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PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS
TO THE DRAMATIC OPPOSITIONS OF
SHAKESPEARE'S MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

City University of New York, Ph.D., 1976
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1976

PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS TO
THE DRAMATIC OPPOSITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S
MEASURE FOR MEASURE

by

Judith Rosenheim

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the
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PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to see the dramatic conflicts of Measure for Measure against the background of certain currents of thought important in the sixteenth century and at the time the play was composed. Shakespeare, it must be emphasized, was not in any formal sense a philosopher; he laid claim to a more commonplace but in his instance perhaps loftier title, that of playwright. But a play that is as problematic as critics have always found Measure for Measure to be does not render all aspects of its meaning to an ad hoc inspection by simple common sense. In a dramatic action expressly involving, as that of Measure for Measure does, ethical conceptions of right and wrong, the philosophical concept of authority, the existential relationships of death to life, the moral balance between justice and mercy, and the theological crux of free will versus necessitated behavior, problems are raised that find their structural formulations, or at least their amplification, in the places where such problems have always had their ultimate lodgement, that is, in philosophy and in religion.

PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to see the dramatic conflicts of Measure for Measure against the background of certain currents of thought important in the sixteenth century and at the time the play was composed. Shakespeare, it must be emphasized, was not in any formal sense a philosopher; he laid claim to a more commonplace but in his instance perhaps loftier title, that of playwright. But a play that is as problematic as critics have always found Measure for Measure to be does not render all aspects of its meaning to an ad hoc inspection by simple common sense. In a dramatic action expressly involving, as that of Measure for Measure does, ethical conceptions of right and wrong, the philosophical concept of authority, the existential relationships of death to life, the moral balance between justice and mercy, and the theological crux of free will versus necessitated behavior, problems are raised that find their structural formulations, or at least their amplification, in the places where such problems have always had their ultimate lodgement, that is, in philosophy and in religion.

Although we do not know, and in a sense do not need to know, whether and to what extent Shakespeare the man might have found occasion to read in Stoic doctrine, Calvinist theology, Neo-Platonist cosmology, or other tendencies of formal thought current in his age, such structures were not only available to him, but, more importantly, provide resonance, complication, and--to the extent that this dissertation is successful--clarification for the dramatic positings and oppositions of Measure for Measure. For those dialectical confrontations are, to an extent perhaps unique in Shakespeare's work, philosophical in their implication.

I wish to express my appreciation for the help and encouragement provided me by three Shakespeareans who have also been my kind teachers, David L. Stevenson, William R. Elton, and Thomas McFarland. To Mrs. Jane Edwards, who has struggled with my revisions, my thanks are also due. And finally, to my husband, Donald, and children, Micah and Jay, for their patience and support during this difficult period, my loving gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

THE DUKE AS A PROBLEM IN CRITICISM

A number of critics have attested to the centrality of the Duke to the meaning of Measure for Measure. Leavis claims that "what one makes of the ending of the play depends on what one makes of the Duke."¹ Fergusson calls him "the center of the play."² Stevenson cites his omniscience as "essential to the play's schematic structure,"³ and Marsh contends that the interpretation of the Duke determines "the whole mood of the play."⁴ When it comes to describing him, however, there is wide disagreement. The Duke, despite, or rather because of, the complex meanings he registers, remains a mystery, and a mystery whose effect is to becloud the entire play. In attempting to solve this mystery, I shall suggest that we approach the Duke in the light of Stoic doctrine.

¹F. R. Leavis, "The Greatness of Measure for Measure," Scrutiny, 10 (1942), 243.

²Francis Fergusson, "Philosophy and Theatre in Measure for Measure," Kenyon Review, 14 (1952), 109.

³David Lloyd Stevenson, "The Historical Dimension in Measure for Measure: The Role of James I in the Play," in The Achievement of Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" (Ithaca, New York, 1966), p. 135.

⁴D. R. C. Marsh, "The Mood of Measure for Measure," SQ, 14 (1963), 31.

In associating the Duke with Stoicism, however, it is essential that we recognize him not simply as Stoic, but as a dramatic projection of the Christianized Stoicism of the Renaissance, or Neostoicism; and that we take account, in this association, of the claim of Neostoicism to have reconciled Stoicism with Christianity and thus to constitute authentically Christian doctrine. It is this claim of Neostoicism to congruency with Christianity that Shakespeare addresses in Measure for Measure, and it is this claim that he emphatically rejects. Shakespeare, on the contrary, will suggest that the differences between Stoicism and Neostoicism are merely cosmetic and that Neostoicism, like Stoicism, is atheism.

If we view the Duke as Neostoic and Shakespeare's attitude toward Neostoicism as negative, we are led to regard Shakespeare's purpose in characterizing the Duke as, if not wholly, yet primarily ironic. In casting the Duke in the role of Neostoic, Shakespeare makes him a self-professed Christian but suggests also that that profession is inauthentic. The Duke is thus not what he seems to be; he is not truly, but rather heretically Christian, not a preacher of Christian truth but a perverter of that truth, not a defender of the faith, but a threat to it, and a threat all the more dangerous for its subtle and covert nature. No less than Angelo, by this account of him, is the Duke, in his identity as Friar-Duke, an example of false seeming, and

Lucio's charges are not without foundation when he remarks of the Friar-Duke that "Cucullus non facit monachum." (V.i.262) By imputing a "sheep-biting face" (V.i.354) to the disguised Friar-Duke, Lucio seems to suggest that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

If, however, it is the very essence of the Friar-Duke's characterization that he should not be what he professes to be, the pervasive but inexplicit character of his inauthenticity has caused critics to misread his meaning. Failing to identify Shakespeare's creation of him as the exponent of an inauthentic Christianity, they have tended either to regard him in a context of bona fide Christianity, or in a context altogether secular.

The fact that Shakespeare endows the Duke as friar with a tripartite identity serves, moreover, to compound the confusion. For in the failure to grasp the Stoic identity that renders him coherent as an imperfect image of both man and God, and informs his nature as man with his divine nature, the critics are left with the incongruity of a nasty man who is also suggestive of a deity assumedly Christian and therefore necessarily perfect. And this incongruity forces them to make a choice between viewing the Friar-Duke as a bad man and therefore no God, or as a Christian deity and therefore not to be reproached for merely human failings. Neither of these views, however, accounts for the totality of his manifest meaning, and this painful fact is variously registered in the criticism of the Duke as dogmatism, candid

bewilderment, vagueness, or outright exasperation.

A third hindrance to the comprehension of the Duke is the dynamic quality of his characterization. If the essential key to his identity is Stoicism, it must be recognized that the Duke's Stoicism undergoes rapid transmutations throughout the play. He is not simply Stoic in the first act, and if his Neostoicism is most clearly expressed in Act II and at the beginning of Act III, he is, as Stoic, subtly identified with Angelo, as Calvinist, and in that identification he assumes qualities antithetical to his Stoic identity. He becomes at once a portrait of selfless reason and of selfish, or self-centered will. Moreover, at the point in Act III when he addresses Isabella, (III.i.151) he becomes a Neo-Platonist, and it is the discountenancing of him as a Neo-Platonic identity encompassing both Calvinism and Stoicism that occupies the whole of Act IV. In Act V, he changes again, assuming, for the first time, the identity of a truly Christian Duke. In failing, thus, to recognize the philosophical development of his characterization, the critics cannot avoid simplifying and thus distorting his meaning.

The critics of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seemed to focus on the Duke's humanity to the neglect of his divine aspect, and they found much to censure. Hazlitt observes that although the Duke

makes a very imposing and mysterious stage-character, he is more absorbed in his own plots and gravity than anxious for the welfare of the state; more tenacious of his own character than attentive to the feelings and apprehensions of others.⁵

Schlegel complains of the Duke that

in his wisdom he is too fond of round-about ways; his vanity is flattered with acting invisibly like an earthly providence; he takes more pleasure in overhearing his subjects than governing them in the customary ways of princes.⁶

Raleigh reproaches the Duke for playing "the benevolent spy," and considers the deputizing of Angelo a classical instance of political amorality.⁷ Hart cites the Duke's official platitudes and pompousness as well as an "inner character" marked by scheming, timidity, and lying. He objects to the "terrible and morbid pessimism" of the Duke's speech on death in III,i,⁸ and John Russell Brown amplifies that opinion by observing that the Duke's "consolation to the condemned Claudio paints . . . life as empty of affection and idealism."⁹ Quiller-Couch resents the Duke as a governor

⁵ William Hazlitt, "Characters of Shakespeare's Plays," in The Collected Works of William Hazlitt, eds., A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1902), I, 346.

⁶ A. W. Schlegel, Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, trans. John Black (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), p. 378.

⁷ Walter Raleigh, Shakespeare (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1907), p. 166.

⁸ H. C. Hart, ed., Measure for Measure (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1903), cited by Leavis, pp. 234-5, and 238.

⁹ John Russell Brown, Shakespeare and his Comedies (1957; rpt. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1964), p. 194.

and as a man. As a governor the Duke is a shirker who "steals back incognito to play busy-body and spy on his deputy." He ends, moreover, as "a wearisome man talking rubbish."¹⁰

More recent critics have judged the Duke's personal nastiness as grounds for rejecting his allegorization as a Christian deity. In 1950, Leech, responding to an article by Pope that attempted to provide an historical context for an apprehension of the Duke as a Christian "embodied Providence,"¹¹ rejected such a Christian reading of the play by citing the Duke's "indifference to human feeling," his pessimism, deception, and mendaciousness.¹² In 1963, Marsh suggested that "our confidence in the Duke is subtly undermined" by Shakespeare,¹³ and Cole in 1965 suggested that the play as a whole examines "sometimes satirically, sometimes with high humor, the Duke's credentials for his self-appointed role as a benevolent Providence."¹⁴

Agreeing, moreover, with the earlier opinions of Hart

¹⁰ Arthur Quiller-Couch and J. Dover Wilson, eds., Measure for Measure, New Shakespeare Edition (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1922), pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

¹¹ Elizabeth Marie Pope, "The Renaissance Background of Measure for Measure," ShS, 2 (1949), 71.

¹² Clifford Leech, "The Meaning of Measure for Measure," ShS, 3 (1950), 67-70.

¹³ Marsh, p. 32.

¹⁴ Howard C. Cole, "The 'Christian' Context of Measure for Measure," JEGP, 64 (July, 1965), 430.

and Brown, Leech, Marsh, and Cole all single out for stricture the peculiarly life-denying and unChristian pessimism of the Duke's recommendation of death to Claudio, Leech calling it an outright denial of "personality itself."¹⁵ "Thou art not thyself. . . ." (III.i.21) And R. G. Hunter's ability to compare this speech to the advice of Despair to Red-cross Knight in Book I of The Faerie Queene further suggests the plausibility of seeing in it the very antithesis of Christian counsel and comfort.¹⁶

The combined testimony of these critics, admitting the inevitable shifts of individual perspective, seems to perceive the Duke as a poor governor and as a man either reproachable for callousness toward those subject to his power or as tainted with capriciousness; as manifesting both a lack of selfhood and an undisciplined selfhood. They record, I submit, the impression the Friar-Duke is intended to convey as governor and man; failing, however, to associate these failings with his characterization as Neostoic, these critics cannot tell us why Shakespeare should have made him so unpleasant, nor do they address themselves seriously to his meaning as a providential figure.

Unlike these pursuers of the Duke as character, the allegorizers of Measure for Measure, attempting to understand

¹⁵ Leech, p. 68, Marsh, p. 33, Cole, p. 436.

¹⁶ Robert Grams Hunter, Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1965), p. 224.

the play as a structure of ideas, perceive very clearly that Shakespeare fashioned in the Duke an image of divinity; they falsely assume, however, that the Duke represents the God of Christianity. G. Wilson Knight inaugurated in 1930 the search for an allegorical correlative of the Duke who, for him, "tends to assume proportions evidently divine"; he found that correlative of divinity in the parables of the Gospels. As a Christian deity, however, the Duke does not quite come into focus. Tentatively, Knight suggests that he

is lit at moments with divine suggestion comparable with his almost divine power of fore-knowledge, and control, and wisdom. There is an enigmatic, other-worldly, mystery suffusing his figure and the meaning of his acts.¹⁷

For the allegorizers, the divinity of the Duke obviates his need to be human. Not, as for Leech, insufficiently human, he is now more than human; he becomes, to quote the Times Literary Supplement, "a power rather than a character,"¹⁸ and Murry concurs, calling him "a power" and "mysterious Justice."¹⁹ Leavis finds him "a kind of Providence,"²⁰ while Battenhouse declares him an incarnated God, and the play

¹⁷ G. Wilson Knight, "Measure for Measure and the Gospels," in The Wheel of Fire (1930; rpt. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1949), pp. 73, 79, 74.

¹⁸ The Times Literary Supplement, July 16, 1931, p. 554.

¹⁹ John Middleton Murry, Shakespeare (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1936), p. 258.

²⁰ Leavis, p. 244.

itself a dramatization of the Christian doctrine of Atonement.²¹ Stauffer sees him as a didactic deity,²² and Bryant combines his educative bent with the Pauline idea of the law as the hermeneutic of sin. Though he calls the Duke a "human being," he nevertheless discusses him in purely theological terms:

For all its secular interest Shakespeare's play is the story of a ruler who concluded all his subjects under sin so that all who would might come to recognize the wound in their own souls . . . and know by experience their need for his abounding mercy.²³

Coghill calls the Duke "the primum mobile of the play," a power that in his view does not so much teach as test.²⁴ And Evans confidently defines him as "an omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent force."²⁵

These critics seem to render indisputable the validity of recognizing in the Duke an allegorical representation of deity. Yet their actual descriptions of him, contrary to their desire to recognize in him a Christian God, either do

²¹ Roy Battenhouse, "Measure for Measure and the Christian Doctrine of the Atonement," PMLA, 61 (1946), 1032 and passim.

²² Donald Stauffer, Shakespeare's World of Images (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1966, first pub. 1949), p. 142.

²³ J. A. Bryant, Jr., Hippolyta's View: Some Christian Aspects of Shakespeare's Plays (Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1961), pp. 89, 107.

²⁴ Nevill Coghill, "Comic Form in Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Survey, 8 (1955), 21.

²⁵ Bertrand Evans, Shakespeare's Comedies (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 186.

not render him in specifically Christian terms, or strain those terms. Of these critics, moreover, some appear haunted by the nagging incongruency in the Friar-Duke's personal character. The desire to purge this doubt provokes them into emphatic assertions that may well be rooted in anxiety. Leavis decries any scrutiny of the Duke's character as irrelevant:

We know where we must focus our critical concern: not, that is, upon the Duke but upon the representatives of human nature that provide the subjects of the demonstration.²⁶

And Coghill even compares criticism of the Duke's character to blasphemy.²⁷

It seems, indeed, that the Christian exegetists of the play, despite the positiveness of their assertions to the contrary, are not completely happy with the idea of God that does not include selfhood. At the same time, their assertions of the Duke's Christian divinity are justified in the denouement of the play, even if they do not square with the concept of the Duke in its first four acts. What they fail to perceive is that the Duke evolves during the play into a Christian deity, and that his Christian character is rather its culminating achievement than its premise.

If the allegorizers of the Duke seem with a voice to

²⁶ Leavis, p. 244.

²⁷ Coghill, pp. 21-22.

view him as a Christian deity, there remains one lone dissenting opinion, that of E. K. Chambers, that perceives an ironic treatment of the Duke as deity. Chambers audaciously asserts that in Measure for Measure "the searchlight of irony is thrown upon the ways of Providence itself."²⁸ Yet he, also, in failing to perceive the Duke's achievement of an authentically Christian divinity in the fifth act of the play, appreciates only a part of his conception. Similarly interesting is Virgil Whitaker's observation on Battenhouse's interpretation of Measure for Measure as a dramatization of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. He reflects that

if Shakespeare intended to mirror the process of the Atonement he had involuntarily produced a parody upon which a skeptic might pounce as revealing all the weaknesses of this central Christian doctrine.²⁹

Of all the investigators of the religious character of Measure for Measure, Southall is the only critic who attacks it as a conflict of different kinds of Christianity; for him, specifically, the Protestant attack on the ideal of Mediaeval Christianity.³⁰

Contrary to those critics who restrict their

²⁸ E. K. Chambers, Encyclopaedia Britannica (1911), 24, p. 785.

²⁹ Virgil Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1953), p. 220.

³⁰ Raymond Southall, "Measure for Measure and the Protestant Ethic," ETC, 11 (Jan., 1961), 11.

attention to the human or divine properties of the Duke, there is a group of critics who perceive the double valency of the Duke as both God and man. Failing, however, to perceive the link between his divinity and his humanity as his Stoic character, such critics either merely assert his duality, or try to find its logic variously in his theatricality, or in the analogical structure of Renaissance reality, or in his role as governor. Fergusson sees his role in the play as "that of Grace in its various forms, as theologians describe it." Yet Fergusson also calls him "a real human being." He is, then, both within the action and above it, both "a stage manager of power and wisdom, controlling and interpreting its course, and also a subject of its fictional situation."³¹ Toole treats the Duke as an admirable though not perfect man; he seems, however, to perceive the analogical structure of his identity when he calls the Duke both man and "the God of the New Testament."³² Pope attempts to find the link between the Duke's humanity and his divinity in his ducal authority. Demonstrating that Scripture made temporal power a manifestation of divine will, and showing further that the derivation of authority from heaven rendered its possessors "like pow'r divine," (V.i.369) Pope suggests that Elizabethans would without difficulty have recognized the

³¹ Fergusson, pp. 116, 119.

³² William B. Toole, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London: Mouton and Co., 1966), pp. 182, 184.

Duke as "an embodied Providence" because all rulers were so conceived.³³ More recently, Godshalk contends that the Duke "acted like God" in seeing into Angelo's sinful actions, but is also, like other characters in the play, a sharer in guilt, and specifically in the guilt of Angelo.³⁴ These critical observations, though not identifying the specific character of the link between the duality of the Duke, serve to suggest that a link does indeed exist between his two meanings, and that this link constitutes an important part of the play's meaning.

The problem of the Duke's meaning has also provoked research into the quality of theatricality with which he seems prominently to be endowed. He is the playmaker within the play; as Knight observes, he controls the action from start to finish.³⁵ Yet here too, though opinions diverge between the perception of him as less or more than human, he remains lacking in selfhood. For Lawrence, the Duke is merely the product of dramatic conventions. "The Duke's character was . . . determined by the plot; the plot did not spring from his character." He is "a stage Duke, not a real person," "essentially, a puppet,"³⁶ in fine, an automaton.

³³ Pope, pp. 70-71.

³⁴ W. L. Godshalk, "Measure for Measure: Freedom and Restraint," pp. 146-47.

³⁵ Knight, p. 73.

³⁶ William Witherlie Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies (1931; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 106, 100, 107.

Lawrence's main point about the play is that its plot combines elements both realistic and romantic.³⁷ The realistic plot Shakespeare derives from Whetstone's play, Promos and Cassandra (1587), from which Shakespeare derives also the theme of sexual vice³⁸ so prominent in Measure for Measure. In his Mirour for Magistrates of Cyties (1584), Whetstone further recommended to Shakespeare's use the folklore element of the spying ruler in the legend of Alexander Severus.³⁹ The various uses to which this legend was adapted are discussed by J. W. Lever in his introduction to the Arden edition of the play.⁴⁰

To Lawrence, the ability of the Severus legend to shed light on the Duke appears to be limited.⁴¹ As an image of governing power hidden within the people, however, it becomes, I think, suggestive. Two points with regard to this legend appear to be further suggestive. First, Whetstone's advocacy in his Mirour for Magistrates of informers whom he calls "visible Lights in obscure Corners"⁴² seems to suggest

³⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 39.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

⁴⁰ J. W. Lever, ed., Measure for Measure: The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1965), pp. xlv-xlvii.

⁴¹ Lawrence, p. 90.

⁴² Lever, p. xlv.

a relationship between Lucio and the "Duke of dark corners." (IV.iii.157) Secondly, the visit by James I in disguise to the London Exchange in March 1604, an incident that impinges significantly on the Duke's characterization, may have been sanctioned, if not provoked by the tendency of the Severus legend to add spying to the list of royal virtues. Though Lawrence points out that the special prominence of the Duke is of Shakespeare's original devising,⁴³ he frames the Duke within the Elizabethan stage convention of disguise.⁴⁴

If Lawrence's investigation of the Duke's conventionality seems to mitigate both his humanity and his power, other critics seem to find in his theatricality a correlative of power. Lascelles sees the Duke as a dramatic projection of Shakespeare himself, and senses a deliberate correspondence between the power of the Duke to devise a comic ending to a potentially tragic plot, and his own skill as a writer of tragi-comedy.⁴⁵ Bennett speculates that Shakespeare may well have played the part of the Duke himself.⁴⁶ It seems, moreover, that the attribution to the Duke of a special dramaturgical power bespeaks a search for a way of construing him

⁴³ Lawrence, p. 91.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁵ Mary Lascelles, Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" (London: The Athlone Press, 1953), pp. 145-46.

⁴⁶ Josephine Waters Bennett, "Measure for Measure" as Royal Entertainment (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966), p. 135.

that is alternative to both humanity and divinity. Such representations of him as a stage manager, or as playing God⁴⁷ seem attempts to terrestrialize his power without humanizing it. For R. W. Chambers, who calls the Duke "an earthly Providence," his theatricality seems to straddle divinity and automatism. The Duke is the sometimes creaky "god in the machine."⁴⁸

As a variant, however, to a divinely endowed Duke, theatricality seems in its own way to lead toward allegory. Unnaturalized artifice in Shakespeare is not a substitute for but rather a technique of allegorical drama. Nowhere, for instance, does the Duke become more hieratic if not theophantic than when he addresses the audience at the end of III,ii, in tetrameter couplets. In this regard, it is appropriate to suggest that the heightened artificiality of the last plays is a device employed to reveal the power of Providence in the world, a power realized in that figure so closely analogous to the Duke: Prospero.

In a recent book, Kirsch shows that obvious theatricality seems to subordinate meaning to form. He takes note of the playwright's tendency in tragi-comedy "to draw attention to himself," and thus "to make us consciously aware of

⁴⁷ Stauffer, p. 142.

⁴⁸ Raymond Wilson Chambers, Man's Unconquerable Mind (London: J. Cape, 1939), pp. 280, 282.

the play as a play."⁴⁹ This tendency on the one hand, by militating against meaning, tends to trivialize the play and thus supports the contention of Lawrence (as well as of Bridges, Stoll, and Harbage) that Shakespeare's plays reflect merely the sensibilities and aesthetic demands of his audience.⁵⁰ Yet, as Kirsch points out, theatricality as Shakespeare used it, by heightening in the audience a consciousness of the play as a product of creative power, suggests "an identification of the dramatist with Providence and of his plot with the workings of that Providence."⁵¹ The heightened theatricality of tragicomedy, of which Measure for Measure is an example, seems to suggest the way in which art can convey religious truth. In Measure for Measure, however, the association of the Duke with a Providence of a specifically artistic kind serves to connect this Providence with the Stoic idea of the world as illustrating the artistry of its creator, as well as the further idea of the world as a stage.

The combined impact of the criticism of the Duke seems to suggest that he has been perceived in fragments. Lacking the extrinsic philosophical analogue that is the scaffolding of his conception, critics have been able to

⁴⁹ Arthur C. Kirsch, Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972), p. 12.

⁵⁰ Lawrence, pp. 98-9.

⁵¹ Kirsch, p. 12.

touch, but not to grasp, his meaning. It is only when we recognize him as Stoic that his callousness becomes a deliberate representation of the insensitivity that is the ethic of Stoic reason, and his strange advice to Juliet and Claudio becomes fraught with dramatic purpose. Likewise, it is only in expressing the Stoic concept of God as immanent and identical with the world and reflective of its specifically selfless quality that his way of being God becomes precise and also dramatically focused. And it is, finally, in recognizing him as Neostoic and thus spuriously Christian, that the difficulty of comprehending him becomes itself comprehensible.

CHAPTER II

THE DUKE AS PROJECTION OF THE POLITICS OF REASON AND WILL

Part of our task in attempting to account for the complexity of the Duke is to see him in political as well as theological terms, as governor, as well as God. In broaching the subject of politics, however, we move from the purely theoretical realm into the realm of history, and, indeed, current events, or more properly, into a realm in which theory and practice clarify and also complicate each other. In assessing the Duke as a political rationalist, we are forced to see him also as, latently, a political voluntarist; he comes to express, ultimately, the identity of Pompey, the bawd, as the mere conflation of political reason and will. But even before the Duke reaches this nadir in his political career, he manifests the latency of that identity by expressing simultaneously the antithetical political theories of Machiavelli and Calvin; he also assumes the identity of two political figures who put these theories into practice: Cesare Borgia and James I.

It is to Stevenson's research that we must turn first for an appreciation of the political aspect of the Duke. Pursuing his perception in the Duke of a deliberate and pervasive

allusion to James I,¹ Stevenson assembles a body of evidence that makes such an allusion all but incontrovertible. He points out resemblances of a kind both superficial and blatant that testify to Shakespeare's desire to make the Duke expressive of James as a political power. At the same time, he suggests similarities less obvious, but of great consequence in giving that resemblance between king and character a definite meaning. As Schanzer points out, moreover, these similarities relate both to personal resemblances between the Duke and James, and also to opinions that they hold in common.² Illustrative of the former is a shared dislike of crowds that Stevenson mentions,³ and to which we will have to return. To this similarity Schanzer, also thinking along the same lines as Stevenson, later adds his observation of a common penchant for either executing or freeing offenders.⁴

Stevenson is primarily interested in "Shakespeare's demonstrable use of the King's book on statecraft, the Basilicon Doron [1603] . . . as a source of the Duke's ideas," as well as in a previous book of James's authorship, The True Lawe of Free Monarchies, published anonymously in 1598.⁵

¹Stevenson, pp. 136-7.

²Ernest Schanzer, The Problem Plays of Shakespeare (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 122.

³Stevenson, p. 140.

⁴Schanzer, pp. 124-5.

⁵Stevenson, pp. 144, 159.

Augmenting the work of George Chalmers in 1779, Charles Knight in 1849, and Louis Albrecht in 1914,⁶ Stevenson shows that the Basilicon Doron, which James declared "a true image of my very mind,"⁷ expresses some opinions strikingly similar to those of the Duke: an approbation of an active virtue, a horror of slander, an insistence upon the necessity of virtue in the king, and an emphasis on his own intellectuality.⁸ And to these similarities Schanzer, evaluating the same material, adds a common repudiation of novelty or new-fangleness.⁹

Similarities between James and the Duke, however, obtain in matters of greater significance than those mentioned above, whose purpose seems to be merely one of simple association. These similarities pertain to the great concepts of justice and mercy, which identify at once an important theme in the play, and, by Stevenson's testimony, were also a special interest of James in the years 1603, 1604,¹⁰ as both his book and his actions attest. The Basilicon Doron sounds the warning of the dangers of undue leniency in a

⁶George Chalmers, A Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-Papers (1779), pp. 404-5. Charles Knight, Studies of Shakespeare (1849), p. 319. Louis Albrecht, Neue Untersuchungen zu Shakespeares Mass für Mass (Berlin, 1914), pp. 129-216.

⁷Stevenson, p. 145.

⁸Ibid., p. 153.

⁹Schanzer, p. 124.

¹⁰Stevenson, p. 154.

ruler, dangers whose consequence we find manifested in Measure for Measure.¹¹ But the most significant if not the most obvious aspects of the Duke's similarity to James seem connected to issues discussed in The True Lawe of Free Monarchies in which James expounds the doctrine of divine right, a doctrine that, if not of his own making, owed its development to him. In this book, James states his claim to be above the law, as well as his claim to absolute power over the lives of each and every one of his people, positions themselves related to his assertion of sovereignty over church as well as state.¹²

The King is above the law as both the author and giver of strength thereto, yet a good King will not only delight to rule his subjects by the law, but even will conform himself in his own actions thereunto; always keeping that ground, that the health of the commonwealth be his chief law. And where he sees the law doubtful or rigorous, he may interpret or mitigate the same, lest otherwise summum jus be summa injuria. And therefore general laws made publicly in Parliament may, upon known respects to the King, by his authority be mitigated and suspended upon causes only known to him. . . .

And as ye see it manifest that the King is overlord of the whole land, so is he master over every person that inhabiteth the same, having power over the life and death of every one of them.¹³

¹¹Ibid., pp. 156-7.

¹²Ibid., pp. 158-60.

¹³J. R. Tanner, ed., Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I, with an historical commentary by Tanner (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1961), pp. 9-10.

This assertion by James of his authority over law and life, despite its benevolent and paternalistic nuances, has a notably voluntaristic ring; for all his perfunctory nods to the law, James claims in this statement that the ultimate source of power is his will. And the assumption of power through will alone is profoundly connected to the withdrawal of power from his people and the concentration of all power within himself. It is to this claim of James that Stevenson refers the Duke's arrogation to himself of the right to meddle with the lives of all the characters in the play.¹⁴ Shakespeare will, I think, see in James's assumption of absolute and total power in the state his denial of the principle of reason and the world, which in the political realm is represented by the people, and the attempt to constitute the state upon the sole principle of selfhood. In making the Duke reflective of James, then, Shakespeare is casting the Duke in a political mold that is specifically voluntaristic, and this association of the Duke with political voluntarism would seem to contradict a Stoic reading of his character.

For, in view of James's claim to a voluntaristic and absolute power divinely derived, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that he represented his political power as something akin to the power of a transcendent God. That James indeed saw himself as analogous to God is suggested by a particularly haughty statement that William Barlow reports of him at the Hampton Court conference: "I may say of myself, as Christ did of himself: though I lived among them . . . I was never

¹⁴Stevenson, p. 159.

of them."¹⁵ Thus it seems that James projected himself as a self-generating allegory, adopting in the political mode the power of a specifically transcendent kind of deity, and that the Duke, insofar as he reflects James, must similarly become the personification of a power derived from a transcendent realm. It is, however, in the light of such a specifically voluntaristic idea of political power that the obsessive interest of James in justice and mercy as rational concepts begins to express a contradiction in his character, and thus to complicate his voluntarism.

Stevenson considers that the fact of the Duke's personal resemblance to James argues Shakespeare's desire to please, or even flatter the king.¹⁶ He observes that James was the object of fulsome flattery on other occasions; he makes it clear also that Shakespeare had the classic motive for flattery: the promotion of the King's Men to his Majesty's favor. It might, not without cogency, be further argued that if the portrait of James in the play does not flatter, it might well have had the connotation of slander, the very slander for which James had demonstrated his readiness to execute offenders.¹⁷ Yet there abides within

¹⁵Ibid., p. 160, quoted from William Barlow, The Summe and Substance of the Conference . . . in his Majesties Privy-Chamber, at Hampton Court (London, 1604), p. 70.

¹⁶Stevenson, p. 163.

¹⁷Schanzer, p. 125.

Stevenson's argument a subtle but disquieting complication in James' character that puts flattery in the light of abject sycophancy. This complication raises a question pertinent to this as well as other plays of Shakespeare, the question of whether the most obvious statements in them are congruent with certain suggestions at once more profound and obscure. In this instance the reasonable assumption of Shakespeare's intention to flatter James is complicated by certain specific actions of James that Stevenson cites, actions that seem to betray in him an unpleasant penchant for extreme behavior of both a rationalistic and a voluntaristic kind.

Stevenson relates two incidents from the chronicles of the time. The first, recorded in an anonymous pamphlet, The True Narration, tells how James when at Newark summarily executed a cutpurse caught in the act and immediately afterward released all the felons in the prison.

His Majestie . . . directed a Warrant, presently . . . to have him hanged. . . . The King ere he went from New-warke, as hee had commanded this Silken base theefe, in justice to bee put to death, so in his beninge and gracious mercie, he gives life to all the other poore and wretched prisoners, clearing the Castle of them al.¹⁸

The second incident related in Richard Baker's Chronicle describes James's alternate severity and clemency to those convicted in the Raleigh conspiracy of 1603. First he had

¹⁸Stevenson, p. 155, quoted from The True Narration, sig. E1^r-E2^r.

some hanged, and later he pardoned others. The pardon, however, was so arranged as to lead the condemned through all the preliminaries of their executions and to reprieve them almost at the instant that the axe was to fall.

. . . this was the course which the K.[ing] held in showing mercy. After the death of the three before named he signed three other warrants for the execution of the late L. Cobham, and Lord Grey, and Sir Griffin Markeham, on a certain day then following; but before that day came he privately framed another warrant, written with his own hand to the Sheriffe; . . . by which he countermanded the former Warrants: and that there might be no notice taken of it: he sent it by Mr. John Gybbe . . . one utterly unknown to all the company, appointing him to deliver it so, that it might not take effect, till after their severall confessions, and at the very point of their Execution, which was accordingly performed: At which time, it was a wonderful thing to see how the Delinquents falling on their knees, lamented their misdoings, and most of all how they extolled the Kings unspeakable mercy.¹⁹

Though it is to the king's mercy that the multitude responded, it seems to this reader that there is more expressed here than mercy. James seems in this action also to express a capricious, even a sadistic will; specifically, this action seems to exhibit in James a conscious attempt to behave like a voluntaristic God. In these actions James seems simultaneously to subordinate the terms of justice and mercy to his own will, and to dramatize justice and mercy as extreme and absolute concepts;

¹⁹ Richard Baker, Chronicle, pp. 125-6, cited in Stevenson, pp. 160-1.

in short, to make the concepts of justice and mercy paradoxically expressive of his absolute will.

These actions of James were, clearly, spectacular events, deliberately staged to command the attention of the public; we must assume, therefore, that Shakespeare reacted to them. The question is, how did he take them? Though the multitude might well extol the king's mercy, one may doubt that Shakespeare took note of it in quite the same way unless, with Lawrence, we foist upon Shakespeare the opinion of the multitude.²⁰ If, as I prefer to think with Leech, we must grant to Shakespeare a sensibility as fine as our own,²¹ we must consider his response to such justice and mercy more than a little complicated. And, indeed, John Harrington's opinion concerning James's treatment of the cutpurse at Newark in his "Breefe Notes and Remembraunces" suggests that it could be regarded as less than perfect justice by a man of that time:

I heare our new Kynge hathe hangede one man
before he was tryede; 'tis strangely done: now
if the wynde blowethe thus, why may not a man
be tryed before he hathe offended?²²

Significantly, Harrington objects not to the severity of the hanging but to its illegality, in short, to the contravention of law by will. I suggest that Shakespeare's response to

²⁰Lawrence, pp. 98-9.

²¹Leech, p. 72.

²²Stevenson, p. 156, cited from Nugae Antiquae, selected from Henry Harrington, 2 vols. (London, 1804), I, 180.

these exhibitions of justice and mercy included the reaction of Harrington, and, further, that he focused on their implications as expressions of a voluntaristic theology. But, I suspect that Shakespeare saw these acts of James in the still broader context of paradox, as expressive of the extremes of both voluntarism and rationalism. The deliberate similarity of the Duke to James seems comparably to suggest that Shakespeare was interested in attributing to the Duke also the paradoxical extremities of both political will and reason, and was presenting these extremities, although subtly, in a spirit rather of criticism than of flattery.

Further evidence adduced by Stevenson reinforces the paradoxical quality of the Duke in his resemblance to James. Stevenson points out that James's dislike of crowds became a matter of public attention through a particular incident promulgated in Gilbert Dugdale's The Time Triumphant in 1604.²³ In March of that year, James ventured into London in disguise to visit the Exchange, being "desirous privately . . . to visit them," and "thinkeing to passe unknowne."²⁴ His identity was discovered, however, and occasioned wild excitement among the people, who thronged about him. For his part, James was greatly offended with their unruly behavior.

²³Ibid., p. 140.

²⁴Idem.

Stevenson suggests that this aversion of James to crowds surfaces in the play as the Duke's disdain for the "aves vehement" (I.i.70) of the people. Another instance of this quirk of character might be the Duke's expressed love of "the life removed" and his scorn "to haunt assemblies/ Where youth and cost, witless bravery keeps." (I.iii.8-10) Both these expressions of the Duke seem, however, to betray a certain contradiction. In avoiding the praises of the multitude the Duke is going "privily away," (I.i.67) and the direction of that going can only be toward the people whose aves he shuns. Again, his life removed, even as he expresses his love for it, is imminently to be traded for a life not only not removed, but as intimately connected as can be imagined, and not only with those for whose assemblies he has expressed such disdain, but with a society considerably worse.

The contradiction implicit in these statements, moreover, seems to refer to the contradiction implicit in the action of James of which they appear to be reflective. In view of this king's self-association with a transcendent deity whose being is above and apart from the subjects of its power, one must ask why he owned and acceded to the impulse to visit his people, and to visit them not in the conspicuous majesty of his royalty, but rather as indistinguishably one of them. In view of the transposability of James's political demonstrations of will--that are also

demonstrations of justice and mercy--into the realm of theology, this action, too, associates politics with theology. And again, there appears to be a simultaneous reference to political transcendence, which is suggested by James's dislike of crowds, and to political immanence, which is suggested by James's descent from monarchial isolation into the midst of his people. Stevenson, in construing the Duke's abhorrence of self-display as an intended allusion to James, passes over the contrary probability that the Duke's disappearance into the world of Vienna may also deliberately reflect an aspect of James's short junket into London; and he does so probably because the contradiction between the attitude and the action makes that similarity difficult to perceive. But, I suggest, it was precisely to this contradiction that the imagination of Shakespeare responded. James seems to become for Shakespeare a symbol, imported by allusion into the play because of its ability to radiate from a single identity the extremes of voluntarism and rationalism that Shakespeare intends to equate and also to manifest an interrelation between the theological and the political manifestations of these qualities. It is with just such an extremity of both transcendence and immanence that Shakespeare contrives to endow the Duke in Act I of Measure for Measure, and it is further to the extremity of both these qualities that their disjunction into an "eminence" (I.ii.164) too high in Angelo and a submergence too low in the Friar-Duke

is related. As extreme rationalist, however, the Friar-Duke maintains a latent identity with Angelo as voluntarist.

It is in light of this identification that Shakespeare's association of the crowd horror with both the Duke and Angelo becomes accessible to comprehension. In II,iv, Angelo, oppressed by his own lust, exclaims,

Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,
Making both it unable for itself,
And dispossessing all my other parts
Of necessary fitness?
So play the foolish throngs with one that swoonds,
Come all to help him, and so stop the air
By which he should revive; and even so
The general subject to a well-wish'd king
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offense. (II.iv.20-30)

Observing that Angelo's speech conspicuously refers to James's crowd phobia, Stevenson suggests that we view it as a "direct eulogy of James's feelings."²⁵ Yet the moral condition of Angelo at that instant would seem to negate any complimentary value in this allusion. More probably the allusion seems to suggest a similarity not between Angelo and James, but rather between Angelo and the Friar-Duke, for which James in his paradoxically symbolic function provides the point of contiguity. Through the comparison of his passions to the "subject of a well-wish'd king," Angelo, by evoking James's disguised visit to the Exchange, incorporates the similarly disguised Friar-Duke and associates him with himself.

²⁵Stevenson, p. 143.

Through their common reference to James as a symbol of two ideas of political power, Angelo and the Friar-Duke become identified with each other as governors, and their identification projects imaginatively the identity of political power as will and reason, even as it reveals these antitheses of will and reason as the hypostases of divine power into the lower realm of politics. The ability of James, moreover, in his emphasis on his absolute will and his obsessive interest in the concepts of justice and mercy, and especially in his visit to the Exchange, to incorporate within himself the extremes of political voluntarism and rationalism supplies the logic whereby the Duke, in his capacity as rationalistic Friar-Duke, can be identified with him.

If, by recognizing the paradoxical logic of the play, we can understand how Shakespeare can identify the rationalistic Duke with the voluntaristic James, we should observe that Shakespeare also provides the Duke with an historical analogue of a specifically rationalistic type: Cesare Borgia. As Stevenson links the Duke to James I through James's books, Basilicon Doron and The True Lawe of Free Monarchies, so Holland, in a short but illuminating article, links the Duke to Borgia through Machiavelli's book, The Prince.²⁶

²⁶ Norman Holland, "Measure for Measure: The Duke and The Prince," Comparative Literature, 11 (1959), 20.

As Holland points out, however, it was probably not through The Prince itself that Machiavelli proffered his political philosophy to Shakespeare, but rather through a restatement and refutation of his politics by Gentillet in his so-called Contre-Machiavel, written in 1576. This book represents the excoriation of Machiavelli's politics by a devout and specifically Protestant author, who brands it as a political expression of atheism,²⁷ and thus enunciates a conflict between voluntaristic and Machiavellian politics. Before turning to the way in which the Duke expresses the identity of Borgia, however, it behooves us to examine the main points of this conflict as well as their implications.

I suggest that Shakespeare regarded the substance of The Prince, not illogically, as a specifically rational delineation of the laws governing the acquisition and maintenance of political power, laws to which the successful prince will strictly adhere even to the suppression of his personal inclinations. I suggest, further, that Shakespeare perceived that the effect of these prescriptions of Machiavelli was to negate the element of selfhood and will in the state, and thus to invalidate the state as a social structure embracing the elements of selfhood as governor and world as people. As an entity

²⁷ Gentillet, A Discovrse Vpon the Meanes of Vvel Governing and Maintaining in Good Peace, a Kingdome, or other Principalitie, trans. Simon Patericke (London: Adam Flip, 1602), Preface, Aiiy. Gentillet here associates the politics of Machiavelli with "Atheisme and Impietie."

composed of reason alone, or world, however, the state becomes identical with its conception as will alone, or selfhood. Machiavelli's law of power becomes identical with James's power of law. And indeed, behind the observance of the laws of power is the overweening selfhood of the rational prince, who, as selfhood, sets his sights on power and power alone. Such a prince is Cesare Borgia.

Machiavelli's politics, I suspect, can be shown to be as pertinent to Angelo as to the Duke, especially in his assertion to Isabella that "my false o'erweighs your true." (II.iv.170) It is of immediate importance, however, to recognize that the imaginative association of the Duke with the voluntaristic James, far from precluding his association with the rationalistic Borgia, seems indeed to demand this association as the fulfillment of its paradoxical logic whereby one extreme seems to predicate its opposite as its identity.

As the projection of both James and Borgia, however, the Duke seems to invoke an identification of the rationalistic politics of Machiavelli not only with the voluntaristic politics of James but, more fundamentally, of Calvin, who, as its great advocate, preaches the divine sanction of political power. It is, I suspect, the two contrasting philosophies of Machiavelli and Calvin that stand behind the Duke's imaginative association with Borgia and James. If, moreover, the politics of Machiavelli is expressed in

The Prince, the politics of Calvin is conveyed in Book IV, chapter xx of Calvin's Institutes.²⁸

Of all the points of contrast between Machiavelli and Calvin, none is more obvious or more important than their conflicting opinions on the source of the governor's power, for it is these differing sources of power that define these governors respectively as world and selfhood. If James defines his power as divine right, that definition is sanctioned by Calvin's derivation of political power from God himself. The governor is chosen by God. For Calvin, moreover, the fact of the governor's election by God confers upon him a measure of divinity, which is witnessed by the Psalmist's denomination of judges as "gods."²⁹ The governor thus becomes quasi-divine, or, to use Claudio's term, a "demigod." (I.ii.120)

When all who sustain the magistracy are called "gods," it ought not to be considered as an appellation of trivial importance; for it implies, that they have their command from God, that they are invested with his authority, and are altogether his representatives, and act as his vicegerents. . . . To the same purpose is the declaration of the wisdom of God by the mouth of Solomon: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."³⁰

²⁸ John T. McNeill, ed., John Calvin, On God and Political Duty (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1956), p. xii. McNeill states that this chapter "is Calvin's most systematic statement on government, and summarizes his entire thought on the subject."

²⁹ Psalm lxxxii. 6.

³⁰ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion,

Contrarily, Machiavelli derives the power of the prince not from God but from the people, and regards the prince as wholly human. He maintains that

it is necessary for a prince to possess the friendship of the people; otherwise he has no recourse in times of adversity.

Again, he affirms that

one who by his own valour and measure animates the mass of the people . . . will not find himself deceived by them, and he will find that he has laid his foundations well.

Therefore the best fortress is to be found in the love of the people, for although you may have fortresses they will not save you if you are hated by the people.³¹

By referring the governor's power to the election of God, Calvin places that power above the judgment of man. Divinely appointed, the governor is unique among men; whether kind or cruel, just or tyrannical, he has, as God's appointed deputy, an absolute claim on the obedience of his subjects. If subjects suffer under their governor, Calvin advises them to consider

that it is not our province to remedy these evils,

 who have received no other command than to obey
 and suffer.³²

In this opinion he contrasts with Machiavelli's admission

trans. John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), II, 773-74.

³¹Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, intro. Max Lerner, The Modern Library (New York: Random House, 1940), pp. 38, 81.

³²Calvin, II, pp. 803-4.

of the prince's dependence on the people and his need to court their favor as the condition of the continuance of his power.

Yet it is not hard to observe that between the politics of Calvin's governor and Machiavelli's prince, the distinction is far from absolute. It is, in fact, rather one of style than of substance. Calvin's governor, by deriving his power not from his virtue but from divine will, becomes, like God, a selfhood, and while he should be moral, his goodness is not a condition of his power. Calvin can assert that the function of the magistracy is both to promote "piety"³³ and to defend his subjects "against the malice and injuries of wicked men."³⁴ Yet the magistrate may himself be wicked. And, indeed, in his evil, he may serve the purpose of God, by scourging the people for their sins, as readily as in his goodness. Calvin explains that

if we are inhumanly harassed by a cruel prince; if we are rapaciously plundered by an avaricious or luxurious one; if we are neglected by an idolent one; or if we are persecuted, on account of piety, by an impious and sacrilegious one,--let us first call to mind our transgressions against God, which he undoubtedly chastises by these scourges.³⁵

Calvin's theory of the governor incorporates a view of him

³³Ibid., p. 779.

³⁴Ibid., p. 791.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 802-3.

as an open and unmitigated tyrant.

We observe, however, that if morality is not essential in Calvin's governor, neither is it a criterion of Machiavelli's prince. By deriving his concept of power altogether from the world as he observes and experiences it, rather than from a transcendent realm, Machiavelli too renders the relationship between power and goodness tenuous:

But my intention being to write something of use to those who understand, it appears to me more proper to go into the real truth of the matter than to its imagination; . . . for how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation. . . . It is necessary for a prince, who wishes to maintain himself, to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge and not use it, according to the necessity of the case.³⁶

To Machiavelli's prince, moral scruples are merely a hindrance. But because he must keep the favor of the people, the prince must give the appearance of morality. Machiavelli instructs his prince that

a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by doing so it would be against his interest, and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist. . . . But it is necessary to be able to disguise this character well, and to be a feigner and dissembler; . . .³⁷

Machiavelli's prince must thus be a consummate deceiver, or to use Shakespeare's term, a seemer. It is not necessary for

³⁶Machiavelli, p. 56.

³⁷Ibid., p. 64.

a prince to possess such virtues as goodness, liberality, and clemency,

but it is very necessary to seem to have them.

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A prince must take care that nothing goes out of his mouth which is not full of the above-named qualities, and, to see and hear him, he should seem to be all mercy, faith, integrity, humanity, and religion. And nothing is more necessary than to seem to have this last quality. . . .³⁸

Thus the difference between Machiavelli's prince and Calvin's governor is not one of vice and virtue but rather of apparent tyranny and covert manipulation, or guile. In Measure for Measure the guile and tyranny of these governors degenerate into "Craft" and "vice." (III.ii.277) In the play, Angelo's tyranny identifies him as an exponent of Calvinist politics. Claudio calls his condemnation "tyranny" (I.ii.163) and Isabella calls it "tyrannous." (II.ii.108) The tyranny of Angelo, moreover, in attempting the virtue of Isabella, adopts a vicious character. The Duke, on the other hand, by assuming the spurious piety of the friar and engaging in an attempt to manipulate his subjects through the use of reason assumes the quality of a Machiavellian prince. In cloaking a political purpose beneath a religious exterior, he follows Machiavelli's prescription to the letter. That purpose, however, ultimately involves him in the illegal scheme or "craft" of the bed trick.

³⁸Ibid., p. 65.

In advising the prince to fool his subjects, Machiavelli assures him also of his ability to deceive them, for, in his words, "the vulgar is always taken by appearances and the issue of the event; and the world consists only of the vulgar. . . ." ³⁹ It is to this opinion of Machiavelli that the Duke's assumption of his ability to conceal his "true-meant design," (I.iv.55) and his ability to strew lies "in the common ear" (I.iii.15) seems relevant. In this connection, moreover, the Stoic tolerance for lying ⁴⁰ seems to offer a point of congruity between its theological rationalism and the political rationalism of Machiavelli. As the critics have observed, the Duke is a consistent liar. We should also observe, however, that Lucio, as Coghill has noted, seems to be able to penetrate the lies of the Duke. ⁴¹ One scene after hearing the Duke relate that he has hidden his true intention from the people, we hear Lucio assuring Isabella that

His [givings]-out were of an infinite distance
From his true-meant design. (I.iv.54-5)

Lucio seems to know that the Duke has assumed the disguise of "beggary"; (III.ii.93) he even knows the time of the Duke's return:

But they say the Duke will be here to-morrow.
(IV.iii.155)

³⁹Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁰Eduard Zeller, The Stoics, Epicureans and Skeptics, trans. Oswald J. Reichel, rev. ed. (1879; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 305.

⁴¹Coghill, pp. 23-4.

And this puzzling knowledge of Lucio seems to be one of Shakespeare's ways of suggesting that the Machiavellian prince does not give his people enough credit for independent intelligence, and that the people are not as easily fooled as he thinks.

The maxim of Machiavelli that appears, however, to express most pertinently to Measure for Measure the manipulative style of government is his opinion "that princes should let the carrying out of duties devolve on others, and bestow favors themselves."⁴² And it is with reference to this maxim that the Duke comes to reflect the identity of Borgia. In illustration of this advice, Machiavelli cites a particularly striking and admired example in the action taken by Borgia and identified by Holland as an incident of special interest to Gentillet. Having captured Romagna, Borgia found it in a condition of civil disorder due to its previous weak government. To make its people obedient, he set over them "Messer Remirro de Orco, a cruel and able man, to whom he gave the fullest authority."⁴³ However, when de Orco had succeeded by his harshness in pacifying the population, Borgia dealt with him in a fashion politically expedient, dramatic, and brutal:

And as he knew that the harshness of the past had engendered some amount of hatred, in order to purge the minds of the people and to win

⁴²Machiavelli, p. 70.

⁴³Ibid., p. 27.

them over completely, he resolved to show that if any cruelty had taken place it was not by his orders, but through the harsh disposition of his minister. And having found the opportunity he had him cut in half and placed one morning in the public square at Cesena. . . .⁴⁴

As Holland justly observes, this action of Borgia's bears a striking resemblance to the Duke's empowering of Angelo similarly to pacify Vienna.⁴⁵

Holland suggests further, however, that the influence upon Measure for Measure of Gentillet's own thought is as pervasive as, if less striking than, that of Machiavelli. Holland points out that Gentillet refers three times to the de Orco incident, once to relate it and twice to comment on it.⁴⁶ The comments, moreover, shed a very illuminating light on the thought of Machiavelli by suggesting the congruency of Borgia's politics with the politics of a voluntaristic stamp. It appears that the Protestant Gentillet, despite his bitter antagonism toward the opinions of Machiavelli, also evinces a surprising approbation of them, an approbation that seems to reinforce--and may even have informed--Shakespeare's subtle identification of Calvinist and Machiavellian politics. For instance, Gentillet seems to approve of Borgia's execution of de Orco on the grounds that de Orco should

⁴⁴Idem.

⁴⁵Holland, p. 17.

⁴⁶Idem.

rather have forsaken his estate and government, than to commit cruelties, without any forme of justice, against the law of God and reason; the civile laws themselves willeth, that none should obey his prince, when hee commandeth any massacre or unjust slaughter, till thirtie daies bee past after the command; that in the means time either their friends, or the magistrate, may persuade the prince to pacifie his choller, and to hearken unto reason. . . . It is then seene by this law, that Messier Romiro was justly punished, as a man too prompt and forward to execute crueltie.⁴⁷

Holland mentions the applicability of this thought to the Duke's accusation of the Provost in Act V, as well as his specific addition of "haste" to Angelo's punishment. "Haste still pays haste." (V.i.410) Holland, however, might well have mentioned also the pertinence of this thought to the Provost's remonstrations with Angelo in II,ii, or Isabella's horror in the same scene at the imminence of Claudio's execution, (II.ii.83-4) or Escalus' attempts to pacify Angelo in II,i, and his mention of these attempts in III,ii, (250-254), or the Provost's mention of Barnadine's friends securing reprieves for him (IV.ii.135).

Gentillet's comment on Machiavelli's proposal that the prince have others do the dirty work of government seems to explain the contradiction implicit in the Duke's conspicuous and perplexing advancement of his own tenderheartedness as the motive for his deputizing of Angelo. Says Gentillet,

⁴⁷Gentillet, p. 188.

This Maxime is a dependencie of that goodly doctrine, which Machiavelli learned of Caesar Borgia (which although it was very cruell) yet meaning to appeare soft and gentle, following therein the Maxime which enjoyneth dissimulation, committeth the execution of his crueltie to Messire Remiro Dorco, as at large before we have discoursed that hystorie.⁴⁸

In light of this statement, the Duke's reply to Friar Thomas' objection that justice delivered by the Duke in propria persona would have been "more dreadful" (I.iii.33) seems to have, specifically and unpleasantly, a Machiavellian flavor:

I do fear--too dreadful;
Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
For what I bid them do; (I.iii.34-37)

What is most interesting about Gentillet's comments on such delegation of power, however, is that they constitute another instance of Gentillet's agreement with Machiavelli:

And because we have fully shewed, that all dissimulation and feignednesse is unworthie of a prince, we will stay no longer upon this Maxime: well will I confess, that many things there be rigorous in execution (although they be most equall and just) which it is good a prince doe commit to others, to give judgement and execution by justice, as the case meriteth.⁴⁹

Not only is there agreement here; there is also an attempt to mask the agreement, however unconscious both the agreement and the masking may be. Gentillet, inveighing against

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 350.

⁴⁹Idem.

dissimulation, does, in some sense, dissemble himself.

It is this coincidence of the opinions of the pious Gentillet and the impious Machiavelli that Holland fails to appreciate. It is not Borgia's belief but rather Gentillet's that "to shun that blame and suspition, it is good that the prince delegate and set over such matters to Iudges,"⁵⁰ or, more precisely, it is both Borgia's and Machiavelli's opinion, and Gentillet's. And I suggest that it was just this congruence that Shakespeare observed and expressed in the play. If the attitudes of Gentillet may be said to be in general agreement with those of the devout James and Calvin, as well as with those of Machiavelli, then this double congruency further explains why we do not have to choose, as Holland does, between a view of the Duke as a symbol of divine grace and a Machiavel.⁵¹ The latent congruence of Gentillet's opinions with those of Machiavelli suggests the submerged recourse of Calvinist politics, for all its pious protestations, to an idea of power not substantially different from that of Machiavelli.

Indeed, in the political actions of James and Borgia, one may observe all too close a similarity. As James dramatized justice as a concept, making it a public performance that was in its own day compared to a play,⁵² so Borgia made

⁵⁰Idem.

⁵¹Holland, p. 20.

⁵²Stevenson, p. 161. Stevenson cites Sir Dudley

his punishment of de Orco a public spectacle of justice. Both the voluntarist and the rationalist treat justice as a concept. But, they likewise express a similarly extreme quality of selfhood. As James uses the concept of justice to advance his image as capricious will, so Borgia similarly waives the justice of de Orco's elimination in favor of its expediency to himself. Thus, between the voluntaristic James and the hard-headed Borgia, an identity emerges through which we begin to recognize how the Duke can be same to resemble figures whose dissimilarity seems so patent.

But once the puzzling fact of the Duke's resemblance to both James and Borgia has been accounted for, it remains to observe that in making the Duke both Neostoic and Machiavel, Shakespeare is observing in both doctrines a congruently nominalistic conception of justice. The cosmic justice of Neostoicism and the political justice of Machiavelli are alike in at least attempting, albeit unsuccessfully, to define justice by the standard of reason and the world, and to exclude from it considerations of selfhood and will. If it is the purpose of Machiavelli to describe the world as it is rather than as we would wish it to be, Stoicism exhibits a similar rejection of human wishing. The self-professed mission of the Stoic is to disabuse the human mind of illusions engendered by its anthropocentricity and to realign

Carlton's description, quoted in Lucy Aikin, Memoirs of the Court of King James the First, 2 vols. (London, 1822), I, 174.

the human consciousness with the impersonal Providence that expresses the order of a world alien to his selfhood.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHIES OF REASON:

STOICISM AND CYNICISM

The remoteness of Stoic ideas from our contemporary concerns, unlike those of Christianity, makes it necessary to render to the reader a brief--and inevitably inadequate--account of the basic tenets of this system, and especially of its theological and moral doctrines. Such an account will address, moreover, a twofold purpose, a purpose both descriptive and critical. I shall attempt on the one hand, insofar as that is possible, to let Stoic theology, as it were, define itself, by repairing to Balbus' favorable exposition of this theology in Cicero's De Natura Deorum. In this treatise we have not only a locus classicus of Stoic ideas of God and man, but also a work that we must assume was available to Shakespeare. In attempting critically to evaluate Stoic thought, I shall rely on the perceptions of Zeller in his book, The Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, with interpolations from other sources. To determine the character of the Christian Stoicism we shall have to consider Justus Lipsius' Tvvo Bookes of Constancie, a book whose translation in 1594 into English made at least one

work of this prominent architect of Neostoicism readily available to Shakespeare. In addressing, however, the larger task of orienting Stoicism within the whole realm of philosophy, and, in particular, of supplying the logic of its incompatibility with Christianity, I shall require the help of discriminations provided by McFarland in his book, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition.

At the outset, it can hardly be overemphasized, however, that if we are unfamiliar with Stoic ideas, the intellectually alert of Shakespeare's day were very much alive to them. It is almost a commonplace that Shakespeare's friend and rival, George Chapman, was learnedly involved with Stoic teachings, not to mention the undoubted expertise of Ben Jonson.¹ And Kirk, for example, in his introduction to

¹Indeed, Stoicism was only the most prominent of a number of philosophical systems that were to assert themselves in the wake of Luther's challenge to the Medieval Christian synthesis, philosophies that appear in profusion also in Measure for Measure. Don Cameron Allen, in his book, Doubt's Boundless Sea (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964), exhibits some highly individualistic and heretical manifestations of religious ferment in Shakespeare's day, as well as describing the resistance that such heresies provoked in the literature that arose to combat their assumed implications of atheism. It seems reasonable to suspect that the introduction of various ancient doctrines into the Renaissance could not but do their part, by the imperative of choice implicit in their mere variety, in provoking the intellect to exercise its own powers of discrimination, and thus could not avoid constituting a challenge to received dogma. Measure for Measure is itself an evaluation of these doctrines. But it is also, in its own uniquely brilliant way, an example of the literature of faith that attempted to defend orthodoxy. Shakespeare, if he demonstrates in this play an extended familiarity with and interest in the doctrines of the ancient world, seems also to have been of the mind that these doctrines did indeed lead to atheism.

Lipsius' Tvvo Bookes of Constancie, observes that Stoicism became virtually naturalized on English soil.² In Medieval times, Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy had disseminated Stoicism, and publication in the Renaissance of ancient Stoic writings fostered and intensified its influence. The works of Epictetus, Diogenes Laertius, Marcus Aurelius, Plutarch, and, of course, Seneca and Cicero, both in their original languages and in translations, guaranteed the accessibility of Stoic philosophy to Shakespeare's age. The Essais of Montaigne, moreover, offer an example of the immediate impact of these ideas on the Renaissance mind.

If Montaigne was deeply influenced by Stoic ideas, he shows himself to have been an unsparing critic of them as well. Similarly, the evidence of Measure for Measure suggests that Shakespeare also was both deeply immersed in the philosophy of Stoicism and profoundly troubled by its implications. He seems to have recognized that the positive and optimistic tone of Stoic teachings concealed a choice whose ultimate consequences were to negate the personhood of God and the immortality of man. McFarland enunciates the terms of this choice.

Taking as his first premise Aristotle's observation

²Justus Lipsius, Tvvo Bookes of Constancie, Englished by Sir John Stradling, ed., with introduction by Rudolf Kirk (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1939), pp. 13, 14, and pp. 13-30, passim.

that all philosophy begins in wonder, McFarland identified in that wonder two elements: the wonderer and the object of wonder:

All philosophical systems . . . involve an account of the relation of the wonderer--the self, the ego, the individual consciousness--to the wondered at--the objective, the external, 'things'.³

But there is also, continues McFarland, a third category that impinges on both the wonderer and his object, and that category is limitation: the limitation of knowledge both of the self and the objective world. This perception of ignorance

constitutes that area of human concern termed the religious; and the most extended hypothetical answers to the totality of questions arising from these primal limitations are grouped under the symbolic term 'God'.⁴

McFarland asserts next that

depending on whichever of our initial assumptions we treat as primary, the self or the object, the corollary which is God will assume the properties of a self or of an object.⁵

This assertion, moreover, generates a critically important corollary:

Furthermore not only will God be the ultimate extension of all possible questions as

³Thomas McFarland, Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 54.

⁴Ibid., pp. 54-5.

⁵Idem.

defined by the emphasis upon whichever of the two primary starting-points is chosen, but the reality of the starting-point not chosen will be inevitably compromised as a result of the emphasis upon the point that is chosen.⁶

These observations isolate for us the most significant difference between Stoicism and Christianity. The basic choice of Stoicism is not the self but rather the objective world. Having chosen the world as its fundamental truth, Stoicism defines the world as God. Christianity, on the other hand, is the exfoliation of the primary choice of the self. And thus the essential attribute of the God of Christianity is selfhood.

These opposite choices expressed themselves in theologies respectively monistic and dualistic. In deriving God from the world the Stoics joined mind and matter into an indivisible unity. As Zeller points out, "Their system was . . . strictly pantheistic."

The world is the sum of all real existence, and all real existence is originally located in deity. . . . We can, therefore, think of nothing which is not either immediately deity, or a manifestation of deity. In point of essence, God and the world are therefore the same; indeed, the two conceptions are declared by the Stoics to be absolutely identical.⁷

In deriving God from a consciousness of the self, Christianity

⁶Idem.

⁷Zeller, pp. 156-7.

divides and segregates the principle of divinity from the world. Contrary to Stoicism, it locates God in a realm of transcendence above and beyond the created universe, and thus represents reality as an irreducible duality.

If Stoicism deifies the world, it compromises the self. By postulating one divine principle that pervades everything, Stoicism undermines the distinctions between one thing and another and renders everything, including man, merely a part of the world. Such a definition of man, however, impugns his reality as selfhood, which is nothing other than man's perception of himself as different from the world and, as such, depends implicitly upon the validity of distinction and separateness. By razing boundaries, Stoicism leaves the self no place to hide; its effect is to engulf and obliterate the wonderer within the realm of the wondered at. Christianity, by positing a second realm of reality in which the consciousness, or self, or wonderer, and the God that is the projection of that self are isolated and segregated from the world, affirms the self. By erecting barriers, however, that remove and isolate the holy element of human consciousness or divine spirit from the physical world, Christianity tends to reduce the value of the world, rendering it unholy, profane, even evil.

In Measure for Measure, however, the term "man" encompasses both physical and material reality, the reality defined as world, and spiritual reality, the reality defined as consciousness or selfhood. In Measure for Measure,

then, the concept of man is neither the self nor the world, but both self and world. As a physical creature man belongs to nature; he is possessed also, however, of an immortal soul that guarantees his selfhood. It appears, then, that Shakespeare in this play simply refuses to make that primary choice between the self and the world. On the contrary, he regards the choice itself, for all its inevitability, as the root cause of man's destruction. In Measure for Measure, moreover, Shakespeare seems to search for the philosophical validation of this refusal.

In Christianity, Shakespeare appears to find the philosophical structure that grants man this complex definition of both self and world. As a dualistic system, Christianity validates both the spiritual and material being of man, whereas Stoicism, by concluding all under the aegis of matter, gives only the most provisional recognition to selfhood. It must be acknowledged that the Stoics make an attempt to distinguish between matter and mind, the created and the creative element in the cosmos (elements that Giordano Bruno will, in a Neo-Platonic context, call "potency" and "act") by the terms "matter" and "force."⁸ Nevertheless, this attempt at something like a dualistic division of reality fails. As Zeller points out, the Stoics conceived of the forming spirit not as something that imposes itself

⁸Zeller, pp. 140-41.

on matter, but rather as something derivative of matter. He observes that "the forming force resides in matter as such; it is in itself something material."⁹ The Stoic attempt to isolate a spiritual, and hence subjective element in the world has, in fine, no ontological basis. The conscious and spiritual self remains a part of the world, and becomes, in that identity, something contingent and derivative. Its less than total reality illustrates McFarland's contention that the element not chosen will inevitably be sacrificed to the element that is chosen. The view of the world as the ultimate reality makes it a monism that cannot finally accommodate human consciousness.

But if Stoicism cannot account for the separateness of human consciousness as something apart from the world, the Christian choice of self, at least potentially, threatens, by the same logic of choice, the reality of the world as the element not chosen. And it is, I suggest, in the theology of Calvin that Shakespeare saw the realization of that potentiality. Shakespeare represents Calvinism as a form of Christianity that makes too sharp a distinction between the inner spirit of man and his outer fleshly being, and congruently removes God so absolutely from the world as to render the world's existence extremely tenuous; in short, to compromise its physical reality in much the same way that

⁹Ibid., p. 155.

Stoicism compromises the spiritual essence of man. Shakespeare, I think, will suggest that in its Calvinist form, Christianity also veers toward monism. By refusing to countenance Neostoicism as different from Stoicism, moreover, and thus defining it as a monistic system, Shakespeare seems to arrive at a perception of both Neostoicism and Calvinism as two antithetical philosophies that identify themselves as Christian, but exhibit the attribute of monism. Both systems, then, bear witness to the destructiveness of the primary choice, whether it be of the world or the self. Neostoicism and Calvinism become respectively the monism of matter and the monism of mind. For man, however, who is both flesh and spirit, world and self, either monism spells disaster. Stoicism would obliterate his selfhood, Calvinism, his nature, or flesh; but by the terms of either system, he is doomed. It is this meaning, finally, that is conveyed by the strange congruency between the action of Angelo, who levels at the flesh of Claudio, and the Friar-Duke, who attacks his spirit in III,i.

If, moreover, Shakespeare refuses to make a choice between self and world in his definition of man, he similarly refuses to make that choice in his definition of God. The true dualism as it is exhibited in Measure for Measure, is the dualism that manages to define God both in terms of the world, or nature, and selfhood. It is this combination of attributes that defines God as personentity. God becomes,

like man, He who is both within and above the world; within the world without being lost and obliterated in it, and distinct from the world without being isolated from it; in short, both immanent and transcendent. It is this God that Shakespeare attempts to define as truly Christian. The historical¹ identity of this God, moreover, Shakespeare locates in Medieval theology, a theology which, despite the embarrassment of contradiction, refused to release its hold on both definitions of deity.¹⁰

The definition, moreover, of both God and man as world and selfhood demands the endowment of both God and man with the attributes belonging to the world and the self, the attributes of reason on the one hand, and will on the other. God and man by Christian definition are endowed with both reason and will. The Stoic monism, however, concludes both man and God under the faculty of reason alone, and the effect of such a restricted definition is to negate divinity in man and personhood in God. That negation appears to have been regarded by Shakespeare as utterly destructive to the idea of both God and man.

In thus defining Stoicism as the choice of world over self and ascribing to Shakespeare a negative response to that choice, however, we run the risk of distorting our

¹⁰ Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," University of California Publications in Philosophy, 1 (Nov., 1904), pp. 157-8.

perception of Stoicism by failing to comprehend what it professed itself to be. However destructive of man Stoicism appeared to Shakespeare, it should be observed that Stoicism represented itself as a positive, optimistic, and ultimately redemptive creed. Indeed, to assess Shakespeare's stricture of this philosophy, we must clearly apprehend its unflagging and even dogged affirmation of cosmic optimism. To the Stoic as to Wordsworth at the end of The Prelude, all was gratulant if man could but attain to that Pisgah sight from which he could perceive the whole rather than merely the parts of creation. Providence was the author of good and good alone; the moral quality of goodness was its essential attribute. Toward the good man, moreover, Providence owned a special kinship. The gods, says Seneca, "are ever best to those who are best."¹¹ Even the seemingly irrefutable manifestation of the world's imperfection, the suffering of good men, was adduced by Seneca to testify only to the benevolent purpose of Providence, which, by exercising and testing virtue with affliction, strengthened and confirmed it. Evils were, if rightly considered, good for men.¹²

Since the Stoics held the world to be perfect, they did not attempt to change it; the Stoics attempted, rather,

¹¹Seneca, "De Providentia," in Moral Essays, trans. John W. Basore, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1928), I, 7.

¹²Ibid., pp. 11, 15.

to change man's perception of it. Their aim was to teach man rather to identify himself with the world, and by so doing to become a sharer in its excellence. It is as the optimistic philosophy of the world's perfection and of man's nobility as a part of that world that Balbus defines Stoicism in Cicero's De Natura Deorum.

Balbus begins his exposition of Stoic philosophy by asserting that

nothing exists among all things that is superior to the world, nothing that is more excellent or more beautiful; and not merely does nothing superior to it exist, but¹³ nothing superior can even be conceived.

This conviction of the world's greatness, moreover, is itself supported by the belief that the world represents the whole of reality, and that all things in the world are but parts of one great unity. In the Stoic view, the whole is necessarily greater than any of its parts, because it contains them all. Conversely, no part of the whole attains the perfection of the whole.

In fact, there is nothing else beside the world that has nothing wanting, but is fully equipped and complete and perfect in all its details and parts. The world . . . since it embraces all things and since nothing exists which is not within it, is entirely perfect.¹⁴

We shall see that this restriction of absolute perfection to

¹³Cicero, De Natura Deorum, trans. H. Rackham, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1933), pp. 141-3.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 159.

the world as a whole is the escape clause in the Stoic validation of man; it provides, ultimately, for the repudiation of selfhood as an imperfect part of the world.

Since the world is entirely perfect, it must be endowed with every conceivable virtue. And since reason is not only a virtue but the greatest virtue, the world must be endowed with reason. Quoting a syllogism of Zeno, Balbus identifies the perfection of the world with reason.

That which has the faculty of reason is superior to that which has not the faculty of reason; but nothing is superior to the world; therefore the world has the faculty of reason.¹⁵

By attributing every conceivable virtue to the world as the whole of which all else is but a part, Balbus concludes that the world is divine.

A similar argument can be used to prove that the world is wise, and happy, and eternal; for things possessed of each of these attributes are superior to things devoid of them, and nothing is superior to the world. From this it will follow that the world is a god.¹⁶

Because the world gives birth to beings both sentient and rational, it too must be sentient and rational to a pre-eminent degree. Balbus quotes Zeno to the effect that

nothing . . . that is inanimate and irrational can give birth to an animate and rational being; but the world gives birth to animate and rational beings; therefore the world is

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 143-5.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 145.

animate and rational.¹⁷

It is, furthermore, the essential nature of this living deity, the world, to be creative. Quoting Zeno again, Balbus defines nature as "a craftsmanlike fire, proceeding methodically to the work of generation."¹⁸ Nature is thus

'a craftsman' whose foresight plans out the work to serve its use and purpose in every detail. . . . Such being the nature of the world-mind, it can therefore correctly be designated as prudence, or providence . . .; and this providence is chiefly directed and concentrated upon three objects, namely to secure for the world, first, the structure best fitted for survival; next, absolute completeness; but chiefly, consummate beauty and embellishment of every kind.¹⁹

We should pause here to note that these three objects seem to be expressed at various times in Measure for Measure by Pompey, to whom Shakespeare appears to assign the creative function of the Brunonian world soul.

By associating the world as craftsman with the world as Providence, Balbus links its function of creation to its function of government. For Balbus, the intelligence and power of Providence implies its government of the world. Referring to the creating and governing power of the world interchangeably as Providence and as the gods, he asks,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 177-9.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 179.

Are then the gods ignorant what things are of the highest moment and how these are to be directed and upheld, or do they lack the strength to undertake and to perform duties so vast? But ignorance is foreign to the divine nature, and weakness, with a consequent incapacity to perform one's office, in no way suits with the divine majesty. This proves our thesis that the world is governed by divine providence.²⁰

The government of Providence, moreover, is characterized by the orderly and thus "most excellent manner" of its operation, and Balbus attributes this orderliness to its rationality.²¹ Nature is not haphazard, but rather

a rational and ordered force, proceeding by method and plainly displaying the means that she takes to produce each result and the end at which she aims, and possessed of a skill that no handiwork of artist or craftsman can rival or reproduce.²²

And the world produced by the orderly and rational working of Providence is a creation of perfect order. It is "like a tree or an animal, displaying no haphazard structure, but order and a certain semblance of design."²³ As the tree manifests the design implicit within it, so also the world is perfected through its government.

Now the government of the world contains nothing that could possibly be censured; given the existing elements, the best that

²⁰Ibid., p. 199.

²¹Ibid., p. 201

²²Idem.

²³Ibid., p. 203.

could be produced from them has been produced.²⁴

In this assertion, to be sure, a note of defensiveness seems to mar the general geniality of Balbus' tone:

Let someone therefore prove that it could have been better. But no one will ever prove this, and anyone who essays to improve some detail will either make it worse or will be demanding an improvement impossible in the nature of things.²⁵

The effect of such a statement is to identify the imperfection of the world as a threat to the self-consistency of Stoicism. Balbus must admit that the world is not without imperfection; it is, rather, as good as it can be. Thus, if only to belittle it, Balbus, despite himself, acknowledges the fact of imperfection in the universe.

The excellence of the world is manifested in the blessings it bestows upon all its varieties of life. But of all the creatures of the earth, man seems to have been especially favored, having been endowed with the preeminently excellent faculty of reason.

Coming now to the actual mind and intellect of man, his reason, wisdom and foresight, one who cannot see that these owe their perfection to divine providence must in my view himself be devoid of these very faculties.²⁶

Balbus, moreover, identifies as the marks of reason in man

²⁴Ibid., p. 207.

²⁵Idem.

²⁶Ibid., p. 265.

his understanding of the syllogism and the faculty of speech, two categories, we should note, that figure prominently in Measure for Measure. It is man's reason that gives him the

faculty of conjoining premisses and consequences in a single act of apprehension, the faculty . . . that enables us to judge what conclusion follows from any given propositions and to put the inference in syllogistic form. . . .²⁷

We find the syllogism employed by Abhorson as "proof" (IV.ii.42) that the hangman's trade is "a mystery." (IV.ii.41) And it is again to man's reason that Balbus attributes the gift of speech.

Then take the gift of speech, the queen of arts as you are fond of calling it--what a glorious, what a divine faculty it is! In the first place it enables us both to learn things we do not know and to teach things we do know to others; secondly it is our instrument for exhortation and persuasion, for consoling the afflicted and assuaging the fears of the terrified, for curbing passion and quenching appetite and anger; it is this that has united us in the bonds of justice, law and civil order, this that has separated us from savagery and barbarism.²⁸

In Measure for Measure, Isabella will be described to us by Claudio as endowed to a preeminent degree with the gift of speech, and she will use this gift both to teach Angelo the meaning of mercy and to persuade him to show mercy to Claudio. The Friar-Duke also will use speech to console the afflicted Juliet and to assuage the fears of the terrified

²⁷Idem.

²⁸Ibid., p. 267.

Claudio. We should note also that the term by which Claudio conveys the speech of Isabella appears to have a highly technical meaning in Stoic philosophy. He refers to her "reason and discourse," (I,ii,185) a complex term that seems to be a direct translation of the ratio et oratio by which the Roman Stoics rendered the Greek term, logos. This term was derived, according to Arnold, from Heraclitus and denoted "Universal reason," and the principle of eternity in the flux of the universe. This logos, or eternal law, held sway both "in the physical universe and in the soul of man," and man's obedience to it placed him in harmony with nature.²⁹

The magnitude of the gift of reason, moreover, can hardly be overestimated. For the reason bestowed upon man by the gods is in no essential way different from that which they themselves possess. The gods

possess the same faculty of reason as the human race, and . . . both have the same apprehension of truth and the same law enjoining what is right and rejecting what is wrong.³⁰

And, indeed, this reason is given to some men in such

²⁹E. Vernon Arnold, Roman Stoicism (New York: The Humanities Press, 1958), pp. 35-7. Thomas James, translating into English the Neostoicism of Du Vair, will identify nature's special gift to man as that of "discourse and reason." Guillaume Du Vair, The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks, trans. Thomas James, ed. with an introduction and notes by Rudolf Kirk (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1951), p. 53.

³⁰Cicero, p. 199.

a preeminent degree that they become virtually divine. There is occasionally to be found a man

born by nature good and wise, and endowed from the outset with the innate attributes of right reason and consistency; this must be held to be above the level of man: it is the attribute of god, that is, of the world, which must needs possess that perfect and absolute reason of which I spoke.³¹

Through this "absolute reason" man can contemplate divinity, and in that contemplation approximate divine life and divine beatitude. Man himself becomes a god.

And contemplating the heavenly bodies the mind arrives at the knowledge of the gods, from which arises piety, with its comrades justice and the rest of the virtues, the sources of a life of happiness that vies with and resembles the divine existence and leaves us inferior to the celestial beings in nothing save immortality, which is immaterial for happiness.³²

This startling identification of the Stoic wise man with the gods seems to have both doctrinal and dramatic importance in Measure for Measure; for it renders Shakespeare's treatment of the Friar-Duke as God merely an extension of his identity as man.

The preeminent faculty of reason with which both men and gods are endowed makes them the end for which the whole world was, indeed, created.

For whose sake then shall one pronounce the world to have been created? Doubtless for the sake of those living beings which have

³¹Ibid., p. 155.

³²Ibid., p. 271.

the use of reason; these are the gods and mankind, who assuredly surpass all other things in excellence, since the most excellent of all things is reason. Thus we are led to believe that the world and all the things that it contains were made for the sake of gods and men.³³

We should not fail to observe, however, that man's special eminence in the universe does not confer upon him the ultimate privilege, which is the eternal existence of his ego, or immortality. The treatment of the serious question of immortality as trivial, moreover, illustrates the tendency of the Stoics to evade the darker implications of their own doctrine.

These citations from Balbus' exposition of Stoic ideas of God and man suggest that Stoicism identified itself as the affirmative theology par excellence, the theology that finds nothing to exist outside of God and everything to participate in God. As such it stands in sharp contrast to the negative theology of Calvin, the theology that radically divides God from the world. The problem inherent in the positive and optimistic posture of Stoicism appears, moreover, to lie in its uncompromising extremity, an extremity that contrasts sharply with the similarly extreme and uncompromising negativity of Calvin's doctrine of God's absolute otherness as a Deus absconditus.³⁴ In the extremity of these

³³Ibid., p. 251.

³⁴William R. Elton, King Lear and the Gods (1966; rpt. San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1968), pp. 29-33.

antithetical positions, Shakespeare will suggest the latency of a profound similarity, indeed, an identity. And, as I shall try to show further on, Shakespeare realizes this identity in Measure for Measure through the Neo-Platonism of Giordano Bruno, a philosophy that expresses in contrast to the extremity of the Stoic-Calvinist antithesis of affirmative and negative theologies, its own complex conflation of these philosophies into a single dialectic. Thus, Shakespeare appears to offer us two forms of extremity in Measure for Measure: the extremity of opposition and the extremity of conflation. Through the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the concordia oppositorum, Shakespeare appears to suggest that the extremity of opposition is identical with the extremity of conflation.

One consequence of the presence of Neo-Platonism in Measure for Measure is to suggest that the latent similarity of Stoicism to Calvinism, a similarity conveyed through its own often unacknowledged pessimism, bespeaks a further and latent similarity in Stoicism to the philosophy of Bruno. Indeed, as I shall try to show, the Duke in I,i, and I,iii, is conveyed as a latent Brunonian. He manifests in these scenes a conflation of the positive and negative theologies of Stoicism and Calvinism in their respective extremities, a conflation that is in the process of transposing itself into its interchangeable opposition of separation. And the tendency of the Stoic choice of the world and reason to deny personhood in God and divinity in man, as well as Shakespeare's

apparent apprehension of this denial as the nullification of both God and man seems not unrelated to the nearness of Stoicism to Brunonian Neo-Platonism.

But, to return to our immediate purpose, we must examine the particular way in which the Stoic choice of the world and reason tended to deny personhood in God and divinity in man, and how this twofold denial could constitute for Shakespeare the nullification of both God and man.

The Stoic denial of selfhood is immediately perceived in its preoccupation with the mere beauty of the world, and the praise of the world rather than man. As Balbus has shown us, the world was compared to a matchless work of art, and its providential maker to an artist or craftsman. It is with reference to this artistry of Providence that we should, I suspect, appreciate the example of theatrical art that the Duke provides in Act V, and it is with reference to Bennett's³⁵ perception of this act as a play-within-a-play that we should apprehend Lucio's disruptive effect upon it. It is, moreover, at least partly to a specifically inhumane idea of art for art's sake that we should attribute the single most callous statement of the Friar-Duke in the play, the statement of his intention to keep Isabella in ignorance of her brother's safety.

But I will keep her ignorant of her good
To make her heavenly comforts of despair.
(IV.iii.109-10)

The denial of selfhood within Stoicism, however, is

³⁵Bennett, p. 126.

more profoundly related to the Stoic association of the world with reason. By defining God, or Providence, as "the Reason of the World,"³⁶ the Stoics denied the selfhood of God in a number of ways. Firstly, reason subsumed God completely under the aegis of the world's objectivity. Reason, obviously, is only accidentally related to the reasoner. The objective truth of two plus two makes four does not require the logical antecedence of person. Secondly, reason's logic associates God with necessity; reason thus assumes a quality of fatality that, as the pervasive and immanent law within the universe, subjects to its control both the world as a whole and its various parts. If God is the law after which man is drawn in inevitable subjection, whether he will or not,³⁷ if as Isabella says, man must "follow as it draws," (II,iv.177) it is no less true that God, or the world as a whole, is also mastered by this law. God is himself subject to necessity; he governs the universe by a law that he himself is powerless to disobey. Thus God as reason lacks the attribute of liberty. Without liberty, however, selfhood cannot exist.

In thus denying liberty to God, the Stoics, if they did not deny the attribute of divine will, yet circumscribed that will by reason and made it virtually synonymous with

³⁶ Zeller, p. 170.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 217.

reason. It is to this rationalization of will that Bevan seems to refer when he associates reason with both the end and the means of action as the modality of will:

When we ask the reason of an action, we inquire about its end or purpose, and we call the action reasonable in two senses-- (1) if its end or purpose is a worthy one, and (2) if it is itself adapted to secure the end it aims at.³⁸

It is, I suspect, significant that the term "purpose" is aligned alternately with rationality and with irrationality in Measure for Measure. It is defined as eminently rational when associated with the Duke in I,iii. Here the Duke tells Friar Thomas,

Why I desire thee
To give me a secret harbor, hath a purpose
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends.
Of burning youth. (I.iii.3-6)

The Duke is assuring Friar Thomas of the rationality of his purpose, or will. We should note, however, that if the Duke entertains no doubts of the rationality of his own will, he has grave doubts of Angelo's Calvinist purpose, or will.

Hence shall we see
If power change purpose: what our seemers be.
(I.iii.53-4)

And Angelo will realize those doubts when he tells Isabella,

My words express my purpose. (II.iv.148)

It is, as Isabella attests, a "most pernicious purpose."
(II.iv.150).

³⁸Edwyn Bevan, Stoics and Sceptics (1913; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble), p. 48.

This denial of authentic or free will by the Duke is a denial of selfhood, and the Friar-Duke expresses this lack of selfhood in his callous inhumanity toward Juliet. In failing to distinguish will from reason, however, the Friar-Duke eventually allows reason to become will and the world to become selfhood. We are eventually to see that the Friar-Duke, while maintaining the rationality of his purpose, or end, nevertheless adopts the less than wholly rational design of the bed trick, as the means to that end. This bed trick involves the employment of specifically illegal and hence irrational means, the means of the bawd, or in the play's terms, "Mistress Overdone's means." (II.i.83) We must anticipate our argument so far as to suggest, moreover, that the Friar-Duke conceives the bawdy device of the bed trick only after he has come under the influence of Isabella and, as a result of that influence, transmuted his Stoic reason into a Neo-Platonic reason, a reason that entails the identity of reason with will. This bed trick seems to represent a subtle transformation of Stoic reason into the absolute and lawless potency that endows reason with unconstrained liberty and power.

The Stoic denial of will seems, further, to be a function of the unifying capacity of its reason. As logic is a rational process that, by discovering the relation of ideas to one another reveals unity, so the superimposition of reason on the world allowed the Stoics to see it as one

great system of ordered unity. Reason governed the world by a chain of causes and effects that included the entire cosmos and came to be known as the law of sufficient reason. This doctrine declared that "nothing can take place without a sufficient cause, nor, under given circumstances, can happen differently from what has happened."³⁹ The cosmos thus manifested a single great plan of Providence in which everything had a place in the framework of the whole, and to which, for the good of the whole, it was confined. In such a world there was no room for accident, and accordingly, no place for free will. We should observe in this regard that the Friar-Duke's presence in the play as the secret planner and controller of the destinies of all the characters suggests just such a Stoic concept of providential reason; we should observe also that the conspicuous failure of his plan to relieve Claudio constitutes an attack on this principle, although, within the wider context of Neo-Platonism. His eventual gratitude for the "accident that heaven provides" (IV.iii.77) after Barnardine's unaccountably rational exercise of free will seems further to express a crumbling of his Stoic orthodoxy.

The doctrine of sufficient reason denies selfhood to man not only in its denial of free will, liberty, and power, but also in its frustration of the human values of hope,

³⁹Zeller, p. 175.

futurity, and teleology. By rendering the cosmos the best of all possible worlds, reason forecloses upon the possibility of its ever becoming better than it is; it denies what the Duke in Act V calls "better times to come." (V.i.485) This foreclosure also alters radically the meaning of time, rendering it circular rather than linear, an eternal repetition of the past in the present. Stoicism binds the world to what is old and denies the possibility of newness.

The inevitable denial by reason of selfhood derives perhaps most clearly, however, from its recognition of selfhood as merely a part of the world. As but a part of the world man cannot, Balbus' assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, occupy a position of primary importance in it. Although man is particularly dignified by his reason, he remains, by virtue of his status as a part, not essentially different from any other part; and as Providence regards the whole more than the part, and the part only in relation to the whole,⁴⁰ man's position in the universe is tenuous indeed.

It is because man is merely a part of the universe that he is mortal rather than immortal. Only the world as a whole is eternal to the Stoics. Even where, as in the thought of Seneca, man's immortality is suggested, it does not confer on him eternal life.⁴¹ And the Friar-Duke's speech on

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 176-7.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 219-21.

death in III,i, the speech that argues the mere nonexistence of personality, or selfhood, deliberately omits the mention of a life beyond the grave.

As a mortal being, man retains his derivative share in the divinity of the world.⁴² Yet that share is limited. It is limited inasmuch as man, by the particularity of his form, obscures the divinity of the world in the manner of its clearest apprehension, as undifferentiated matter. Man thus both expresses and obscures divinity, and in his merely derivative quality seems to acquire a negativity that finds its realization in the Neo-Platonism of Bruno.

Like the Stoics, Bruno deified matter. Like them, he ascribed to matter the potency, or potentiality, of becoming actualized as the finite world of individual forms. And Bruno, like the Stoics, praises this world of forms. For Bruno, however, man is merely one of the forms of the world and one, moreover, that is both interchangeable with and not essentially different from all other forms. Matter can assume and reject the forms of "man, corpse, earth, stone, or something else in succession."⁴³ But this succession of forms implies that matter is "an unchanging thing within itself" that "is not stone, nor earth nor corpse, nor man."⁴⁴

⁴²Ibid., p. 159.

⁴³Giordano Bruno, Cause, Principle and Unity, trans. Jack Lindsay (New York: International Publishers, 1964), p. 102.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 103.

There appears to be implicit within Stoicism an alternative mode of viewing the world, a mode that views the world not as God, but as illusionary. And this tendency becomes explicit in the Neo-Platonism of Bruno as one way of regarding the realm of particulars. All that the eye can see is on the one hand God, but on the other, mortal, inessential, and ultimately unreal. Indeed, the Stoics hypothesized a cosmic order in which the entire world underwent periodic cycles of generative expansion and multiplication into particularity, and destructive contraction and reduction into the primal fire or ether. The Stoic deification of reason, thus, at least potentially concluded the world of phenomena, including man, under the negativity of fleeting temporality.

This subordination of particularity as a part of the world to the world as a whole becomes further relevant as an account of the appearance of evil in the world. As we have seen, Balbus attributed perfection only to the world as a whole. All particular parts remained, by its standard, less than perfect. The imperfection of the particular became indeed the inescapable condition of the perfection of the whole.⁴⁵ And again, Bruno seems to intensify this Stoic doctrine of the imperfection of the particular by ascribing to the limited world of successive particularity the imperfections of "death, corruption, vices, defect,

⁴⁵Zeller, p. 187.

monstrosities."⁴⁶

Thus there seems to inher in the Stoic idea of the particular a kind of original sin, which suggests both its variance from the divine plan and its chastening by that plan. It is with reference to such thoughts as these that, as I suspect, the Duke's observations on justice and mercy in I,iii, are to be oriented. In view of the imperfection of the particular, the cyclical destruction of the world that devours its forms becomes simply a manifestation of retributive justice; comparably, the regenerative aspect of the cycle constitutes the tolerance of mercy for sin. It is the world, or nature in its expansive phase, giving birth to those particulars, which, as particulars, betray an inevitable tendency toward lawlessness.

The Stoic deification of the world, thus, generates a concept of justice before which selfhood stands condemned. Justice by the standard of the world defines whatever is as right. By making justice reflective of its being, the world alienates righteousness from a context of selfhood. The effort of Stoicism, on the contrary, is to justify the ways of Providence to man by urging man to deny his selfhood. Its aim is to detach man's reason from his self, and to teach him "to contemplate and imitate the world."⁴⁷ We

⁴⁶Bruno, pp. 112-3.

⁴⁷Zeller, p. 187.

should observe in this regard that the Friar-Duke does not question the justice of the judgment against Juliet and Claudio, but merely attempts to bring them to an attitude of submission to it.

It is, moreover, just such a denial of selfhood as is expressed in the subordination of man to the law of the world that is meant by the Stoic assertion that its ethics are founded upon its physics.⁴⁸ Clearly making man in the image of the world, the Stoics define his good as his harmonious integration with the cosmos, the life according to nature. That harmony man achieves through the one attribute that participates not in particularity but in universality, that corresponds not to the imperfection of his being as a part of the world, but rather to his identity with the World as a Whole: his reason. Reason, as Balbus affirms, is a faculty identical in man and in the universe, and implies a congruity of values between self and world.⁴⁹ The essential attribute of the world, reason, is also the highest, and indeed, the only good of man, and the sole definition of virtue. In reason alone man attains his proper felicity, and in its loss falls prey to all evil and misery. All other benefits and calamities of life the Stoics regard as

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 226.

⁴⁹Bevan, pp. 48-9.

things indifferent: even life and death.⁵⁰ Pertinent to these Stoic ideas is the observation of the Friar-Duke's attempt to rectify the reason of both Juliet and Claudio, and the concomitant indifference he displays to their fate.

If virtue consists in reason, its chief manifestation is in the cognitive activity of the soul. Though virtue expresses itself in action, it is synonymous with knowledge.⁵¹ And if virtue is knowledge, then it can be taught.⁵² Once comprehended, moreover, it comprises the sum of all knowledge.⁵³ The Duke, we should observe, in catechizing Juliet, attempts to give her knowledge of her own soul, and thus to teach her virtue.

The Stoics, however, entertained a particularly absolute idea of virtue, and this absoluteness seems to have been related to the disvaluation of particular things in the perspective of eternity. Being in the midst of flux, the Stoics sought for that which was eternal; thus, for them, virtue was preeminently that which admitted of no alteration. By making virtue an inner condition of knowledge in the soul, the Stoics placed it beyond the influence of the world's particularity. If a man possessed this virtue, he possessed

⁵⁰ Zeller, pp. 232-3.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 255.

⁵² Idem.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 270.

it whole. "Virtue," Zeller explains, "is an indivisible whole which we cannot possess in part, but must either have or not have."⁵⁴

In its undifferentiated simplicity virtue seems to bespeak the comprehension of the universe under the aspect of its unity. Just as all particulars derive their value from their relation to a greater unity, so, for the Stoics, all individual virtues are merely the expressions of virtue writ large and depend for their authenticity upon its inner integrity.⁵⁵ In this regard Lucio's attack on the Duke's experiment as "a mad fantastical trick," (III.ii.92) by imputing to him a lapse of virtue, impugns the entirety of virtue in the Friar-Duke. We should observe that Lucio blatantly attacks the essence of the Friar-Duke's identity by denying his wisdom. "A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow." (III.ii.139-40)

Another aspect of virtue that seems to have divorced it from the particularity of the world is its association with intention. As Zeller explains,

What makes virtue virtue and vice vice, is simply and solely the intention. The will, although it may lack the means of execution, is worth quite as much as the deed; a wicked desire is quite as criminal as the gratification of that desire. Hence only that action can be called virtuous which is not only good in

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 266.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 261.

itself, but which proceeds from willing the good. . . .⁵⁶

The Stoic concept of intention is of critical importance in Measure for Measure, since it is through his intending of the assignation between Angelo and Mariana that the Friar-Duke will become implicated in its guilt. The Stoic definition of intention makes the Friar-Duke wholly guilty of Angelo's deed, and the fact of his total culpability by Stoic standards is not unrelated to the ultimate untenability of his Stoic identity. Shakespeare's rejection of Stoicism is thus a condition of his exculpation of the Duke. It appears that in Measure for Measure, unpardonable guilt is a function neither of intention alone, nor act alone, but of the congruence between intention and act. If the Duke intends Angelo's act, Angelo performs it; thus, the Friar-Duke is neither totally guilty of it, nor totally innocent of it. It is significant, moreover, that if Angelo performs an illegal deed, it is not the deed of his own intending, but quite another deed, a deed of the Friar-Duke's intending. And as the actor of a deed that the Friar-Duke intends, he is, like the Friar-Duke, subject to a partial guilt, and as such, not beyond pardon. The full consequence of this doctrine of intention, however, becomes apparent in the recognition that the terms through which Shakespeare identifies the Friar-Duke and Angelo are the Neo-Platonic terms of potency

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 264.

and act, potency conforming to the idea of intention.

We should pause to observe in this connection that the Stoic Friar-Duke and the Calvinist Angelo define act very differently. Angelo informs us in II,i, that the act, whatever its cause, is, if it is evil, the responsibility of the self. Angelo merely refuses to entertain Escalus' attempt to orient Claudio's trespass within a context of intention.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall. (II.i.17-8)

And this attitude seems to reflect Calvin's attribution of human evil totally to the responsibility of man even though God intends his evil.

The Stoics, however, regarded the act as a part of the world, and tended for that reason to exculpate man for his evil actions. Only intention or purpose or end lies within the jurisdiction of the self; the means or act through which it is achieved come within the jurisdiction of the world. Hicks points out that

the end is immutable, the means of attaining it are not. Conformity to virtue and reason admits of variation according to the various circumstances in which the agent finds himself. Over and over again it will happen that the same action may be at one time suitable and expedient, and at another time, under altered circumstances, unsuitable and inexpedient for the same individual agent. All particular acts, then, are relative to circumstances.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ R. D. Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean (1910; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 97.

Shakespeare makes frequent reference to the circumstances of time and place in Measure for Measure. In I,ii the banter of Lucio and the two gentlemen includes references to time and place (I.ii.18-20), and again in II,i, Escalus suggests that Angelo would have behaved like Claudio "Had time coher'd with place," (II.i.11) and these references to the circumstances of the world suggest that the Stoic definition of act is a doctrine of consequence in the play. Most importantly, this Stoic idea of act seems to relate to the Friar-Duke's determination to entrap Angelo into an act whose time and place are conspicuously arranged by him. Angelo's act thus acquires a Stoic definition, and becomes the responsibility of the world. The Friar-Duke advises Isabella,

Go you to Lord Angelo, answer his requiring
with a plausible obedience, agree with his
demands to the point; only refer yourself to
this advantage: first that the time may have
all shadow and silence in it; and the place
answer to convenience. (III.ii.243-8)

And Isabella will return with the lengthy report of Angelo's (suggestively Epicurean) garden and specify "the heavy/Middle of the night" (IV.i.34-5) as the place and time, or circumstances, of their assignation.

It seems further that this concept of man's action as determined by the world rather than by the self underlies the Stoic tolerance for evil. As part of the world, man's actions are determined by the chain of causation to which all events are ultimately to be attributed; it thus behooves the wise man to avoid an emotionally involved

response to human evil. And it is congruent with such thinking that the Duke as world can maintain in I,iii, that the people's evil is his fault rather than theirs:

Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to stike and gall them
For what I bid them do; for we bid this be done
When evil deeds have their permissive pass,
And not the punishment. (I.iii.35-9)

The Duke's reference, moreover, to his own punishment as "tyranny," a word that, as we shall see, expresses a critical response to Calvinist justice, forms a contrast, however spurious, between the Duke's Stoic attitude and that of Angelo, who is willing to be a "tyrant." (II.iv.169)

For the Stoic, the quest for autonomy expressed itself not in a quest for selfhood, but rather in its complete denial. Autonomy was the identification of man with the eternal world as it expressed itself in reason. Therefore, the Stoic rejected as extraneous to himself all that was not rational. He utterly rejected the passions, regarding them as diseases of the soul.⁵⁸ Speaking of the passions, Zeller explains that

the Stoic demands their entire suppression: true virtue can only exist where this process has succeeded. As being contrary to nature and symptoms of disease, the wise man must be wholly free of them. When we have once learnt to value things according to their real worth, and to discover everywhere nature's unchanging law, nothing will induce us to yield to emotion.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Zeller, p. 251.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 252.

In divesting himself of emotion, man divested himself of selfhood. He attempted to define his being in terms of the abstract and impersonal virtues of rationality, and to recognize as extraneous to himself everything apart from his conceptuality. And this restriction of man's being to an abstract moral quality becomes in Measure for Measure a mark of the Stoic identity. We shall see that the definition of man in such conceptual terms as "the good," (I.iv.38) "Justice," (III.ii.254) and "temperance" (III.ii.237) identifies Stoic elements in character, and contrasts with the definition of man as selfhood. Selfhood is self-validating; reason is validated by virtue. Selfhood, indeed, will tend to validate itself through evil.

This absolute rejection of the irrational selfhood demands that even the noblest of emotions, love and pity, be expunged from the human breast. Bevan observes the fitness of such a doctrine by asking whether it is not futile to attempt to liberate man from vulnerability to fear and desire

which make him dependent upon outside things,
 if one immediately opened a hundred channels
 by which the world's pain and unrest could
 flow into his heart through the fibres,
 created by love and pity, connecting his
 heart with the fevered hearts of men all
 round? a hundred fibres!--one aperture would
 suffice to let in enough of the bitter surge
 to fill his heart full. Leave one small hole
 in a ship's side and you let in the sea.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Bevan, p. 70.

Thus the Stoics forbore to commiserate with those who became victims of their own folly. The wise man

feels no pity, and exercises no indulgence. For how can he pity others for what he would not himself consider an evil? How can he yield to a diseased excitement for the sake of others, which he would not tolerate for his own sake? If justice calls for punishment, feelings will not betray him into forgiveness.⁶¹

How Stoic, then, is the absence in the Friar-Duke of pity for Juliet and Claudio, and how sharply his lack of pity contrasts with the compassionate comment of the Provost on Claudio. "'Tis pity of him." (II.iii.43)

If the wise man fails to commiserate with others, he scorns also to acknowledge his own suffering. Because man's being is defined only by the goodness and virtue that make him a reflection of divine reason, it is the integrity of this virtue alone that is to be preserved. The development of this idea, moreover, led to the assertion that the wise man will cheerfully face torture and death, knowing that the destruction of his particular body cannot touch his rational virtue. All the calamities that can befall him through the mutations of Fortune, since they do not touch his virtue, do not touch him.

He has everything invested in himself, he trusts nothing to fortune, his own good is secure, since he is content with virtue, which needs no gift from chance, and which,

⁶¹ Zeller, p. 254.

therefore, can neither be increased nor diminished. For that which has come to the full has no room for further growth, and Fortune can snatch away only what she herself has given. But virtue she does not give; therefore she cannot take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, unmoved, unshaken, so steeled against the blows of chance that she cannot be bent, much less broken. Facing the instruments of torture she holds her gaze unflinching, her expression changes not at all, whether a hard or a happy lot is shown her.⁶²

Yet, however emphatically the Stoics maintained this doctrine, and they maintained it rather too emphatically, Shakespeare must have responded to it with doubt. The benevolence of Providence to the good man extended to the care of his goodness only; the man did not concern it in the least. But Shakespeare will suggest that it is impossible to separate the man from his virtue.

In his essay, "De Constantia," Seneca identifies, moreover, as the signal expression of the wise man's liberation from selfhood, his imperviousness to insult. "A wise

⁶²Seneca, "De Constantia," p. 61. We should note in this connection the comment of Coleridge, under the rubric "The Christian no Stoic," to the effect that sheer insensibility and the destruction of the feelings is opposite to the Christian concept of patience, which implies the activity of the feelings:

"For the Stoic attaches the highest honour (or rather attaches honour solely) to the person that acts virtuously in spite of his feelings, or who has raised himself above the conflict by their extinction; while Christianity instructs us to place small reliance on a virtue that does not begin by bringing the feelings to a conformity with the commands of Conscience."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Aids to Reflection (London: George Bell and Sons, 1901), p. 57.

man will receive neither injury nor insult."⁶³ Although he admits that insult will be offered to the wise man, Seneca contends that "the invulnerable thing is not that which is not struck but that which is not hurt; by this mark I will show you the wise man."⁶⁴ It is in light of this assertion of the wise man's ability serenely to accept insult that we should, I think, assess the Friar-Duke's sensitivity to slander, and, in particular, his injured reaction to the imputations of Lucio concerning his politics, his virtue, and his wisdom. The Friar-Duke, to be sure, attempts to assume the prescribed posture of imperturbability in the face of such charges. But his rising heart, his increasingly vehement denials, inform against his own self-definitions, even as he utters them.

Despite the inevitable compromise of so stringent a suppression of emotion,⁶⁵ the severity of the Stoics earned them a reputation for callousness and the equation of Stoic with stock, or block,⁶⁶ an equation that seemed also to associate the insensitivity of this doctrine with its foundation in materiality. It is, thus, not accidental that the Friar-Duke betrays a shocking callousness in his treatment

⁶³Ibid., p. 55.

⁶⁴Idem.

⁶⁵Zeller, p. 270.

⁶⁶Elton, p. 97 and pp. 274-5.

of Juliet.

This severe repression of the passions seems to take yet another form relevant to Measure for Measure, and that is the rejection of femininity as the quality of abandoned passion and self-indulgence. Seneca finds it shameful that a man should acknowledge the insult of a woman, whom he describes as "an unthinking creature--wild and unrestrained in her passions--unless she has gained knowledge and had much instruction."⁶⁷ And in "De Providentia" he characterizes masculine and feminine love as respectively demanding and indulgent, oriented respectively toward virtue and comfort. He observes that God, in testing men's virtue with tribulations, is like a masculine rather than a feminine parent:

Do you not see how fathers show their love in one way, and mothers in another? The father orders his children to be aroused from sleep in order that they may start early upon their pursuits,--even on holidays he does not permit them to be idle, and he draws from them sweat and sometimes tears. But the mother fondles them in her lap, wishes to keep them out of the sun, wishes them never to be unhappy, never to cry, never to toil. Toward good men God has the mind of a father, he cherishes for them a manly love, and he says, "Let them be harassed by toil, by suffering, by losses, in order that they may gather true strength."⁶⁸

How fittingly, then, is the Duke's Stoicism characterized as involving an avoidance of women and a confirmed chastity.

⁶⁷ Seneca, "De Constantia," p. 89.

⁶⁸ Seneca, "De Providentia," pp. 9-11.

The Stoics, in contrast with the Epicureans (of whom we shall speak later), were, as rejectors of feeling, inveterate enemies to pleasure as a good of life. As pain was a matter of complete indifference to them, so too pleasure was ranked in the class of things indifferent; indeed, the Stoics manifested scorn for the conventional pleasures of the palate, dress, and wealth. Seneca went so far in his "De Providentia" as to identify the life of pleasure as the lot of those incapable of virtue.⁷⁰ So austere and uncompromising was the idea of virtue, or wisdom, as defined by the Stoics, that it provoked its opponents to charge that it could never be attained by man, or that the Stoic wise man was but a figment of the Stoic imagination--a name devoid of substantial existence. It is just this objection that Seneca states in "De Constantia," although he states it, of course, in order to deny it:

There is no reason for you to say, Serenus, as your habit is, that this wise man of ours is nowhere to be found. He is not a fiction of us Stoics, a sort of phantom glory of human nature, nor is he a mere conception, the mighty semblance of a thing unreal.⁷¹

As we shall see, Lucio, by impugning the reality of the Duke's wisdom as the sole authenticating element in his identity, seems to imply that, as Stoic, he is unreal.

⁷⁰Seneca, "De Providentia," p. 17.

⁷¹Seneca, "De Constantia," pp. 67-69.

The intense emphasis of Stoicism upon the virtue of impassivity, or apathy,⁷² however, if it bespoke, on the one hand, a rejection of the great realm of selfhood outside reason, seemed also to suggest that the quest for reason was also a quest for selfhood. It bespoke a desire for that godlike autonomy which, for Balbus, and also Seneca, makes the wise man of reason "next-door neighbor to the gods and like a god in all save his mortality."⁷³

The Stoic doctrine of reason, if it demands the rejection of selfhood, however, seems to own also a contrary thrust toward self-protection. By renouncing his autonomous will and submitting himself to the will of Providence, the Stoic attempted to reduce his vulnerability to the calamities of the world. But the rigors involved in such a renunciation compelled the Stoic to regard himself as a figure of unique fortitude and integrity, and thus served to confirm in him the sense of his own individuality and personality. Congruent with his claim of the perfect sufficiency of virtue, the Stoic claimed also his absolute independence of all the accommodations of the world, a doctrine derived from Cynicism. Thus the Stoic idea of man as a finite expression of the divine reason both depersonalized him and heightened within him a sense of his uniqueness and solitude.

⁷²Zeller, p. 254.

⁷³Seneca, "De Constantia," p. 73.

The double quality of self-surrender and self-assertion in Stoicism, moreover, seemed to imbue the whole system with a quality of paradoxical inconsistency. Of this paradox, a particularly clear example is the relation of the wise man to society. The Stoic's perception of himself as a part of the cosmos dictated the comparable view of himself as but a member of a greater society. His reason required him to subordinate his own ends to the ends and needs of the community.⁷⁴ "Man must not live for himself but for society. The wise man . . . is never the private man."⁷⁵ And it appears to be with regard to such an orientation to society that the Stoics refused to consider virtue as entirely subsumed under the mode of contemplation; rather, virtue was to be expressed by rational conduct.⁷⁶ It was a manifestation of the rationalized will.

Yet the question remains as to why a man made self-sufficient through virtue would require a society. As Zeller points out, the social imperative and the claim of complete self-sufficiency were not to be reconciled.⁷⁷ In addition to the selfless submission to society, the Stoic also exhibited a distinctly selfish preoccupation with his

⁷⁴Zeller, p. 312.

⁷⁵Idem.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 256.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 318.

own well-being. And it is this double sense of service to society and a more subtle but pervasive sense of his own self-gratification that the Friar-Duke exhibits throughout the play. He is a corrector of the evils of Vienna, and as such up to his ears in social concerns; he is also inordinately vulnerable to the slanders of Lucio, and even reduced by them to asking Escalus to repair the harm that Lucio's irreverent charges have made in his self-esteem. It is this double orientation of Stoicism toward society and toward self that the play seems to investigate as an extension of the paradoxical latency of selfhood in the Stoic philosophy of world.

This element of selfhood in Stoicism Shakespeare traces to its Cynic lineage. It is, as Zeller explains, from the Cynics that the Stoic doctrine of self-sufficiency as an independence of external needs derives.⁷⁸ In Cynicism, moreover, such independence frankly repudiates society, at least in its unreconstructed condition, and further expresses that repudiation as a blatant flouting of its customs.

In his speech to Claudio in III,i, the Friar-Duke appears to express attitudes congruent with Cynicism, although not with Cynicism only, and to reveal in that expression the relationship of Cynicism to Stoicism. Measure for Measure, however, offers us an expression of Cynicism in its

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 305-6.

own right in the character of Barnadine. Barnadine seems to be cut whole from Cynic cloth; he expresses the ethic of absolute self-sufficiency and autonomy with all the deliberate primitiveness of Cynicism. In the clash between Barnadine and the Friar-Duke in IV,iii, then, Shakespeare seems to represent a clash of Stoicism with the kindred doctrine of Cynicism, a clash that impugns the self-consistency of Stoicism in rejecting selfhood.

It is, initially, Barnadine's animality that suggests in him a representation of Cynic philosophy. Like the Stoics, the Cynics followed the Socratic ideal of reason as the guide to life; like the Stoics, they recognized that reason impelled man to make his life conformable to nature. But whereas for the Stoics such conformity emphasized a perfection of rationality whose effect was to civilize man, the Cynics regarded reason as dictating a rejection of all civilized life. For the Cynics the imitation of nature consisted in the imitation of animal behavior. Diogenes Laertius, citing Theophrastus "in the Megarian dialogue" reports of Diogenes the Cynic that

through watching a mouse running about . . .
not looking for a place to lie down in, not
afraid of the dark, not seeking any of the
things which are considered to be dainties,
he discovered the means of adapting himself
to circumstances.⁷⁹

Thus it was with a certain propriety that they held the name

⁷⁹Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. R. D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann, 1925), II, 25.

of Cynics, or dogs. As Diogenes Laertius reports, "Antisthenes himself was nicknamed a hound pure and simple."⁸⁰ In this connection the animality of Barnadine suggested in the rustling of his straw (IV.iii.35-6) becomes significant.

It should be understood, however, that, to the Cynics, animality did not signify degeneracy, but rather, on the contrary, nobility. It was rather civilization or city life that they identified as the cause of human degeneracy. Civilization debased human life by rendering man dependent upon unnecessary accommodations, which promoted his servility. For the Cynics, the highest goal of life was liberty, and this liberty they defined as complete independence and the sufficiency of selfhood. Diogenes Laertius reports of Diogenes the Cynic that "he preferred liberty to everything."⁸¹ He also reports that the Athenians cited, on a bronze statue of a dog devoted to his memory, his doctrine of "self-sufficingness."⁸² In connection with the Cynic ideal of bestiality, it should be observed that in King Lear also we find Edgar's intention to adopt "the basest and most poorest shape/That ever penury, in contempt of man,/ Brought near to beast." (II.iii.7-9) His subsequent complaint, "Tom's a-cold," (III.iv.58) seems to comment

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 13-5.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 73.

⁸²Ibid., p. 81.

definitively on his experiment.

The contrasting attitudes of Stoicism and Cynicism toward civilization also implied sharply differing political orientations. The Stoics enjoined upon the individual the obligation to subordinate his own needs to the good of the whole and this subordination entailed a submission to the laws of society. The Cynic sought as his ideal not social good but rather individual good and thus rejected society. This rejection, moreover, implied a repudiation of the state's claim to authority over the individual. Gomperz points out that

we may speak of the Cynic movement, with its intensified craving for personal freedom and self-assertion, its defiant accentuation of individual independence, as an abnormal manifestation of political liberalism.⁸³

It seems, thus, to be far from accidental that Barnadine's self-assertion has a political implication. He refuses to acknowledge his imprisonment by the state and he frustrates the state's attempt to take his life.

Like the Stoic, the Cynic exhibited great strength of mind and intelligence; unlike the Stoic, however, he rejected dialectic.⁸⁴ It is, I suspect, not to Barnadine's lack of intelligence that we should ascribe his unwillingness to debate with the Friar-Duke the advisability of his

⁸³Theodor Gomperz, Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy, trans. G. G. Berry (1905; rpt. London: John Murray, 1931), II, 149.

⁸⁴Arnold, p. 49.

dying, but rather to the doctrinal rejection of dialectic by the Cynics. Barnadine responds to the Friar-Duke's attempt to sermonize him into dying by simply forbidding him to speak. "Not a word." (IV.iii.61)

Allied with the Cynic rejection of dialectic, moreover, was its noministic evaluation of words. For the Cynics, as for Hamlet, it was words, words, words; words, in short, that had no authentic relation to the realities they purported to describe. Whereas for Plato the word captured the ideal and truly real aspect of the thing it denoted, the thing itself being less real than the word that defined it, for Antisthenes, things were themselves the "types of complete reality,"⁸⁵ and the words that named them devoid of universal significance. Likewise, Diogenes Laertius reports of Diogenes the Cynic that

as Plato was conversing about Ideas and using the nouns "tablehood" and "cuphood," he said, "table and cup I see; but your tablehood and cuphood, Plato, I can nowise see."⁸⁶

And while Barnadine does not seem himself to express this aspect of the Cynic doctrine, the question of the validity of names is very much a part of Measure for Measure. For example, Isabella in II,ii, will include in her attack on justice, an attack on words, or names:

⁸⁵Gomperz, p. 182.

⁸⁶Diogenes Laertius, p. 55.

That in the captain's but a choleric word,
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.
(II.ii.130-1)

And in his sermon, the Friar-Duke asks Claudio, "What's yet in this/That bears the name of life?" (III.i.38-9)

Barnadine's defeat of the Friar-Duke's plan seems to constitute a defeat of Stoicism by a philosophy that competes with it for the same faculty of reason. As Stoicism defines God as autonomous reason, so Barnadine defines man as autonomous reason. And as the divine and human manifestations of reason, Stoicism and Cynicism are nearly allied. As absolutely autonomous self, Barnadine represents to an admirable degree just that imperturbability in the face of disaster and even death that is the highest of Stoic virtues. In this connection, Leavis' comment on Barnadine deserves mention. He points out that

of all the attitudes concretely lived in the play, the indifference to death displayed by him comes nearest to that preached by the Friar.⁸⁷

In identifying Barnadine's Cynicism as the human as opposed to the divine expression of reason, Shakespeare seems to be addressing the inability of a monistic system to validate diversity in the universe, and especially the diverse elements of God and man. Monism, rational or voluntaristic, tends to make the being of God a denial of man and the being of man a denial of God. Accordingly, Stoicism tends to

⁸⁷Leavis, p. 238.

validate man by absorbing him into divine reason, whereas Cynicism, a philosophy equally rationalistic, validates man by rejecting his subjection to anything above him, and thus making him a god to himself. By introducing Barnadine into the play as a rationalistic validation of man comparable to the Stoic's rationalistic validation of God, Shakespeare appears to be introducing the element of diversity into Stoicism that signals its readiness to be transformed into a truly Christian dualism. The Friar-Duke does not give us a reason for his decision not only to postpone the execution of Barnadine but also to pardon him. Yet this decision seems to demand interpretation. And it seems likely that this decision dramatizes in the Friar-Duke the incipiently Christian recognition of the diverse realities of God and man that requires a dualistic interpretation of reality.

That Barnadine is meant, moreover, to convey a self-hood within reason rather than within will is suggested by Shakespeare's attempt to attribute to him a quality of depressed self-consciousness. It is to convey in Barnadine such depressed consciousness that the Provost emphasizes his habitual drunkenness, and associates this drunkenness with his lack of concern for his own life.

Drunk many times a day, if not many days
entirely drunk. We have very oft awak'd him,
as if to carry him to execution, and
show'd him a seeming warrant for it; it hath
not mov'd him at all. (IV.ii.149-52)

If Barnadine seems to dramatize the conflict between

world as God and world as man within the position of rationalism, he remains, clearly, as much a compromised figure as is the Friar-Duke. As man rejecting God his position is as inauthentic as that of the Friar-Duke in asserting the right of God to deny nature. Barnadine represents the autonomy of the Cynic, but that autonomy, or liberty, is bought at the cost of everything that gives liberty meaning. Barnadine's autonomy is but "the liberty of the prison," (IV.ii.147-8) the prison of nature from which the doctrine of Cynicism lacks the wisdom to desire escape. From this prison, however, Shakespeare ultimately arranges his escape. The Duke in Act V remands him to the custody of Friar Peter to be instructed in a world beyond nature, the Christian realm of heaven. Friar Peter, in short, is to humanize Barnadine, to raise him from a subhuman identity to a true humanity by adding to nature the realm of heaven. But if the Duke instructs Barnadine, Barnadine also instructs the Duke. His encounter with Barnadine, bespeaking as it does the inception of diversity within Stoicism itself, thus suggests its own transmutation from a theology also, in its own way, inhuman, to a dualistic and anthropomorphic conception of God.

In seeking to attack Stoicism by impugning its self-consistency, Shakespeare also seems to note the inconsistency of its doctrine permitting suicide with its ideal of submission to Providence. The tone of Stoic ethics is, on the

one hand, passive. Notwithstanding his exercise of reason, the Stoic comprehended his highest virtue in the total resignation of his will to the law that governed the universe. Unable in any case to alter the irresistible power of its causal chain, the wise man had the privilege of willingly submitting himself to that law by bringing his own will into congruence with the divine will.⁸⁸ Yet the Stoics also granted to the wise man the right to withdraw from the world when his life seemed threatened by evil, either major or minor, by committing suicide.

This right to end one's own life the Stoics derived from a principle of virtue that they called seasonableness. By the testimony of Hicks, the idea of seasonableness rejected the temporal prolongation of life as a good; it defined the value of life rather in its ability to maintain a consistent and uninterrupted sequence of actions in conformity with nature.⁸⁹ Such seasonableness dictates a time to live and equally, a time to die. And we should note that it is the Friar-Duke's trespass on the Stoic virtue of seasonableness that Barnadine responds to when he tells the Friar-Duke that he is not "fitted" (IV.iii.44) for death.

Yet, by permitting man to choose the fit time for his own demise, Stoicism qualified man's submission to the course of destiny. And Zeller aptly questions whether

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 333.

⁸⁹Hicks, pp. 98-9.

it is consistent with an unconditional resignation to the course of the world, to evade by personal interposition, what destiny with its unalterable laws has decreed for us.⁹⁰

Indeed, Zeller suggests that such contrary injunctions as those to submission and to suicide attest to the inability of Stoicism to reconcile its two claims of "individual independence" and "submission to the universe."⁹¹ Such a contradiction impugns the great virtue of self-consistency that, as a rational system, Stoicism is bound to exhibit.

Besides implying a contradiction within Stoicism, however, the Stoic permission of suicide constitutes a point of clear divergence between it and Christianity, and is used in Measure for Measure to expose its unChristian character. For the Christian, suicide, as an act of both despair and self-murder, is mortal sin. And, as we shall see, it is toward just such suicidal despair that the Friar-Duke provokes Juliet in attempting subtly to inform her Christian humility and patience with a Stoic foundation of self-rejection.

Another aspect of the Stoic subversion of its own choice of the world is revealed in its theory of knowledge. This theory attempts to define knowledge both in terms of sensation and in terms of the mind's rational processes.

⁹⁰Zeller, p. 339.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 340.

Yet in the Stoic system, the two elements of sensation and reason seem to fail of a clearly integrated functioning. On the one hand the soul was incapable of acquiring knowledge without sensation. It was a blank page upon which objects impressed themselves in their materiality as a seal upon wax, or otherwise as producing a change in the ruling part of the soul.⁹² "The soul is a blank leaf, sensation is the hand which fills it with writing."⁹³ These sensations are perceptions, yet the mind also works upon these perceptions through its own powers to form primary conceptions,⁹⁴ which, while not innate ideas,⁹⁵ are, according to Zeller, "the natural types of truth and virtue, and . . . the distinctive possessions of rational beings."⁹⁶ Through the process of logic, primary conceptions become artificial conceptions, which the Stoics define as "a fixed and immoveable conception, or system of such conceptions," and which they regard as knowledge.⁹⁷ Thus "perceptions and the conclusions based upon them" are the two sources of knowledge.⁹⁸

⁹²Ibid., p. 78.

⁹³Ibid., p. 79.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 80.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 81.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 80.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 82.

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 82-3.

Yet this even-handed balance of sensation and intellection seems also to betray a subtle war for dominance, a conflict that appears to derive from the unacknowledged difference between the mind's logic as a criterion of truth and the truth dictated by the standard of nature.⁹⁹ On the one hand, conception, though derivative of perception, is not less true than it, but rather more true, "for absolute certainty belongs only to knowledge, and . . . the truth of the perceptions of the senses depends on their relation to thought."¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, judgment may be, as it were, coerced by the irresistible conviction engendered by perception itself,¹⁰¹ which guarantees its truth. And though, as Zeller tells us, assent is at a remove from perception by being an act of judgment, he admits that "some of our perceptions are . . . of such a kind that they at once oblige us to bestow on them assent."¹⁰²

Correlative of this lack of integration between sensation and thought is the alternate deprecation of sensation and thought. It is as if the absence of a completely satisfactory integration of these two ways of knowing undermines them both. To the extent that thought determines truth

⁹⁹Idem.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 89.

it also appears to distance itself from reality, which is the attribute only of material objects.¹⁰³ And the Stoics, as Zeller suggests, even veered toward the nominalism of the Cynics in claiming a disjunction between concepts and the things from which they are derived. In line with this reasoning, "conceptions and terms framed artificially can have their truth established only by being subjected to the scientific process of truth, and thus confirmed by the standard of nature."¹⁰⁴ Yet Zeller also shows that despite this reference to nature as the standard of truth, the Stoics attributed greater conviction to artificial than to primary conceptions. Stoic epistemology appears, in short, to affirm without their proper integration the action of the intellect and of the senses, and this failure of integration casts doubt on the validity of both ways of knowing.

There can be no doubt that the problem of knowledge is central to Measure for Measure. Its centrality is suggested by the terms "science" and "pregnant" (I.i.5,11) in the Duke's opening speech, and his ending the play with the word, "know." This problem, moreover, seems to be divided into the realms of heaven and nature, the knowledge of heaven being derived from mental cognition and having as its object the knowledge of the self. In the play it is called

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 91.

"thinking." The knowing of nature is experiential and carnal, proceeding through the senses and having as its object the understanding of the world. The play calls it "knowing." Shakespeare's aim in making such a division of knowledge, however, is not merely to assign the faculties of man to their proper spheres, but to suggest that experiential and intellectual knowing must combine to produce real knowledge. The senses without intellect deny the existence of the self. But they also give us only the appearance and not the reality of the world. The intellect tends to deny the world, but in that denial, tends also to falsify the self by abstracting it from the world. Even where, as in Angelo's case, he attains carnal knowledge, that knowledge remains ignorance by virtue of the fact that his thinking and his knowing are disjointed, as Mariana in Act V explains. Shakespeare will suggest that the Duke's final accession to wisdom in Act V represents an integration of the sensation of nature and the intellection of heaven within the Christian framework that validates both ways of knowing.

Finally, it remains to observe the Senecan style that marks the speech of the Duke, a style that is marked by a thrust toward brevity that borders on and even transgresses into ellipsis, with an accompanying incomprehensibility; and also a sententiousness that tends rather tiresomely to point the moral of dramatic circumstances at the most inopportune moment. It is this prolix brevity that

marks the Duke's opening speech, just as it is this same quirk of style that seems reflected in Lucio's promise of "fewness and truth" (I.iv.39) as he is about to embark on a speech of extended circumlocution whose coloration of the "truth" may be said substantially to compromise it.

These brief observations about Stoicism are, I hope, sufficient to support the assertion that the primary Stoic choice of the world, by concluding all under the faculty of reason, impugns the reality of the self, and places Stoicism in a moral posture precisely opposite to that of Christianity. That assertion, moreover, becomes interesting in light of a pervasive resurgence of Stoic thought in the Renaissance. Rudolf Kirk, for instance, observes that Stoicism was recommended to the Christian reader in the Renaissance as a pagan ethic congruent with Christianity. Kirk further observes, however, that it was not long before the differences between these systems became apparent.

It was with the purpose of dealing with and resolving these differences that Justus Lipsius in 1584 wrote De Constantia.¹⁰⁵ This book, translated by John Stradling in 1594 under the title, Tvvo Bookes of Constancie,¹⁰⁶ constituted

¹⁰⁵ Justus Lipsius, Tvvo Bookes of Constancie, trans. 1594, John Stradling, ed., with intro. Rudolf Kirk (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1939), p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

not merely a document of Stoic philosophy but a latter day restatement of that philosophy in the context of Christianity. In it Lipsius attempts to legitimize Stoicism by the standard of Christian dogma; in effect, to Christianize Stoicism. It is upon this attempt that Shakespeare, through the Duke, seems to pass judgment. Though evidence for Shakespeare's use of this text is scant, the combined impact of the plot and the characterization of the Duke suggests that the substance of its philosophical claim is a primary object of Shakespeare's investigation and censure.

In Tvvo Bookes of Constancie, Justus Lipsius attempts to loosen the chain of necessity that binds God by adding to his rationality the attribute of will. By the addition of will God achieves that essential attribute of personhood: freedom. Lipsius confesses that Stoicism errs in two ways, of which the first is its subjection of Providence, which Lipsius defines as "the controlling power of God's will," to necessity, and the second, the denial of free will to man.¹⁰⁷ The constraining power of necessity Lipsius defines as "the firme ordinance and immutable power of prouidence."¹⁰⁸ The constraint of man Lipsius attributes to a variant of necessity, which Lipsius defines as

an imouable decree of Prouidence inherent

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 106.

in things moouable, which firmlie effecteth
euerie thing in his order, place, and time.¹⁰⁹

It is with the first of these errors that Lipsius
is more concerned to deal; yet, clearly, as with God, so with
man. The constraining power is the same in substance; the
difference is one of name only and derives from its applica-
tion to different realms: "Prouidence . . . of things in
uniuersality, Destiny by distribution in particularities."¹¹⁰
The limitations of divine and human freedom rest on the es-
sentially identical premises of necessity and destiny.

Lipsius quotes Seneca to this effect:

The verie same necessitie bindeth God: an
irreuocable course carrieth away both
humaine and diuine thinges. The maker and
ruler of all thinges decreed destinies, but
now followeth them: He commaunded once, but
he obeyeth for euer.¹¹¹

Lipsius himself admits that

the same indissoluble chaine and linking
together of causes which bindeth all thinges
and persons, seemeth plainlie to inferre force
or constraint

of God. "But," he goes on to claim,

the true Stoickes neuer professed such
doctrine, and if by chance any like sentence
passed from them in the vehemencie of their
writing or disputing, it was more in words
than in substance and sense.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 119-20.

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 115-16.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 116.

For, as Lipsius contends, the force of necessity, or destiny, or fate, to which the Stoics subject God is itself God.

"Our Seneca doth not make God subiect to fate . . . but God to God, after a certaine kinde of speach."¹¹³ We should note, incidentally, the repeated apology for the imperfect ability of words to convey truth.

More importantly, however, we should note that Lipsius apologizes for and hopes to obviate the Stoic error of subjecting God to necessity by the very Stoic and thus doubtfully Christian expedient of making necessity the definition of God. Yet, this definition, by emphasizing the power of necessity, seems to Lipsius to attest to the unique nearness of Stoicism among philosophies to Christianity.

I doe in good earnest giue this commendation to the Stoickes, that no other sect of Philosophers auowed more the maiesty and prouidence of God, nor drewe men neerer to heauenlie and eternall thinges.¹¹⁴

Lipsius nevertheless cites four ways in which his own form of Stoicism differs from that of the ancient Stoics on the relation of God to necessity and man to destiny, all of which qualify the power of necessity and leave room for freedom both human and divine. The Stoics make God subject to destiny, but Lipsius subjects destiny to God. The Stoics acknowledge natural and eternal causes

¹¹³Idem.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 117.

only; Lipsius admits miracles and second causes that came into being with the creation of the world. The Stoics deny contingency; Lipsius admits chance. The Stoics deny free will; Lipsius allows it.¹¹⁵

But if Lipsius can dispose of the binding of God by making necessity a definition of God, he fares less well in attempting to reconcile destiny with human freedom. He attempts to argue that God's foreknowledge does not imply man's coercion, and that, in sinning, we act both freely and of necessity.¹¹⁶ He attempts to make God the author of all without making Him also the author of evil. It is in our imperfections that the will of God conduces to evil.

So in this case it commeth of God that thou art mooued: but it is of and in thy self that thou art mooued to euill.¹¹⁷

Yet, having said so much, Lipsius turns round and abandons free will.

Finallie, to conclude of this libertie: Destinie is as the first man that leadeth the round in this daunce of the world: but so as we daunce our partes to, in willing, or nilling, and no further, not doing, for there is left to man only a free-wil to striue and struggle against God, and not power to perfourme the same.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 121.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 122.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 122-23.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 123.

The human will thus teaches man only his impotence. The true refuge from necessity is not in the exercise of will but in its submission to necessity. Man must "wish that, that she willeth."¹¹⁹ Thus as the definition of God as necessity confers a doubtful liberty on God, so the imputation of an impotent will to man cannot truly suggest his freedom. And the repudiation of the freedom whose expression is will inevitably results in the repudiation of man as a being distinct from the world. The only recourse for man is to do as Langius does in entering his garden.

to shake off all thing in mee that is humaine,
and to be rapt vp on high vpon the fiery
chariot of wisdome. . . . to subdue all humaine
and earthly things to my MIND.¹²⁰

And if to man, thus controlled by destiny, humanity is a baggage to be shaken off, so God, whose acts derive from his identity as necessity, remains a non-human God. Lipsius defends God's affliction of the world with calamities by arguing that, as the effects of a good God, they must be good.¹²¹ But the goodness of God consists specifically in the consideration that the calamities he sends are not sent in anger.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 125.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 137.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 143.

Doest thou imagine that he is angrie, or
 chollericke, and casteth, as it were those
 noisome dartes among men? Thou art deceiued.
 Anger, wrath, reuenge, are names of humaine
 affections; and proceeding from a naturall
 frailty & weaknes, are incident only to weak-
 lings.¹²²

These calamities, good in their origin, also effect benefit and profit to man. They exercise the virtuous in virtue, they chastise and correct those offenses that threaten virtue, and they benefit the wicked by destroying them.¹²³ In connection with this last "benefit," the Friar-Duke's assumption of his ability to convince Barnadine "willingly to die" (IV.iii.81) becomes suggestive, as does the Provost's comment, "Who can do good on him?" (IV.ii.68)

In attempting to justify the sufferings of man as manifestations of a benign purpose in a God totally good, however, Lipsius resorts at last to the Stoic validation of the whole over the parts. As the Stoics regarded the imperfection of particulars as the condition of the perfection of the world as a whole, so Lipsius asserts that the suffering of individuals is the condition of the world's preservation.

In every age Citties and tovvnes are builded,
 and if burnings or other destructions happened
 not, our World, nor scarce another would con-
 taine them. And so in conceipt thou maiest
 passe through the nature of all things. There-
 fore, Is it any maruell, if that olde father

¹²²Idem.

¹²³Ibid., p. 145.

of the familie thrust in his sickle into this ranke fielde, and cut off some superfluous thousandes with pestilence or warre? If he did not so, What Countrey were able to containe Vs? Therefore in Gods name let some partes perish, that the whole perfection of all may be perpetuall.¹²⁴

Such a statement reveals with admirable clarity the extent to which the value of the world merely effaces the selfhood of man. The effect of the subordination of selfhood to the world is to deny the uniqueness of man as the validating condition of his selfhood.

In the context of the world alienated from selfhood, moreover, the terms of the world's morality become similarly alien to man. Good and evil cease to have a meaning in which he can participate, and assume rather a connotation of menace. Seen in the Stoic perspective of his irrelevance, man cannot but assume the moral posture of guilt; his suffering becomes legitimized as justice. But it cannot be so legitimized without profound violence to the authenticity of justice as a human value. In the thought of the Stoics and Lipsius, justice incurs the nominalistic speciousness that attends the divorce of ideality from selfhood.

In view of these observations, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that Shakespeare, if he read Lipsius --and surely he read Montaigne's Stoic-saturated essays-- should have found the claim of Stoicism to kinship with

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 155.

Christianity less than compelling. The necessity implied by pure reason is destructive of all that is divine in humanity and human in divinity. Yet if pure reason is an inadequate definition of personhood, reason remains a necessary component of personhood. It is not reason, but reason in its absolute affirmation and segregation from will, the specifically Stoic reason, that Shakespeare portrays as a debasement of man and a dehumanization of God. It is not through the rejection of reason but through its integration with will that the Duke in Act V becomes an image of deity both immanent and transcendent and attains in that twofold image the attribute of personhood.

The Duke's perfection as a humanized deity constitutes, moreover, his perfection as a governor. Through the double significance of his own being, he reconstitutes the political entity, or society, of Vienna as nothing less than the structure within which both heaven and nature are reconciled. And it is in view of this reconciliation that the appropriateness of Measure for Measure both for the occasion of Christmas and for James's court, as asserted by Bennett, becomes validated.¹²⁵

¹²⁵Bennett, p. 8.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHIES OF WILL: CALVINISM AND EPICUREANISM

The intense and critical interest that Shakespeare displays in Measure for Measure in the concept of reason and its political, theological, and ethical implications is evenhandedly balanced by a comparably intense and critical examination of the concept of will. Together, reason and will are the fundamental terms of the play's structure. And if reason is identified with the world and expresses its absoluteness by appropriating and engulfing will or selfhood into its own modality of conceptuality, will is identified as selfhood and expresses its absoluteness by a contrasting repudiation and annihilation of the world, and also of the concept. The political form of such voluntaristic absolutism has already been dealt with in the politics of Calvin. We have now to show that Shakespeare manifests an equal interest in the theology of Calvin as the expression par excellence of theological voluntarism, and that voluntarism achieves its humanistic and ethical as opposed to its theological expression in the philosophy of Epicurus. Shakespeare will suggest in Measure for Measure that as Calvinism validates

will and repudiates the conceptuality of reason in its definition of God, Epicurus espouses the same principle of will and the same repudiation of conceptuality in its definition of man.

In ascribing to God the identity of selfhood and the attribute of will, Calvin liberates God from the constraining reason of the world; God as will owes allegiance to no law; his will, rather, is law. And the supremacy of God's will is nowhere more centrally enunciated than in the doctrine of Predestination. Calvin expresses this doctrine as

the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestined either to life or to death.¹

With this statement, we have left the Stoic realm of reason and benevolence and apology. The will of God is referred here to no rational cause; it is the author not only of salvation but also of damnation; it is not justified, but merely stated.

The doctrine of Predestination, however, is not original to Calvin, nor to Luther before him. Calvin, rather, derives it from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, IX,

¹Calvin, II, 175.

and quotes heavily from that chapter to prove its Christian orthodoxy. Seeking to establish that divine election refers to no reason but rather solely to the inscrutable will of God, he cites Paul's reference to the arbitrary choice by God of Jacob over Esau while they were yet unborn and had no ability to define themselves by their deeds.

What is the testimony of Paul: "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said, The elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, ² Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

And Calvin, continuing Paul's argument, arrives at the irreducible affirmation of God as will.

If you inquire the cause, the apostle assigns the following: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." And what is this but a plain declaration of the Lord, that he finds no cause in men to induce him to show favour to them, but derives it solely from his own mercy; and therefore that the salvation of his people is his work?³

We should observe here that this utterance of God to Moses adduced by Paul and reaffirmed by Calvin as the central foundation for the doctrine of Predestination is echoed by Claudio in I,ii. And we should further observe that it refers directly to Angelo's decree against him as "the words of heaven."

²Ibid., p. 181.

³Ibid., p. 189.

The words of heaven: on whom it will, it will;
 On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just.
 (I.ii.122-3)

We have already seen also that Claudio acknowledges the divine quality of Angelo's authority by calling him "the demigod Authority." (I.ii.120) By applying to Angelo the classical formula of divine voluntarism, he seems to imbue Angelo with a voluntarism not only human and political, but also divine.

Claudio's rueful observation that Angelo's absolute will is still "just" seems, moreover, to point to the tendency in Calvin's voluntarism, as in Stoic rationalism, to impugn the validity of justice as a human concept. Man for Calvin, being corrupted by original sin, has no understanding of justice, since he is dead to the good. Thus as Zanta explains in her book La Renaissance du Stoicisme au XVI siècle, "La moralité pour eux, n'a plus aucun sens: notre nature corrompue en est incapable. . . ." ⁴ Man is thus subject to a law he cannot understand, and that subjection renders justice a formal word, or name, without meaning. As Zanta again explains,

Cette conception de la moralité nous conduit donc à une loi arbitraire où la forme seule subsiste, le contenu étant sacrifié ou tout au moins indifférent. ⁵

⁴Leontine Zanta, La Renaissance du Stoicisme au XVI siècle (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honore Champion, 1914), p. 53.

⁵Ibid., pp. 53-4.

God's justice, like the Stoic concept of justice as the rationality of the world, is beyond human comprehension; it becomes simply what God wills. Thus Calvin can rebuke those who would call God's arbitrary predestination of man to perdition "the caprice of a tyrant rather than the lawful sentence of a judge" by asserting that

the will of God is the highest rule of justice; so that what he wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it. When it is inquired, therefore, why the Lord did so, the answer must be, because he would. But if you go further, and ask why he so determined, you are in search of something greater and higher than the will of God, which can never be found.⁶

If, however, Calvin thus throws out justice as a rational concept, he seems to set an example for man, likewise, to similarly reject reason and assert his own will. If on the one hand Claudio submits to his condemnation by calling it just, he seems abruptly to reverse that submission, and to exculpate himself entirely by calling Angelo's sentence "tyranny." (I.ii.163) In this imputation, moreover, he echoes the charge of those who rebel against God's will.

In repudiating the justice of Angelo, moreover, Claudio seems also to echo, with a derogatory implication, the one reason that Calvin does hazard for God's damnation of his creatures. Calvin claims that

it is certain that he determined thus, only because he foresaw it would tend to the just

⁶Calvin, II, 201.

illustration of the glory of his name.⁷

And again Calvin contends that God

orders all things by his counsel and decree
in such a manner, that some men are born
devoted from the womb to certain death, that
his name may be glorified in their destruc-
tion.⁸

How suggestive, in light of such a reason, is Claudio's at-
tribution of his own condemnation to Angelo's desire to make
a name for himself, and his assertion that Angelo

for a name
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
Freshly on me-- 'tis surely for a name.
(I.ii.169-71)

It appears, however, that Calvin cannot quite ac-
knowledge that God's absolute will destroys justice.

We represent not God as lawless, who is a
law unto himself; because, as Plato says,
laws are necessary to men, who are the sub-
jects of evil desires; but the will of God
is not only pure from every fault, but the
highest standard of perfection, even the law
of all laws.⁹

And Shakespeare seems to acknowledge this reluctance on the
part of Calvin by characterizing the absolute will conferred
by the Duke on Angelo not as lawless but rather as innately
lawful. The Duke tells Angelo,

Your scope is as mine own,
So to enforce or qualify the laws
As to your soul seems good. (I.i.64-6)

⁷Ibid., p. 209.

⁸Ibid., p. 206.

⁹Ibid., p. 202.

As for Calvin the divine will seems to retain the quality of justice, so the Duke seems to find the good in Angelo's soul, or selfhood. The play will show, however, that thus defined, the good is a fragile and evanescent thing.

There seems, indeed, to be a quality of lawlessness implicit within the doctrine of Predestination, for it makes God the author not only of good, but of evil as well.¹⁰ As the concern of Stoic Providence for the good of the whole necessitated the misfortunes of its parts, misfortunes justified by the good of the world as a whole, so God's inscrutable will included the damnation of his subjects. Calvin argues further that the omnipotence of God's will makes him also the cause of the evil committed by men. Yet he insists that though God is the cause of human evil, the guilt of man's evil must be borne by himself rather than by God. And this dissociation of cause, or intention, from guilt seems to contrast with the Stoic definition of guilt as intention alone.

In defending God's innocence of human guilt, Calvin adopts, moreover, his most arbitrary tone. Responding to those who object that God's punishment of man for the evil that he himself decrees makes him unjust, Calvin frankly admits that man is condemned for the evil that God causes but insists that God is not unjust.

¹⁰Zanta, p. 51.

I confess, indeed, that all the descendants of Adam fell by Divine will into that miserable condition in which they are now involved; . . . But it follows not, therefore, that God is liable to this reproach. For we will answer them thus in the language of Paul: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?"¹¹

It is, significantly, just this predicament of man under the Calvinist dispensation that Claudio seems to express. He is condemned for an ignorant sin, a sin of which he is not the cause, or intender, but for which he must suffer condemnation. And it is in accordance with this same idea of guilt that Angelo in Act V will condemn himself.

In characterizing the relationship between God and man as that of potter and clay, however, both Paul and Calvin seem to repudiate man as a selfhood altogether. Man is not a self, but a thing; he is made from the material "lump" of nature and is thus a part of the world. God remains the sole self of the universe. In Calvin's definition of man solely as world, moreover, we perceive the absolute cleavage between selfhood and world that characterizes Calvinism. Through this absolute separation of God and man, as self and world, Calvin utterly denies will and power, or liberty to man as the condition of its attribution to God. It is this absolute

¹¹Calvin, II, 203.

choice of either God or man as selfhood and hence as power and liberty that Zanta observes to be the consequence of repudiating the Catholic accommodation between reason and will.

Si l'on ne veut point accepter la solution moyenne et conciliatrice de l'Église catholique, il ne reste que deux partis absolument opposés à choisir: ou nier la puissance de Dieu, et laisser toute liberté à l'homme, ou l'admettre pleine et entière et ne plus laisser place à la liberté.¹²

If the liberty of God's will implies the absolute denial of will to man, man without will, or selfhood, becomes alien and repugnant to God. Accordingly, we see that Calvin attributes man's sinful condition to his origin in the "corrupt mass" of nature.

As we are all corrupted by sin, we must necessarily be odious to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty, but in the most equitable estimation of justice. If all whom the Lord predestinates to death are in their natural condition liable to the sentence of death, what injustice do they complain of receiving from him? Let all the sons of Adam come forward; let them all contend and dispute with their Creator, because by his eternal providence they were previously to their birth adjudged to endless misery. What murmur will they be able to raise against this vindication, when God, on the other hand, shall call them to a review of themselves. If they have all been taken from a corrupt mass, it is no wonder that they are subject to condemnation. Let them not, therefore, accuse God of injustice, if his eternal decree has destined them to death, to which they feel themselves . . . spontaneously led forward by their own nature.¹³

¹²Zanta, pp. 47-8.

¹³Calvin, II, pp. 202-3.

And because man is thoroughly a natural and corrupt part of the world, he cannot come to love God unless he recognizes how entirely despicable he is. Calvin asserts that man should properly despise himself for we cannot "really aspire toward him, till we have begun to be displeased with ourselves."¹⁴ In how suggestive a light do such opinions place Claudio's strong, indeed too strong, denunciation of "our natures."

Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane
A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.
(I.ii.128-30)

Thus we begin to see in Angelo's condemnation of Claudio as expression of God's repudiation of man as a part of the corrupt materiality of nature, as a being without a self. And this claim of absolute selfhood complements the Friar-Duke's claim to be the sole repository of the identity of the world. If, moreover, the Friar-Duke shows signs of relinquishing his Stoic identity by tolerating the life of Barnadine as the identity of the world in man, so also Angelo's wish in IV,iv, that Claudio were still alive seems to suggest his recognition of the right of man to life as part of the crumbling of his Calvinist identity as divine will. "Would yet he had liv'd." (IV.iv.32)

The halting, moreover, of the Friar-Duke's reason by Barnadine, seems to find its parallel in the ironic

¹⁴Calvin, I, 48.

conclusion of Angelo's arrogation to himself of omnipotence as his experience of impotence. In IV,iv, he tells us that his repudiation of the conceptual and rational elements of law and justice has dissolved his identity as a power.

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant
And dull to all proceedings. A deflow'ed maid!
And by an eminent body that enfor'd
The law against it! (IV.iv.20-3)

His vaunted will is being reduced to the impotence of inconclusive vacillation.

Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,
Nothing goes right--we would, and we would not.
(IV.iv.33-4)

Shakespeare appears, then, rather clearly to identify Angelo with the theology of Calvin and to offer in him a criticism of that theology. In associating Angelo with Calvinist theology, moreover, Shakespeare takes care to restrict that association to its manifestation in the extreme form of Calvinism known as Puritanism. The Puritans were called precisionists; significantly, the Duke says, "Lord Angelo is precise." (I.iii.50) It was, moreover, the Puritans who advocated death for the most minimal sexual offenses as does Angelo, and pursued that advocacy with vigor,¹⁵ as does Angelo. And while we may not be aware of this harshness as a distinguishing feature of the Puritans, the Elizabethans were well aware of it. Thus through the

¹⁵Lever, p. xlvi.

denomination of him as "precise," and through his own severity, Angelo would have been immediately recognized as a Puritan of the John Stubbes variety and thus as an exponent of the voluntaristic extreme of Christianity. Through the remarks of Claudio, moreover, this Calvinism appears to assume dimensions both political and divine.

If one distinguishing feature of Calvin's doctrines is their extremity, another seems to be the frankness with which Calvin expresses them. We observe in him a candor that boldly identifies all the implications of his dogmas without attempting to palliate their harshness. In this quality of brutal honesty Calvin, moreover, stands in sharp contrast to the Stoics, whose dour doctrines were recommended under what seemed, I suspect, to Shakespeare the deceiving guise of optimism. And Angelo, good Calvinist that he is, shares Calvin's style of expression. In contrast to the Duke, he is blunt to the point of gracelessness; he cannot mince words, or try to ingratiate himself even when, as in II,iv, he most wishes to.

It may appear strange, if not bizarre, to make bedfellows of two such antagonistic philosophers as Calvin, the great theist, and Epicurus. For, as Elton has amply demonstrated, atheism in sixteenth-century England advanced itself under the banner of Epicurus.¹⁶ The Stoics, lacking the

¹⁶Elton, Chapter II, *passim*. Elton shows beyond a doubt both that the philosophy of Epicurus was recognized

light of revelation, might be pardoned for the imperfection of their notion of Providence; Epicurus was merely the herder of swine.¹⁷ Far more unequivocally than the Stoics, Epicurus postulated a realm of nature or sense uncomplemented by the extra-natural realm of Grace.¹⁸ With his name, open and avowed atheism was merely synonymous.

The atheism of Epicurus consisted in the outright denial of the existence of Providence in the cosmos. The two realities of the universe were matter and a void; the world, moreover, was merely the result of the chance collisions of atoms.¹⁹ Upon matter laws did indeed operate with

in the sixteenth century as atheistic, and that its influence was sufficiently strong to arouse strenuous criticism. His work thus augments that of Mayo, who traces the rise of Epicureanism to the rank of a major philosophical force in England in the seventeenth century. T. F. Mayo, Epicurus in England: (1650-1725) (The Southwest Press, 1934).

¹⁷Horace, Epistles 1.4.16. "Epicuri de grege porcum."

¹⁸Allen, pp. 135-36, cites St. Thomas Aquinas' distinction between the knowledge of sense and Grace, terms that appear in Measure for Measure and seem to correspond to Shakespeare's distinction between the realms of heaven and nature. The pervasive importance of this distinction for poets as well as philosophers is manifested by Woodhouse, who, in The Heavenly Muse (University of Toronto Press, 1972), refers to an "order of nature" and an "order of grace" as a "frame of reference common to Milton and Spenser, as to their contemporaries and predecessors, part indeed of the Christian inheritance. . . ." Pp. 4-5.

¹⁹For the broad principles of Epicureanism I rely on Cyril Bailey's The Greek Atomists and Epicurus (1928; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), and Cyril Bailey's translation of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1910).

unfailing regularity, but there was no single source of omnipotence within nature, and the belief in an all-powerful deity was mere superstition. If we apply to the testimony of Lucretius, whose poem, De Rerum Natura, having been published in 1473,²⁰ was available to Shakespeare as a source of Epicureanism, we observe that Epicurus decries as benighted those minds that

are borne . . . into the old beliefs of religion, and adopt stern overlords, whom in their misery they believe have all power, knowing not what can be and what cannot, yea and in what way each thing has its power limited, and its deepest boundary-stone.²¹

This Epicurean cosmos was not devoid of divine beings; these beings, however, had nothing to do with the governing of the universe. Living in interstellar space and pursuing their own hurtless pleasures, they affected the lives of men not at all. From them men could expect no harm. Epicurus thus preached not a literal but a functional atheism; he acknowledged the existence of the gods while repudiating their power over mankind.

Like the material world in which he lived, man was

²⁰Elton, p. 47.

²¹Lucretius, pp. 188-9.

wholly material. The soul differed from the body only in being composed of an extraordinarily fine kind of matter, and the human identity was the result of the union of soul atoms with body atoms, a union that persisted only as long as the body lived. With the death of the body, the soul likewise perished, but even did it not, the identity of man was destroyed with the destruction of the body.

The doctrine of human mortality was of extreme importance for Epicurus, for it seemed to him that the limiting of the human identity by death removed from man the blighting expectation of punishment after death; it dispelled the fear of hell. If for Shakespeare the idea of man bounded by his mortal flesh implicitly denied the validity of his human identity, for Epicurus this doctrine was, if not entirely without its sadness, essentially liberating. Without the fear of punishment, contended Epicurus, death would lose its sting. Thus as in life man need not fear the gods, neither need he fear them in death. For this reason Lucretius claims that "death . . . is naught to us. . . ." ²²

It thus becomes apparent that the whole thrust of Epicurus' philosophy is toward the liberation of man from subjection to powers outside himself. That purpose, moreover, is expressed also in Epicurus' idea of the state, the family, and the human will. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, who found

²²Lucretius, p. 133.

in society an important expression of human nature, Epicurus held society to be merely a matter of custom or convention. Man's true interests were confined to himself alone. Marriage and the rearing of children were likewise intrusions on the autonomy and pleasure of the individual. And finally, Epicurus freed man from the compulsions of his own nature. As atoms in the void had the freedom to swerve in their fall through space, so man had free will, and thus, the ability to control his own life. Thus Epicurus defined man as an autonomous, solitary, self-willed entity, finding his value solely in his own selfhood. All other values, including truth, derived their validity from their usefulness to him.

In Epicurus' repudiation of the gods in the interest of human liberty, however, there appears to emerge between Calvin and Epicurus a complementarity that was, I suspect, of interest to Shakespeare. These thinkers seem to exhibit a common recognition that absolute selfhood in God and in man could not both simultaneously be affirmed. Calvin's idea of God as the single and sole selfhood denies selfhood to man; Epicurus' desire to make man the locus of absolute selfhood comparably denies the selfhood of God.

The denial of the gods by Epicurus seems, thus, to illustrate the contention of the Reformers who claimed that the attribution of liberty to man denied the being of God, and, indeed, made man a god. Zanta cites Luther's opinion to this effect:

Le libre arbitre, dira-t-il, ne peut convenir qu'à la seule majesté de Dieu; car c'est sa puissance qui fait et veut tout dans le ciel et sur la terre. Si on l'attribue à l'homme, on ne lui attribue rien moins que la divinité elle-même; or il ne peut se faire de sacrilège plus grand.²³

And Zwingli expresses the same opinion, claiming that

vouloir être libre, c'est faire de soi-même son propre Dieu. La doctrine de la liberté conduit à la domination de l'homme et à la pluralité des dieux.²⁴

To make man his own god, and to see in all men a plurality of gods, seems, indeed, to describe the goal of Epicurus. This, at least, seems to have been Shakespeare's appreciation of his thought.

Calvin and Epicurus seem thus to represent two competing voluntaristic monisms, rather than a contest between the self and the world. Calvin and Epicurus struggle for the same property of absolute selfhood and will, as the Friar-Duke and Barnadine struggle for possession of the single identity of world.

If, however, Epicurus and Calvin differ as to the definition of selfhood as God or man, they agree with each other in repudiating the world. Shakespeare will dramatize this Epicurean repudiation of the world as the repudiation by Lucio, who, as I shall show, is the play's exponent of Epicureanism, of the Friar-Duke as Stoic, and also in Lucio's

²³Zanta, p. 48.

²⁴Ibid., p. 49.

repudiation of Pompey, who seems to represent the world soul. The philosophical meaning of the repudiation of the world, however, is the repudiation of the world's reason; it is, in short, the renunciation of conceptuality. If, in the repudiation of reason, Calvin impugns the validity of justice, Epicurus seems to manifest his renunciation of conceptuality in his repudiation of virtue as the good of human life, and in his identification of the supreme good as pleasure. While Epicurus recognized that good men enjoyed their lives more than bad ones, he accounted morality only as the means to pleasure and not as an end in itself. Bailey relates of Epicurus that he claimed to "spit on the honorable . . . and upon those who vainly admire it, when it does not produce any pleasure."²⁵ In Measure for Measure, Shakespeare seems to have asserted the familial relationship between the Epicurean idea of pleasure and the Calvinist notion of will by juxtaposing them as synonyms at the outset of the play. In his greeting to the Duke in I,i, Angelo says,

Always obedient to your Grace's will,
I come to know your pleasure. (I.i.15-6)

We should note here also the subtle presence of the carnal word "know." It appears to be through the association of pleasure with will that such words as "touching" and "satisfaction" seem, especially in Angelo's mouth, to acquire a sensual connotation.

²⁵Bailey, p. 508.

Let us withdraw together
 And we may soon our satisfaction have
 Touching that point. (I.i.81-3)

The nearness of Epicurus' rejection of conceptual-ity to that of Calvin is most clearly revealed in Epicurus' own repudiation of the concept of justice. Since, for Epicurus, the realm of spirit did not exist, ideas also had no reality. Thus justice could not be an innate feature of the human mind. On the contrary, since man was a being implicitly egoistic and hedonistic, justice, as the ideal of equality, could not avoid being regarded by Epicurus as an inhibition of the human ego. Bailey observes that from the perspective of Epicurus,

it would clearly be most to the advantage of the individual to have perfect freedom of action, which in life among other men means complete disregard for them, their property and their interests.²⁶

But Epicurus also considers that such freedom granted to all men would result in a state of uncontrolled aggression and produce for the individual selfhood on balance more pain than pleasure.

It therefore becomes to his advantage to forego the pleasures of aggression, on condition that he is guaranteed freedom from attack: justice is in other words a kind of compact between members of a community to refrain from harming one another.²⁷

As a concept, however, justice remains alien to man. Bailey

²⁶Bailey, p. 511.

²⁷Idem.

points out that

the ideal from the individual's point of view is really injustice: if only he could commit injustice consistently without ever being discovered, that would be best, but unfortunately . . . there is always the dread of detection. This extreme position Epicurus takes up unhesitatingly: 'injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which attaches to the apprehension of being unable to escape those appointed to punish such actions.'²⁸

Such a repudiation of justice, if it means nothing to Epicurus, for whom man is not a concept but a selfhood, yet profoundly affects man as a concept. If it is but the fear of reprisal that restrains man from committing evil, all men are potentially felons. And it needs small imagination to recognize that such a conception of man, if it leads on the one hand to the idea of society as a contract, also provides the foundation of tyranny. That word, defining as it does, a problem of Calvinist theology, becomes also an implication of Epicurean politics. Not only must man, inherently unjust, be governed by fear, but anyone exempt from such fear could be counted on to impose his will upon other men with the most capricious harshness. Furthermore, in so doing, such a man would be subject to no authentic reproach. Like Calvin's God, he would be unimpeachable, for he would be able to assume that any other in his place would behave in exactly the same way he does. Thus, in his destruction of

²⁸Ibid., p. 512.

conceptuality, Epicurus expresses, with even more candor than Calvin, the implication of the choice of selfhood as the obliteration of justice.

The political validation of tyranny implicit in Epicurus' doctrine, if not worked out by him, seems to have emerged in the seventeenth century in the political thought of Hobbes, the modern Epicurean, and of the pious Pascal.²⁹ Both thinkers regarded man in his natural state as brutally egoistic. For both, homo homini lupus. And while Hobbes considered the fact of the social contract to convert power into justice, Pascal felt that the rules of society conceal without altering the antagonism between man and man. It appears to be in anticipation of such congruency as that between Hobbes and Pascal that Shakespeare fashions this alliance between Epicurus and Calvin. In these seventeenth-century philosophers, the relationship between Calvin's doctrine of man's natural depravity and Epicurus' doctrine of pleasure stands revealed.

The similarities between Calvin and Epicurus extend, moreover, to the tone and style of their works. Epicurus exhibits, like Calvin, a toughness and frankness in telling his truths. Bailey observes that Epicurus shows man the

²⁹ J. S. Spink, French Free-Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire (1960; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1960), pp. 70-3. Thomas Franklin Mayo, Epicurus in England: (1650-1725), Ch. VIII: "Epicurus and Hobbes," pp. 115-127. Mayo argues a pervasive similarity between these two philosophers.

truth as he sees it and not as he would like it to be.³⁰ He notes further that Epicurus, again like Calvin, exhibits no compunction in expressing ideas whose impact was shocking and revolutionary.³¹

Shocking enough was Epicurus' assertion that pleasure rather than virtue was the good of man; but more shocking still was his opinion that the gross pleasures of the flesh were more intense than the pleasures of the mind, and that of all pleasures, the most fundamental was that of the belly.

The beginning and the root of all good is
the pleasure of the stomach; even wisdom
and culture must be referred to this.³²

Through this notorious assertion, Epicurus made appetite the foundation of pleasure and suggested that sex was but a form of appetite. Not that Epicurus failed to recognize the reality of love; he regarded love, however, as an unequivocal evil. And Lucretius in the fourth book of De Rerum Natura excoriates love as a madness, which indulged becomes all the more intense and baneful.³³

The single note of altruism and social instinct in the philosophy of Epicurus seems to be its praise and cultivation of friendship. But if in the affirmation of friendship Epicurus seems to emerge from his egoistic isolation

³⁰Bailey, p. 484.

³¹Ibid., p. 515.

³²Ibid., p. 488.

³³Lucretius, p. 179.

into something wider and nobler, Bailey points out that the benefits of friendship are calculated by the same rule of the self as the values that Epicurus rejects. Friendship confers on life its greatest pleasure, but part of that pleasure seems to inher in its ability to promote individual safety. Friendship might culminate in self-sacrifice, yet it had its beginning in an instinct of prudence and self-service.³⁴

The spokesman for Epicurus in Measure for Measure is Lucio. He seems to amass within himself the various doctrines of this philosophy of egoistic hedonism, and to reveal in them a congruence with the theology of Calvin. Lucio first of all exhibits a suspicion of moralism or conceptualism as prejudicial to man's selfhood. Responding to Claudio's self-condemnation, he says,

If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I
would send for certain of my creditors; and yet,
to say the truth, I had as lief have the
foppery of freedom as the mortality of
imprisonment. (I.ii.131-4)

In this speech, Lucio exhibits a willingness to speak the truth, and gives truth an antimoralistic character. Lucio's choice is not the restraint of rational virtues, or wisdom, but rather the "freedom" of selfhood expressed in will. He seems to suggest that conceptual values spell "mortality" for the self. And Lucio further associates himself with

³⁴Bailey, p. 520.

pleasure by wishing to save Claudio

for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be
sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a
game of tick-tack. (I.ii.189-91)

In this statement the identification of the good of life as enjoyment or pleasure evinces at once its antinomian bias, as well as its bias against love as another way of compromising the autonomy of the self. Lucio is further addressed by Claudio specifically as a "friend" and that denomination also helps to build in him an Epicurean identity: "I thank you, good friend Lucio." (I.ii.192)

Further hints of Lucio's Epicurean character are to be found, I suspect, in the praise of creative nature that marks his characterization of Juliet's pregnancy.

Your brother and his lover have embrac'd.
As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb
Expreseth his full tilth and husbandry.
(I.iv.40-44)

The tone and meaning of this speech seem to echo Lucretius' praise of Venus genetrix at the beginning of De Rerum Natura. Again, Lucio, like Epicurus, seems to have a skeptical turn of mind, which is yet contained by a trust in the senses, of which we shall speak anon. When he addresses Isabella for the first time, he expresses a doubt of her virginity, a doubt that he dismisses by observing her "cheek-roses."

Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses
proclaim you are no less! (I.iv.16-7)

But it is his appetitive and loveless approach to

sex, displayed throughout the play, that most conspicuously marks Lucio for an Epicurean. Although the connection of sex with food is not unique to Lucio, it seems to be an especially prominent, indeed, an almost compulsive feature of his mind.³⁵ His description of Juliet's pregnancy to Isabella begins, "As those that feed grow full." (I.iv.41) Responding to the Friar-Duke's postures of severity toward carnal vice, he objects,

It is impossible to extirp it quite, friar,
till eating and drinking be put down.
(III.ii.102-3)

And again he tells Isabella,

I am fain to dine and sup with water and bran;
I dare not for my head fill my belly; one
fruitful meal would set me to't.
(IV.iii.152-4)

Indeed, sex and eating become not only associated but identified by him. Mistress Overdone becomes "my dear morsel."
(III.ii.54)

Once we combine the recognition of Lucio as an exponent of the philosophy of Epicurus with Shakespeare's association of Epicureanism with Calvinism, we begin to see

³⁵We should note that this association of Epicureanism with the pleasures of the stomach is habitually extended by Shakespeare to include lust. Goneril charges Lear's knights with "Epicurism and lust," vices that, she says, make her "graced palace" "more like a tavern or brothel." King Lear (I.iv.244-6). And in Antony and Cleopatra, Enobarbus refers to Cleopatra as Antony's "Egyptian dish." (III.vi.126) This association, moreover, was not confined to Shakespeare. In Jonson's Alchemist, Sir Epicure Mammon exhibits the same identification of lust and gluttony on an extravagantly indecent scale.

evidence of a pattern in Lucio's strange ability to enunciate Calvinistic doctrines, and to adopt Calvin's vocabulary.

His description in I,ii, of man, seeking to obey the law as

the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with
the Ten Commandments, but scrap'd one out of
the table, (I.ii.7-9)

becomes identifiable as Calvin's rejection of man's attempt to justify himself by his own works. And Lucio's declaration that "Grace is grace, despite of all controversy," (I.ii.24 5) hailed from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, xi. 6, becomes somewhat less puzzling in his mouth.

In viewing Epicureanism as the philosophy of human as opposed to divine selfhood, we begin to perceive the logic not only of the association between Lucio and Angelo, but also of Lucio's attack on Angelo. As divine selfhood, Angelo threatens the selfhood of Lucio. As Angelo is envious of all selfhood outside of his own, so Lucio slanders Angelo's selfhood. Lucio will suggest that he lacks personhood by virtue of his inability to participate in nature. Angelo by Lucio's account is "an ungenitur'd agent." (III.ii.175) By contrast, the conflict between Lucio and the Friar-Duke is that between selfhood and world. In III,ii, Lucio will invalidate the divinity of the Duke as world by showing him to lack selfhood, and thus also to fail as personhood. Being totally immersed in the world,

He would mouth with a beggar, though
she smelt brown bread and garlic. (III.ii.183-5)

In short, neither the Duke nor Angelo has the attribute of personhood.

In slandering Angelo and the Duke together, moreover, Lucio seems to be addressing them as the affirmative and the negative aspects of the Neo-Platonic dialectic. In slandering them, Lucio is slandering theological extremes. And the meaning of this slander appears to bear some relationship to the fact that Shakespeare provides, in Measure for Measure, a conflation of the philosophies of reason and will on the humanistic level that seems to parallel that on the theological level. In III,i, the Friar-Duke will offer to Claudio a sermon that constitutes, as I shall try later to show, an evenhanded conflation of Epicurean and Cynic thought, and seems to slander the idea of man much as Lucio slanders the Neo-Platonic ideas of God. If Lucio denies the divinity of God by denying God's personhood, the Friar-Duke impugns the humanity of man by denying his divinity. The signature of the denial of man in the Friar-Duke's speech is its implicit denial of the immortality of the soul, a denial that renders it, as a Christian consolation, so bizarre.

It should be observed of Lucio, moreover, that his perception of sex is not only unemotional and appetitive, but also crudely and imagistically mechanistic. Sex for him is "a game of tick-tack" (I.ii.190-1) or "filling a bottle with a tun-dish" (III.ii.172) or "untrussing." (III.ii.179) Such mechanistic references to sex seem, in self-contradictory fashion, to trivialize the very concept of pleasure that

Epicurus advances. The mechanistic idea of sex, moreover, appears to be related to the mechanism of the Epicurean cosmos and to the linking of pleasure and knowledge implicit in that mechanism. As Epicurean hedonism appears by its crude triviality to negate itself, so the Epicurean theory of knowledge seems, comparably, to misrepresent the truth.

In Epicurus' world of atomic materialism, both knowledge and pleasure are fundamentally related to sensation. Bailey explains that

the one method of cognition of truth is sense-perception: sensation is the ultimate and only guarantee or criterion of truth. This is indeed the one fundamental principle of Epicurus' whole system. . . .³⁶

In a world wholly material, moreover, sensation can take place only through physical contact, or touch. As Bailey explains,

In a material system . . . the only possible relation between one thing and another is that of contact: if one body is to affect another it must touch it. All sensation then, in its physical analysis, is an atomic movement due to the touch resulting from the contact of material bodies. Hence the simplest form of sensation is the feeling of contact which we may experience in any portion of our body, when an external body impinges upon it, and to such contact all sensation must ultimately be reduced.³⁷

But if the apprehension by the subject of the objective world is derived from the direct material impingement of that world on the subject through touch, the same impingement not only communicates the objective truth of the world,

³⁶Bailey, pp. 337-38.

³⁷Ibid., p. 241.

but also provokes a reaction to it of either pleasure or pain. According as the thing known proves pleasurable or painful, it is either good or bad.³⁸ Thus in the Epicurean system, knowing and feeling are intimately interrelated. Bailey explains that

'feeling' plays the same part in Epicurean Ethics, which sensation does in his physical theory; it is the basis from which everything must start and the standard to which all must be referred. It is the test of rightness in morals, that is, of rightness in action, just as sensation is the test of truth in knowledge, that is, of the rightness of apprehension. . . . Thus the ethical theory of Epicurus does not stand by itself as an independent or detached adjunct to the physical theory, but rests upon the same fundamental principle, the immediate and necessary validity of sensation.³⁹

Shakespeare will suggest, however, that sensation and feeling, while not totally invalid, still deny the existence of ideals such as justice and mercy. Following Epicurus' derivation of all knowledge from sensation, Lucio ascribes the Duke's valuation of mercy to his own experience of sin.

He had some feeling of the sport; he knew
the service, and that instructed him to mercy.
(III.ii.119-20)

Lucio here makes the critical Epicurean association between feeling and knowing. Likewise, Angelo's justice is attributed to his inability to feel and hence, to know. The effect of Lucio's attempt to define conceptuality as a function of

³⁸Ibid., p. 250.

³⁹Idem.

sensation, however, is to impugn the validity of his own knowledge of sensation. Among the ironies of this dialogue between Lucio and the Friar-Duke is its revelation of Lucio's own ignorance. A sensationalist, Lucio cannot see beneath appearances; he does not realize, therefore, that the friar before him is really the Duke himself. Limiting knowledge to sensation, he convicts himself of ignorance.

In attempting to understand the association between Angelo, Lucio, and the Friar-Duke, we should observe, moreover, that Shakespeare seems to make their philosophical identities all expressions of newfangledness. Of this newfangledness Lucio is but the most egregious expression, and it is the extravagance of his manifestation of newness that his denotation in the cast of characters as a "fantastic" seems to connote. Through this term Shakespeare seems to associate a love of extravagant dress with an addiction to change. Lucio's love of the "foppery of freedom," (i.ii.134) seems to criticize his Epicurean concept of freedom as mere foppery, or what Claudio in another context will call "the fault and glimpse of newness." (I.ii.158) It is for just such "witless bravery" (I.iii.10) that the Duke expresses contempt. Yet the Duke, in assuming the habit of a Stoic friar, is, like Lucio, also changing his clothes and dressing up. Angelo, too, as Isabella's "man,/ Dress'd in a little brief authority," (II.ii.117-8) is another example of man in costume. As paraders in costume, both Angelo and the

Friar-Duke become associated with Lucio and incur an association with the term "fantastic." Lucio can charge that the Duke's relinquishing of power was "a mad fantastical trick," (III.ii.92) and Isabella's man dressed in authority also "plays . . . fantastic tricks before high heaven." (II.ii.121)

The term "trick" seems to reinforce the nuance of gaudiness in the term "fantastic" by its apparent implication of fashionableness.⁴⁰ In his conversation with Pompey, Lucio will ask Pompey for "the trick of it," and suggest in refusing to bail him that "it is not the wear." (III.ii.74-5) In Act V, he will excuse his slanders against the Duke by claiming, "I spoke it but according to the trick." (V.i. 504-5) Thus, in the complex term "fantastic trick" or "tricks" Shakespeare appears to be alluding to the new-fangleness of his age in which man discarded the old religion and "tried on" various new and showy philosophies, of which Epicureanism was the showiest and most daring, but ultimately no more atheistic in its implications than the more respected doctrines of Stoicism and Calvinism.

The term "fantasia" had, moreover, a specific

⁴⁰The O. E. D. gives "trick," among other meanings, as "a freakish or mischievous act; a roguish prank; a frolic; a piece of roguery or foolery; a hoax, practical joke"; but also as, "a capricious, foolish, or stupid act; a thing done without full thought or consideration." The term "trick" in Measure for Measure seems to embrace such meanings within a context of fashionableness. It appears to connote a fatuous pretense of cleverness and to refer to the ultimate folly of the philosophical modishness of Shakespeare's day.

denotation in Epicurean philosophy; it was associated with the "agglomeration in the eye" of the idols, or films, which, according to Epicurus, were being shed continually by all objects and whose unremittant stream made possible the faculty of sight.⁴¹ These idols, like Lucio's clothes, were continually being changed. They were, moreover, hollow and extremely tenuous, indeed, barely there at all. The "fantasia" thus seems to connote an exterior, "hollowly put on," (II.iii.124) a thing of minimal reality. And it is barely possible that this term helps to place Stoicism, and Calvinism, within a context of Epicurean false knowledge.

A connection between Lucio and the Friar-Duke seems to be further implied by the light-darkness imagery that informs their relationship. Lucio's name is suggestive of light, and thus for the knowledge of which light is the immediate metaphoric equivalent; the Friar-Duke is associated in III,ii, and IV,iii, with darkness, and both times by Lucio.

The Duke yet would have dark deeds darkly
answer'd, he would never bring them to light.
(III.ii.175-8)

Alluding to Claudio's supposed death, he tells Isabella,

If the old fantastical Duke of dark corners
had been at home, he had liv'd. (IV.iii.156-8)

Coghill has associated Lucio with Lucifer, and thus with

⁴¹Bailey, p. 242.

Satan.⁴² Whetstone's reference to "visible Lightes in obscure Corners" in his prefatory Epistle to A Mirrour for Magistrates of Cyties and his use of that phrase with the meaning of "informers" seems to reveal a richer vein of significance. Lucio in Act V literally plays the informer; in III,ii, he informs the Friar-Duke of certain implications in his own identity.

This suggestion of knowledge or information in Lucio's name seems, moreover, to correspond suggestively with the light-knowledge metaphor in Lucretius' poem. Throughout that work light is a metaphor for Lucretius' specific kind of knowledge, the knowledge of the senses that sweeps away all religion, while darkness connotes the mind oppressed with terrors born of religion.

This terror then, this darkness of the mind,
must needs be scattered not by the rays of the
sun and the gleaming shafts of day, but by the
outer view and the inner law of nature.⁴³

For Lucretius, the uninformed and therefore blind heart is beset by danger and misery.

Ah! miserable minds of men, blind hearts! in
what darkness of life, in what great dangers ye
spend this little span of years!⁴⁴

Inner and outer darkness converge in Lucretius' comparison of

⁴²Coghill, p. 24.

⁴³Lucretius, p. 31. Lucretius evidently liked these lines well enough to repeat them in Book VI.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 65.

the darkness of ignorance to the fear of children in the dark. Suggesting that "the whole of life is a struggle in darkness," he continues,

For even as children tremble and fear everything in blinding darkness, so we sometimes dread in the light things that are no whit more to be feared than what children shudder at in the dark and imagine will come to pass.⁴⁵

Likewise, in Measure for Measure the dark corner of the Friar-Duke's mind seems to refer to his neglect of sense perception. It is this dark corner that Lucio, as the light of sensation, is to illuminate.

Shakespeare will suggest, however, that the light of Epicurus, as the light of unaided sense, is limited in its sphere of judgment. When Lucio, intruding into the courts of power, attempts to take a hand in the government of the state by assisting in the arrest of the Friar-Duke, he finds that his senses betray him and that his knowledge is mere ignorance. Thus, if Lucio informs against the Friar-Duke, he informs also against himself. He becomes at the end of the play an unwilling representative of the docta ignorantia in matters above the ken of the senses, and that recognition of ignorance suggests the final rectification of his knowledge. There is, moreover, the suggestion in his marriage to Kate Keepdown not only that the senses will be kept in their proper place but also that Lucio will have the lesson of their

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 66-7.

deceiving qualities reinforced in a most humiliating way. As he himself suggests, Kate Keepdown will make Lucio a "cuckold." (V.i.517)

In awakening the sense perception of the Duke, however, Lucio retains some virtue and some validity. Not only does he stand his ground with Vice-like insouciance when confronted with the enormity of his error and the consequences it threatens, but he is accorded also the honor of revealing the Duke to the view of the senses and thus dominates the climactic moment of the play. Not incidentally, moreover, he reveals the true identity of the Duke through the faculty of touch. When the Duke tells him, "Thou art the first knave that e're mad'st a duke," (V.i.356), he seems to refer both to Lucio's unhooding of him and to the innate validity of Lucio's knowledge. In his identity as world, the Duke had advanced intellect without the senses. By claiming Isabella in marriage, he will now affirm their validity.

In the affirmation of the senses that the Duke's readiness to marry represents, moreover, the execution of Lucio becomes a philosophical impossibility. Lucio is to be punished, but not destroyed; disciplined, but not denied. And because in Act V Measure for Measure emerges from the realm of absolutes into the realm of moderation and reconciliation, the Duke can impose a penalty other than death. Lucio, too, seems to evince an appreciation of moderation when he begs not for pardon but for a moderate penalty.

If you will hang me for it, you may, but I
had rather it would please you I might be
whip't. (V.i.505-6)

And inasmuch as both Lucio and the Duke find their pleasures in expressions of moderation, they may be said to be reconciled. To be sure, their pleasures do not coincide exactly, Lucio preferring a whipping and the Duke identifying his "pleasure" (V.i.521) as Lucio's marriage to Kate Keepdown. But neither are they at absolute odds. Between the will of heaven and the will of nature an accommodation has been achieved in which likeness and disparity, congruency and distinction achieve a balance.

CHAPTER V

BRUNONIAN NEO-PLATONISM AS THE PHILOSOPHICAL STRUCTURE IDENTIFYING STOICISM AND CALVINISM

If, as I have been at pains to suggest, Shakespeare identifies the absolute affirmation of both reason and will as the cause of their dissociation into the opposing theologies of Calvinism and Neostoicism, it is my purpose to suggest further that Shakespeare observed in the stark opposition of Calvinist and Stoic theologies the implication of their profound identity. The origin of this identity is beyond the scope of this study; yet it should at least be observed that scholars have found such an origin in the influence of Stoicism upon the thinking of Paul himself as the architect of voluntaristic theology. In his book, Roman Stoicism, Arnold notes a variety of ways in which Pauline thought seems to reflect the influence of Stoic ideas.¹ And while Pohlenz considers Paul to have been influenced rather by the mystery cults of his day than by Stoicism, he too perceives a parallel between the Stoic validation of the wise man in all his deeds by the perfection of his wisdom and the

¹Arnold, Chapter XVII, "The Stoic Strain in Christianity," pp. 409-36, passim.

Pauline validation of man's acts by the standard of faith.² If the thinking of Paul reflects the influence of Stoicism, the resemblance between Calvin as the heir of Pauline Christianity and Justus Lipsius, as the Neostoic, acquires an historical foundation. Calvin as the latter day enunciator of Pauline theology comes rightly by a Stoic temperament. And while to make Paul and Calvin mere Stoics is manifestly to distort their thinking, an appreciation of this thinking cannot but include a recognition of such similarities.

If the ideology of the Stoics has been shown to be marked by absoluteness, the temperament of Paul also is adjudged by Pohlenz as extremist.³ The most prominent expression of extremism in both Stoic and Pauline thought, moreover, is their common insistence upon the absoluteness of divine power and the coordinate insistence that the absoluteness of divine power entails as its corollary the total subjection of man to God. In neither the theology of the Stoics, nor in Paul, does man have free will, and this denial of human freedom is restated in Neostoicism and Calvinism. Inge has observed that the reservation of will solely to God forges an identity between Calvinism and Stoicism, and that "high Calvinism is simply Christian Stoicism. It has

²Max Pohlenz, Die Stoa (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1948), p. 403. See also Zanta, p. 54.

³Ibid., p. 402.

been called pantheistic, because it admits only one Will in the universe."⁴ Whether this will is enunciated in Calvin's voluntaristic doctrine of Predestination or in Lipsius' idea of fate as the unalterable law of natural causation, it remains a single absolute will. Indeed, as Pohlenz observes, critics of Calvin claimed that his doctrine of Predestination had its roots in the Stoic doctrine of fate.⁵

Similarly, Shakespeare in Measure for Measure seems to express a doubt in the reality of the distinction between God as absolute will and God as absolute reason. Certainly in his reading of Calvin he would have observed that in asserting God's absoluteness Calvin adopts terms alternately rationalistic and voluntaristic. And if he read Lipsius, he would have observed the same ambivalence of expression. God for Calvin is the will that defines justice "so that what he wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it."⁶ But for Calvin, God is also "a law to himself; . . . even the law of all laws."⁷ And Lipsius seems to express the same identity between God as law and God as will from the Neostoic perspective. Rebuking the temerity of man in questioning the justice of God, he too resorts

⁴William Ralph Inge, Christian Mysticism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 121, n. 2.

⁵Pohlenz, p. 468.

⁶Calvin, II, 201.

⁷Ibid., p. 202.

to the equation of law with will:

God hath pardoned: God hath punished: what wilt thou haue more? The will of God is the chiefe Iustice, as Saluianus saith well and godly. Yet ye say, we require a reason of this inequality. Of whome? Of God? To whom that is lawfull whatsoeuer him liketh; and nothing liketh him but that which is lawful.⁸

Shakespeare may further have observed that whether man's imperfection derives from his selfhood as extraneous to the divinity of the Stoic World, or whether the depravity of his nature alienates him from Calvin's divine selfhood, man's existence apart from God has no validity. For Lipsius as for Calvin, man is tainted. The terms of his reconciliation to God are the repudiation of his own reason and his own will. In terms reminiscent of Seneca's "De Ira,"⁹ Lipsius asserts that "all have deserued punishment, for that al are offenders."¹⁰

I know we have all sinned, and daily doe; we are borne in vncleanness and in it we liue. Insomuch that the storehouse of heauen . . . would be without thunder-bolts, if they were hurled continually vpon all that do offend.¹¹

⁸Lipsius, p. 160.

⁹"We are all inconsiderate and unthinking, we are all untrustworthy, discontented, ambitious --why should I hide the universal sore by softer words?--we are all wicked."
Seneca, "De Ira," in Moral Essays, I, 321.

¹⁰Lipsius, p. 169.

¹¹Ibid., p. 170.

As Calvin contends that man, "taken from a corrupt mass,"¹² must be corrupt, so Lipsius denies that

we being born in this contagion of the world,
should our selues be without corruption.
Then if all bee offenders, where are these
harmles people?¹³

Part of Shakespeare's purpose in attacking divine absolutism is to authenticate the being of man as well as God.

In the Neo-Platonism of Giordano Bruno, Shakespeare seems to have perceived the structure that affords philosophical validation to the identity of Calvin's voluntarism and Stoicism's rationalism. Through the Brunonian categories of potency and act, the Friar-Duke and Angelo are fused into a single identity as a concordia oppositorum. But, as we shall see, the Friar-Duke and Angelo, in expressing this concord of opposites, represent only one part, the positive and approved part of Bruno's dialectic; there is another negative and obscure aspect to this theology that is expressed through the relationship between Isabella and Mariana, and this aspect of Bruno's dialectic is conveyed through the terms "essence" and "attribute," terms that connote not the identity of oppositions, but the opposition of identities. In short, the bed trick at the heart of Measure for Measure seems to present a complex image of the identity of will and reason and also to contradict the identification of will with reason.

¹²Calvin, II, 202.

¹³Lipsius, p. 170.

It is these distinctions of potency and act, essence and attribute that Lovejoy in his article of 1904 entitled "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza,"¹⁴ sets forth. In this article he argues for the recognition of Spinoza as the direct philosophical descendant of Plotinus and of Bruno as his immediate predecessor and influencer. He attempts to show that these critical Plotinian categories of thought constitute the scaffolding upon which the dialectic of both these philosophers rests and that both Bruno and Spinoza are to be regarded as latter day Neo-Platonists. Shakespeare's use, moreover, of Brunonian categories in Measure for Measure not only suggests his own profound involvement with Neo-Platonic philosophy and his anticipation of the philosophical ferment that Spinoza was later to generate, but also betrays a distinctly critical quality. As always, Shakespeare is both observer and commentator.

Lovejoy, moreover, in providing us with the terms and the logic basic to the comprehension of the thought of these two philosophers, seems not only to suggest the perspective from which the characterization of Isabella becomes intelligible, but seems to provide also the key to the understanding of the characterizations of Mistress Overdone and Pompey as imaginative projections of aspects of the

¹⁴Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," University of California Publications, I (1904), 141-174.

Brunonian dialectic. By the translation of Lovejoy's argument into the imaginative terms of the play, we begin to see *Mistress Overdone*, *Pompey*, and *Isabella* as members of one philosophic family.

Spinoza's philosophy may be described as monistic; yet Lovejoy observes of his thought that it appears to embrace two conspicuously contradictory systems¹⁵ by virtue of its postulation of strikingly contrasting definitions of God. Spinoza defines God both as an abstract simplicity, having no attributes, and also as an essence endowed with an infinity of attributes. He is both a being of which nothing can be predicated and also a being of which everything must be predicated. On the one hand, all attempts to define him negate him, for all definitions inherently limit and thus negate his necessarily infinite Being; to say what God is is also to say what he is not. On the other hand, God is to be defined as everything, since there is nothing that can exist outside of God without similarly limiting the necessary infinitude of his being and, thus, also denying him. Lovejoy's purpose in this paper is to identify the dialectic that relates these two ideas of Spinoza as necessary and inevitable components of the monistic system he advances.

In addressing these antinomies within Spinoza's pantheism, however, Lovejoy observes not only that they are

¹⁵Ibid., p. 142.

a latter day restatement of Neo-Platonic ideas originating in Plotinus, but that they constitute, further, a feature of the thought of Medieval theologians, including Dionysius Areopagita and Thomas Aquinas, before being again promulgated in the philosophy of Bruno.¹⁶

In the Medieval theology this paradoxically double definition of God emerges as

the doctrine of the equal truth of the 'negative' and the 'affirmative' theology--the doctrine that while all positive predicates must be negated of the divine nature--because all determination is limitation and negation --at the same time all must be affirmed of it --since no real mode of being or kind of 'perfection' could be lacking in the All-Perfect.¹⁷

Lovejoy suggests, however, that in Medieval theology, the starkness of this antinomy is muted by a variety of not wholly successful rationalizations and stylistic devices whose effect was to soften its impact on the mind and to prevent a full recognition of its implication.¹⁸ Bruno's statement of this paradox, however, far from attempting to blur its outlines, is marked by a conscious effort to heighten and intensify them. By trumpeting the doctrine of the coincidentia oppositorum, Bruno advances this paradox with a fervor that makes it seem new and revolutionary; he claims this doctrine as his own.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 158-9.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 158-60.

Central to Lovejoy's investigation of this twofold definition of God is a distinction that he advances early in his essay: a distinction between the divine essence and the divine attributes, or between the "thatness" and the "whatness" of God.

The question as to the relation, as conceived in any given monistic ontology, between Absolute Being and the world of phenomena, is not one question, but two; and that side of it about which philosophers and theologians have usually had most to say, is distinctly the less significant of the two. For one may ask, either: what is the ontological locus or extension of the ultimate reality? or, What is its ontological kind? The first question concerns the relation of inclusion or exclusion between the mere being, the 'that' of phenomena, and the being of the Absolute; the second concerns the relation of inclusion or exclusion between the determinate nature and content, the 'what' of phenomena, and the nature of the Absolute. . . . It is this question about the manifestation of the divine nature in the world of experience that is both practically and theoretically the more important. . . . One may doubt whether the inclusion of the esse of things in a single Being has any meaning if abstracted from the conception of the inclusion of the determinate qualities and content of those things in that Being.¹⁹

Nevertheless, it is just such selective inclusion that Neo-Platonism asserts; it is this distinction between the essence and the attributes of God that constitutes in Plotinus, and in a latter day, Bruno, one part of the grand contradiction in the definition of God. And it is, I suspect, to this same distinction between essence and attribute that

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 145-6.

the Duke in I,iii, of Measure for Measure refers in expressing a willingness to hazard his "name" though not his "nature" in the cause of restoring order to Vienna. He tells Friar Thomas that he has made Angelo governor,

Who may, in th' ambush of my name, strike home,
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander. (I.iii.41-3)

The Duke's "name" here seems to refer to his essence, while his "nature" seems to refer to his attribute. An even clearer allusion to this distinction obtains in Isabella's reference to man's "glassy essence" as his "most assur'd" and least divine quality. (II.ii.119,20) It is, moreover, by virtue of this distinction between essence and attribute that Isabella will consent in essence or name to go to bed with Angelo while preserving her attribute of chastity intact.

In attempting to discover the origins of the concept of God as both alien from and identical with the world, Lovejoy, not insignificantly for our study, takes notice of the influence of Stoicism.²⁰ But he is more concerned to discover a logical necessity behind such a development in human thought. And he finds this necessity in a contradiction inherent in the Platonic and Aristotelian God of abstract and negative transcendence. The essential attribute of the Aristotelian God was "logical self-sufficiency,"²¹

²⁰Ibid., p. 151.

²¹Ibid., p. 150.

an attribute that seemed to preclude any logical relation with the world of phenomena. The world of phenomena, conversely, lacked any logical relationship with God; its existence was thus unsupported in the ultimate reality. It appeared, however, to Plotinus that the ability of the world to exist apart from deity implicitly contradicted the perfection of deity as Absolute Being.

If the Perfect and Absolute Reality were confessed to be merely coexistent with a diversity of other beings having some sort of genuine reality of their own--if the lower entelechies were true entities, not only outside the divine substance but incapable of being apprehended or influenced thereby--then it was, in truth, confessed that the Absolute was no Absolute, that the Most Perfect Being was not perfect after all. Only a Nature that included all positive being within itself, could meet the requirements of the dialectic that lay behind the theology of Plato and Aristotle.²²

To perfect this now imperfect idea of divine perfection, Lovejoy identifies the options of either regarding the world of phenomena as illusory or of making it real but incorporating its reality within the being of God. Neoplatonism chose the latter way although, as Lovejoy points out, the alternative recourse to illusionism was never entirely renounced and becomes a significant factor in the theology of Bruno. The location of all phenomenal being within the being of deity, however, transformed the Platonic idea of divine transcendence into the contrary idea of divine

²²Ibid., p. 151.

immanence. Thus Plato's dualism evolved into Neo-Platonic monism.²³

Lovejoy, however, makes the critical observation that the participation of the world in divinity was never total but rather limited to a participation in the divine essence without a comparable participation in the divine attributes. The world was God

in being but not in kind--the divine nature must still be maintained to be completely 'other' to all the characteristics of the world of experience--immutable, simple, transcendent of relativity, incapable of receiving the attributes of human existence as true predicates of itself. And here appeared the peculiar paradox of Neo-Platonism --the conception of a being which should include all the esse of all things without possessing the attributes of any of those things--a being which, though without parts, should embrace within itself all the diversity of the universe; in which, though immutable, all things should live and move and have their being.²⁴

Lovejoy further points out, moreover, that Plotinus, finding the perfection of God to necessitate this incorporation of the realm of mundane reality, was subtly changing the Platonic and Aristotelian idea of divine perfection to include the concept of infinity, a concept that had not before figured prominently in its meaning.²⁵ And by making infinity an attribute of perfection, Plotinus appears to deduce the idea of divine creativity from the idea of divine

²³Idem.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 151-2.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 155-6.

immanence. For Plotinus, God's perfection implies first and foremost its "transcendence of itself, its going forth beyond itself."²⁶ He takes note of Plotinus' insistence that

whatever attains to perfection necessarily engenders, and is incapable of remaining within itself alone, but must needs produce something other than itself. . . . How, then, were it possible that the Most Perfect Being and Supreme Good should remain within itself, as though the Universal Power were envious or impotent.²⁷

While noting the presence of this idea in Plato's Timaeus and also in Philo, Lovejoy insists that it is Plotinus who integrates it logically within the concept of divine perfection.²⁸ We should observe at this time, if only in passing, that both the Duke and Lucio associate the negativity of the Calvinist Angelo with envy and impotence.

The inclusion of self-transcendence in the idea of divinity appears to have impelled Plotinus to ascribe to the negative idea of transcendence and the affirmative idea of immanence the relationship of potentiality to actualization, a relationship that seems to provide for the perception of the concepts of transcendence and immanence as an identity of opposites, a concordia oppositorum. Yet this identity does not negate the difference implied in the distinction between essence and attribute, thatness and whatness, a

²⁶Ibid., p. 155.

²⁷Idem. Quoted from *Enneads*, 4.1.

²⁸Idem.

distinction that, contrary to fostering a harmony of contraries, rather implies a rupture of identities. Thus the One both is and is not all things:

That, for Plotinus, the One is all things and all things are 'in' the One, is certain from several passages in the Enneads, and is implicit in the general logic of the system. For the One is the potentiality of all things (*ἐν ᾧ πάντα*) and at the same time in it all possibility is in perfect realization; that of which it is the *ἐν ᾧ* must be one with itself, since in it potentiality and realization are indivisibly one. On the other hand, it is certain that the One is simple and free from relation to anything, and alien to all the determinations of the things that exist within it. The One and the All are identical in substance; yet nothing that is true of the latter is true of the former, none of the properties that make things what they are can be found within the whole that completely contains those things.²⁹

In Measure for Measure, these two aspects of the Neo-Platonic dialectic seem to orient the philosophies of Stoicism and Calvinism to each other by incorporating both their perspectives. The terms potency and act, corresponding with the Stoic terms matter and force, provide the logic of the Stoic idea of God as the world; the terms of essence and attribute seem to account for the Calvinist claim of the radical otherness of God from the world. As the exponent of Neo-Platonism in Measure for Measure, Isabella will exhibit an ability to express either point of view, and, apparently, even to express both points of view simultaneously.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 152-3.

Turning specifically to Bruno, Lovejoy asserts that despite Bruno's deliberate heightening of the monistic aspect of its dual theology, he remains "neither more nor less than a Neo-Platonist of the Renaissance."³⁰ Lovejoy also points out that Bruno made his own contribution to Neo-Platonic thought by deifying matter and denying the existence of universals:

He corrected Neo-Platonism . . . at a point where it was unnecessarily at variance with itself, by merging the conception of 'matter' (the potential) in that of God, or the Infinite. And in some writings, though not uniformly, he clearly expresses himself as, in the mediaeval sense, a conceptualist, denying the existence of any separate 'world of universals,' of archetypes not embodied in concrete individual forms.³¹

But most significant for us is the use to which Bruno put the idea of the infinitude of God. In the thought of Bruno, the "logical infinity" or "absoluteness" of God that implies his transcendence also implies God's infinite extension in the world.³² God must, as the infinite creator, create

³⁰Ibid., p. 160.

³¹Idem.

³²Ibid., pp. 161-162, McFarland suggests that Bruno, by aligning the doctrine of the infinity of God's immanence with the new cosmology of Copernicus, destroyed the idea of God's transcendence. He cites Heim's observation that

"Giordano Bruno . . . was the first with audacious hands to strike the roof off the world, disclosing space without end. And with that the thought of a world beyond, in its former significance became unframable. Bruno himself not only made the discovery; he also showed the consequences for religion. With the breakdown of the Ptolemaic idea of the world as a self-

infinitely; the world, thus, becomes infinite. It is, moreover, to Bruno's explicit rejection of the limitation of the world that we should, I suspect, relate Pompey's rejection of all restraints on his trade.

By adding the idea of infinitude to the idea of creation, Lovejoy identifies three distinct parts in the dialectic of Bruno: the necessity of a transcendent idea of deity, the equal necessity of a totally inclusive and immanent concept of deity, and finally, the necessity for the divine immanence to be unceasingly and infinitely creative:

The assumed necessity that an absolute reality shall be self-contained, logically infinite, and ontologically complete is found to require (1) that the absolute shall be conceived as transcendent of all relations and determinations, and hence as purely abstract and negative; but also (2) that it shall be conceived as containing in itself all that is, and as (3) having involved in its own, self-caused, existence the necessity for causing the existence of all possible things in all possible ways--that is to say, of an infinity of infinite worlds and of finite beings.³³

This third element of infinity in the Neo-Platonic dialectic is expressed before Bruno as the world's fullness of all possible manifestations of being, that completion to which

inclosed system, he felt that the possibility of ever distinguishing God and the world from each other went also. The divine line was gone; the world and the world beyond were no longer to be separated."

God Transcendent; Foundation for a Christian Metaphysic, trans. E. P. Dickie (New York, 1936), pp. 31-4, cited in Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition, p. 288.

³³Lovejoy, p. 166.

Lovejoy in his book, The Great Chain of Being, refers as the principle of plenitude.³⁴

It is, I suggest, something very close to, if not identical with, this tripartite definition of deity that Shakespeare recognized in Bruno's theology, and it is this tripartite definition of the Brunonian deity that Shakespeare seems to express through the characters of Isabella, Mistress Overdone, and Pompey. In Isabella Shakespeare gives us an imaginative projection of the negative part of Neo-Platonic theology, in Mistress Overdone, he seems to express its wholly positive aspect, and in Pompey, the infinitely creating world soul. In these three characters, moreover, Shakespeare appears to recapitulate, in Neo-Platonic terms, the analogical structure of reality. Isabella represents God, Pompey, political power, and Mistress Overdone, the individual. In these characters, not excluding Pompey, Shakespeare further seems to represent the female counterparts of reality as contrasted with the Duke and Angelo as representatives of masculinity. Because all these characters represent aspects of one concept, however, Shakespeare will at different times suggest that they are all allied, if not identical, with each other.

Like Bruno's absolute, it is Isabella's nature to

³⁴ Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea (1936; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 52.

be transcendent of all relations and abstracted into purity. That is, I think, the meaning of her definition as the votarist of an order of secluded nuns and her eventual repudiation of any relationship with her brother, Claudio. As a nun-to-be, Isabella orients herself toward the realm of theology, and her retirement to the convent dramatizes the negative cast of that theology. The convent becomes the transcendent place of the negative theology.

The monistic character of Isabella's transcendence, moreover, is expressed through her self-characterization as matter, or body. As Bruno defines the absolute as matter, so Isabella identifies her divine principle, her soul, with her body. This identification becomes explicit in Isabella's refusal to submit her body to Angelo on the grounds that such submission would contaminate her soul. "I had rather give my body than my soul," she tells him. (II.iv.56) As Lever has observed, she does not seem to recognize that orthodox Christian and dualistic doctrine so far distinguishes body from soul as to deny the ability of bodily action automatically to compromise the soul; it stipulates rather that compelled sins are not sins.³⁵ And Angelo, in telling

³⁵Measure for Measure, ed. Lever, p. lxxviii. Lever declares that "at the abstract level of a 'contention' or *débat*, Angelo's argument was itself entirely valid. 'Compelled sins' were indeed 'no sins,' by Christian doctrine, by common consent, and by the literary precedent of Andrugio's similar assurance to Cassandra." Lever also cites Bodin to the effect that "le peche n'est point peche, s'il n'est volontaire, comme dit S. Augustin. . . ." La Demonomanie, IV, p. 516.

Isabella,

I talk not of your soul; our compell'd sins
Stand more for number than for accompt,
(II.iv.57-8)

seems to be offering for our consideration the contrast of her position with one truly Christian. In failing to distinguish between body and soul, Isabella betrays the monistic and thus unChristian character of her theology.

Isabella's refusal to submit her body to Angelo has, moreover, reference to the Brunonian way of identifying femininity with matter and masculinity with form. Angelo speaks of those who "coin heaven's image/ In stamps that are forbid," (II.iv.45-6) and Isabella herself speaks of woman's vulnerability to seduction as matter's susceptibility to masculine form.

Nay, call us ten times frail,
For we are soft as our complexions are
And credulous to false prints. (II.iv.28-30)

But Isabella in her pure and unpredictable absoluteness must remain formless. She cannot, thus, submit to any man. It is this incapacity that causes her so emphatically to reject Angelo's offer to trade Claudio's body for her own, and this rejection seems in itself to express in her the negative aspect of the Brunonian dialectic.

We observe also, and importantly, that this rejection seems to be effected through the logic of that negative theology: the difference between Isabella's essence and her attribute. On the one hand, she includes herself, as

an essence, within the category of women. It is "we" rather than "they" who are "credulous to false prints." But this identity in essence does not extend to an identity in attribute. Isabella is like other women, but yet most unlike them. She is both woman and nun.

Mistress Overdone, like Isabella, appears to represent the female quality of matter. But unlike Isabella, she represents matter not in its formless divinity but in its eternal succession of forms. We observe of Mistress Overdone that her living requires the sustained succession of masculine forms, and, when told by Pompey in I,ii, that the houses of Vienna are to be plucked down, she laments in a phrase that expresses her identity as the realm of becoming. "What will become of me?" (I.ii.105) Mistress Overdone's identification with this world of becoming is suggested further by Pompey's observation in II,i, that she has had nine husbands, "Overdone by the last." (II.i.202)

If, as matter in its eternal adoption of forms, however, Mistress Overdone belongs to the realm of becoming, she belongs also to the realm of decaying. If Isabella is matter, or flesh, in its incorruptible eternity, Mistress Overdone is matter or flesh in its corruptible temporality. When Pompey tells us of her that "she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub," (III.ii.56-7) he shows Mistress Overdone declining into a subhuman grossness. She appears to be that matter that Bruno describes in the

fourth dialogue of Cause, Principle, and Unity, as both accepting and rejecting form, "since it eternally throws off the individual which it retains for a moment of time."³⁶

We observe further of Mistress Overdone that she is as inveterately promiscuous as Isabella is chaste. Her name as well as her trade associate her immediately with sex. Her name associates her with doing, and doing in Measure for Measure has, pervasively, a sexual connotation. Inquiring the cause of Claudio's arrest, Mistress Overdone asks, "What has he done?" and Pompey replies, "A woman."

(I.ii.87-8) We should note, further, that Mistress Overdone's name implies that she does not assume the role of form, or action. She does not do; rather, she is done. She is the passive matter that is acted upon, in contradistinction to Isabella who, as matter, is potency, yet is rather active than passive. This distinction appears, in a way whose specific significance eludes me, to refer to Bruno's distinction between active and passive potency.³⁷

The association of Mistress Overdone with sex seems, further, to give dramatic expression to her identification with the affirmative theology of potency and act. When we observe that sex is just that kind of action that implies the unifying of femininity and masculinity, and that

³⁶Bruno, p. 134.

³⁷Ibid., p. 111.

femaleness and maleness are here adduced as metaphorical equivalents of potency, or matter, and form, or act, we begin to recognize the more than incidental function of the play's sexual climate, and the more than incidental significance of this minor character. As part of this theology of identification, Mistress Overdone expresses a necessary aspect of the dialectic of the play. She shares a progenerative inclination with no less critical a character than the Friar-Duke. If Lucio reports of the Duke that

ere he would have hang'd a man for the getting
a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the
nursing a thousand, (III.ii.117-9)

she raises Lucio's bastard at her own expense. And this similarity seems to associate the affirmative theology of Neo-Platonism with the optimistic and positive theology of Stoicism.

In identifying Pompey as the third postulate in Lovejoy's analysis of the Neo-Platonic and, specifically, Brunonian dialectic, we observe that he, like Mistress Overdone, is defined in terms of the positive theology of potency and act. Whereas Mistress Overdone is the passive potency of matter, Pompey is the active cause, or form, or act. If Mistress Overdone is the enformed matter, he is the purveyor of forms; he brings men to her. And if Mistress Overdone's life depends on the continued succession of such forms, so his life depends on the ability to continue furnishing these forms. The Friar-Duke tells him

The evil that thou causest to be done,
That is thy means to live. (III.ii.20-1)

And he himself, responding to Escalus' attempt to characterize him with the pejorative term of bawd, replies, "Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow that would live." (II.i.223)

Since it is the necessary condition of his life, Pompey cannot surrender his trade. He responds to Escalus' threat to whip him for being a bawd by murmuring,

Whip me? No, no. let carman whip his jade,
The valiant heart's not whipt out of his trade.
(II.i.255-6)

Of this trade, we should observe two further things: first that it implies an indiscriminate ensouling or enforming of matter and second that it is compulsive and unending, and hence infinite. The indiscriminate equality of one form with another that Pompey's trade implies, and the consequent impersonality of it account for its denomination as a trade. The term "trade" itself implies the interchangeability and equality of one form with another. It is, secondly, to its necessary infinitude that Lucio seems to refer when he imputes the imprisoning of Pompey to a dearth of whores.

What, is there none of Pygmalion's images newly
made woman to be had now, for putting the hand
in the pocket and extracting [it] clutch'd?
(III.ii.44-7)

It is this third principle of infinite causation that Bruno appears to call the world soul. Bruno describes this soul as

the formal constitutive principle of the universe and all contained in it. . . . If life is found in all things, the soul must be the form of all things: that which presides throughout over matter and holds sway over composite things.³⁸

We should observe of this world soul that it presides over matter not as a cause distinct from matter but rather as a principle of form inherent within it. We see that Pompey, even as he causes form, is himself an example of living form and that his desire to preserve his life suggests that he is the thing he causes. As the world soul, Pompey is immanent within matter and as such identical with matter. It appears to be for this reason that Pompey has so close an association with Mistress Overdone and expresses his fidelity to her. "I'll be your tapster still." (I.ii.108) In this connection it should be noted also that Shakespeare emphasizes the identity of Pompey with Mistress Overdone by applying to them both the single term of "bawd." Pompey, indeed, even seems minimally to share her femaleness; in III,ii, Lucio calls him "trot," (III.ii.50) in what Lever observes is Shakespeare's only application of that term to a male character.³⁹

Isabella, Mistress Overdone, and Pompey thus appear to express a tripartite articulation of the principles of

³⁸Bruno, p. 89.

³⁹Lever, p. 84, n. 48.

Brunonian theology. And as three parts of a monistic system, they all seem to be linked with each other. Mistress Overdone is enformed matter; Isabella is matter in its formlessness. Isabella's formlessness, moreover, clearly and repeatedly orients her toward death. Death comes more naturally to her than sex because death dissolves the last vestige of form in the body, whereas sex is productive of form. Yet in her formlessness, Isabella seems to converge with Mistress Overdone's enformed identity because, in becoming everything, Mistress Overdone shows signs of becoming nothing. She is in a state of decomposition and of return to formless primacy. Thus she, no less than Isabella, is oriented toward death. And we see further that if Mistress Overdone by being everything is in the process of becoming nothing, so likewise Isabella by refusing to be anything has the ability to be everything. And it is this infinite potential in utter formlessness that seems to inform her ability to be different things at different moments in the play.

If Shakespeare seems to assert an identity between Isabella and Mistress Overdone, he also conveys a complexity in Pompey that seems to identify him both with Mistress Overdone and Isabella. We should observe that, along with his positive and form-assertive function as world-soul, he has also a negative aspect. For the soul of the world functions both as the force for infinite creation and infinite destruction. He both enforms and dissolves form.

Thus it is no accident that Pompey can find himself equally at home as bawd and as hangman. As he has created out of a compulsion of his nature, so too he destroys to save himself from his "full time of imprisonment" and "an unpitied whipping." (IV.ii.12-3) He has the versatility of being able to change both place and trade and thus exhibits a certain durability, the durability that seems to be informed by Bruno's ascription to the world soul of permanence amidst change:

Thus, while the form changes place and circumstance, it itself cannot possibly be annihilated, since spiritual substance is no less real than material.⁴⁰

Isabella, moreover, in arranging the assignation of Angelo and Mariana, will adopt Pompey's function, as she herself anticipates when she tells Claudio, "Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd." (III.i.149)

If Isabella's identity seems to be complicated by her association with both Mistress Overdone and Pompey, the reason of that complication seems to reside in the extreme complexity of her role in the play. Part of her function is to elicit the identity latent in the extreme separation of reason and will in the Friar-Duke and Angelo. Isabella will complement the will of Angelo by appearing to him as absolute and ideal virtue; she will change Angelo from Calvinist

⁴⁰Bruno, p. 89.

to Neo-Platonist. She will also complement the reason of the Friar-Duke by appearing to him as absolute will and change him also into an exponent of Neo-Platonism. She will bring the Friar Duke and Angelo into an identity with each other as the potency and act of the bed trick. But inasmuch as she herself represents an example of a conflation as improper in its extremity as the disparity between Angelo and the Friar-Duke is for its extremity, her own part in the bed trick adopts the terms of the Brunonian dialectic that sunder identities: essence and attribute. If Isabella causes the disparities of the Friar-Duke and Angelo to culminate in their identification with each other, she also asserts too absolute a distinction between herself and Mariana, a distinction by which she permits to Mariana that which she would sooner die than commit herself. The bed trick seems to express the identity of potency and act and the disparity of essence and attribute as the two interchangeable and equally perverse extremes that characterize Neo-Platonic thought.

In attempting to elucidate the ability of Isabella to exhibit an alliance with both the affirmative and the negative aspects of Bruno's dialectic, we must repair once again to distinctions provided by Lovejoy. He observes that Bruno's own response to the paradox implicit in his twofold theology was itself twofold: it was both one of willing and strident endorsement and also one suggestive of

acosmism.⁴¹ In frankly affirming the paradox, Bruno advances the doctrine of the concordia oppositorum and--most pertinently for our play--the special applicability of this doctrine in "'maximal' or 'minimal' instances of any quality of activity or mode of being; the extreme of one thing is the same as its opposite."⁴² But, Lovejoy also points out that

Bruno was unable to stop here; there is in him another tendency, which leads him, after all, to seek to conceal, and even completely to transform, his central paradox. The outcome was inevitable; for it is not psychologically possible for a rational mind to believe a really self-contradictory proposition, when it once fully envisions that proposition. If one says that God is both an absolutely simple Monad, and a complex Whole of Things, the mind is certain sooner or later to cry out: Which, when all is said and done, am I to think of God? for honestly and vividly think of him in both ways, I cannot. The judging mind, if it truly dealt with concepts and not with words, cannot serve two contradictory predicates; for either it will hate the one and love the other or hold to the one and despise the other. And where the opposition is that in the mind of a Platonizing metaphysician between the transcendental and the immanent conceptions of the relation of the Absolute Being to the concrete content of the world, it is not hard to predict which side of the antinomy will be sacrificed; the concrete 'what' of things will be explained away as only an unreal or illusory aspect of the indivisible and immutable Substance. It was to this that the mediaeval theologians tended to come round; and it is to this, unmistakably, that Bruno resorts, when the mystic intoxication of paradoxical phraseology is less strong upon him. He constantly lapses into language implying that

⁴¹Lovejoy, "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," pp. 163-5.

⁴²Ibid., p. 41.

the multiplicity, difference, and temporal mutability in things are merely a false appearance of the Eternal One--an appearance due in some ways to the distorting influence of the human mind. "All that appears as the differences in bodies, with respect to form, etc., is naught but a differing aspect (or face, volto) of the same Substance--an aspect frail, changeful, corruptible of one immutable, everlasting and eternal Being. . . .⁴³

Thus Lovejoy suggests that if the affirmative theology of Neo-Platonism, expressing itself through the doctrine of the concord of opposites, affirms nature, the negative theology, expressing itself as acosmism, attempts to invalidate and, finally, to destroy nature. The first hint that the play offers of acosmic negation, or illusionism, is found, I think, in the Duke's speech about Heaven and Nature in I.i.32,36. By alluding to Nature as a "creditor," (I.i.39) he makes Nature inherently threatening to her own forms. But it is Isabella who, when we first meet her, is the denier of forms by virtue of her withdrawal into the convent. And we see that this withdrawal is attended by a statement of denial, and inherently false denial. Isabella's first words express an instinctive choice of liberty over restraint, or the affirmative over the negative theology. She expresses a longing for Nature's modality of combinative liberty: "And have you nuns no farther privileges?" (I.iv.1) When Francesca reprimands her, how-

⁴³Ibid., p. 165.

ever, she reverses her choice of privilege, or liberty over restraint, and denies the patent meaning of her statement.

Fran. Are not these large enough?

Isab. Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more,
But rather wishing a more strict restraint
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of
Saint Claire. (I.iv.2-5)

In thus denying the truth of her own nature, Isabella lies. We should note, moreover, that in both affirmation and denial, Isabella is associated with extremism. In both cases she desires "more," more liberty and more restraint. Her very denial of "more" is also an affirmation of "more."

I speak not as desiring more,
But rather wishing a more strict restraint.

Here, I suspect, is a recognition by Shakespeare of that interchangeability of attitude that Lovejoy identifies as Bruno's twofold approach to the contradictions implicit within the affirmative and the negative theologies of Neo-Platonism. On the one hand Isabella denies one aspect of herself; on the other hand, through the term "more," she bespeaks that maximal degree of absolutism that attends the positive paradox of the concord of opposites. In this "more-ness" of Isabella, Shakespeare seems to promise that she will ultimately choose that conflative liberty that she now so strenuously rejects. And I suspect that the dialogue between Isabella and Angelo in II,ii, indeed portrays Isabella's attempt to bring heaven and nature into concord. In II,ii, Isabella ultimately anchors her argument on the

categories of potency and act, and both repudiates and redefines the categories of essence and attribute.

In I,iv, however, such a reversal is merely in its initial stages. Isabella confirms her allegiance to the negative concept of restraint, and the psychological manifestation of that restraint is signal and significant. We observe of Isabella that she maintains the most rigorously exalted opinion toward herself, and yet extends a remarkable tolerance toward the misdemeanor of her brother and adopted cousin, Juliet. To Lucio's mock reverence she archly retorts, "You do blaspheme the good in mocking me." (I.iv.38) Yet her severity toward Juliet and Claudio proceeds no farther than to suggest that they marry. "O, let him marry her;" (I.iv.49) a commonsensical and strikingly unPuritanical approach! And it is her negativity, I suspect, that generates her tolerance. Because Isabella considers herself wholly different from the world, she does not include herself in its stain.

It appears, however, that in this scene, Lucio begins to prompt her to realize within herself not only the negative theology that distinguishes between essence and attribute, but also the positive theology of potency and act. Lucio imputes power to her when he tells her, "Assay the pow'r you have." (I.iv.76) Wholly committed to her negativity, Isabella does not seem capable of recognizing potency or power in herself. "My power? Alas, I doubt--," (I.iv.77)

she responds. But Lucio dispels her doubt and further associates this power with persuasion, or the power of speech, which he also identifies with the transcendent realm of grace.

All hope is gone,
Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
To soften Angelo. (I.iv.68-70)

Significantly, in causing Isabella to believe in her power, and to begin to define herself not as absolute negativity but rather as positive potency, Lucio causes her also to change her place. Convinced by him that she can indeed influence Angelo, she leaves the convent. We should note, moreover, that in convincing Isabella to leave the convent, Lucio includes her within the generality of the young and fair. "When maidens sue,/Men give like gods." (I.iv.80-1) Isabella is to approach Angelo as high and holy nun but also as one of those maidens, in short, as the conflation of affirmative and negative theologies.

The emergence of the affirmative as well as the negative theology of Neo-Platonism within Isabella, however, is anticipated well before we encounter her in I,iv. We observe that in the play's first reference to Isabella, Claudio makes prominent mention of her power and defines that power as persuasiveness: it is the power to cause action in others. What Claudio attributes to Isabella is the quality of potency, and this potency, significantly, is expressed in a description of Isabella as possessed of both

sensuous and intellectual gifts to a superlative degree. What is more, Claudio in ascribing these gifts to Isabella seems to identify and thus to conflate them with one another.

For in her youth
 There is a prone and speechless dialect,
 Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art
 When she will play with reason and discourse,
 And well she can persuade. (I.ii.182-6)

Personal and rational qualities are distinguished by their respective associations with speechlessness and discourse. Yet they seem to be distinguished only to be conflated. Isabella's speechlessness is itself a "dialect" and, despite its passivity, can "move men," just as Isabella's rational "art," while implying an interest in reason for its own sake, is also subject to a rhetorical use. Here in Claudio's description of Isabella is the potential equivalency of self with world and will with reason that she is to realize in II,ii.

In II,ii, Isabella the Neo-Platonist confronts Angelo the Calvinist. And in first confronting him she seems to stand between the affirmative and the negative aspects of the Neo-Platonic dialectic in such a way as to be able to commit herself to neither side. In pleading for the fault of Claudio, she is confronting a situation that demands not the advancement of either selfhood or conceptual justice, but rather a compromise between both principles. But Isabella does not know compromise. As the espouser of both virtue and selfhood in an absolute degree, she seems incap-

able of making a choice between the conceptual value of justice and the value of Claudio as selfhood.

There is a vice that most I do abhor,
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;
For which I would not plead, but that I must;
For which I must not plead, but that I am
At war 'twixt will and will not. (II.ii.29-33)

Isabella will attempt to break this impass by arguing for the sparing of selfhood and the condemnation of concept as two separate things; and as two separate things, expressive of the disjunction between selfhood and world.

I have a brother is condemn'd to die;
I do beseech you, let it be his fault,
And not my brother. II.ii.34-6)

When Angelo, however, refuses her request as implicitly negating his own selfhood, Isabella seems to acknowledge the superior dignity of the selfhood of the magistrate over the selfhood of her brother, and she submits to his denial.

O just but severe law!
I had a brother then. (II.ii.41-2)

In Isabella's referral of Claudio's death to the just but severe law, however, lies the suggestion of the identity of will with law that Isabella is forthwith to claim.

When Lucio urges Isabella to renew her plea, she seems to have made her decision to affirm the justice of pardoning Claudio and thus the congruency of concept with selfhood. She adopts now the perspective of reason and

determines to marshal its discursive power in defense of Claudio. And her first application of reason advances, aptly enough, the very heart of the rational power to coerce: the principle of sufficient reason. She tells Angelo, in effect, that if he can legally pardon Claudio, he must pardon him. Thus Isabella brings reason to the aid of Claudio's selfhood and expresses the congruency of man and heaven.

Yes; I do think that you might pardon him,
And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.
(II.ii.49-50)

To this argument Angelo responds by adducing the Calvinist doctrine of free will, and thus defines his position as the polar opposite to that of Isabella.

Ang. I will not do't.
Isab. But could you if you would?
Ang. Look what I will not, that I cannot do.
Isab. But might you do't, and do the world no wrong,
If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse
As mine is to him? (II.ii.51-5)

With this interchange, then, the battle lines are drawn. But in the ensuing battle, Angelo is at a critical disadvantage. For Isabella, representing as she does the congruency of selfhood with world, will be able, like Ambidexter, to play with both hands. She will show Angelo that the antithesis of will and reason conceals a profound congruency by discovering rationalistic implications in his expressions of will and voluntaristic implications in his expressions of reason. Thus she seems to efface the

distinction between authority and subject, judge and prisoner. Angelo can assert the supremacy of his will against Isabella's coercive reason; but Isabella in advancing that reason suggests that the irrational will is also the impotent will, and thus subtly dissolves autonomous will. Likewise, when Angelo attempts to argue from the perspective of law, Isabella will suggest, voluntaristically, that if Angelo does not pardon Claudio, he too stands convicted before the law of God. Ultimately, she will force Angelo to resort to the conflation of Stoicism with Calvinism and thus convert him into a Neo-Platonist.

With the identification by Isabella of her position as rationalistic, she subtly challenges the Calvinist claim of the governor's superiority over his subject, a claim she is immediately to amplify by asserting that Angelo's word is possessed of no greater dignity than her own; she is to augment this claim further with the congruently rational claim of the interchangeability of governor and subject. In studying the language of Isabella, we should observe still further her almost certainly symbolic use of the words "yes" and "no," to suggest the congruency of the affirmative and the negative positions that it is her function rationally to suggest. She has already told Angelo, "Yes; I do think that you might pardon him." (II.ii.49) Now, when Angelo tells her, "He's sentenc'd; 'tis too late," (II.ii.55) she responds,

Too late? Why, no; I that do speak a word
 May call it again. Well, believe this,
 No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
 Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
 The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
 Become them with one half so good a grace
 As mercy does.
 If he had been as you, and you as he,
 You would have slipp'd like him, but he, like you,
 Would not have been so stern. (II.ii.56-66)

In this speech Isabella seems to adduce rationalistic doctrines both to enshrine mercy as the special attribute of hierarchical authority and also to express the contrary leveling of hierarchy that reason implies. The rational context of Isabella's speech would seem to render plausible the derivation of that praise not from a Calvinist source but rather from Seneca's "De Clementia." Isabella's praise of mercy seems to echo Seneca's opinion in that essay that

of all men none is better graced by clemency than a king or a prince. For virtues impart to great men grace and glory only when they have a salutary power: it is surely a baneful might that is strong only for harm.⁴⁴

In considering the possibility of the derivation of Isabella's definition of mercy as the preeminent attribute of kings from Seneca's "De Clementia," we should note also that Calvin wrote a commentary on this essay. Thus, the subject of clemency constitutes historically a point of contiguity between the thought of Seneca and that of Calvin, and it seems not implausible to suggest that Shakespeare, in addressing the issue of mercy in II,ii, was availing

⁴⁴Seneca, "De Clementia," in Moral Essays, I, 77-9.

himself of this contiguity to further his purpose of conflating the thought of Stoicism and Calvinism. It is interesting to observe that Calvin concurs with Seneca on this point. He calls clemency an "heroic virtue, without which princes cannot rule," although, ironically, his reason for this opinion seems to verge on the Machiavellian. Calvin affirms that "the prince cannot, by whatever virtues, win the favor of the populace unless he exercises a SALUTARY POWER."⁴⁵ Thus it seems that by citing the greatness of mercy in the prince, Shakespeare may well be deliberately adducing a point of congruence between Seneca, the arch-Stoic, and Calvin.

The Neo-Platonic character of Isabella's thinking seems, moreover, to become manifest in her description of Angelo's power as "potency," even as, with frank insubordination, she expresses a longing for that power.

I would to heaven I had your potency,
And you were Isabel! Should it then be thus?
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,
And what a prisoner. (II.ii.67-70)

Notice also that in this wish, Isabella is also associating heaven itself as the source of power with the Neo-Platonic concept of potency.

The optative mood of this statement, however, suggests that Isabella, unable to move Angelo through reason and

⁴⁵Ford Lewis Battles and André Malan Hugo, eds. and trans., Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia (Leiden: pub. for The Renaissance Society of America by E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 87.

concept, will try what the recourse to will and selfhood can accomplish. By adopting the terms of voluntarism, however, Isabella seems to provoke Angelo into a recourse to law and reason.

Your brother is a forfeit of the law,
And you but waste your words. (II.ii.71-2)

Isabella, however, proceeds to contradict this inherently Stoic argument with a Calvinist one by informing Angelo that before God all men are the forfeits of the law. She thus seems to identify leveling implications within the thought of Calvin and through that leveling to equate voluntaristic thought with rationalism. She further suggests that in making an example of Claudio, Angelo is contradicting the impartiality of justice.

Who is it that hath died for this offense:
There's many have committed it. (II.ii.88-9)

Angelo attempts to uphold the law's authority by suggesting that the death of Claudio will in the future deter others from vice. His adversion in this speech, moreover, to divination, a Stoic belief,⁴⁶ seems to give this speech an identifiably Stoic character.

Those many had not dar'd to do that evil
If the first that did th'edict infringe
Had answer'd for his deed. Now 'tis awake,
Takes not of what is done, and like a prophet

⁴⁶Cicero, De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione, trans. William Armistead Falconer, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964).

Looks in a glass that shows what future evils,
 Either now, or by remissness new conceiv'd,
 And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,
 Are now to have no successive degrees,
 But here they live, to end. (II.ii.91-9)

I suspect that with this speech, Shakespeare means to show in Angelo a complete reversal of his position as voluntarist and Calvinist to Stoic and rationalist, and to show this reversal as mere alterneity. When Isabella, moreover, pleads, "Yet show some pity," (II.ii.99) Angelo expresses the culmination of that alterneity by asserting the mere identity of the Calvinist and the Stoic positions: What Angelo seems to suggest in this speech is the identification of the absolute oppositions of justice and pity. In a single act he extends pity to future offenders and to Claudio, right or justice. And in the respective accents of the Calvinist and the Stoic, he tells Isabella, "Be satisfied," and "be content." (II.ii.104-5)

We see in this identification an expression of Shakespeare's thematic purpose in this scene when we recognize the concept of pity as a point of controversy between Stoics and Christians, and one that surfaces in Calvin's commentary on "De Clementia." In his essay, Seneca distinguishes between clemency and pity. Clemency is a rational virtue and, as such, approved. Pity, however, he represents as an emotion and thus as "a mental defect."⁴⁷ Seneca

⁴⁷Calvin's Commentary, p. 357.

asserts that

all good men will display clemency and gentle-dealing, but will avoid pity; for it is the failing of a weak nature that succumbs to the sight of other's ills. And so it is most often seen in the poorest type of persons: there are old women and wretched females who are moved by the tears of the worst criminals. . . .⁴⁸

On the subject of pity, Calvin is forced to demur and to challenge on this point the wisdom of the Stoics.

Obviously we ought to be persuaded of the fact that pity is a virtue, and that he who feels no pity cannot be a good man--whatever these idle sages may discuss in their shady nooks.⁴⁹

Calvin's opinion of pity is, moreover, in the Christian tradition of St. Augustine, who asserts,

Here is no need to expound fuller what the Christian scripture teaches on this point of feelings. It subjects the whole mind to God's governance and assistance, and all the passions unto it, in such manner that they are all made to serve the increase of justice. Finally our doctrine inquires not so much whether one be angry, but wherefore; why he is sad, not whether he is sad; and so of fear. For anger with an offender, to reform him; pity upon one afflicted, to succour him; fear for one in danger, to deliver him--these no man, not mad, can reprehend. The Stoics indeed are wont to reprehend pity. But with far more humanity and piety said Tully in Caesar's praise: 'Of all thy virtues is none more admired, nor applauded, than thy mercy.'⁵⁰

In view of the fact that rational clemency and voluntaristic pity constituted a focus of controversy between

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 361.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 359.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 51.

Seneca as Stoic rationalist and Calvin as voluntarist, it seems not implausible to suggest that Angelo, in equating pity with justice, is conflating pity with clemency, and by that conflation is asserting the identity of reason and will, or emotion, that marks the position of Neo-Platonism. The fact, moreover, that both justice and pity are affirmed in their absoluteness seems to reinforce such a conclusion.

That Angelo, moreover, has suffered a change from Calvinist to Neo-Platonist is suggested by Isabella's scornful ascription to him of the quality of selfhood, but of selfhood in the modality of compulsive potency. Angelo is a power that cannot but express itself in act, that is incapable of withholding and self-inhibition:

So you must be the first that gives this sentence,
And he that suffers. O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant. (II.ii.106-9)

And in the furious tirade that follows this outburst, Isabella seems to denounce Angelo's eminence over her and Claudio by an assertion of the absolute congruence between the negative theology that makes an absolute distinction between God and man on the one hand, and the affirmative theology that asserts the absolute identification of God and man on the other. In this speech Isabella both places God in heaven and makes herself a god on earth, both characterizes God in terms of his capacity to withhold his power and expresses herself an absolute and unrestrainedly passionate

realization of all her power. In this speech Isabella herself appears to represent the actualization of heaven's power as thunder.

Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would never be quiet.
For every pelting, petty officer
Would use his heaven for thunder,
Nothing but thunder! Merciful heaven,
Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt
Splits the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
Than the soft myrtle; but man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd
(His glassy essence), like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

(II.ii.110-23)

And by this identification, she nullifies the authenticity of Angelo's authority, by making him, as the representation of divine authority, no different from any other man. Human authority, Isabella seems to say, is to be defined wholly in terms of the actualization of potency. To be sure, he participates in the negative terms of essence and attribute, but only to the extent of participating in essence and not in attribute. Man's unrestrained actualization of his potency makes him "an angry ape," most ignorant of his most assured quality, his essence, that part of him that renders him like everybody else. I suspect that Shakespeare conjures here an image of an ape regarding himself in a mirror and imagining that he is seeing another ape, in short, that he is different from the reflection that he regards there. Thus he threatens the image in the glass as if it

were a being distinct from himself, when all the while, he and it are the same. In the same way, authority imagines itself to possess an attribute of divinity that separates it from the prisoner it threatens and condemns, when there is in reality no difference between judge and prisoner.

The specifically Neo-Platonic quality of this speech seems further to be suggested by the simultaneous approval of it by its two witnesses: the profane Lucio and the pious Provost. From the outset of Isabella's plea, Shakespeare has identified her arguments as either rationalistic or voluntaristic through the comments of the Provost and, more extensively, Lucio. That the Provost speaks for the perspective of heaven is suggested in his aside, "Heaven give thee moving graces." (II.ii.36) Lucio suggests to Isabella that she employ not the power of heaven but rather that of nature, and he tries throughout this scene to encourage in Isabella the natural power that oversteps boundaries, renounces submission, and razes distinctions. Isabella's thundering speech, significantly, brings the simultaneously expressed approval of both the Provost and Lucio. Lucio exclaims,

O, to him, to him, wench!
He will relent,
He's coming; I perceive't

And the Provost concludes Lucio's line with, "Pray heaven she win him!" (II.ii.123-5)

By identifying the affirmative and the negative

theologies, Isabella also identifies governor with subject, as potency with act, and thus impugns the authority of justice. The specifically political implications of this theologically oriented speech become immediately apparent as Isabella ascribes to authority both the unique privilege of Calvinist politics and the spurious virtue of Machiavellian politics as merely congruent attributes. On the one hand she argues that rank hath its privileges.

We cannot weigh our brother with ourself.
Great men may jest with saints; 'tis wit in them,
But in the less foul profanation. (II.ii.126-8)

That in the captain's but a choleric word,
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.
(II.ii.131-3)

Thus Isabella asserts the supremacy of selfhood over concept, or law. She claims in short that the law is a respecter of persons and that, indeed, the person makes the law. But on the other hand, she claims that the rank of the governor does not truly absolve him of guilt before the law; it merely allows him to hide his guilt. Authority, voluntarily defined, can alternately be defined as erring, but

authority, though it err like others
Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself
That skins the vice o' th' top. (II.ii.134-6)

Thus authority is defined as the compulsive actualization of potency that renders it identical with the actors of sin that it arrogantly professes the right to condemn. Justice, in view of this identity of the governor as potency with his

subjects as actualization, lies in the renunciation by the governor of this right.

Go to your bosom,
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
That's like my brother's fault. If it confess
A natural guiltiness such as is his,
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life. (II.ii.136-41)

Through the conflation of the positive and negative theologies of Calvinism and Stoicism, Isabella has redefined Angelo's identity as Neo-Platonist and his power as potency. Law, as an expression of the world extrinsic to Angelo's will, has been redefined as the law of the compulsive expression of his will. As governor, he must be lawless. But Angelo is not only governor; he is also man, and, as man, he owns a power not only political but also sexual. If his power as potency acknowledges the law of compulsive expression, so too his sexuality becomes redefined as a power demanding expression. Angelo's response to Isabella's definition of him as potency, the redefinition that expresses the realm of nature, or sense, involves a response both intellectual and sexual.

She speaks, and 'tis
Such sense that my sense breeds with it.
(II.ii.141-2)

With this statement, Angelo fulfills the implication of potency by entering the realm of act.

If through the doctrine of the concord of opposites, Isabella breaks down the barrier between the governor and

the subject and, in effect, destroys the governor as a legitimately constituted authority, that razing of authority has destructive consequences for the subject as well as for the governor, and for Isabella as well as for Angelo. For if the distinction between subject and governor implies the submission of the subject to the will of the governor, it also allows to the subject an inviolable distinction of his own, a distinction that Isabella has destroyed. And the fact that she has destroyed it becomes apparent to her when, in II,iv, Angelo suggests to her that she overstep the boundaries of law to save her brother. Angelo, in short, suggests to Isabella that, having herself undertaken to be the potency urging him to pardon Claudio, she should herself undertake the action that is identical with it, by going to bed with him. He turns her own logic against her, and thus causes her to renounce, as strenuously as she had affirmed it, the congruency between potency and act. Angelo forces Isabella, in short, to contradict and deny her own affirmative doctrine of the concordia oppositorum and to assert instead the negative theology that asserts the difference between identities. In a violently wilful assertion of her unique and individual attribute, or divinity, over all the world, Isabella negatively consigns Claudio to death in III,i.

In Isabella's denunciation of Claudio, she seems to reject the attempt of Claudio as her brother to make any claim upon her and thus to posit an absolute difference

between herself and those related by nature to her. Isabella repudiates her family. And in rejecting this relationship with her family, she imputes to them the quality of essence and to herself the quality of individual attribute. Essence is sullied, natural, carnal; attribute, however, is pure and inviolate, infinitely different from essence.

Thus Isabella's assertion of her purity is related to her characterization of her family and the relationships of family with the utmost negativity. Claudio's plea for life is tantamount to the most perverse of family relationships: incest.

Is't not a kind of incest, to take life
From thine own sister's shame? (III.i.138-9)

The breaking of the family bond is viewed here by Isabella as something devoutly to be wished.

Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness
Ne'er issu'd from his blood. (III.i.140-2)

In Isabella's assertion, however, of her absolute difference from her family and her total repudiation of it, she is clearly taking a position as extreme in its negativity as her declaration of the identity of potency and act had been extreme in its affirmativeness.

This spectacle of negativity, moreover, seems to have a definite effect on the Friar-Duke, who witnesses it, just as Isabella's affirmative theology had its effect on Angelo. If with the affirmative theology, Isabella complemented Angelo's Calvinistic negativity and thus made him a

Neo-Platonist, with her negativity, she complements the Friar-Duke as exponent of the wholly affirmative theology of the world and likewise makes him a Neo-Platonist. If we may judge by his own remarks to Isabella, the Friar-Duke apparently finds something to admire, something, indeed, charming, in this negativity. Like Angelo, he too appears, in his subdued way, to fall in love with Isabella and to find in her negativity an important completion of his Stoic positiveness. And as Isabella's assertion of the positive terms of potency and act enabled Angelo to disencumber selfhood of the inhibiting impediment of law, so Isabella's negativity seems to enable the Friar-Duke to assert absolutely the power of the world over the self. Through the bed trick, the Friar-Duke sets a snare for the selfhood of Angelo, and a snare that threatens his very life. In hitting on the bed trick, moreover, the Friar-Duke makes himself the instigator of Angelo's act; indeed, the Friar-Duke and Angelo assume toward one another the Neo-Platonic relationship of potency to act, and through these terms seem to realize the latent identity between Stoicism and Calvinism.

It should be observed, however, that it is through the agency of Isabella upon both these characters that they assume this identity, and the part played by Isabella seems to define her also in terms of these concepts. Her part in the bed trick, however, encompasses not only the terms of potency and act, but also the terms of essence and attribute.

If the Friar-Duke and Angelo realize the relationship of potency and act, Isabella and Mariana realize the relationship of essence and attribute.

It is, thus, her negativity as well as her affirmativeness that Isabella expresses in the bed trick. Part of its meaning is to express the difference between Isabella's formal and material essence and the particular attribute of that essence that she herself expresses. In promising herself to Angelo and then substituting Mariana for that self in the dark, Isabella is to distinguish between her "whatness," her essence, her name, and her "thatness," her attribute, her nature. In material essence, Mariana and she are identical; yet in attribute, or nature, they remain different. They are composed of the same matter; yet nothing that can be predicated of the one can be predicated of the other. For Mariana is very much the sensual woman, matter pining to be ensouled by masculine form, while Isabella is divine matter, rejecting all form, absolute in its otherness. It is, I suspect, this difference between essence and attribute that it is the purpose of the substitution of Mariana for Isabella to suggest.

In the bed trick, Shakespeare seems to realize all the extreme implications of Stoicism, Calvinism, and Neoplatonism, and to suggest in the unsavory quality of this plot the inauthenticity of all the doctrines involved in it. Angelo and the Friar-Duke, by assuming an identity with

each other, lay claim not merely to absolute reason or will but rather to both reason and will. They adopt the identity of everything; as everything, however, they become nothing. As Neo-Platonist, moreover, Isabella suffers the ignominious defeat of her logic by Angelo in II,iv, and experiences the bitter defeat of negativity as well when, in IV,iii, the Friar-Duke tells her that Claudio has been executed.

That Angelo, by engulfing the world, loses the identity of both world and selfhood is suggested in his double exclamation,

What dost thou? or what art thou, Angelo?
(II.ii.172)

Both in his actions and in his consciousness, he is lost. His loss of the world, moreover, is suggested in his perception of it in the illusionary manner suggested by Lovejoy. He begins to adopt this attitude by doubting the honesty of Isabella's apparent inability to comprehend his drift.

Nay, but hear me,
Your sense pursues not mine. Either you are ignorant
Or seem so [craftily]: and that's not good.
(II.iv.73-5)

The doubt of the world is, significantly, a doubt of the eidetic quality of goodness. And when Isabella protests her innocence, he replies,

Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright
When it doth tax itself; as these black masks
Proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder
Than beauty could, displayed. (II.iv.78-81)

And finally he orders Isabella to

Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes
That banish what they sue for, (II.iv.162-3)

in a statement that essentially dismisses those blushes as the very reverse of what they profess to be.

If, moreover, Angelo loses the world, he ceases also to be able to abide himself. He expresses at the beginning of II,iv his inability to tolerate either the solitary irascibility of his former negativity, which he calls mere hypocrisy, or the concupiscence raging of his blood. In that strange and difficult statement,

Let's write "good angel" on the devil's horn,
'Tis not the devil's crest, (II.iv.16-7)

Angelo seems to express the way in which his own identity as angel, by becoming also devil, becomes neither one thing nor the other. Like the God, who in assuming all names assumes no name,⁵¹ so Angelo by becoming both angel and devil, becomes also neither angel nor devil.

If Angelo loses his selfhood on the one hand, and on the other, the reality of the world, the Friar-Duke, in becoming a Neo-Platonist, similarly destroys his identity as world and also seeks to destroy the identity of self. Like Angelo, in becoming everything, he becomes nothing. The first thing to be observed of the Friar-Duke when he appropriates the identity of Neo-Platonism is that he transgresses the law, which defines him. In adopting the bed

⁵¹Lovejoy, "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza,"
p. 158.

trick, the Friar-Duke is resorting to illegal means to bring Angelo within his power. Secondly, we should observe that the Friar-Duke's design on Angelo is both an attempt to appropriate selfhood and to destroy it. The Friar-Duke, in his attempt to adopt the identity of selfhood, speaks like the Calvinist God, who judges by act, and refuses to assume responsibility for its guilt, which, as Stoic world, he would be the first to admit, since he is its instigator. Angelo is to be arraigned by his own deeds.

If his own life answer the straitness
 of his proceeding, it shall become him well;
 wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenc'd himself.
 (III.ii.255-7)

But in adopting the identity of selfhood, the Friar-Duke seems also to be destroying Angelo as selfhood. By judging Angelo through his misdeeds, the Friar-Duke seems to eclipse Angelo's selfhood within the identity of the world. Responding to the Provost's reference to Angelo as "a bitter deputy," (IV.ii.78) he affirms Angelo's definition by his acts in a way that assures us of his total condemnation.

Not so, not so; his life is parallel'd
 Even with the stroke and line of his great justice.
 He doth with holy abstinence subdue
 That in himself which he spurs on his pow'r
 To qualify in others. Were he meal'd with that
 Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous,
 But this being so, he's just. (IV.ii.79-85)

His dialogue with Pompey and with Lucio in III,ii, seems to suggest, as I shall try to show later, that the Friar-Duke has, like Angelo, lost his identity and become neither world nor self.

We see, ultimately, however, that both Angelo and the Friar-Duke are redeemed by the very failure of their designs. Angelo is saved by his failure as self to realize his intended violation of the world. Angelo attempts both to appropriate the world and to destroy it by both violating Isabella and executing Claudio. He finds, however, in Act V that he has done these things only in his own mind. The objective reality of the world that he has so assaulted comes to redeem him by showing him that it still exists uncompromised by the most lawless and extreme outrages of his will. The world, as an irreducible reality apart from self, has survived the aggression of self. Isabella's purity remains untainted, and Claudio reappears at the last, alive. And if Angelo is redeemed by the very world that he has attempted to destroy, so also the Friar-Duke is redeemed by the selfhood that he has attempted to destroy. He is made "a Duke" by the principle of selfhood in Lucio, that principle that disrupts his carefully orchestrated and artistic design. Even as the Duke is humiliating Angelo's selfhood in Act V, Lucio presents him with an unwanted testimony to its perdurability by refusing to be merely a part of his scheme. His repeated disruptions of the action, and not least importantly, his taxing of the Friar-Duke with a slander that is not altogether untrue, represents the incorrigible Vice-like selfhood that fortunately no worldly reason can control.

If, however, Shakespeare compromises the Neo-Platonic claim of absolutism in Angelo and the Friar-Duke, he compromises that claim also in Isabella. The compromise of Isabella seems to have been effected by the absoluteness of her responses to the proposals of both Angelo and the Friar-Duke, and the contradiction implied by these two responses. When Angelo offers Isabella the exchange of Claudio's life for her chastity, her response is an unqualified "no," a response that seems to express dramatically the self-contradiction of her own philosophy. Yet we see that her no in its absoluteness is but a variant of her position as the exponent of the concordia oppositorum. And the very emphasis and absoluteness of this response seems to be its most troubling aspect. Isabella's response is not modified by reflection or conflict, and Schanzer has remarked on the strangeness of the absence of conflict in so portentous a decision as the consignment of her own brother to death. Schanzer further observes that this strangeness is heightened by the fact that Isabella's forebear, Cassandra, in Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra, offers evidence of intense conflict when the same choice is imposed upon her. What Schanzer observes, in short, is the absence of conflict in a situation defined by conflict.⁵² And to compound the strangeness of Isabella's refusal of Angelo, she blithely reverses her own too

⁵²Schanzer, pp. 107-9.

definite "no" by an unclouded and cheerful "yes" when the Friar-Duke proposes the bed trick to her.

If we consider these responses in a psychological light, we conclude that Isabella is an impossible character, and we wonder how Shakespeare could have nodded so egregiously in his composition of her. Yet we should also consider the possibility that Shakespeare, far from casting out psychology, is using psychology to compromise Isabella. Might he not be holding up to critical scrutiny the blithe absolutism and contradiction of which Neo-Platonic theology is composed by suggesting the psychological impossibility of such doctrines to coexist? Might he not be resorting, as Lovejoy does, to the standard of common sense and suggesting that the philosophy that lays claim to absolute contradictions must ultimately be judged by the standard of psychology as insufferably self-contradictory? The validity of such an hypothesis becomes plausible when we observe that Isabella's "no" and her "yes" seem ironically to recapitulate the affirmative and the negative theologies of Neo-Platonism. And if such an explanation remains conjecture, it is not altogether conjecture to assert that Shakespeare seriously compromises Isabella's absolute "no" and absolute "yes." Isabella's negativity degenerates into an outburst of feral hysteria that is characterized by a shameful breach of the limits of decency; her "yes," on the other hand, confers on her the self-suggested denomination of "bawd."

Nowhere, it seems to me, is Shakespeare harsher toward his young nun than in the characterization of her refusal of Claudio's plea to live.

Take my defiance,
Die, perish! Might but my bending down
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed.
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee. (III.i.142-6)

In these lines Shakespeare characterizes Isabella's utter negativity as perverse and unnatural. In them Shakespeare shows us that Isabella affirms her self at the expense of her brother's self; and such an affirmation dishonors selfhood. The implication of self-dishonor seems, moreover, to be implied in her repudiation of her mother.

Heaven shield my mother play's my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness
Ne'er issu'd from his blood. (III.i.140-2)

But if Isabella's mother played her father false, then Isabella is the daughter of a whore. We ought perhaps to observe also that Isabella, in assuming independence of her natural origin, incurs Albany's curse in King Lear.

That nature which contemns its origin
Cannot be bordered certain in itself.
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither,
And come to deadly use. (IV.ii.32-6)

It is in light of this statement, I suspect, that we should assess Isabella's intention to pray for the death of her brother.

If Isabella's refusal of Claudio is compromised by its own absoluteness, her cooperation with the Friar-Duke

is likewise compromised. For if Isabella's part in the bed trick is defined by the terms of essence and attribute, it is also defined by the terms of potency and act. Isabella does not passively submit to the substitution of Mariana for herself; rather, she arranges the assignation between Angelo and Mariana and thus becomes a sharer with the Friar-Duke in the identity of causer or potency of their act. Since the identity of potency is formally defined in Measure for Measure as Pompey, the bawd, the indiscriminate causer of all possible acts, Isabella in becoming the cause of the assignation between Angelo and Mariana also becomes, along with the Friar-Duke, a bawd. And she anticipates this identity by ascribing it to herself. When, in rejecting Claudio, she tells him,

Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade,
 Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd,
(III.i.148-9)

she is, I suspect, informing us of the way we should perceive her acquiescence in the Friar-Duke's bed trick.

Thus Isabella's compliance with the Friar-Duke's bed trick may exercise the distinction between the essence that she has in common with Mariana and the attribute that makes her unique and distinct from Mariana; but in so doing, she can also be regarded by Quiller-Couch as "a bare procuress."⁵³ She becomes the mercy that she herself has

⁵³Quiller-Couch, p. xxx.

denounced as "a bawd."

It appears, then, that Shakespeare deliberately impugns the ability of Isabella to be the thing she professes to be, and we should observe that this compromise of Isabella's integrity is not unattended by a similar compromise of Pompey and Mistress Overdone as the figures representative of the world soul and of matter as a passive ability to receive all forms. Since Measure for Measure is to emerge in Act V as a Christian play, all its heterodoxies are to be chastened and modified to a form acceptable to a truly Christian duality. If Stoicism and Calvinism are to recognize the error of their excessive separation of reason and will, so likewise, the figures of Isabella, Pompey, and Mistress Overdone, as aspects of the conflation of reason and will, immanence and transcendence, are to be made to acknowledge a distinction that compromises their claim to absolute autonomy. But since Measure for Measure, while repudiating identity, is still to affirm relationship, it is not Shakespeare's purpose to destroy these characters but rather to check them.

Of Mistress Overdone as matter in its individual manifestation, Shakespeare disposes most easily. Being passive matter, she is not a thing to be persuaded, but rather to be disciplined. Accordingly, we see that Act III shows her arrest by Escalus. Her arrest, however, does not imply her destruction, for the Christian dispensation does

not destroy matter; she is, however, denied her freedom and made to submit to the authority of heaven.

As the world soul, Pompey represents nature's pretension to political autonomy, and this pretension is also exploded with his arrest in the third act. The emptiness of Pompey's arrogance and bluster, moreover, is suggested from the start by his very name. Pompey, as no educated spectator could fail to know, was the Roman general and consul whose defeat by Julius Caesar marked the end of the Republic and the transition of Rome from democracy to monarchy. His name is thus associated with democracy in defeat. And Escalus renders the allusion explicit by calling him, in effect, Pompey the Great.

Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about
you, so that in the beastliest sense you are
Pompey the Great. (II.i.217-9)

Escalus, moreover, threatens to play Caesar to Pompey.

. . . I shall beat you to your tent, and prove
a shrewd Caesar to you. . . . (II.i.248-9)

And Lucio again associates Pompey with the historical general.

How now, noble Pompey? What, at the wheels of
Caesar? Art thou led in triumph? (III.ii.43-4)

Pompey himself seems to identify democracy as the political expression of the Brunonian world soul by associating himself with the world. He comments on his own arrest by saying,

'Twas never merry world since of the two
usuries the merriest was put down, and the worser
allow'd by order of law; . . . (III.ii.5-7)

And Lucio reinforces this association of Pompey with the

world by asking him, "Is the world as it was, man?" (III.ii.50)

As an aspect of Nature, however, Pompey, like Mistress Overdone, suffers not destruction, but imprisonment, not extinction, but control. He is made to express dramatically the contradiction implicit in his identity, by changing from creator to destroyer. In Measure for Measure, however, he seems to realize his destructiveness not, as Bruno would have us believe, as a proper and commendable expression of his nature, but rather as an element that expresses his subjugation. He adopts that lowest of licit professions: the trade of hangman.

It is in Isabella, however, that the adjustment of Brunonian monism to Christian dualism attains its most interesting character. Not only is the absoluteness of Isabella's attribute as divine matter compromised by her causative function in the bed trick, but we see also that the bed trick fails to achieve all its purposes. It procures Angelo for Mariana, but it does not procure a pardon for Claudio. That failure, however, is but the beginning of Isabella's reformation. The absoluteness of Isabella is to suffer irreparable compromise by being the instrument of a lie, and a lie that impugns the holy chastity that Isabella has so savagely defended. She is instructed by the Friar-Duke to declare in the hearing of the whole city of Vienna that she has capitulated to the unlawful demand of Angelo. We observe in IV,vi, that she is not happy to make such a

statement.

To speak so indirectly I am loath.
I would say the truth, but to accuse him so,
That is your part. Yet I am advis'd to do it,
He says, to veil full purpose. (IV.vi.1-4)

Yet we observe also that Isabella's story is not all lie; it has a substantial ingredient of truth in it without being an altogether just description of reality. Isabella speaks nothing but the truth when she defends the unlikelihood of her tale by asserting,

Most strange! but yet most truly will I speak:
That Angelo's forsworn, is it not strange?
That Angelo's a murtherer, is't not strange?
That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
An hypocrite, a virgin-violator,
Is it not strange and strange? (V.i.37-42)

It is not truer he is Angelo
Than this is all as true as it is strange;
Nay it is ten times true, for truth is truth
To th' end of reck'ning. (V.i.43-6)

Yet if truth is a thing so absolute that it can be defined by nothing other than itself, Isabella proceeds now to qualify this truth with a tale that is not the truth.

The vild conclusion
I now begin with grief and shame to utter.
He would not, but by gift of my chaste body
To his concupiscible intemperate lust,
Release my brother; and after much debatement,
My sisterly remorse confutes mine honor,
And I did yield to him. (V.i.95-101)

There was not, indeed, as there should have been, sisterly remorse; neither was there any debatement, and, most critically of all, there was no yielding!

And if Isabella's recitation of what she should have

done and did not do mortifies her chastity, she still retains that chastity. Her statement is repudiated as an untruth by Friar Peter.

First, hath this woman
Most wrongfully accus'd your substitute,
Who is as free from touch or soil with her
As she from one ungot. (V.i.139-42)

Thus Isabella both discredits and retains her chastity.

The value for which Isabella has compromised, albeit only verbally, her chastity, is justice. At the beginning of this scene, she kneels before the Duke and cries out to him for "justice, justice, justice, justice!" (V.i.25) Whether because of her verbal compromise of her chastity, or because Mariana, as her substitute, has the relationship of her to her own essence, the distress of Mariana at the imminent execution of her new husband causes Isabella to renounce the value of justice. The Duke commands the death of Angelo, on the grounds of the identity of Angelo and Claudio, the very identity that Isabella had argued in II,ii.

An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!
(V.i.409)

The Duke claims that Angelo and Claudio are alike, and "Like doth quit like." (V.i.411) Isabella argues for the pardon of Angelo by suggesting that they are different.

Most bounteous sir:
Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd
As if my brother liv'd. I partly think
A due sincerity governed his deeds,
Till he did look on me. Since it is so,

Let him not die. My brother had but justice,
 In that he did the thing for which he died;
 For Angelo,
 His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,
 And must be buried but as an intent
 That perish'd by the way. Thoughts are no subjects,
 Intentions but merely thoughts. (V.i.443-54)

An interesting aspect of Isabella's argument appears to be its employment of the terms of intention and deed, or potency and act, a second time in the argument against justice. That she is using the structure of intention to the prejudice of act is suggested by her request that the Duke regard Claudio as still alive when he is, to her knowledge, dead, and in her suggestion that she has herself played an in-tentive part in Angelo's fall. But in arguing with the terms of intention and act, she seems now to be repudiating the theology of relationship, the theology that sees the deed in the light of intention, and thus repudiating Neo-Platonic con-flation. When Isabella says,

My brother had but justice,
 In that he did the thing for which he died,

she is attempting to isolate Claudio's deed from his inten-tion. Likewise, Isabella suggests that intentions are merely, or utterly, thoughts when we know full well that intentions are purposeful thoughts, and, as such, participate in the quality of action. Isabella seems here to accuse and then renounce intention, but in this renunciation she goes too far. Thus she fails to express a truly Christian ideal of mercy that recognizes both the deed and the intention.

We observe, further, that, as Isabella first repudiates and then retains her chastity, or selfhood, she likewise repudiates and then retains her identity as world, the identity conveyed by the concept of rational discourse as potency. The Duke, if he duly records Isabella's identification of her potency as her guilt, does not absolve her of that guilt and, by not absolving her of it, seems to disallow her rejection of the conflating terms of potency and act. Isabella remains an exponent of these terms, but a self-accused exponent of them. If in her the value of conflation is discredited, that discrediting of conflation makes possible the emergence in her of the moderate value of relationship. World in identification with selfhood remains the identity of Isabella, but now both world and selfhood are shown as less than perfect. If Isabella, however, is shown as imperfect, she becomes by virtue of her imperfection, a marriageable woman.

In the marriage between the compromisedly Stoic Duke and the compromisedly Brunonian Isabella, the play seems to assert the integration of the world in its distinction from selfhood with the world in its relation to selfhood that Stoicism and Neo-Platonism now suggest. Likewise, the play seems to convey in the marriage of Angelo and Mariana the alliance between self in isolation from the world and self in relation to the world. Marriage is the structure that disallows both isolation and conflation but admits and indeed requires distinction and relation. And it is through the

balance of these principles that both the Duke and Isabella appear to be Christianized. The suggestion, however, that both Isabella and the Duke do not become truly Christianized until they agree to marry suggests in the play the recognition of the Christian identity as itself a synthesis and a marriage, though not an identification of opposites.

In requiring for the attainment of the Christian identity the incorporation of the two disparate values of distinction and relation, the play also attests to the fragility and tenuousness of the Christian synthesis as a balance struck between values not easily reconciled. It is, finally, to the unstable equilibrium that Christianity seems to express in Shakespeare's own mind that we should probably attribute the mirthlessness of the marriages that conclude Measure for Measure. We are left to wonder whether such diversities as the Duke and Isabella, or, for that matter, Angelo and Mariana, are long to preserve a harmony suitable to the married condition.

But if the comic closing of the play is thus qualified by intimations of something less than marital bliss, these intimations should not be mistaken for the imaginative failing of the dramatist, but rather recognized as Shakespeare's acute translation of philosophic into dramatic reality. Unlike Coghill,⁵⁴ I do not hear the peal of bells

⁵⁴Coghill, p. 25.

and joyful Te Deums at the closing of this play. Measure for Measure seems rather to be the tentative comic alternative and antecedent to King Lear, that play which is, as Elton has shown,⁵⁵ painfully, almost traumatically, reflective of theological angst.

⁵⁵Elton, King Lear and the Gods. Elton's main thesis in this book is that Lear depicts a universe without God.

CHAPTER VI

THE DUKE'S SCENES IN DETAIL

In the foregoing investigations of various philosophies in Measure for Measure, I have made certain general and theoretical assertions concerning the play's structure. It remains now to try to demonstrate that the play in fact supports such assertions by examining the text in detail, and attempting to find philosophical coherence in the complex relationships that it presents. What I propose to do is to deal at length with those scenes that include the Duke or the Friar-Duke and with the last act of the play primarily as it pertains to the Duke.

In the first scene of the play, the scene in which the Duke deputizes Angelo and withdraws from power, Shakespeare faces a complex task. He must express in the Duke the faculties of both reason and will and associate these faculties with rationalism and voluntarism in three inter-related realms. At the same time, he must show these qualities in the process of dissociation and justify their dissociation by suggesting that, in the mind of the Duke, these faculties make inherently incompatible claims upon reality.

Act I of the play opens with the Duke announcing in an extended speech his intention to deputize Angelo. This speech relates, however, not the deputizing of Angelo alone, but the commissioning of Escalus as well. And it appears that in these two acts rational choice is contrasted with voluntaristic choice, with the apparent purpose of showing in reason and will a less than perfect integration. For the commissioning of Escalus the Duke gives us a lengthy justification in terms of reason.

The nature of our people,
Our city's institutions, and the terms
For common justice, y' are as pregnant in
As art and practice hath enriched any
That we remember. (I.i.9-13)

To Escalus, moreover, he gives a commission congruent with reason: the commission hedged by law.

There is our commission,
From which we would not have you warp.
(I.i.13-14)

But if all seems to be proceeding with punctilious rationality up to this point, the Duke's immediately sequent words seem to shift abruptly into the voluntaristic mode. We discover that Escalus' rational deputization reflects only half the mind of the Duke, who now reveals the intention to deputize Angelo as an expression of his hidden will, or, as he vaguely terms it, his "special soul."

For you must know, we have with special soul
Elected him our absence to supply,
Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love,
And given his deputation all the organs
Of our own pow'r. (I.i.17-21)

Unlike the commission granted to Escalus, this deputation is called, Calvinistically, an election, and, again, unlike the deputation of Escalus, it bestows on Angelo absolute power, and power, moreover, that is associated prominently not with cognitive but rather with voluntaristic faculties, with terror and love.

As if to emphasize the absolute and voluntaristic character of the power conferred on Angelo, Shakespeare has the Duke twice reiterate its terms directly to him.

In our remove be thou at full ourself.
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart. Old Escalus,
Though first in question, is thy secondary.
Take thy commission. (I.i.43-47)

Old Escalus, the rational power, is to be secondary, or subject, to the superior will of Angelo. And as if to clarify the power of Angelo as superior to the law, and thus as defining rather than obeying it, the Duke explicitly informs him,

Nor need you (on mine honor) have to do
With any scruple. Your scope is as mine own,
So to enforce or qualify the laws
As to your soul seems good. (I.i.63-67)

The special soul of the Duke has elected and empowered Angelo; and the reference to "a leaven'd and prepared choice" (I.i. 51) seems to conjoin to that election an element of ineluctible predestination. The soul of Angelo becomes the repository of power and, preeminently, the arbiter and definer of justice. It should be noticed, however, that the Duke's second characterization of Angelo's power does not

merely recapitulate its first expression. If Angelo's will is made superior to law, his will does not thereby destroy law. He can bend, but not break it. For in the Duke's mandate, the eidetic quality of the "good" remains. Angelo can "enforce or qualify the laws" but only "as to your soul seems good." The power conveyed to Angelo, thus appears to remain dualistic. We shall see, however, that Angelo ultimately does qualify the law, but in a way that does not seem good to his soul.

O fie, fie, fie!
 What dost thou? or what art thou, Angelo?
 Dost thou desire her foully for those things
 That make her good? (II.iii.171-4)

In each of the Duke's deputizing statements, moreover, it appears that the intention to convey the absolute-ness and voluntary quality of the power conferred on Angelo is accompanied by a second intention to emphasize that the origin of this power is the Duke himself. It is "our terror," "our love," and "Our own power" that Angelo is to receive. Again Angelo is to be "at full ourself." "Your scope is as mine own," he is told. And the object of such emphasis is to point out that the Duke, in conferring his will on Angelo, is both divesting himself of a component of his own being and constituting in Angelo a portion of that being. Congruently, the assignment to Angelo of his own will radically alters the character of the reason that he retains. Shakespeare seems, in short, to be suggesting in the deputizing of Angelo both the cleaving of the unity of will

and reason and the eventual reappropriation by the Duke of this faculty as originally and properly his own.

Angelo's deputation, moreover, has an immediate effect on the location of both him and the Duke, propelling Angelo upward and the Duke downward. In assuming the power of will, Angelo assumes also the power of place. In I,iii, the Duke will tell Friar Thomas,

I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo
 (A man of stricture and firm abstinence)
 My absolute power and place here in Vienna.
 (I.iii.11-13)

If Angelo has thus been elevated, the Duke seems to be comparably depressed. His parting speech shows him retiring from the court to an indistinct destination, marked by both privacy and an affinity for the people, whom he has just defined in terms of "nature." (I.i.9) This withdrawal, moreover, is conveyed in terms that seem to deny not the validity of hierarchy but the validity of hierarchy for himself. It attests to a relation between the Duke and the people in which intimacy and hierarchy cannot coexist.

I'll privily away. I love the people,
 But do not like to stage me to their eyes;
 Though it do well, I do not relish well
 Their loud applause and aves vehement;
 Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
 That does affect it. (I.i.67-72)

As the elevation of Angelo accompanies his attainment to the power of will, so the Duke's diminution to the rank of private man is marked by a new prominence in his "discretion," which now appears incongruent with such affections

as the love of praise and even suggests an immunity to prayer.

This concept of location or "place" is of preeminent significance, I suspect, in giving a theological dimension to the dissociation of reason from will. The term "place" seems to focus attention on the issue of location as a criterion for the definition of rationalistic and voluntaristic power; it functions imaginatively in suggesting immanence as an attribute of divine reason and transcendence as an attribute of divine will. And these implications appear to be substantiated by the Duke's introduction in his second speech of the terms "Heaven" and "Nature" as two separate locations of divine power. The association of Angelo with the idea of place suggests that God, voluntaristically conceived, occupies a place separate and apart from the cosmos, a place that represents a superaddition of location to it; it seems thus to connote transcendence in and of itself. The Duke, on the other hand, renouncing the court as a place distinct from the people and submerging himself in their midst, obliterates the distinction of place. He leaves the court to go we know not where.

By virtue of his accession to place, Angelo will attain, moreover, a new personal eminence, as he himself seems to anticipate when he urges,

Now, good my lord,
Let there be some more test made of my mettle

Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamp'd upon it. (I.i.47-49)

It is just this personal conspicuousness that the Duke, in abandoning "place," seems apparently to renounce. His now seems to be an ethic of rational self-obliteration. In going "privily away," the Duke is assuming the relative obscurity of the private status. In divesting himself of will, he seems to manifest a dwindling of personality, to trail off, as it were, into the anonymity of passionless "discretion."

This "discretion," it should be noticed, seems now to manifest a Stoic incompatibility with Epicurean pleasure. Such at least seems to be the import of the Duke's otherwise gratuitously hazarded opinion that the people's praise corrupts the man who affects, or takes pleasure in it.

Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it.

Prior to conveying the power of his will to Angelo, however, the Duke seemed to own and exercise pleasure as a function of his will. Such, at least, seems to be part of the point of having Angelo associate the Duke's pleasure with his will and profess an obedience to both.

Always obedient to your Grace's will,
I come to know your pleasure. (I.i.25-26)

Angelo as an authority of will is shortly to become subject to affection and the violent pursuit of pleasure.

If Shakespeare represents the sundering of reason from will as the expression of an apparent incompatibility

between these faculties, he seems also in this first scene of the play to suggest the basis for this incompatibility in a complex speech whose ostensible subject is the necessity for the active exercise of virtue. In its manifest subject, this speech cannot escape an association with Stoicism, for it is the Stoics who prominently enjoin upon man the exercise of virtue in the service of the state. And, congruent with its Stoic orientation, this speech seems to import a Stoic compatibility and, indeed, a pantheistic identity between Heaven and Nature. And it seems to accomplish this identification by treating Heaven and Nature not as separate entities but merely as alternate modalities of a single substance, these modalities being potency and act. Although these categories are nowhere explicitly mentioned in his speech, they comprise the vehicles of its meaning. And their Brunonian derivation bespeaks in the Duke the orientation of his Stoicism within the context of the Neo-Platonic theology.

Angelo,

There is a kind of character in thy life
That to th' observer doth thy history
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use. (I.i.26-40)

In this speech the Duke seems to characterize the power of

Heaven as the potency or potentiality for action. Its immobility, isolation, and noncommunication contain the promise of action; its fullness of excellence implies the overflowing of that fullness into Nature. Nature, on the other hand, while it is the realm of action, is not all act. Rather, Nature participates in the quality of Heaven through her tendency to keep strict accounts of her excellences and to reclaim into herself what she sends forth.

To view Heaven and Nature not as two distinctly different realms of reality, but rather as modalities of a single substance is to treat their differences as illusory. And this is just what the Duke does. He shows Angelo that the adoption of the modality of action, which is the modality of Nature, does not compromise his Heaven-oriented virtue, because Heaven and Nature are really identical terms. In short, Nature and Heaven become both themselves and each other. Virtues, or excellence, are preeminently the attributes of Heaven, yet virtues, like unlit torches, have no efficacy until they are used. Nature demands action, or use, yet she is also a creditor who gives nothing and lends only on interest, or "use" in the well-known alternate and opposite sense of the term. Nature, indeed, participates so far in the essence of Heaven as to be called a goddess. The capitalization, moreover, of Nature in the text seems a conspicuous pointer to Shakespeare's intention in this speech to attribute to Nature a divinity comparable to that

of Heaven. Like Heaven, Nature also demands the thanks, or glory, ordinarily directed toward Heaven.

But if Heaven and Nature seem to bespeak the relationship of potency and act, the relationship in which Heaven and Nature merge into a single pantheistic identity, the specifically Neo-Platonic character of this speech seems to derive from the fact that it represents Heaven and Nature as a paradoxical congruence of the affirmative and negative theologies in their very opposedness to each other. As such it offers to our view the concept of Heaven in its implicit negativity. This speech thus seems deliberately to heighten the oppositions that it integrates and to proceed from two points of view simultaneously. By so doing, however, it implicitly challenges its own affirmations and suggests not only the congruence of its oppositions but also the opposition of its congruities; and thus implies not only the terms of potency and act but also of essence and attribute.

On the one hand, the Duke implies that virtue hoarded is virtue wasted.

Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues;

On the other hand, his words suggest that virtue acted is also virtue wasted. The torches lit by Heaven are not merely

lit, but consumed in being lit, and public servants, likened to such torches,¹ were similarly understood to expend themselves for the public weal. It has been observed, moreover, by Whiter, that this speech seems to combine two motifs from Luke, viii: the parable of the candlestick and the story of the woman with the issue of blood.² It is significant that Shakespeare should incorporate into this speech two specifically Biblical allusions; it is further significant, moreover, that these two allusions should define Heaven first in terms of potency and then in terms of attribute. Pertaining to the Duke's torches that are not lit for themselves, we should observe that Jesus in Luke, viii.16, says,

No man when he lighteth a candel,
couereth it vnder a vessel, nether putteth it
vnder the table, but setteth it on a
candelsticke, that they that entre in, may se
the light.³

Here the potentiality of virtue in the candle demands actualization, and this actualization is further linked to a social purpose. But this parable seems to be in direct contrast with the episode that pertains to the woman with the issue

¹Measure for Measure, ed., Lever. See note on ll. 32-36, pp. 5-6.

²Cited by Kenneth Muir in Shakespeare's Sources, and both cited by Lever in his note, p. 5.

³All Biblical quotations are cited from The Geneva Bible: facsimile of 1560 edition (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

of blood, related in verses 43-46, which surfaces allusively in this speech in the terms "virtues," "issues," and "touch'd."

And a woman hauing an yssue of blood,
 twelue yeres long, which had spent all
 her substance vpon physicions, and colde
 not be healed of any:
 Whe she came behide him, she touched the
 hem of his garment, and immediatly
 her yssue of blood stanchd.
 Then Iesus said, Who is it that hathe
 touched me? When euerie man denyed, Peter said
 & thei that were with him, Master, the
 multitude thrust thee, & tread on thee, and
 sayest y, Who hathe touched me?
 And Iesus said, Some one hathe touched me:
 for I perceiue that vertue is gone out of me.⁴

This episode presents an instance in which the actualization of power is perceived by Jesus as its immediate nullification. The allusion in the Duke's speech is then to the impairment of the power of holiness through the contamination of touch. And touch, so negatively adduced in this incident, is a term that finds in the Epicurean philosophy of nature, a contrarily positive frame of reference.

Thus the Duke, in attempting to convey to Angelo the congruency of Heaven and Nature, cannot avoid suggesting simultaneously that these terms are not congruent but, rather, irreconcilable. His assertion of the inessential difference of modality between Nature and Heaven seems, contrarily, to imply an absolute distinction between Heaven and Nature. In each case, moreover, the perspective is offered in an

⁴Luke, viii.43-46.

extreme and absolute form. The Duke, thus, by expressing the paradoxical dialectic of the Neo-Platonic theology in its affirmativeness, encounters the pain of the contradiction implicit within it, and it is this contradiction that provokes him to the expedient of dissociating the two elements of the paradox from each other. He disjoins his reason from his will, his transcendence from his immanence, and makes of himself the two identities of Angelo and the Friar-Duke. He gives verbal expression to the affirmative theology and physical expression to the negative theology. Clearly, however, he proceeds from one extreme, the extreme of conflation, to the other extreme of isolation, holding ever to absolutism.

If the strain of keeping reality together causes it to come apart, the progress of the play reveals that the taking apart of reality, while it is the origin of suffering, does not resolve the conflict between reason and will. The proper integration of reason and will requires the surrender of the demand for absolutism in both qualities, and it is this compromise of absolutism that emerges out of the sufferings of its various protagonists.

The necessity for the compromise of absolutism in both reason and will appears to inher in the tendency, also expressed in the Duke's speech, of reason and will, in their absolute affirmations, to destroy themselves. Nature's claim to encompass the whole of reality culminates in acosmism. It is in the light of the Stoic relegation of everything to Nature that the representation of Nature as a creditor

becomes fraught with its deepest meaning. For the Stoics, the principle of form is the modality of actualization, which is the modality of individuation and thingness. But for the Stoics, such individuation has an ephemeral and negative character. It comprises a limitation of substance as an infinite and all-including category. Insofar as substance is infinite, it comprehends all forms, but by virtue of comprehending all, it can manifest none. It comprises all forms potentially and none actually. Actuality can thus be viewed as the realm of privation, and the result of all imperfection in the universe. The modality of actualization as an expression of Nature has thus a self-negating quality. Nature the creditor seems to call back her forms, to lend for a time only and to be strict in her arrest. Thus the perspective adopted by Nature seems to negate Nature itself.

If, moreover, the perspective of Nature alone nullifies Nature, the perspective of Heaven, pursued absolutely, involves a similar nullification of Heaven. By telling Angelo

For if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not,

the Duke seems to be questioning not only the self-sufficiency of Heaven's power, but also its reality. This comment on Heaven's virtues broaches the subject of certain theological consequences entailed by the doctrine of the total otherness of God in his transcendence. It suggests that the

conception of God as wholly alien to the universe forecloses upon His description by any but negative terms; to speak of the nature of God is literally to equate Him with nothing. The absolute affirmation of God's transcendence as infinitely beyond the world and apart from it culminates thus in an affirmation of Him that is logically consistent at least with His nonexistence. Like the Ding an sich of Kant, we have no way of knowing logically that it is really there.⁵ Thus the reality of God's transcendence requires that this transcendence be less than absolute; that the created universe function so far as a mirror of divinity as to give assurance of the reality of that divinity.

This speech appears, then, to identify absolutism as the quality to be purged from both Heaven and Nature, self and world. Through the uncompromised assertion of their respective claims of all-inclusiveness and total isolation, Nature and Heaven destroy themselves. Nature attempts to appropriate Heaven within its own sphere, but its contaminating encroachment upon Heaven entails a nullification of itself; Heaven's refusal to impart its power to Nature and its envious retention of all excellence within itself is a refusal to recognize Nature as a legitimate aspect of reality, but this refusal calls its own reality into question. Thus at the outset of the play Shakespeare both identifies the reconciliation of Heaven and Nature as the condition of its

⁵McFarland, p. 91.

comic resolution and identifies the concept of absoluteness as the element that must be cast out to attain that reconciliation.

That the mold of the play is indeed comic, moreover, Shakespeare immediately assures us by emphasizing in its first scene that the Duke's departure from the court is but temporary.⁶ Unlike the finality that Shakespeare conveys in the tragic renunciation of Lear, he suggests here that, in the end, not harm, but rather good, will have been done:

We shall write to you,
As time and our concernings shall importune,
How it goes with us, and do look to know
What doth befall you here. (I.i.55-8)

⁶Although, as McFarland rightly attests, this play comes as close to tragedy as comedy can come, to hold, as do Swinburne, Croce, and Tillyard, that the play is properly tragic is to underestimate both Shakespeare's dramatic skill and his dramatic purpose. In Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy, p. 17, McFarland observes that "Measure for Measure manages, just barely, to remain within the legitimate boundaries of comedy, and in doing so becomes one of Shakespeare's greatest and most tormented achievements." In A Study of Shakespeare (London: Chatto & Windus, 1902), p. 203, Swinburne asserts that "this play is in its very inmost essence a tragedy, and . . . no sleight of hand or force of hand could give it even a tolerable show of coherence or consistency when clipped and docked of its proper and rightful end. . . ." In Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille, trans. Douglas Ainslie (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1920), p. 294, Croce remarks that "this play, which oscillates between the tragic and the comic, and has a happy ending, . . . fails to persuade us that it should have been thus developed and thus ended." And, in Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), p. 123, Tillyard, by claiming that "the play is not of a piece, but changes its nature half-way through," also suggests that it should have been a tragedy.

And, while sending the Duke off, Angelo and Escalus express a balance of the fear attended by the danger of his departure and the hope born of the anticipated reunion.

And. The heavens give safety to your purposes!
Escal. Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!
(I.i.73-4)

If in I,i, the Duke seems to express the logic of the disjunction of reason from will, it is in I,iii, having divested himself of his will, that he begins to speak in accents unmistakeably and fully Stoic. His first statement professes an immunity to passion that derives from the perfection of his reason.

No; holy father, throw away that thought;
Believe not that the dribbling dart of love
Can pierce a complete bosom. (I.iii.1-3)

The Stoic coloration of this statement derives, I think, not merely from its rational rejection of passion but from its echo of the specific profession of Stoicism to armour the heart against the assault of passion. Thus Justus Lipsius, as yet undisciplined by Langius, complains in Tvvo Bookes of Constancie,

For, to see and suffer these thinges daylie
as heretofore, I cannot, Langius, neither⁷
haue I anie plate of steele about my heart.

As the Duke rejects the passions, so also he rejects social manifestations of irrationality, telling Friar Thomas,

I have ever lov'd the life removed,
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies
Where youth, and cost, witless bravery keeps.
(I.iii.8-10)

⁷Lipsius, p. 72.

It is the irrationality, or witlessness, of the bravery that offends the Duke. But it is also, as the words "price," and "cost" help to suggest, the Stoic antipathy to ostentatious luxury as slavish and unmanly that gives these words the impress of Stoicism.

The critical aspect of the Duke's Stoicism is imparted, however, in his reflections on the great theme of justice and mercy. The Duke's observations on justice and mercy place these ideals within a framework of nature and make them ultimately reflections of the laws of the universe. They become not discrete principles, but rather phases of a time-bound cycle, justice representing the reigning in and devouring or contracting of nature into primal matter, and mercy, the proliferating and expanding of nature into a variety of forms.

We have strict statutes and most biting laws
 (The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds),
 Which for this fourteen years we have let slip,
 Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,
 That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
 Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,
 Only to stick it in their children's sight
 For terror, not to use, in time the rod
 [Becomes] more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
 Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead,
 And liberty plucks justice by the nose;
 The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
 Goes all decorum. (I.iii.19-31)

The immediate effect of the Duke's aversion to the animal imagery of "bits and curbs," "weeds," (or steeds, or jades)⁸

⁸ See note in The Riverside Shakespeare, p. 554, and

and the "lion" is to place the question of ethics within a context of nature.⁹ Not only are the subjects of the law associated with a lawless vigor or rankness, but the law itself, presented by the image of the "o'ergrown lion in a cave," seems associated with matter, or mass. This image suggests that the claims of justice are served by the devouring of nature's forms into the primal matter. The forms of nature, devoured by the lion, convert their energy into his substance. This process of devouring, however, limits itself, for when mass becomes too great, the devouring process is abated. The lion is not merely large, but, being overgrown, too large. Its excessive mass renders it inert and provides for nature the merciful respite in which her forms proliferate energetically and arrogantly. This proliferation of forms through the creative action of nature implies a Stoic association of form with both action and imperfection, or rankness. The passage of time, however, will

in Measure for Measure, ed. Lever, p. 20. Theobald emends "weeds" to "steeds," while Lever prefers the emendation of "jades."

⁹ It is just possible that the image of the lion conveys the latency of Brunonian thought behind this Stoic description of nature when we observe that Bruno in his Cena de le ceneri refers to the King of France as a lion "who when he roars with anger, like a lion in his den, strikes mortal fear into the other predatory beasts of the jungle; and when he is calm and in repose; he sends forth such a flame of liberal and courteous love. . . ." See Francis Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 254.

reduce the lion's size, and will cause it to assert again its devouring and absorptive modality.

It appears, then, that the Duke is defining justice and mercy in terms of a balance of mass and energy or matter and force in nature, that he is placing these terms in a quasi-scientific, rather than in a human, context. Justice and mercy are aspects of nature's law, the cyclical systole and diastole of the great body of living nature. In such a context justice and mercy are divorced from any ultimate goal or purpose. They represent merely the rhythm of alternation; they are time's eternal whirligig in which change is eternal repetition.

If in this speech the Duke renders justice and mercy the ethical equivalents of matter and force in their respective modalities of contraction and expansion, he also, in true Stoic fashion, makes it plain that such a definition of justice and mercy places these concepts outside a moral and human framework. Justice is referred to a naturalistic inevitability and rationality. The bits and curbs of justice are neither bad nor good, but merely "needful." And in their needfulness they overrule the tender inclinations of the human beings they govern. In the image of the fond father with his twigs of birch, Shakespeare seems to convey the futility of man's attempt to contravene the order of nature with his own mercy. The fond father is both loving and foolish. He wishes to ameliorate the harshness of justice

by confining its influence to terror as opposed to use. But as the Duke tells us, the effect of the father's withholding of punishment is only an intolerable increase in the arrogance of his children.

Like the fond father, the Duke is also, as he implies, unable to correct his people without chastising them. If, however, the Duke Stoically refers his justice to the way things are rather than the way we would have them, he proceeds immediately to align the physical definition of justice with a political system that comparably addresses the world as it is rather than as we would have it: the politics of Machiavelli. Following the advice of Machiavelli, the Duke identifies the purpose of his deputizing of Angelo as the Machiavellian desire to relegate to a deputy the unpopular task of correcting the people.

That Shakespeare means to associate the Duke's Machiavellian statecraft with Stoicism is suggested by his framing of the Stoic speech on justice and mercy between two references to his deputizing of Angelo. The Machiavellian quality of this act, moreover, is most fully appreciated when it is viewed as an act of substitution, and in that substitution as negating the meaning of selfhood as a uniqueness that forbids substitution. That, as an act of substitution, it is an unChristian act is suggested by Friar Thomas's objection to it.

It rested in your Grace
To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleas'd:

And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd
Than in Lord Angelo. (I.iii.31-4)

In this response, Friar Thomas suggests, voluntaristically, that the deputy is not of equal dignity with the Duke and thus not truly interchangeable with him. The oblique reference in "pleas'd" to pleasure, and the unflinching tolerance for the dreadfulness of justice in Friar Thomas's statement both seem to imply voluntaristic aspects of deity that the Duke in his new role as Stoic Reason seems to find abhorrent. "I do fear--too dreadful," (I.iii.34) he replies, and proceeds to introduce into the dialogue the theme, already obliquely touched on in I,i, of the governor's relation to law.

The Duke now invalidates his own punishment of the people in terms of his own complicity in the infraction of law for which they must now suffer.

Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
For what I bid them do; for we bid this be done,
When evil deeds have their permissive pass,
And not the punishment. (I.iii.35-9)

These words suggest the Stoic emphasis upon the world as guilty of the individual's act and stand in contrast to Calvin's insistence that God, though the author of evil, is not responsible for it.

This tender-hearted response of the Duke to Friar Thomas, however, is subtly tinged with speciousness and deceit, the hallmarks of Machiavellian policy. The fact of his proposal does not square with his compassionate words. The

Duke rejects tyranny, and yet, in proposing that Angelo "strike home," (I.iii.41) he intends to exercise it nonetheless. The deputizing of Angelo, itself a Machiavellian gesture, becomes identified with the Calvinist tyranny it rejects. Thus if the Duke, in getting the harsh Angelo to do his dirty work for him, follows the Machiavellian prescription for keeping the good will of his people and thus guarding the source of his power, he is manifesting equally the qualities of Calvinist severity.

Besides forging an association between Stoicism and Machiavellianism, this scene directs our attention to three further points of importance. Firstly, we now become aware of precisely where the Duke is going in leaving the court. We find that he intends to "visit both prince and people." (I.iii.45) The Duke is to become a pervasive and unidentified presence in Vienna. Secondly, he is to assume a specifically Christian exterior to conceal his identity. To this end he asks Friar Thomas,

Therefore, I prithee,
Supply me with the habit, and instruct me
How I may formally in person bear
Like a true friar. (I.iii.45-48)

The Duke is thus to assume an identity whose character is, apparently, but not actually, Christian; to become, in short, a Neostoic. His Christian habit is to conceal a Stoic identity. Finally, in the Duke's last words, he betrays, rather vaguely, a special attraction and preoccupation,

though hardly one marked by friendship, with his deputy Angelo.

More reasons for this action
 At our more leisure shall I render you;
 Only this one: Lord Angelo is precise;
 Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
 That his blood flows; or that his appetite
 Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see
 If power change purpose: what our seemers be.
 (I.iii.48-54)

Among the superfluity of reasons here suggested, as a commodity that the Duke as Stoic rightly has in ample supply, is his expressed desire to penetrate to its core the selfhood of Angelo. And that selfhood is for the first time given an explicitly voluntaristic identification. Angelo is the Calvinist precision, who, unlike the Stoic God whose virtues are expressed in the universe, hoards his virtue within himself. Like a voluntaristic deity, Angelo becomes, as the repository of all excellence, subject to envy. He seems further to be the object of the Duke's envy, inasmuch as the Duke expresses a clear desire to bring him down. And, I suggest, the personal integrity of Angelo is under attack by the Duke because it is just that selfhood with which Angelo, as Calvinist, is endowed, that the Duke, as Stoic, lacks.

Yet, if Shakespeare asserts in this scene an antagonism between the Duke and Angelo, he asserts also, subtly but pervasively, an identity between them. And he seems to suggest this identity by showing in the Duke a congruence of

Stoic and Calvinist qualities, and in Angelo a similar receptivity to both Calvinist and Stoic description. In his renunciation of love, the Duke is recognizably Stoic. But there is a further quality of Christianity in him, and that quality manifests itself in his ability to speak like a Christian, and indeed, like a Christian critic of Stoicism. The Duke appears to express the conventional stricture of Christian authors against the Stoic idea of the wise man. In describing Angelo as a precision, the Duke makes him recognizably Calvinist; in associating him, however, with a total absence of feeling, he is describing Angelo as that Stoic wise man.

We have seen that Seneca defends this doctrine as valid; Christian thinkers, even those favorably inclined toward Stoic thought, seemed, however, to unite in expressing scorn for the rejection of the passions manifestly expressed by it. Battles and Hugo observe that "the one thing that never failed to arouse the antagonism of Christian apologists was the Stoic image of the sapiens, the wise man."¹⁰ The passions were a clear point of difference between Christianity and Stoicism. Thus, Calvin asserts that

patiently to bear the cross does not consist in an absolute stupefaction and privation of all sense of sorrow, according to the foolish description given by the ancient Stoics of a

¹⁰Ford Lewis Battles and André Malan Hugo, eds., Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, p. 51.

magnanimous man, as one who, divested of the feelings of human nature, is alike unaffected by adverse and prosperous events, by sorrowful and joyful ones. And what advantage have they derived from this sublime wisdom? They have depicted an image of patience, such as never has been found, such as never can exist among men. . . . At present also among Christians there are modern Stoics, who esteem it sinful not only to groan and weep, but even to discover sadness and solicitude. These paradoxes generally proceed from idle men, who, employing themselves more in speculation than in action, can produce nothing but such paradoxical notions. But we have nothing to do with that iron-hearted philosophy, which our Master and Lord has condemned not only in words, but even by his own example. For he mourned and wept both for his own calamities and for those of others.¹¹

I suggest that Shakespeare meant us to recognize in the apathetic description of Angelo just such a modern Christian Stoic as Calvin describes, who spends his life in idle speculation. And we see the plausibility of such an association when we observe that stoniness, a quality ascribed to Angelo, is the very one applied to such pretenders to Stoic impassivity. In The Praise of Folly, Erasmus, addressing Seneca's doctrine of the wise man, observes that "the great Stoic Seneca" denies him all emotion and takes from him

all affections whatever, yet in doing that he leaves him not so much as a man but rather a new kind of god that was never yet nor ever like to be. Nay, to speak plainer, he sets up a stony semblance of a man, void of all sense and common feeling of humanity. And much good

¹¹

Calvin, I, 772-3.

to them with this wise man of theirs; let them enjoy him to themselves, love him without competitors, and live with him in Plato's commonwealth, the country of ideas, or Tantalus' orchards. For who would not shun and startle at such a man, as at some unnatural accident or spirit? A man dead to all sense of nature and common affections, and no more moved with love or pity than if he were a flint or rock; whose censure nothing escapes; that commits no errors himself, but has a lynx's eyes upon others; measures everything by an exact line, and forgives nothing; pleases himself with himself only; the only rich, the only wise, the only free man, and only king; in brief, the only man that is everything, but in his own single judgement only; that cares not for the friendship of any man, being himself a friend to no man; makes no doubt to make the gods stoop to him, and condemns and laughs at the whole actions of our life? And¹² yet such a beast is this their perfect wise man.

When we observe Lucio's contention that Angelo's "urine is congeal'd ice," (III.ii.110-11) and the Friar-Duke's observation to Isabella that Angelo is "a marble" (III.i.229) to the tears of the abandoned Mariana, it becomes plausible to see in Angelo an allusion to this conventional Christian portrait of the Stoic wise man. And it is further in relation to this portrait that the skepticism of the Duke concerning the integrity of Angelo becomes itself conventional. Both Calvin and Erasmus doubt that the wise man can exist, and Budé also calls the sapiens a simulacrum of self-righteous pride.¹³ Hence, the Duke's reference to Angelo as a seemer.

¹² Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, trans. John Wilson (Univ. of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1958), pp. 46-7.

¹³ Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, p. 54.

What is interesting in this well-known reputation of the wise man is that it should be applied not by the precision to the Stoic, but rather by the Stoic to the precision, not to the Duke by Angelo, but rather to Angelo by the Duke. And yet, as Zanta asks, how different, when the superficialities of diction are stripped away, is the Calvinist who, by renouncing his human reason, claims to adopt the virtue of God himself, and the Stoic who, by renouncing his passions, similarly claims identity with deity? How different is Calvinist humility from Stoic arrogance?

La foi étant la connaissance de la Rédemption par le Sauveur, sans qu'il soit nécessaire d'y joindre les oeuvres, la vertue devient foi et par conséquent science. Croire en la Rédemption, la connaître, c'est avoir l'assurance que Dieu accomplit son oeuvre en nous, et que nous sommes des prédestinés à la gloire éternelle. Et voilà l'orgueil stoïcien qui revient subrepticement par la porte de l'humilité, parce que l'humilité avait été mal comprise. L'homme n'est plus rien, Dieu est tout; mais comme l'homme sanctifié ne garde plus rien de lui-même, il redevient Dieu en quelque sorte. Le sentiment de l'humilité naît d'une comparaison entre la créature et Dieu, il y a donc deux termes. Stoïcisme et protestantisme sacrifient l'un des deux, l'un, en donnant tout pouvoir à l'homme, l'autre, tout pouvoir à Dieu. Le catholicisme seul a su comprendre cette vertu, en laissant l'homme par sa liberté, coopérer à l'oeuvre de Dieu.¹⁴

It is to this similarity of Stoicism and Calvinism as both failing to attain a truly Christian identity that the theme of seeming in this scene ultimately refers, and refers, interestingly, to the Duke as well as Angelo.

¹⁴Zanta, p. 56.

If the Duke brands Angelo as a seemer, it cannot escape notice that he is himself in the act of becoming a seemer by adopting the friar's habit.

The subtle combination of antagonism and identity with which Shakespeare seems to characterize the relationship of the Duke to Angelo appears designed, moreover, to convey an element of ignorance, or rather of merely partial knowledge in each of them. As the exponent of will, Angelo's knowledge will be the knowledge of experience, a knowledge that ultimately involves the exercise of the senses in carnal action. As the exponent of reason, the Duke will express the contemplative knowledge of the world. But both Angelo and the Duke fail in their antithetical characters to integrate the carnal knowing of will with the intellection, or thinking, of reason. Angelo, as he enters the realm of will and experience, does not know that he is part of the Duke's political scheme. He thus fails to orient himself accurately toward the world. But the Duke, in his attempt to know Angelo, projects in him faults of which he too is guilty, and thus suggests that he does not know himself.

If, however, each fails to appreciate the knowledge that the other represents, it is the fate of each to assert the mere identification of the knowledge of will with the knowledge of reason, and self with world. And in this conflation, the result, again, is ignorance. Angelo's rejection of the knowledge of reason is exemplified in his impatience

with the facts of the dispute between Pompey and Elbow in II,i. He withdraws leaving Escalus "to the hearing of the cause." (II.i.136) But Angelo progresses from the rejection of the facts of reason to an identification of will with conceptuality that is equally distorted. Mariana is to describe him as one

Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,
But knows he thinks that he knows Isabel's.
(V.i.203-4)

Mariana's point here is that in Angelo's identification of thinking and knowing, he is wrong both ways: wrong in the intellectual supposition that he is carnally ignorant of Mariana, and wrong in the carnal experience of Isabella. The Friar-Duke, however, in rejecting the experience of will, comes ultimately to identify the knowledge of reason or the world with the knowledge of person. He assumes an a priori rational knowledge that Angelo as selfhood will pardon Claudio. But what he thinks he knows with reference to Claudio's pardon in IV,ii, and what he learns by experience are two different things, just as what Angelo thinks and what he knows are two different things. True knowledge, however, is neither the exclusive exercise of either experience or intellection, nor the conflation of experience with intellection, but rather the collaboration of rational intellect and voluntary sensation that integrates the knowledge of the world with the knowledge of the self.

With both his integrity and his wisdom thus subtly

compromised, the Duke descends into the realm of nature that Shakespeare represents as the rank and sinful world of Vienna. We see him next in one of its direst locations, a prison, and comporting himself in his conversation with its Provost, like a true friar. As the representative of a theology both rationalistic and voluntaristic, the Friar-Duke as friar is addressed by the Provost in terms of both will and idea, or goodness. "What's your will, good friar?" (II.iii.2) And the Friar-Duke's answer suggests the Medieval Christian synthesis of will and reason in its reference to "charity" and "order," charity suggesting individual love and "order" suggesting objective reason.

Bound by my charity and my blest order
 I come to visit the afflicted spirits
 Here in the prison. Do me the common right
 To let me see them, and to make me know
 The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
 To them accordingly. (II.iii.3-8)

In this statement the Friar-Duke seems to profess an interest in "the afflicted spirits" of the prison each in his individuality. Each is to be distinguished by his crime, and to require different ministration. The Provost thereupon directs the Friar-Duke's attention to the approaching Juliet, and informs him that her lover, Claudio, has been sentenced to die on the morrow. And the Friar-Duke straightaway begins his ministrations.

As the interview between the Friar-Duke and Juliet progresses, however, we become aware of a certain blurring of focus in the assumedly Christian direction of his

consolation. His diction is Christian enough, but its use seems directed toward a goal other than Christian. Specifically, there seems a rational coldness about the Friar-Duke's manner that casts into doubt his self-professed charity. The event of the interview is, moreover, the psychic destruction of Juliet, a culmination that ceases to appear adventitious and assumes instead the logic of inevitability when we view the Friar-Duke's ministrations not as the solace of Christian instruction, but rather as the insinuation of a Stoic ethic under the casing of a Christian habit. In thus viewing the Friar-Duke's words, we begin to understand not only their real drift but also the source of Juliet's total vulnerability to them.

The fact that Juliet's crime is one of passion makes her a fit object for the Friar-Duke's solicitude by the standard of either Christian or Stoic ethics. There remains, however, a difference in the characterization of this crime by the Christian as opposed to the Stoic ethic. Christianity reproves lawless love; Stoicism reproves love itself.¹⁵ The subject of the Friar-Duke's reproof, we gradually become aware, is not the lawless expression of Juliet's love merely, but the existence of that love. He urges Juliet toward

¹⁵ Bevan, p. 66. How pertinent to the dramatic situation rendered in II,iii, is Bevan's assertion that the Stoic was to have benevolence, "as much of it as you can conceive; but there was one thing he must not have, and that was love."

nothing less than a renunciation of the love of Claudio; implicit, moreover, in that demand is the demand for the renunciation of self love as well.

To these demands Juliet responds with imperfect comprehension but with perfect trust. Accepting the Friar-Duke's habit as the guarantee of his authenticity, she submits her mind wholly to his sway in the persuasion that he comes to comfort her. Her responses to his questions, moreover, fulfill the demands of Christian piety, evincing as they do an even-handed love of both God and self; and Juliet offers these responses to the Friar-Duke with full confidence in their acceptability. These responses, however, if they affirm concepts laudable in the Christian context, assume, in the context of the Stoic ethic, the character not of virtue but of vice. The responses of Juliet, then, so sweetly and confidently advanced, sound in the ears of the Friar-Duke as confirming evidence of sin, which he proceeds to attack. The effect, however, of his attack on Juliet's love of Claudio as an expression of the love of self is to destroy within her the integration of selfhood and world, and, thus, psychically, to destroy her.

The first suggestion we receive of an other than Christian perspective in the Friar-Duke's advice to Juliet derives from his linking of virtue with knowledge, and, more specifically, his offer to teach Juliet how to judge her virtue.

I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,
 And try your penitence, if it be sound,
 Or hollowly put on. (II.iii.21-23)

Hollow seeming here proposes to teach candid simplicity how to judge itself! Finding Juliet willing to learn, he asks a classically Christian question, the question whose affirmative response fulfills the commandment of the Sermon on the Mount: "Love your enemies."¹⁶

Love you the man that wrong'd you?
 (II.iii.24)

Significantly, the Friar-Duke makes no assumption of love between Juliet and Claudio. He is, accordingly, surprised when Juliet, by her response, informs him not only that she loves Claudio, but that she loves him with a love that bespeaks not self-denial but rather self-fulfillment, and a love that bespeaks self-love.

Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him. (II.iii.25)

Implicit in this affirmation of love and affirmation of self, moreover, is the validation of the personality of man in terms that partly transcend morality. Juliet seems to be implying that while she and Claudio are to be defined by their deeds, they are also more than their deeds. Guilty of wrong, they remain still worthy of love.

To the Friar-Duke, Juliet's response, constituting as it does an almost sublime affirmation of personality, cannot but appear as a challenge and an offense. But, more

¹⁶
 Marke, vi. 27.

specifically, the attribution of the carnal act to love endows it with the dimension of intentionality, which for the Stoic constitutes the true criterion of innocence and guilt. Juliet not only did the deed, but did it with intent.

So then it seems your most offenseful act
Was mutually committed? (II. 26-7)

And when Juliet agrees to that charge, the Friar-Duke, for a reason that is not clear to me, imputes to her a larger share of blame than to Claudio.

Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.
(II.iii.28)

Is this statement an expression of the Stoic bias against women, or does it constitute a way in which the Friar-Duke encourages Juliet not to love but rather to dislike herself, or, as seems most probable, is it simply a charge that seems to invite Juliet to some independent reflection and objection? The fact that she accedes to this as to all previous suggestions seems calculated by Shakespeare to emphasize the point that this young woman is determined to maintain a posture of submissiveness toward her supposedly Christian instructor.

In acceding to this charge, however, Juliet has been provoked into a betrayal of herself. In telling the Friar-Duke,

I do confess it, and repent it, father,
(II.iii.29)

she is exhibiting a failure to think for herself, and is

rather allowing the Friar-Duke to unprovide her mind by substituting for the self-authenticating and thus self-strengthening doctrines of Christianity the self-denying and ultimately self-weakening doctrines of Stoicism.

That self-denial is the keystone of his argument becomes at last apparent when he asserts the utter incompatibility of love of self with love of God.

'Tis meet so, daughter, but lest you do repent
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven,
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,
But as we stand in fear-- (II.iii.30-34)

Juliet's repentance, to be authentic, must be what, by the terms of human frailty, it can never be: totally divorced from the fact of personal suffering. The Friar-Duke is asking as the validation of her repentance that Juliet, like the Stoic wise man, renounce sorrow for herself. For his own part, he rejects, true to Stoic form, the emotion of pity. And Juliet, in a statement of almost perverse self-repudiation, accedes to this demand, even interrupting its expression in the alacrity of her compliance.

I do repent me as it is an evil,
And take the shame with joy. (II.iii.35-6)

Whereas, in Christian penitence, she had asserted a modest willingness to "bear the shame most patiently," (II.iii.20) in Neostoic penitence, her contrition assumes heroic proportions.

But these heroics, however ardent and sincere, seem

to be portrayed by Shakespeare as deliberately strained and precarious. Indeed, even in Stoic terms, joy, being itself an emotion, is not the mental condition proper to virtue. And Juliet's joy serves merely to indicate to us that while she can be diverted from a proper Christian virtue, she cannot appropriate the inhuman ideal of Stoic perfection.

The Friar-Duke, however, considers her response as evidence confirming a Neostoic eradication of selfhood from her soul. Whether assuming that to Juliet, now secure in the fortress of her virtue, it can now be a matter of no moment that her lover is imminently to die, or seeing his work with her accomplished and more work still to do with the other "afflicted spirits," he briskly takes his leave, informing her casually and with true Stoic indifference,

Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.
Grace go with you, Benedicite! (II.iii.37-39)

With this simple and terrible communication, the Friar-Duke topples the fragile edifice of Stoic virtue so zealously constructed in the mind of Juliet.

Must die to-morrow? O injurious love,
That respites me a life whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror! (II.iii.40-42)

Gone the joy, and gone too the patience. This anguished outcry seems to have been designed by Shakespeare to reveal the way in which the "addition" of Stoic doctrines to Christian piety, far from strengthening and confirming that piety, merely destroys it. By the standard of Christianity,

this outcry suggests that Juliet is now in the sinful state of despair. She rejects her own life as "a dying horror," and in that rejection seems to show that the rejection of selfhood is nothing less than a rejection of life. Her mental condition is, indeed, suicidal, a condition that becomes thematically significant when we recall that suicide, while sanctioned and even approved by Stoicism, was regarded as mortal sin by Christianity. In Juliet's impassioned longing for death, Shakespeare seems, moreover, to be suggesting that the desire to die bespeaks not, as the Stoics claim, the settled strength of the virtuous mind, but rather a spirit abject and broken.

But the culminating horror of the Friar-Duke's victory over Juliet is not assessed until we recognize that he has destroyed both her selfhood and her love. In rejecting "injurious love," Juliet seems to be rejecting her unborn child,¹⁷ and this rejection appears, as a practical application of the Stoic abjuration of love, so contrary to nature that its origin in the Friar-Duke's advice becomes subtly ironic. We seem to have in this rejection an instance of nature's denial of itself. Yet this term,

¹⁷See Measure for Measure, ed. Lever, note 1. 40, p. 53. Hanmer emends "love" in line 40 to "law," while Johnson defends the Folio reading of "love" as Juliet's oblique reference to the child she carries. A reading of the scene as a contrast of Christian and Stoic ethics seems to make the retention of the Folio's "love" essential to its comprehension.

by its inclusive vagueness, seems to pertain to Claudio as well. And we see that, although it is the news of his imminent demise that precipitates Juliet's despair, its anguish is conspicuously devoid of expressed sympathy for him. What Shakespeare shows us instead is the terror of a soul in the confrontation of its own isolation. And as if subtly to accent the absence of love in Juliet's outcry, Shakespeare offers in contrast to it the Provost's quiet comment that focuses not on Juliet but, properly, on Claudio: "'Tis pity of him." (II.iii.42)

If one can claim, with a fair degree of certainty as to its accuracy, that the Friar-Duke's dialogue with Juliet dramatizes the Neostoic ethic as spuriously Christian and aggressively antihumanistic, to assess the dramatic purpose of the Friar-Duke's sermon to Claudio in III,i, is more difficult. The problem it presents is twofold. The first task is to orient it within the scheme of the play's philosophies; the second is to identify the philosophic statement that it dramatizes and to show the place of that statement in the philosophic meaning of the play.

The first task seems to be accomplished in the recognition that this speech is a tissue of Cynic and Epicurean ideas, woven into so fine a texture as to suggest their conflation as the rationalism and voluntarism of man, a conflation that balances the Neo-Platonic conflation of rationalism and voluntarism in the realm of theology, or God.

It is in addressing the meaning of this conflation that thought becomes speculative. Certain aspects of this speech, however, obtrude on our consciousness and demand coherent integration. And chief among these is the representation of this conflation of Cynicism and Epicureanism not as affirming man, but rather as denying him. As I shall try to show, the Friar-Duke uses the ideas of these philosophies to derive from them conclusions that suggest man's mere unreality. This speech is, as Leech observed, a denial of personality itself. The irony of such a use, however, becomes apparent when we observe that it is the contention of these philosophies not to deny but rather to affirm man's reality and autonomy. Shakespeare seems, indeed, to be suggesting that it is the very absoluteness of that affirmation that conduces to their use as a means of his denial.

We recognize the meaning of this denial of man in the conflation of Epicureanism and Cynicism, moreover, when we observe that implicit within it is the implied negation of God. Conspicuous in his scathingly pessimistic denunciation of human life is the Friar-Duke's complete silence on the subject of deity, an omission, as it were, of his reality. This speech makes man the sole reality in the universe; in so doing, however, it seems to recapitulate in the realm of humanism the claim of Plotinus in the realm of theology. As Plotinus' need to see God as absolute required him to absorb all being into the identity of deity, and thus

implicitly to deny the reality of man, so man, by asserting his absolute autonomy, implicitly negates the reality of God. And it is to this negation of deity implicit within the absolute affirmation of man that the absence of deity in this speech is to be referred. The negation of God, however, negates man also. In the negation of God, man becomes everything, but in becoming everything also becomes nothing. Thus the negation of man in the speech is implicitly associated with the negation of God. As Plotinus' denial of man conduces also to his denial of God, so likewise, the denial of God culminates in the definition of man as nothing. It is just this nothingness of man that the Friar-Duke preaches to Claudio.

We must ask also why Shakespeare makes the Friar-Duke the expounder of this negation of man. And an answer, however tentative, seems partly to emerge in the consideration of this speech as a dramatic realization of the consequence of the absolute realization of God as the denial of man. Shakespeare seems to portray that denial as the Friar-Duke's use of the philosophies of humanism to invalidate them. He appropriates these ideas in such a way as to draw from their own logic proof not of the autonomy and dignity of man, but rather of his abject, ignominious, and ultimately unreal condition. In this attempt Shakespeare appears to be doing much the same thing that Plutarch did, when he addressed the ideas of Epicurus to show that these ideas,

far from making life pleasant, conduced to a view of life in which pleasure was impossible.¹⁸ Shakespeare, however, unlike Plutarch, is concerned to make this observation within the broader context of his own opinion that the absolute affirmation of either God or man conduces to the negation of both God and man.

Before attempting to deal with particular details of this speech, it might be well to allow the profundity of its pessimism to emerge from a perception of this statement as a whole. Addressing Claudio, the Friar-Duke tells him,

Be absolute for death: either death or life
 Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:
 If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
 That none but fools would keep. A breath thou art,
 Servile to all the skyey influences,
 That dost this habitation where thou keep'st
 Hourly afflict. Merely, thou art death's fool,
 For him thou labor'st by thy flight to shun,
 And yet run'st toward him still. Thou art not noble,
 For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st
 Are nurs'd by baseness. Thou'rt by no means valiant,
 For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
 Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,
 And that thou oft provok'st, yet grossly fear'st
 Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself,
 For thou exists on many a thousand grains
 That issue out of dust. Happy art thou not,
 For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get,
 And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not certain,
 For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
 After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor,
 For like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
 Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
 And death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none,

¹⁸ Plutarch, "That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible," in Moralia, trans. Benedict Einarson and Phillip H. De Lacy, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967).

For thine own bowels, which do call thee [sire],
 The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
 Do curse the gout, sapego, and the rheum
 For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth nor age,
 But as it were an after-dinner's sleep,
 Dreaming on both, for all thy blessed youth
 Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
 Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,
 Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
 To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this
 That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
 Lie hid moe thousand deaths; yet death we fear
 That makes these odds all even. (III.i.5-41)

It is when we place this speech in the context of Cynic humanism that its initial emphasis on reason and subsequent repudiation of all the social and material values of life assume a philosophical identity. It is, furthermore, through the association of Stoicism with Cynicism that Shakespeare seems to identify the negation of human life latent within Stoicism itself. Indeed, its first injunction,

Be absolute for death: either death or life
 Shall thereby be the sweeter, (III.i.5-6)

besides identifying Stoicism itself with absolutism, advances the doctrine of radical renunciation so peculiarly Cynical. That renunciation, in turn, is to be effected through reason. It is reason that presides over an imaginary arraignment of life in which all its blessings become the sources of man's enslavement and humiliation.

As the doctrine of reason alone, however, this doctrine cannot be truly Christian. Like the merely pseudo-Christian ethic preached by the Friar-Duke to Juliet, this great speech on death, as many critics have perceived,

defies Christian interpretation. Firstly, the Friar-Duke begins the scene by urging Claudio to cast out the cardinal Christian virtue of hope, a virtue that Claudio, good Christian that he is, gives evidence of possessing, as well as needing.

Duke. So then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

Claud. The miserable have no other medicine
but only hope:
I have hope to live, and am prepar'd to die.
(III.i.1-4)

Secondly, there are to be found in the Friar-Duke's speech none of those heavenly comforts that, in the Christian representation of reality, compensate for the repudiation of this world. Instead of preaching such comforts, the Friar-Duke suggests, contrarily, that the entire realm of ideality is an illusion. He negates such spiritual virtues as nobility, valor, and constancy, virtues that derive their validity from a realm of more than material dignity.

Thou art not noble,
For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st
Are nurs'd by baseness. Thou'rt by no means valiant
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm.

.
Thou art not certain
For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
After the moon. (III.i.13-17,23-25)

The specifically Cynical cast of this speech, moreover, is revealed in the representation of human life not as ennobled but rather as debased by the accommodations toward which man inclines. All those ameliorations of life that are sought to enhance it, such as riches and children, are

represented as conducing to human shame. Resorting to the Stoic logic of paradox, the Friar-Duke asserts,

If thou art rich, thou'rt poor,
For like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee. . Friend hast thou done,
For thine own bowels, which do call thee [sire],
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, sapego, and the rheum ¹⁹
For ending thee no sooner. (III.i.25-32)

Yet the Friar-Duke's assumption of man's ignobility seems to take Cynicism farther than Antisthenes and Diogenes took it. For these thinkers sought not to convince man of his baseness but to teach him his true nobility. They rejected the accommodations that compromised man's autonomy as the means of realizing his nobility. The Friar-Duke, however, does not acknowledge the ability of man to reject those accommodations. He remains dependent and debased. His is not an impaired nobility but an inherent baseness. In taking that further step in the representation of Cynicism, Shakespeare continues to cast his own verdict on the philosophies he entertains. Cynicism offers one more instance of the way in which the rejection of heaven by nature impugns the validity of nature. Thus, if autonomy is a Cynic ideal, man is enslaved.

¹⁹ Measure for Measure, ed., Lever, note 16-8, p. 68. Lever cites Hanmer's derivation of the image of the ass from the Zodiake of Palingenius, finding there the association of the ass with the loneliness of old age. He himself suggests also The Golden Asse of Apuleius as a possible source, finding there the association of the ass with death.

A breath thou art,
 Servile to all the skyey influences,
 That dost this habitation where thou keep'st
 Hourly afflict. (III.i.8-11)

If fortitude and strength of mind represent Cynic virtues, man in the Friar-Duke's speech fears the "tender fork/ Of a poor worm," and shifts his character or "complexion" in response to the influence of the moon. After the manner of Cynicism, man is compared to an animal. But here, significantly, his animality is not an analogue of his autonomy, but rather of his slavery. Congruently, the definition in this passage of children as "the mere effusion of thy proper loins" seems to ascribe to them a wholly physical, and hence, animal being, and this fact seems not irrelevant to their humiliation and repudiation of their father. Note also the Cynically nominalistic implication in "do call thee [sire]." The cumulative effect of these references to Cynic doctrine seems to suggest that Shakespeare is turning the values of Cynicism against Cynicism.

Having forged a primary association in this speech between Stoicism and Cynicism, however, Shakespeare appears to manifest within it a second and equally strong intention of identifying Cynicism with Epicureanism. By making man servile to specifically "skyey influences," Shakespeare is denying both the Cynic's ideal of human freedom and also the Epicurean claim of man's exemption from the power of the gods. As I shall attempt to show later, the observation on

riches and children has a reference to Epicureanism as well as to Cynicism, and constitutes, as an important part of its meaning, a way of bonding Cynicism with Epicureanism.

The most pervasively Epicurean aspect of this speech seems to be its quality of dramatic immediacy, a quality that derives from its use throughout of direct address in the second person. It is this same dramatic immediacy that marks the combined exhortations of Nature and Lucretius to man at the end of Book III of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura.

The evidence of Epicureanism in this speech that has been most clearly perceived by critics, however, appears to be the suggestion, in the most radical of its statements, of Epicurean atomic theory.²⁰

Thou art not thyself
For thou exists on many a thousand grains
That issue out of dust. (III.i.19-21)

Lever cites the O. E. D. definition of grains as "seeds."²¹

²⁰ Measure for Measure, ed. Lever, p. 68, note 11. 20,1 in which he cites observations to this effect by Martin. In his article entitled "Shakespeare, Lucretius, and the Commonplaces," RES, 21 (1945), 174-182, L. C. Martin argues for the recognition of Shakespeare's probably direct access to Lucretius' De Rerum Natura, as well as for the recognition of Shakespeare's critical evaluation of Lucretius' doctrine. Included in his citations of Lucretian material in Shakespeare are references to the Friar-Duke's speech to Claudio. See pp. 177, 179.

²¹ Idem. Although Lever cites Curry as ascribing also Stoic and Neo-Platonic origins to the term "seeds," and Elton as deriving the term from Timothy Bright's Treatise of Melancholie (1586), the context of its use here seems to be primarily Epicurean.

"Seeds," in turn, are, in the Latin of Lucretius, "semina," which, along with other terms, denotes the minimal components of the universe.²² Lucretius tells Memmius,

I will reveal the first-beginnings of things,
from which nature creates all things, and into
which nature too dissolves them again at their
perishing: these in rendering our account it
is our wont to call matter or the creative
bodies of things, and to name them the seeds
of things, and again to term them the first
bodies, since from them first all things have
their being.²³

Congruent with Lucretius' account of the creation of everything from atomic seeds, the Friar-Duke advises Claudio that he is compounded of these atomic "grains." If we may think speculatively concerning the derivation of these grains from "dust," moreover, it appears at least possible to derive the term "dust" from Lucretius' recourse, in his description of the perpetual movement of atoms, to the analogy of motes moving in the sunbeam. In these motes, Lucretius gives us a model of the atom.

So far as may be, a little thing can give a
picture of great things and afford traces of a
concept. And for this reason it is the more
right for you to give heed to these bodies,
which you see jostling in the sun's rays, be-
cause such jostlings hint that there are
movements of matter too beneath them, secret
and unseen.²⁴

²² In Book I, l. 501, Lucretius refers to atoms as "semina quae rerum primordiaque esse docemus."

²³ Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, trans. Bailey, pp. 28-9.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

These notes may at least partly have inspired Shakespeare's association of "grains" with "dust." As Lever suggests, however, the term "dust" seems also to be an allusion to Genesis, and illustrates the way in which one word can suggest a blending of pagan philosophy with Christian myth.²⁵ Lever cites its use in ii.7, where God makes man "of the dust of the ground." More pertinent, I suggest, is its incorporation into God's curse of Adam and Eve in iii.19.

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat
bread, til thou returne to the earth: for
out of it wast thou taken, because thou art
dust, and to dust shalt thou returne.

Clearly, in the context of the Friar-Duke's speech, the term "dust" attains its power through its imputation of nothingness and vanity to the being of man, a power that it appears to derive, as Lever observes, from an imaginative fusion of Epicureanism with Christianity in one of its most pessimistic moments. This Epicurean citation of the Christian "dust," moreover, by fixing Christianity in pessimism, puts us once more in mind of Shakespeare's larger purpose in the characterization of the Friar-Duke: the demonstration of the way in which Neostoicism impresses Christianity into the service of a doctrine that distorts it.

The specifically Epicurean component of this speech is revealed in those statements that judge the value of life

²⁵ Measure for Measure, ed. Lever, note 20-1, p. 68.

by the standard not of nobility, but rather of pleasure. It will be observed in the discussion of this element, however, that Shakespeare's representation of Epicureanism seems to intensify a tone of darkness within it. Congruent with his treatment of Cynicism, Shakespeare seems not merely to reflect, but rather to interpret Epicurean doctrine, especially as it is stated by Lucretius. Whereas Epicurus held that life was capable of yielding pleasure to the man who followed his teachings, in this speech the Friar-Duke argues that life's promises of pleasure are never fulfilled. And prominent among the reasons for the failure of life to fulfill its promises of pleasure is the conspicuously Lucretian citation of the insatiability of human desire. The pursuit of pleasure becomes a manifestation of the illusion that beclouds the life of man and renders it more nearly aligned with death than life.

At the same time, however, that Lucretius has Nature suggest the futility of the pursuit of pleasure, he likewise has her express the futility of flight from pain, and from the greatest of all pains: death. The Friar-Duke will likewise discourse on the futility of man's attempt to flee from death. But, whereas for Lucretius the fear of death is an effect of the ignorance that mars life, for the Friar-Duke, this fear becomes rather one more reason to reject life altogether and embrace death.

Let us attempt now to identify specific elements of

the combined exhortation of Nature and Lucretius to man in Book III of De Rerum Natura, with a view to seeing how Shakespeare appropriates and subordinates these elements to his own purpose. In her discourse, Nature reproaches man for his unwillingness to die, with the aim of showing him that death is both the inevitable and the proper end of life. As an inevitable fate, death assumes a dark ominousness. But death's inexorability, while present in Nature's argument, is not a prominent feature of it. Nature's emphasis is rather on the propriety of death as a conclusion to life. She attempts, in short, to view death optimistically. In the unfolding of Nature's argument, however, it becomes increasingly clear that her attempt to justify death as a proper end to life involves her in an inevitable but only half acknowledged disvaluation of life. Life itself becomes permeated with death in many forms.

To the man, not yet old, lamenting at the summons of death, Nature observes that whether his life has been one of joy or misery, he should not repine at the prospect of dying. If life has been pleasant, it should have satisfied him, and, if life's pleasures have escaped him, death forecloses on the possibility of further disappointment.

Why is death so great a thing to thee, mortal,
that thou dost give way overmuch to sickly
lamentation? why groan and weep at death?
For if the life that is past and gone has been
pleasant to thee, nor have all its blessings,
as though heaped in a vessel full of holes,
run through and perished unenjoyed, why dost
thou not retire like a guest sated with the

banquet of life, and with calm mind embrace,
 thou fool, a rest that knows no care? But
 if all thou hast reaped hath been wasted and
 lost, and life is a stumbling-block, why seek
 to add more, all to be lost again foolishly
 and pass away unenjoyed; why not rather make
 an end of life and trouble?²⁶

This statement justifies death by the standard of pleasure, whether enjoyed or not enjoyed. Yet the idea of pleasure unenjoyed seems to haunt it like a specter. Life seems here to be merely a duration of painful frustration, whereas death is seen as a release from its miseries.

Addressing herself now to the man grown old and despairing at the imminence of death, Nature develops the theme of pleasure unenjoyed, viewing its loss as a function of the insatiability of man's desire. She tells man, on the one hand, that he has tasted all the joys of life, but (heedless of her own self-contradiction) suggests also that he has spoiled his life through an insatiability of desire that no length of days can appease.

Thou hast enjoyed all the prizes of life and
 now dost waste away. But because thou yearnest
 ever for what is not with thee, and despisest
 the gifts at hand, uncompleted and unenjoyed
 thy life has slipped from thee, and, ere thou

²⁶ Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, trans. Bailey, p. 137. Added to this argument is a further and still darker observation not addressed in the Friar-Duke's sermon, an observation that seems to impugn the reality of pleasure rather than man's capacity to appreciate it: "For there is naught more, which I can devise or discover to please thee: all things are ever as they were." The ability of life to give man pleasure is limited by the absence in it of newness.

didst think it, death is standing by thy head,
before thou hast the heart to depart filled and
sated with good things.²⁷

And Nature returns to this point at greater length in her
summation by explaining that

so long as we have not what we crave, it
seems to surpass all else; afterward, when it
is ours, we crave something else, and the same
thirst for life besets us ever, openmouthed.²⁸

All this doctrine seems to be distilled in the Friar-
Duke's brief verdict on human pleasure.

Happy art thou not,
For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get,
And what thou hast, forget'st. (III.i.21-23)

But here, unhappiness is not balanced with the possibility
of happiness; rather, it is unconditional and absolute.

A prominent feature of Nature's admonition to the
old man, moreover, is her observation that he has an obliga-
tion to withdraw from life to make way for his sons:

Yet now give up all these things so ill-fitted
for thy years, and with calm mind, come, yield
them to thy sons: for so thou must.²⁹

Commenting in his own voice on this piece of advice, Lucretius
observes that Nature is quite right so to command man.

For the old ever gives place thrust out by new
things, and one thing must be restored at the
expense of others. . . . There must be sub-
stance that the generations to come may grow;
yet all of them too will follow thee, when

²⁷ Ibid., p. 138.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 142.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

they have had their fill of life.³⁰

Death, in any case, is not terrible, but only "a calmer rest than any sleep."³¹

The Friar-Duke, however, abandoning Lucretius' attempt to measure the honey with the gall, casts the same meaning in a tone of deliberate bitterness.

Thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, sapego, and the rheum,
For ending thee no sooner. (III.i.28-32)³²

We should observe of this statement that to the Cynical representation of children as a hindrance Shakespeare adds the Epicurean idea of children as an enemy.

The savagery of its Epicurean aspect derives, I suspect, from Shakespeare's desire to manifest in no uncertain terms the way in which such Epicurean advice debases human life by bursting asunder the "holy cords" (King Lear, II.ii.74) of filial love. Such doctrine, Shakespeare seems

³⁰Idem. Here, I suspect, lies the origin of the doctrine by which Edmund, on the point of betraying his father, Gloucester, justifies himself. "The younger rises when the old doth fall." King Lear, III.iii.25.

³¹Idem. Compare with regard to this opinion, the attitude of Plutarch, p. 133, for whom "the countenance worn by death that dismays all men as fearful, grim, and dark, is insensibility, oblivion, and knowing nothing." It is not, in Plutarch's estimation, the fear of hell, but rather the doubt of heaven that makes the passage of death so terrifying.

³²Measure for Measure, ed. Lever, note 11. 29-32, p. 68. Lever derives this passage from the Zodiacke of Palingenius, and observes that the Friar-Duke deepens its pessimism. Palingenius represents children as the only succor of old age rejected by brother, kinsman, friend. Shakespeare makes the children particularly spiteful.

to be saying, destroys youth as well as age, for the Friar-Duke immediately concludes,

Thou hast nor youth nor age,
But as it were an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both, for all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld. (III.i.32-36)

The Friar-Duke's association of sleep with food in the phrase, "an after-dinner's sleep," seems to identify this sleep as Epicurean in its derivation. And, indeed, it seems probable that the Friar-Duke derives this representation of life as "an after-dinner's sleep" from a similar representation of human life by Lucretius as a state of perpetual somnolence. Except in uncommon instances of greatness, man's life is closer to death than to life. Why, then, Lucretius asks, when man lives on the verge of nonexistence, should he resent the necessity of dying?

Wilt thou then hesitate and chafe to meet
thy doom? thou, whose life is wellnigh dead
while thou still livest and lookest on the
light, who dost waste in sleep the greater part
of thy years, and snore when wide awake.³³

The Friar-Duke makes the same association between sleep and death in the context of the human longing for unconsciousness.

Thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provok'st, yet grossly fear'st
Thy death, which is no more. (III.i.16-19)

Like Lucretius, the Friar-Duke seeks to draw the terror from

death by associating it with nothing more fearful than sleep.

The Friar-Duke's mention of the provocation of sleep, moreover, appears to address the second theme of Lucretius' discourse on death: the fear of dying and the futility of man's efforts to escape this fear. In Lucretius' description of this fear we can recognize an accurate delineation of what in our own age we would call anxiety. This anxiety manifests itself in the recourse to sleep, a recourse that reveals its futility in the fact that sleep is itself a simulacrum of death. It also manifests itself, however, in an aimless movement.

Both in the speech of Lucretius, and the Friar-Duke, this movement appears to have psychic as well as physical manifestations. In Lucretius' exhortation it manifests itself mentally as a passivity that subjects the mind to illusion, fear, care, and an aimless drifting from one opinion to another. Man, in the opinion of Lucretius, ought to remonstrate with himself directly and accuse himself as a creature who cannot

cease to see dream-visions, who hast a mind harassed with empty fear, nor canst discover often what is amiss with thee, when like a sot thou art beset, poor wretch, with countless cares on every side, and dost wander drifting on the shifting currents of thy mind.³⁴

³⁴Idem.

The dream-visions of Lucretius seem to correspond to the dreams of life in the Friar-Duke's "after-dinner's sleep." We seem to hear a stronger echo of it, however, in the Friar-Duke's observation,

Thou art not certain,
For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
After the moon. (III.i.23-25)

Lucretius, moreover, shows that the fear of death provokes a comparably aimless physical movement.

The man who is tired of staying at home, often goes out abroad from his great mansion, and of a sudden returns again, for indeed abroad he feels no better. He races to his country home, furiously driving his ponies, as though he were hurrying to bring help to a burning house; he yawns at once, when he has set foot on the threshold of the villa, or sinks into a heavy sleep and seeks forgetfulness, or even in hot haste makes for town, eager to be back.³⁵

Significantly, sleep and motion are interrelated in this statement, as sleep and anxious irresolution are contiguous in the passage that immediately precedes it.

Similarly, the Friar-Duke parallels the futility of the flight from death through the provocation of sleep, which is an image of death, with the ludicrous description of man as physically running toward death in an effort to flee it.

Merely, thou art death's fool,
For him thou labor'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet run'st toward him still. (III.i.11-13)

More oblique and suggestive is the imaginative link between Lucretius' representation of anxiety as a burden or

load upon the mind, and the Cynical idea of wealth as a burden to man. The convergence of both these nuances upon the image of the "ass, whose back with ingots bows," renders it reflective of both Cynical and Epicurean thought even as it melds these systems into one. Reflecting on human anxiety, Lucretius says,

If only man, even as they clearly feel a weight in their mind, which wears them out with its heaviness, could learn too from what causes that comes to be, and whence so great a mass, as it were, of ill lies upon their breast, they would not pass their lives, as now for the most part we see them; knowing not each one of them what he wants, and longing ever for change of place, as though he could thus lay aside the burden.³⁶

Here, as elsewhere, we should observe a difference in the orientation of Lucretius and the Friar-Duke to human misery. Lucretius insists upon an alternative to the anxiety he describes, an alternative that is altogether lacking in the Friar-Duke's view of the human condition. In his view, death alone unloads man. For Epicurus, life has the potentiality of becoming the very hell that man vainly fears. Indeed, for him the mythical torments of hell are no more than allegories of the pains that afflict man's life and render it a living death. But for Epicurus, it is only the fool that makes his life a hell. "Here after all on earth the life of fools becomes a hell."³⁷ The Friar-Duke,

³⁶
Idem.

³⁷
Ibid., pp. 38-40.

contrarily, represents all desire for life as the quest of a fool.

Reason thus with life,
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep. (III.i.6-8)

And the subtle combination of the terms "reason" and "fools" makes this statement as representative of Epicureanism as of Cynicism. The same combination of influences seems, moreover, to mark the Friar-Duke's concluding statement. Alluding almost certainly to Epicurus' lengthy description of the hellish torments to which human life is vulnerable, he asks,

What's yet in this
That bears the name of life: Yet in this life
Lie hid mee thousand deaths; yet death we fear
That make these odds all even. (III.i.38-41)

This statement, however, also asserts a Cynic nominalism. Under the scrutiny of reason, life is a word, a name devoid of object reality. Death is the sole substantial truth.

In this speech, then, Shakespeare devastates the attempts of Cynicism and Epicureanism in conflation to vindicate human life within the strict and unyielding limits of mortality. The Cynic reliance on reason and the Epicurean attempt to justify death combine to doom human life and, indirectly, to damn the philosophies of mere humanism as the purveyors of that doom. In this conflation of the Cynical rejection of pleasure with the Epicurean affirmation of pleasure, moreover, Shakespeare seems to anticipate the comparable conflation of the theologies of reason and will

in Neo-Platonism, and to suggest that just as Neo-Platonism, in defining everything as God destroys the idea of God, so humanism, by making everything man, destroys the idea of man.

The question, however, of why the Friar-Duke should have been chosen, even before he assumes the overt identity of Neo-Platonist, to express this speech seems still to lack a precise answer. Perhaps the answer to this question is to be found rather in dramatic than in purely philosophic considerations. In putting such philosophy in the Friar-Duke's mouth, Shakespeare seems to be expressing a desire to make the Stoic power of reason to destroy man's spirit equivalent with the Calvinist power of coercive will to destroy his nature, and thus to forge an identity between the Friar-Duke as Stoic and Angelo as Calvinist. The effect of the Friar-Duke's rational admonition upon the mind of Claudio is to destroy his selfhood, and this effect is congruent with the decree of Angelo against his body that destroys his nature. Or, to frame the similarity imaginatively, both the Friar-Duke and Angelo level at the head of Claudio, and thus collaborate in his destruction. It is, moreover, when we recognize the lethal power of reason that we begin to see the relationship of the Friar-Duke with Angelo as the complication of antithesis with identity. We begin to recognize that the conceptual mercy of the Friar-Duke is no more authentic than the willful justice of Angelo.

That identity is realized, as I have tried in

Chapter VI to show, in the development of both Angelo and the Friar-Duke through the agency of Isabella into Neo-Platonists. Isabella, through an integration of arguments both rationalistic and voluntaristic, forges in the consciousness of Angelo an identification of reason with will and world with selfhood. On the other hand, Isabella's hysterical display of selfhood in her repudiation of Claudio reveals to the Friar-Duke the unintegrated difference of the self from the world. By isolating the self, she makes its reality conspicuously evident to him. The identity between Angelo and the Friar-Duke receives its dramatic consummation in their assumption in the bed trick of the identities of act and potency.

Nevertheless, we do not assess the total impact of the dialogue between Isabella and Claudio until we recognize that Isabella's rejection of him is a contradiction of that part of the Neo-Platonic dialectic that asserts the identity of heaven with nature. Isabella, in rejecting Claudio, utterly rejects the identifying terms of potency and act. It is this rejection that she seems to convey in denouncing Claudio's fault as "a trade," and mercy to him as "a bawd."

Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
 Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd,
 'Tis best that thou diest quickly.
 (III.i.148-50)

The term, "bawd," has the consistent connotation of potency in Measure for Measure, and Claudio's act is denounced as identical with the potency of bawdry in being called a trade. Likewise, the persuasive potency of the word, so intimately

associated in II,ii, with mercy, is to convey now the voluntaristic longing for Claudio's death.

I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee. (III.i.145-6)

And it appears to be the contradiction implicit in her own identity that makes the Friar-Duke's attempt upon Isabella so easy. Whereas Angelo, by attempting to make Isabella act out the implications of her own words, or potency, was asking her to deny her being as nun, as the divine attribute of formlessness, the Friar-Duke, in attempting to persuade Isabella to engage in the bed trick is rather reconstituting that identity in its entirety. Isabella can, through the bed trick, both acknowledge her identity with her brother and also preserve her divine chastity; she can forge between the Friar-Duke and Angelo the relationship of potency to act, while asserting toward Mariana the relationship of attribute to essence. In the bed trick Isabella can assert both the identity of oppositions and the opposition of identities.

That the bed trick does in fact represent the dramatization of the whole dialectic of Neo-Platonism is, I think, to be perceived in the fact that its essential device of substitution renders it simultaneously as much an expression of the rationalistic and Machiavellian doctrine of the interchangeability of persons as the expression of Isabella's negativity and selfhood. That substitution is indeed a

thematically critical aspect of the bed trick, and a concept that defines the character of the Friar-Duke in proposing it is suggested by the fact that the Duke smarts for this proposal in Act V. There, as Friar-Duke, he will be forced to listen to Lucio's ascription of his own slanders of the Duke to himself as Friar-Duke. And the disguised Duke, himself guilty of interchanging persons, will find his own subjection to such changing hard to rebut. He will be able to tell Lucio merely,

You must, sir, change persons with me, ere
you make that my report. You indeed spoke so of
him, and much more, much worse. (V.i.356-8)

If substitution pertains to the craft of the Machiavel, it is also, however, involved in the trade--as the term itself implies--of the bawd. Regarding humanity as wholly natural, or bestial, the bawd as well as the Machiavel regards men as entirely interchangeable with each other. Isabella, in describing mercy on Angelo's terms as "a bawd," seems to anticipate her complicity in a substitution plot, and to suggest the identity that we ought to ascribe to her in that complicity. Even more than Isabella, however, the Friar-Duke, by assuming the relationship of potency to the act of Angelo, assumes the identity of the bawd, and assumes that identity, moreover, within a specifically political and Machiavellian context.

Thus, in the construction of the bed trick plot, Shakespeare seems to present before us the spectacle of a

nun and a friar that are at one and the same time bawds. Indeed, a less likely interchange than the one we witness between a nun and a friar could scarcely be imagined. Shakespeare seems to be setting before us a contradiction so stark as to render it patently absurd. And in the absurdity of this contradiction, he seems to be holding up the vaunted identity of the affirmative and negative theologies that comprise Neo-Platonism to the ridicule of common sense. It is no more possible to express absolutely both the affirmative and the negative theologies, he seems to be saying, than it is possible to be authentically both nun or friar, and bawd. We identify, I think, the dramatic character of this dialogue between the Friar-Duke and Isabella when we see it as an expression of the absurdity central to Neo-Platonism.

It seems not incidental to the dialogue between the Friar-Duke and Isabella in III,i, that it begins with a statement by the Friar-Duke in praise of Isabella.

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you
good; the goodness that is cheap in beauty
makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace,
being the soul of your complexion, shall
keep the body of it ever fair. (III.i.180-4)

These words suggest, I think, that the Friar-Duke, insofar as the weakness of his selfhood will allow, is smitten with Isabella, and smitten specifically with the identity in her of conceptual excellence, or "goodness" and personal excellence, or beauty. As Angelo falls in love with the

combination of eidetic "virtue," (II.ii.161) and youth, with both nun and woman, but primarily with Isabella as nun, the Friar-Duke is also beguiled by the same combination of personal and rational qualities. Yet, if for Angelo, it was the virtue, or the "reason and discourse, the speaking--"She speaks, and 'tis such sense . . ." (II.ii.141-2)--that was the decisive factor in her power, for the Duke it is the personal beauty of Isabella that seems paramount.

We should observe further that the Stoic character of the dialogue between the Friar-Duke and Isabella is marked by a gentleness in its persuasive technique that renders its manipulative quality virtually undetected by Isabella and contrasts sharply with Angelo's barely concealed and finally overt coercion. In Angelo the coercive brutality of will was constantly threatening his efforts at smooth seduction; he laments at the outset of his dialogue that he is obliged to speak to Isabella at all. When she tells him, "I come to know your pleasure," he thinks,

That you might know it, would much better please me
Than to demand what 'tis. (II.iv.31-3)

The Friar-Duke, by contrast, tells his story so cleverly that Isabella is led to approve the bed trick almost as her own idea.

In assessing the consequences of the Friar-Duke's conversion from Stoic to Neo-Platonist, Shakespeare seems to deal first with the political sphere of reality. As

potency, the Friar-Duke assumes the political identity of both sovereign and subject; he becomes, politically, everything. But in becoming everything, he becomes, also, nothing. In the scene immediately following his assumption of the Neo-Platonic identity of potency, the Friar-Duke experiences political nothingness. He experiences at once the failure of his rationally persuasive powers, the powers of the subject, and also the failure of his voluntaristic authority. The failure of his persuasive powers is manifested in his inability to cause Pompey to repudiate his trade as bawd and to reform. He experiences voluntaristic impotence in Elbow's disregard of his command to take Pompey to prison.

He addresses Pompey with contempt, exclaiming,

Fie, sirrah, a bawd, a wicked bawd!
 The evil that thou causest to be done,
 That is thy means to live. Do thou but think
 What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back
 From such a filthy vice; say to thyself,
 From their abominable and beastly touches
 I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.
 Canst thou believe thy living is a life,
 So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.
 (III.ii.19-27)

We see, however, that the Friar-Duke is singularly unable to convince Pompey of the advisability of mending, that his heretofore very persuasive reason is no longer efficacious. Although Pompey ultimately will be coerced by the higher voluntaristic power of heaven into change, he is constitutionally incapable of self-generated change. Pompey rather resorts to reason to defend himself against the Friar-Duke's charge.

Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir; but
yet, sir, I would prove-- (III.ii.28-9)

And though Pompey doesn't finish his proof, we must suspect that he is about to adduce Lovejoy's principle of plenitude, the principle of creativity in the world that is logically bound to create everything that can be created. And the very power of this logic is intimated by the fact that the Friar-Duke decides not to listen to it. Rather, he cuts Pompey's "proof" short and silences his reason.

Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin,
Thou wilt prove his. (III.ii.30-1)

If the Friar-Duke cannot prevail upon Pompey by means of reason and discourse, he tries to augment reason with will, and, resorting now not to argument but to a summary fiat, remands Pompey to prison.

Take him to prison, officer.
Correction and instruction must both work
Ere this rude beast will profit. (III.ii.31-3)

As both world and selfhood, the Friar-Duke can express an approbation of both correction and instruction. But it appears rather that he can command neither instruction nor correction. Elbow rather informs him that the imprisoning of Pompey lies not in his say so, but rather within the authority or will of Angelo.

He must before the deputy, sir, he has given him
warning. The deputy cannot abide a whoremaster. If
he be a whoremonger, and comes before him, he were
as good go a mile on his errand. (III.ii.34-7)

As interesting as the recognition of the Friar-Duke's

political nothingness, however, is the ironic relationship that Shakespeare seems to construct between him and Pompey. One cannot help observing that in becoming a bawd, the Friar-Duke has assumed an identity with Pompey. In dressing down Pompey, it appears that the Friar-Duke is reproaching and reviling him for an identity that he himself is in the midst of expressing. And this identity between the Friar-Duke and Pompey seems to render the Friar-Duke's repudiation of Pompey as the philosophical opposition of identities, or the obverse of the identity of contradictions that, as Neo-Platonist, he represents.

It is interesting to notice, with regard to the implication of self-contradiction in the Friar-Duke's accusation of Pompey, that this excoriation seems to exhibit, as in the Friar-Duke's sermon to Claudio, the presence of both Epicurean and Cynic concepts. Now, however, it is not the congruence of these concepts that is expressed, but rather, their antagonism. In this speech Epicurean "touches" are represented as "abominable and beastly"; Cynic independence, on the other hand, is shown as a desirable virtue. The Friar-Duke, having appropriated selfhood, seems to begin to define life as something incompatible with compulsion, and thus to exhibit a new appreciation of its meaning.

The spectacle of the Friar-Duke reviling Pompey for an identity he himself shares seems, however, also to focus on his own lack of self-consciousness. The Friar-Duke seems

totally unaware of the extent to which he is accusing himself in reviling Pompey. And this lack of self-consciousness in the Friar-Duke seems to be Shakespeare's way of translating into dramatic terms the Friar-Duke's identity as world rather than selfhood. In this lack of awareness of self, moreover, the Friar-Duke seems to stand in marked contrast with Angelo, who, as selfhood, displays an analytical obsession with self. He stops the action at three different instances in the play to analyze his psyche for us; the Friar-Duke, as world, however, gives us no portrait of his psyche because psyche is what he is not. And where he speaks of himself, his words suggest his ignorance of self. In assuming the identity of Neo-Platonist, however, the Friar-Duke appropriates a selfhood, and, accordingly, begins to soliloquize about himself at the end of the third act.

If lack of self-consciousness is one aspect of the Friar-Duke's dramatic representation as world, emotional flatness is another. And in this absence of emotional dynamics, the Friar-Duke again stands in contrast with Angelo. Angelo suffers; the Friar-Duke seems removed from feeling altogether. Yet, in acquiring, as Neo-Platonist, the quality of selfhood, the Friar-Duke begins to acquire emotionality also, and it seems to be this new birth of passion that he displays in his vituperative disdain for Pompey.

If the Friar-Duke's acquisition of the identity of Pompey seems to express the political manifestation of the

Neo-Platonic conflation of world and self, the arrest of Pompey seems simultaneously to dramatize the thwarting in the political realm of the Neo-Platonic claim of the conflation of world and self. By arresting Pompey, Shakespeare removes him from the world. This arrest, moreover, repudiates Pompey's claim of political autonomy. As Shakespeare seems to compromise Isabella's Neo-Platonic conflation of theologies, so also he extends this contradiction of the Neo-Platonic claim to the sphere of politics in arresting Pompey. And in arresting Mistress Overdone later in this scene, Shakespeare does not fail to include the realm of the individual as well in his compromise of Neo-Platonic doctrine.

If, as Neo-Platonist, the Friar-Duke experiences the vitiation of his political power through a conflation of the identities of both sovereign and subject, Lucio, the subject, seems to exhibit a comparable vitiation of his being through his own assumption of the identities of both sovereign and subject. If the Friar-Duke seems also to compromise that conflation by repudiating Pompey, Lucio seems to recapitulate in the subject the action of the Friar-Duke, when he too betrays and abandons Pompey.

In this betrayal, Lucio seems to repudiate his own Epicurean value of friendship as a humanistic virtue. It is specifically as Epicurean that Pompey hails him when he says,

I spy comfort, I cry bail. Here's a gentleman,
and a friend of mine. (III.ii.41-2)

Pompey clearly expects that Lucio, as his friend, will save him from imprisonment; what he finds, however, is that Lucio will not help him but rather denounces and rejects him. And in that rejection, Lucio seems to express the voluntaristic repudiation of the world that reminds us of Calvin, while at the same time exhibiting that repudiation as nature's betrayal of herself. Clearly, in betraying the concept of friendship, Lucio is impugning his own validity.

In this denunciation of Pompey, moreover, Lucio seems to manifest qualities that Shakespeare has associated with the realm of politics, and politics both rationalistic and voluntaristic. We observe in Lucio the application of the maxim of Machiavelli that advises the governor to renounce any alliance that has ceased to be advantageous to him. It is to this maxim that Lucio seems to refer when he tells Pompey that his friendship is out of style. Being implored by Pompey to provide his bail, Lucio responds,

No, indeed, will I not, Pompey, it is not the wear. I
will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage. If you take
it not patiently, why, your mettle is the more. Adieu,
trusty Pompey. (III.ii.74-7)

But if Lucio seems to act on a Machiavellian maxim, he seems also to express that maxim in the Calvinistic terms of brutal frankness. Lucio seems, in short, to express an identity with Pompey as the political identification of reason with will even as he repudiates him. And the Friar-Duke,

witnessing this dialogue, seems to appreciate it as suggestive of the nothingness of the subject wishing to be both subject and sovereign, and comparable to the nothingness of himself as both sovereign and subject. Such at least seems to be the implication of his vague but vehement comment: "Still thus and thus; still worse!" (III.ii.53)

It is, then, as the two identities of sovereign and subject, both compromised by their conflation with each other, that the Friar-Duke and Lucio confront each other in the complex dialogue that follows the arrest of Pompey. What this dialogue seems to convey is the antagonism inherent in the identity of sovereign and subject. In this dialogue Shakespeare seems to show the simultaneous destruction of the sovereign by the subject and of the subject by the sovereign; further, Shakespeare seems to address this mutual destruction as a function of too close an affinity and an identity. In the destruction of both sovereign and subject, moreover, Shakespeare conveys the utter disintegration of the state.

In the disintegration of the state, moreover, as the institution that maintains the distinction between God and man, heaven and nature, the analogical structure of reality appears to collapse. Lucio imputes to the Friar-Duke and Angelo an identity as heaven and nature by rendering their differences in terms that seem to conflate sexual with theological meaning. In this conflation, he disgraces them both. On the one hand, he renders both the Friar-Duke's mercy and

Angelo's justice merely as expressions of their extreme kinds of sexuality. By deriving the concepts of justice and mercy from sex, Lucio seems to destroy eidetic reality. Of the Friar-Duke, he claims,

He had some feeling of the sport; he knew
the service, and that instructed him to mercy.
(III.ii.119-20)

Angelo, on the other hand, derives his justice from the ignorance and envy of sexual impotence; he is an "ungenitur'd agent." (III.ii.174) And his impotence is implicitly allied by Lucio with envy.

Sparrows must not nest in his house-eaves,
because they are lecherous. (III.ii.175-6)

In thus ascribing to the Friar-Duke the quality of lecherousness, Lucio is implying in him too close an identification with nature. He cannot withhold himself even from "your beggar of fifty." (III.ii.125-6) Angelo, on the other hand, is so far removed from nature as to lack an origin in it.

They say this Angelo was not made by man and
woman after this downright way of creation.
(III.ii.104-5)

But this absolute contrast between the Friar-Duke and Angelo also evokes resonances in the realm of theology. In thus describing the Friar-Duke and Angelo, Lucio seems to be adverting to the Neo-Platonic identity of divine transcendence with divine immanence, and in derogating heaven seems to invoke Plotinus' own thoughts.

How, then, were it possible that the Most Perfect Being and Supreme Good should remain within itself, as though the Universal Power were envious or impotent.³⁸

It appears, then, that Lucio defines the political power of both the Friar-Duke and Angelo in terms of sexuality on the one hand, and on the other, as hypostases of Neo-Platonic divinity. In so doing, Lucio seems to efface the distinctions between the various realms of being. His conflation, moreover, of the realms of analogical reality, seems to be congruent with the identification of sovereign and subject as the components of the state.

The state, lacking a balance of distinction and relationship between sovereign and subject, lapses either into anarchy, which nullifies the being of the sovereign, or into tyranny, which nullifies the being of the subject. Lucio defines the Duke as so permissive an authority as to cease to be an authority at all.

Ere he would have hang'd a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand. (III.ii.117-9)

Angelo, on the other hand, is so strict that he "will un-people the province with continency." (III.ii.174-5) He will destroy the state by destroying its citizens.

What Lucio seems to suggest, however, in thus defining in both the Duke and Angelo the extremes of anarchy and

³⁸ Lovejoy, "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," p. 155.

tyranny, is the simultaneity of both tyranny and anarchy. The slander of Lucio seems to suggest a destruction of the monarch by his subject, just as Angelo's tyranny imports a destruction of the subject by the monarch. It is to this anarchic power in the subject that the Friar-Duke testifies in his short reflection following Lucio's exit.

No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure scape; back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?
(III.ii.185-8)

And in this statement the Friar-Duke seems to testify to the real power of the slanderous tongue in the subject. In particular, the term "censure" refers both to Angelo's decree against the life of Claudio--"H'as censur'd him/ Already," (I.iv.72,3) Lucio tells Isabella--and Lucio's slander of authority.

If Lucio attacks the Friar-Duke in conjunction with Angelo, and thus seems to allude to his conflating identity as Neo-Platonist, he seems to criticize him also in his isolating alterneity as Stoic. Addressing him as Stoic, Lucio defines him as lacking in selfhood, and seems to hint that his abandonment of the state is a function of his doubt of his own reality as selfhood.

Sir, I was an inward of his. A shy fellow was the Duke,
and I believe I know the cause of his withdrawing.
(III.ii.130-2)

The association of this "cause," moreover, with silence and secrecy seems to reinforce its association with the realm

of selfhood. When the Friar-Duke asks to know the cause, Lucio responds,

No, pardon; 'tis a secret must be lock'd within the
teeth and the lips. (III.ii.134-5)

After refusing to impart this secret cause in terms of selfhood, however, Lucio seems to address it, alternatively, in terms of the Friar-Duke as world. To the suggestion that the Friar-Duke does not exist as selfhood, Lucio now adds the suggestion that he does not exist as world either. He impugns the reality of the Friar-Duke by impugning his authenticity as Stoic wise man. He will, in short, allude to the opinion of those critics of Stoicism who claim that the wise man is a figment of the Stoic imagination: that he does not and never could exist. Lucio tells the Friar-Duke,

But this I can let you understand, the greater file
of the subject held the Duke to be wise.
(III.ii.135-7)

When the Friar-Duke rejoins,

Wise? Why, no question but he was,
(III.ii.138)

Lucio returns,

A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow.
(III.ii.139-40)

The significance of this attack, moreover, lies not in its truth or falsity, but rather in its power to shatter the emotional serenity of the Friar-Duke. As we have seen, the Stoic concept of wisdom entailed the ability to maintain complete imperturbability in the face of insult and injury.

Patience was, thus, a critical mark of the Stoic's authenticity as wise man. In attacking the wisdom of the Friar-Duke, Lucio offers him a massive insult, and an insult that strikes at the very heart of his identity as world, an insult, moreover, that, by the terms of his Stoic identity, he is not supposed to feel.

But the Friar-Duke does feel it, and testifies to his feeling of it by attempting with ill-suppressed emotion to refute it.

Either this is envy in you, folly, or mistaking.
The very stream of his life, and the business he
hath helm'd, must, upon a warranted need,
give him a better proclamation. Let him be but
testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he
shall appear to the envious a scholar, a statesman,
and a soldier. Therefore you speak unskillfully; or,
if your knowledge be more, it is much dark'ned in your
malice. (III.ii.141-8)

In the very refutation of Lucio's charge, the Friar-Duke supports it, for he testifies "in his own bringings-forth" that he is indeed both struck and hurt. Though the Friar-Duke attempts to retain his composure, these lines are designed to convey nothing so much as his rising heart.

If in this response, however, the Friar-Duke betrays himself as Stoic wise man, he seems also to level against Lucio the same charge of ignorance that Lucio brings against both him and Angelo, and to imply in that charge the inauthenticity of Lucio's knowledge as the knowledge of selfhood. The Friar-Duke imputes to Lucio as selfhood the same quality of envy that he imputes to Angelo as selfhood.

He contends that, as selfhood, Lucio's understanding is warped and blinded by emotion. .

The justice of this charge, moreover, is attested by the demonstrable ignorance of Lucio's knowledge of sense perception. As an Epicurean knower, Lucio trusts the senses, but the senses fail to penetrate the appearance of the Friar-Duke and to grasp his identity as Duke. Lucio is completely unaware that in protesting to know the Duke he is proving his ignorance of him and that, in his ignorance, he is slandering the Duke to his very face. Thus, if the Friar-Duke's protestations of wisdom conduce to nothing so much as his ignorance, Lucio's repeated claims to know the Duke also function as proofs of his ignorance. By telling the Friar-Duke,

I was an inward of his, (III.ii.130)

and

I know him, and I love him, (III.ii.149)

Lucio proves his ignorance and his malice. And if, in impugning the Duke's wisdom as world, Lucio implicitly impugns the validity of the Duke's existence, by his own slander of the Duke, Lucio also jeopardizes the safety of his own life.

It appears, then, that in this scene, Lucio and the Friar-Duke invalidate each other as governor and subject. By becoming both sovereign and subject, the Friar-Duke loses his identity as sovereign. Lucio, however, attempts, likewise, to become both subject and sovereign, and it is this

attempt to associate himself with sovereignty that prompts him to declare that he was "an inward" of the Duke. But in this assertion of an identity as politically everything, Lucio jeopardizes his reality even as subject. And in the nullification by subject of sovereign and by sovereign of subject, Shakespeare dramatizes the destruction of the state.

It is, moreover, the destruction of society through the mutual invalidation of rational and voluntaristic values by each other that the Friar-Duke seems to convey to Escalus in answer to his desire to know the "news abroad i' th' world." (III.ii.221) He tells Escalus that there is

none, but that there is so great a fever
on goodness, that the dissolution of it must
cure it. Novelty is only in request, and, as it
is, as dangerous to be ag'd in any kind of course,
as it is virtuous to be constant in any
undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive
to make societies secure, but security enough
to make fellowships accurs'd. Much upon this
riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news
is old enough, yet it is every day's news.

(III.ii.222-230)

The subjects of this speech are in part the conceptual and social virtues of Stoicism: goodness, constancy, and truth, values that make society possible. These virtues, however, seem to be perceived in this speech from the damning perspective of voluntaristic and Calvinistic individuality. The term, "security," is a Calvinist word and a characterization of the Stoic virtues of society from the Calvinist perspective of individuality. It is Calvinism that promotes

the understanding of goodness as the sinful man's belief in his own righteousness. It is, again, Calvinism that opposes to the eternal repetition and order of the Stoic society its own disruptive value of newness. But if the Friar-Duke addresses the Stoic values of society, he speaks also of the Calvinist values of selfhood. And these values seem to be as corrupted as the social ones. Further, they are represented as corrupt from the perspective of Stoic virtues. Newness is mere novelty because it remains "virtuous to be constant in any undertaking." And fellowships, or friendships, are cursed because each man is cravenly concerned for his own equally damnable security, and ready, like Lucio, to condemn his fellow man in order to conform to society. In this speech, then, the Friar-Duke seems to find that the social and the individual virtues, conflated in the world, have destroyed each other.

In the midst of these general observations on the monistic "world," however, the Friar-Duke seems to exhibit a totally unintegrated and unmistakably new interest in himself as selfhood. He asks two questions of Escalus:

I pray you, sir, of what disposition was the Duke?
(III.ii.230-1)

What pleasure was he given to: (III.ii.234)

These questions seem to bespeak in the Friar-Duke the emergence of personality. It is, however, the answers to these questions that appear to be of greatest interest. For in

answering the Friar-Duke's questions, Escalus seems to suggest that the Duke expressed alternately an extreme and consuming absorption in self, and an utterly selfless absorption in the world. To the question of the Duke's disposition, Escalus responds,

One that, above all other strifes, contended
especially to know himself. (III.ii.232-3)

To the question of his pleasures, he replies,

Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than
merry at any thing which profess'd to make him
rejoice; a gentleman of all temperance.
(III.ii.235-7)

In these responses, Escalus seems to be identifying the extremities of selfhood and world in the Duke as the cause of his separation of these elements into the two identities of Angelo and Friar-Duke, and also of their ultimate destructive conflation as the potency and act of Neo-Platonic doctrine.

It is the paradoxical identity of the Friar-Duke with Angelo as the potency and act of Neo-Platonism that Shakespeare appears to convey in the soliloquy with which the Friar-Duke closes the third act of the play. In this speech, he condemns Angelo, yet his words have a subtle and pervasive applicability to himself as well.

He who the sword of heaven will bear
Should be holy as severe;
Pattern in himself to know,
Grace to stand, and virtue go;
More nor less to others paying
Than by self-offenses weighing.

Shame to him whose cruel striking
 Kills for faults of his own liking!
 Twice treble shame on Angelo,
 To weed my vice, and let his grow!
 O what may man within him hide,
 Though angel on the outward side!

(III.ii.261-72)

How holy, indeed, are the means of the Friar-Duke in his attempt to be severe to Angelo, if his means make him a bawd? How far does he himself overstep the decent limits of virtuous action in becoming the potency of Angelo's carnal act? Does he not incur the self-offense for which he condemns Angelo? Does not the bed trick constitute a fault of the Friar-Duke's liking? And finally, how similar to Angelo is the Friar-Duke in the falseness of his outward identity!

If such intimations of the identity in criminality remain, in the first part of the Friar-Duke's speech, almost subliminal, they appear more openly in its latter lines. Here Shakespeare conveys the equality in guilt of the Friar-Duke and Angelo through their collusion as potency and act in evil, by defining their parts in the derogatory terms of "craft" and "vice," and by defining that craft and that vice in the identical words of "disguise" and "falsehood."

Craft against vice I must apply.
 With Angelo to-night shall lie
 His old betrothed (but despised);
 So disguise shall by th' disguised
 Pay with falsehood false exacting,
 And perform an old contracting.

(III.ii.277-82)

That the craft of the Friar-Duke in becoming the potency behind Angelo's act makes him identical with that vice, or

act, is clearly suggested by the Friar-Duke's observation that Angelo, as the wicked "disguise" and the author of "false exacting," will meet his match in the "disguised" Mariana, and the Friar-Duke's own "falsehood," or illusion. Disguise and falsehood become, interchangeably, the attributes of both Angelo and the Friar-Duke.

In this speech of the Friar-Duke, Shakespeare seems, however, to realize simultaneously with the identity of opposites as craft and vice the principle that is the reverse side of the identity of oppositions: the opposition of identities. Angelo and the Friar-Duke are identical, yet they are also adversaries. And it is as Neo-Platonists that they will nullify that identity in each other. Both Angelo and the Friar-Duke become, as Neo-Platonists, the humiliators of each other. If as Calvinist, Angelo's right to condemn Claudio could be deplored but not impugned, in his Neo-Platonic attempt to violate Isabella he is humiliated by the Friar-Duke's substitution plot. If the Friar-Duke's bed trick, on the other hand, succeeds in compromising Angelo's specifically Neo-Platonic claim to appropriate the world, it meets with humiliating defeat in attempting to so far appropriate the selfhood of Angelo as to claim an assurance that he will pardon Claudio. His confident pronouncements are flatly contradicted by the revelation of the truth of Angelo's will.

There can be little doubt that Shakespeare's purpose

in IV,ii, is to humiliate and check the Friar-Duke. He comes upon the scene supremely confident in his ability as the reason of the world to anticipate and control the action of Angelo as its will. And he commits himself to that ability by assuring--almost prophesying to--the Provost that Claudio will be pardoned. Asked by the Provost, "What comfort is for Claudio?" he replies "There's some in hope." (IV.ii.77-8) And the commitment of the Friar-Duke to Claudio's pardon is emphasized by its repeated enunciation by him.

Duke. Have you no countermand for Claudio yet,
But he must die tomorrow?

Prov. None, sir, none.

Duke. As near the dawning, Provost, as it is,
You shall hear more ere morning.

Prov. Happily
You something know, yet I believe there comes
No countermand; no such example have we.
Besides, upon the very siege of justice
Lord Angelo hath to the public ear
Profess'd the contrary.

Enter a Messenger.

This is his [Lordship's] man.

[Duke] And here comes Claudio's pardon.

(IV.ii.92-101)

The message conveyed to the Provost, however, is clean contrary to that anticipated by the Friar-Duke. Instead of pardoning Claudio, it advances the hour of his execution.

With his shocked realization that Angelo's will remains something both different from and refractory to his reason, the Friar-Duke experiences the nullification of his specifically Neo-Platonic reason, and ceases, I think, to be a Neo-Platonist. But if the Friar-Duke experiences in this

scene a contraction of his being, he experiences, I suspect, a liberation of it also. It is only after Angelo disappoints his calculations that the Friar-Duke appears able to dissociate himself from Angelo and to give over his defense of Angelo's false virtue.

It is, I suspect, partly to the community of identity between the Friar-Duke and Angelo that the Friar-Duke's defense of Angelo's false justice relates. He knows that Angelo is corrupt, yet he is compelled through his own involvement in Angelo's guilt, to justify him.

His life is parallel'd
Even with the stroke and line of his great justice.
He doth with holy abstinence subdue
That in himself which he spurs on his pow'r
To qualify in others. Were he meal'd with that
Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous,
But this being so, he's just. (IV.ii.79-85)

The Neo-Platonic identity of the Friar-Duke seems, moreover, to be involved in this speech on justice. Shakespeare appears to express the Neo-Platonic view of justice as a matter of absolute approbation or absolute condemnation, while basing these absolutes on the double observation of both the disparity between the governor and his people, and his identity with his people. On the one hand, the governor's life is different from that of his subjects in being equated with justice; on the other hand, he treats himself like a subject, subduing his own nature as well as theirs. It appears, furthermore, that in this speech the Friar-Duke both condemns and condones Angelo at one and the same time. He

appears, thus, to adopt a position contrary to the one that he is finally to approve in Act V, one in which no one is either absolutely condemned or acquitted. And the falsity of the extreme position expressed in this speech seems, once again, to be suggested in the very fact that the Friar-Duke is himself "Meal'd" with the evil of Angelo that he implicitly threatens to correct so harshly.

That the Friar-Duke himself, however, feels a certain degree of revulsion at this Neo-Platonic way of thinking becomes evident in his reflections on the mercy of Angelo that he believes--falsely--to be conveyed in the messenger's letter.

This is his pardon, purchas'd by such sin
For which the pardoner himself is in.
Hence hath offense his quick celerity,
When it is borne in high authority.
When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended,
That for the fault's love is th' offender friended.
(IV.ii.108-13)

Here again the relationship between the sovereign and the subject is presented as both one of total identity and total disparity. Angelo is both a "high authority" and a pardoner identical to the one he pardons. Mercy becomes an absolute, so widely extended as to be offered not only to offender but to fault as well. In this speech, then, the Friar-Duke reveals himself as committed to a position which offends him, and Angelo's failure to supply the expected mercy, while it humiliates him, seems also to release him from a commitment to the extreme Neo-Platonic attitude toward both justice

and mercy.

The Friar-Duke appears in this scene to resume his identity as Stoic, and as Stoic, he attempts to persuade the Provost that Angelo's lawlessness nullifies his authority.

Claudio, whom you have warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenc'd him. (IV.ii.156-9)

The Provost, however, to whom authority is both rationalistic and voluntaristic, or, in a word, Christian, does not regard the Friar-Duke's rational invalidation of Angelo's authority as sufficient reason for disregarding Angelo's order; in his objections, moreover, he cites both his own legitimate concern for his safety as a subject, and his oath of obedience to Angelo as governor.

Through his reluctance, the Provost forces the Friar-Duke to give the first intimation of his resumption of his proper identity as Duke. He shows the Provost the insignia of the Duke's own power. And he shows these symbols in a way that suggests in them an admission of the insufficiency of his rational identity as Stoic. Attempting to convince the Provost of the Duke's imminent return as "not a resemblance, but a certainty," he continues,

Yet since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the Duke; you know the character, I doubt not, and the signet is not strange to you. (IV.ii.188-94)

Before that proper identity can be achieved, however, the

Friar-Duke must endure the humiliation of his Stoic identity as well as his humiliation as Neo-Platonist. He is to endure that humiliation at the hands of Barnadine.

In fixing on Barnadine as a substitute for Claudio, I suspect that the Friar-Duke is revealing Stoicism in the light of its congruence with Neo-Platonism as but one of two kinds of extremes. Both the bed trick and the attempt to substitute the head of Barnadine for that of Claudio share the essential quality of substitution; thus, both seem to express a common repudiation of selfhood. That the implication of Barnadine's substitution for Claudio is, indeed, a repudiation of selfhood is further, and quite strikingly, revealed in the fact that the Friar-Duke regards Barnadine as merely a part of his design, rather than as an end in himself.

To be sure, he consults, as Stoic, the legitimacy of decapitating Barnadine; he is not about now to engage in specifically lawless actions as he did in his Neo-Platonic phase. He verifies Barnadine's guilt with the Provost, by asking whether that guilt is "apparent," (IV.ii.138) and is assured by the Provost that it is "most manifest, and not denied by himself." (IV.ii.139) But as for the readiness of his soul, his critically unique and immortal part, to meet its Maker, that is another matter. The Provost describes the spiritual state of Barnadine as "insensible of mortality, and desperately mortal." (IV.ii.145) These words seem to

convey nothing less than that Barnadine is in a state of mortal sin, which, as the condition of his soul at the time of his death, damns it. The Friar-Duke remains so far confident of the persuasive power of his Stoic reason as to regard the spiritual condition of Barnadine as easily rectified by him.

I will give him a present shrift, and advise him
for a better place. (IV.ii.207-8)

The description of Barnadine provided by the Provost, however, suggests that Barnadine will prove amazingly resistant to the Friar-Duke's Stoic reason, and that he will resist that reason not out of fear but rather from the standpoint of his Cynic autonomy. He is by the report of the Provost,

a man that apprehends death no more dreadfully
but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and
fearless of what's past, present, or to come.
(IV.ii.142-4)

We have very oft awak'd him, as if to carry him
to execution, and show'd him a seeming warrant
for it; it hath not mov'd him at all.
(IV.ii.150-2)

Barnadine's refusal to die derives from his Cynic repudiation of the right of the state to impose its power on him. As the Provost tells us, he refuses to acknowledge the power of the state even to the extent of acknowledging his status as its prisoner.

He hath evermore had the liberty of the prison;
give him leave to escape hence, he would not.
(IV.ii.147-9)

Through these observations the Provost forbids both the Friar-Duke and us to misapprehend Barnadine's refusal to die as deriving from an impulse contemptible to Stoicism. The Friar-Duke will have to contend in Barnadine with a degree of mental consistency that, although different from the Friar-Duke's Stoic reason, seems to assert its own claim to a rational identity, and to be itself a valid expression of reason. That this mental consistency is indeed an expression of reason and reason alone is suggested by the Friar-Duke's apprehension of its adamant strength as evidence of an emotional inadequacy. With broad irony he will, in his exasperation, refer to Barnadine as a "gravel heart."

(IV.iii.640)

If Barnadine's consistency commands the Friar-Duke's recognition, Barnadine himself remains limited, and in his limitation seems to identify and contrast with the limitation inherent in Stoicism. The Friar-Duke proposes to nullify, in deference to his design, the individual's independent existence; Barnadine, by contrast, negates utterly the claim of society as expressed in the laws of the state. In IV,iii, however, Barnadine, by repudiating and silencing the reason and discourse of the Friar-Duke, will force him, however unwillingly, to a recognition of the autonomous existence of reason in the individual. Before the obduracy of Barnadine's mind, the persuasive powers of the Friar-Duke are summarily silenced. His sermon, begun in prolix confidence, reaches

an abrupt and undignified end.

Duke. Sir, induc'd by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you.

Bar. Friar, not I; I have been drinking hard all night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or they shall beat out my brains with billets. I will not consent to die this day, that's certain.

Duke. O sir, you must; therefore I beseech you Look forward on the journey you shall go.

Bar. I swear I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

Duke. But hear you--

Bar. Not a word. If you have any thing to say to me, come to my ward; for thence will not I to-day.

Exit.

(IV.iii.50-63)

This new awareness in the Friar-Duke of the autonomous reason of the individual seems, however, to produce in him a recognition of two unintegrated realities, realities that place him in a dilemma. He realizes both that the execution of an unwilling Barnadine negates the truth of his autonomy; he realizes also that his design, for all the unwillingness of Barnadine, retains its importance. To recognize either the design or Barnadine alone is to choose badly either way. But the Friar-Duke sees these two choices as irreconcilable. He tries both the alternatives, but expresses these alternatives in a way that implicitly invalidates them. His first inclination is to execute Barnadine against his will, but, even as he expresses this inclination, he admits that Barnadine, if not fit to live, is really not fit to die either.

Unfit to live or die; O gravel heart!
After him fellows, bring him to the block.

(IV.iii.64-5)

But if Barnadine is not fit to die, neither ought he to wreck the Friar-Duke's design. Barnadine is, indeed, as the Friar-Duke realizes,

A creature unprepar'd, unmeet for death;
And to transport him in 'the mind he is
Were damnable, (IV.iii.67-9)

but Barnadine is not the Friar-Duke's sole concern.

The integration of the right of Barnadine to a pious death, a right that testifies to the significance of his individual being, and the right of the Friar-Duke's scheme to success, as representing the right of society and the world as a whole to recognized validity, is supplied by the Provost, who announces an alternative to Barnadine's head in that of the newly deceased Ragozine, "more like to Claudio." (IV.iii.76) This alternative the Friar-Duke will identify as "an accident that heaven provides," (IV.iii.77) and in that statement recognize a new alignment of Providence with heaven, as the realm of dualistic and Christian transcendence. He thus subtly transmutes a Stoic idea of government into an idea of Christian government. That such is indeed the significance of the Friar-Duke's statement is indicated by its reference to accident as the element of freedom that, far from threatening design, perfects and integrates it, by providing for the recognition of both selfhood and world. By making heaven the author of accident, the Friar-Duke acknowledges the freedom of heaven, and the capacity of heaven's freedom to guarantee also the freedom of man. In

the association of heaven with both accident and Providence, moreover, the Friar-Duke seems to anticipate the conjoining of freedom and government in an alliance that frees both terms from the crippling conditions of absolutism and extremity. Selfhood and world, liberty and restraint, reason and will, attain in both God and man the validating recognition of their complementeity. They become both distinct from and related to each other.

The Friar-Duke with this new appreciation of accident thus glimpses in Act IV the integration of selfhood and world that he is to achieve in Act V. That this integration in Act IV is the unattained object of the Friar-Duke's desire is, moreover, suggested in Escalus' statement concerning him that

every letter he hath writ hath disvouch'd other,
and in Angelo's rejoinder,

in most uneven and distracted manner. His
actions show much like to madness, pray heaven
his wisdom be not tainted! (IV.vi.1-5)

Here, obliquely, Shakespeare seems to suggest in the Friar-Duke a recognition of the whole scope of reality without the ability to integrate its elements. His recognition rather causes him to vascillate incessantly between the recognition of its two aspects of selfhood and world so that his letters and actions contradict each other.

In Act V, the Duke, putting aside the obscurity of his disguise, returns to Vienna in the regalia of a prince.

He is not, however, at the beginning of this act the perfected prince that he will be at its conclusion. To perfect himself he must reclaim the attribute of will that resides in Angelo. At the beginning of Act V, however, he seems not so much concerned to reclaim this attribute as to destroy it. That his intention toward Angelo is lethal is, moreover, suggested by the fact that he repeatedly strengthens in Angelo the illusion of omnipotence. The Duke responds to Isabella's cry for justice by telling her,

Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice;
(V.i.27)

Again, he says,

Come, cousin Angelo,
In this I'll be impartial. Be you judge
Of your own cause. (V.i.165-7)

And he urges Angelo to punish Isabella and Mariana to his "height of pleasure." (V.i.240) The Duke, in short, gives Angelo the power and freedom to damn himself, and thus seems to suggest that it is his intention to execute Angelo. He has, indeed, intimated this intention at various points in the play, and most notably in III,ii, when, in full awareness of Angelo's guilt, he says,

If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding,
it shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail,
he hath sentenc'd himself. (III.ii.255-7)

Thus the Duke seems to intend not merely to humiliate Angelo as will, and thus to destroy the absoluteness of will, but rather to utterly annihilate Angelo, and with him the

attribute of will. In that desire, however, he seems also to threaten the integration of will with reason that is the condition of his own rational perfection.

In his attempt to destroy Angelo, moreover, the Duke seems himself to assert reason as an absolute power. He masterminds in this act a scheme in which the characters, both wittingly and unwittingly, are controlled by him. Isabella, Mariana, the Provost and Friar Peter all speak the lines that he has assigned them. The Duke at the beginning of this act is the master Machiavel, and, as such, appears to recapitulate Angelo's belief in his absolute power. But in this belief the Duke is to be disappointed no less than Angelo, for there is "one in place" (V.i.499) that remains fundamentally insubordinate to the Duke's design, and expresses that insubordination by repeatedly speaking out of turn. That character is, of course, Lucio. If Angelo is to be humiliated by the Duke, the Duke is likewise to be humiliated by Lucio. In a recent article Donna Hamilton acutely observes that Lucio usurps control of the action from the Duke and ultimately causes "a breakdown of the mechanics of the scene which the Duke has planned. . . ." She observes further that the effect of this usurpation by Lucio is to prevent the Duke from choosing the circumstances of his self-revelation.³⁹ It appears, then, that in the fifth act,

³⁹ Donna B. Hamilton, "The Duke in Measure for Measure: 'I Find an Apt Remission in Myself,'" Shaks 6 (1970), 180.

Shakespeare explodes not one illusion of omnipotence in Angelo, but rather two such illusions, the one being Angelo's and the other the Duke's.

The effect, moreover, of the Duke's humiliation by Lucio is to blunt his power against Angelo. At the moment that Lucio reveals the Duke, Angelo comes to the stunning recognition of his powerlessness. It is, however, not before an uncompromised and absolute Duke that he stands in his confessed criminality, but rather before a Duke ridiculed and insulted. And the ridicule that the Duke endures is furthermore shown to be not merely the false imputation of slander, but rather all too true.

In his subjection to Lucio's slanders, the Duke endures the public defamation of his identity as the false rationality of the friar. Lucio tells him

My lord, I know him, 'tis a meddling friar.
I do not like the man; had he been lay, my lord,
For certain words he spake against your Grace
In your retirement, I had swing'd him soundly.
(V.i.127-30)

A saucy friar,
A very scurvy fellow. (V.i.135-6)

Cucullus non facit monachum: honest in nothing but
his clothes, and one that hath spoke most villainous
speeches of the Duke (V.i.62-4)

And indeed, as if to verify the slanders of Lucio, Shakespeare has the Friar-Duke speak a speech against the Duke that is both villainous and honest. Addressing Isabella and Mariana, he says,

But O, poor souls,
 Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox,
 Good night to your redress! Is the Duke gone?
 Then is your cause gone too. The Duke's unjust
 Thus to retort your manifest appeal,
 And put your trial in the villain's mouth
 Which here you come to accuse. (V.i.279-303)

Emboldened by this slander of the Duke, Lucio intensifies his attack on the Friar-Duke, and finally lays violent hands on him. He also addresses him in terms that seem aimed specifically at the falsity of his rational exterior, and terms that seem, like burrs, to stick: (IV.iii.179)

Come sir, come, sir, come, sir; foh, sir, why,
 you bald-pated, lying rascal, you must be hooded,
 must you! Show you knave's visage, with a pox to you!
 Show your sheep-biting face, and be hang'd an hour!
 Will't not off? (V.i.351-5)

With these words, Lucio stigmatizes the Duke's reason in a way that permanently compromises its absoluteness. Thus revealed, the Duke appears to exhibit a somewhat shamefastly subdued quality, indeed, an almost disorienting sense of his own embarrassment. His first words are addressed to Lucio, and acknowledge wryly the less than dignified auspices under which he achieves his honest identity.

Thou art the first knave that e'er mad'st a duke.
 (V.i.356)

He comes, then, not in glory, but upon terms that render his identity as reason somewhat less than flattering.

The revelation, then, of the speciousness of the Friar-Duke as reason has the effect of complementing the humiliation of Angelo as will. Indeed, what Shakespeare

seems to give us is the simultaneous humiliation of the Duke and Angelo, the simultaneous exposure of both reason and will as compromised in their integrity, and thus stripped of their absoluteness.

If, however, the attributes of will and reason are thus compromised, they are by virtue of their no longer absolute conditions, capable of becoming integrated. It seems hardly fortuitous that the compromise of the Duke's reason immediately precedes his appropriation of the place of Angelo, and the reconstitution of his being, by that act, as both reason and will. By telling Angelo, "We'll borrow place of him.--Sir, by your leave," (V.i.362) and formally seating himself in Angelo's seat of authority, the Duke reclaims the lost and erring faculty of will. It is, however, only as a faculty humiliated and impaired that he can so readily and easily reclaim it. Finally, it cannot be mere accident that the Duke as "Grace" attains at precisely this point in the action the overt association with "pow'r divine." (V.i.369)

If, in the humiliation of both the Duke and Angelo, Shakespeare nullifies the claim of both reason and will to absoluteness as the critical condition of their reintegration as values, he seems, likewise, to suggest that the demise of absoluteness invalidates also the relegation of Angelo's will to absolute nothingness. In his humblest self-abasement, Angelo himself suggests the possibility of a guilt still greater than his.

O my dread lord,
 I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,
 To think I can be undiscernible,
 When I perceive your Grace, like pow'r divine,
 Hath look'd upon my passes. (V.i.366-70)

And Mariana will find in the abridgement of Angelo's absoluteness the very promise of his virtue.

They say best men are moulded out of faults,
 And for the most, become much more the better
 For being a little bad; so may my husband.
 (V.i.439-41)

If Shakespeare's treatment of both the Duke and Angelo conveys the abridgement of their respective claims of absoluteness as the separate identities of reason and will, or selfhood and world, his treatment of Mariana and Isabella seems to convey similarly their humiliation as the Neo-Platonic advocates of the absolute identity of selfhood and world. Mariana, we see, tries to reconcile Angelo with the Duke by characterizing him as merely "a little bad," and Isabella attempts likewise to argue his total innocence as the mere intender of her violation. The Duke, however, accepts neither of these pleas as valid. Yet if the absolute of identity is repudiated, the moderate concept of relationship is affirmed. In the marriage of Isabella to the Duke and Mariana to Angelo, Shakespeare affirms the now-no-longer-absolute value of feminine identity, as relationship, just as in their marriages the Duke and Angelo attest to the compromise of their masculine value of distinction.

Seen in terms of the integration of selfhood and world, or will and reason, as the terms of ultimate reality,

the last act of Measure for Measure fulfills its Christian design by reconciling heaven with nature and God with man within the political context of the state. The Duke's ability in this last act of the play to integrate will and reason makes him symbolic of a truly Christian concept of God. The Duke as deity becomes the deity that both validates man and becomes a man. Accordingly, the "pow'r divine" of the Duke becomes Christian when it becomes redemptive of man, and that redemptiveness is expressed in the definition of man as divine, or, possessed of an immortal soul. Measure for Measure expresses man's immortality in the revelation of Claudio as resurrected from death, and, as it were, unwrapped, or unmuffled (V.i.486) from his shroud. But the Christian concept of God entails also his humanity or personality, and accordingly, we see that the revelation of the resurrected Claudio is simultaneous with the Duke's declaration of his own humanity by his formal proposal of marriage to Isabella. Adverting to the living presence of Claudio, the Duke says to Isabella,

If he be like your brother, for his sake
 Is he pardon'd, and for your lovely sake,
 Give me your hand, and say you will be mine,
 He is my brother too. (V.i.490-3)

Measure for Measure thus renders the identity of God with man a part of its Christian design, and in this identification, validates the realm of nature. But this identification of God with man, and vindication of nature's perspective is balanced by the contrary affirmation of the

perspective of heaven as the recognition of distinction and disparity between God and man. In this last scene, the community of the Duke with his subjects that is implied by his humanity and their immortality does not obscure the distinctions of place between the Duke and his subjects. And these distinctions seem to be affirmed by the fact that the play ends with the disciplining of Lucio as the pretender to equality with his prince. As the exponent of the realm of mechanistic and atheistic nature, Lucio challenges the hierarchical sanctions of heaven by attempting to insinuate himself into the courts of power. The Duke, however, asserting, though not with the harshness of extremity, the perspective of heaven, repulses this attack by Lucio as effrontery and slander, and thrusts him down into the realm of nature as distinct from and beneath that of heaven. Thus the play, at its penultimate moment, dramatizes the integration of heaven with nature as the affirmation, measure for measure, of the principles of disparity and identity, and identifies the state as the structure within which these principles attain their redemptive reconciliation.

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