

INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9020792

Personation: The players' art on Shakespeare's stage, 1599–1611

Narey, Wayne Douglas, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

Copyright ©1990 by Narey, Wayne Douglas. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

A

PERSONATION: THE PLAYERS' ART
ON SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE, 1599-1611

by

WAYNE NAREY

A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
English in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

1990

© 1990

WAYNE NAREY

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

November 10, 1989

Date

W. Speed Hill

Chair of
Examining Committee

November 10, 1989

Date

Mark Steiner
Executive Officer

W. Speed Hill

Steven Urkowitz

Patrick Cullen

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

PERSONATION: THE PLAYERS' ART ON SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE, 1599-1611

by

Wayne Narey

This work argues that the Chamberlain's-King's Men used a mixture of playing styles from 1599 to 1611, which allowed for more "natural" action to complement an older, more formal style of play. While the predominant style of acting on the London stage of the 1590s was a conventional play craft that used actors as correspondents for verbal images, in Hamlet it was supplemented by an occasional "plausible" style, which lent a different, more "realistic" perspective to the drama.

The influences around 1599 upon the playing forms of the Chamberlain's Men were many: the construction of the Globe theatre and its unique partnership, the ensemble talents--especially those of Richard Burbage--of a successful playing company, and the relationship of Shakespeare to that company as actor-dramatist. Dramatic forms and playing styles, therefore, have a symbiotic

relationship: a shifting dramatic perspective gives evidence of a modulation in presentational form in which viewers are given alternative ways of seeing stage action. Beginning with Hamlet, and especially found in the great tragedies, Shakespeare's dramatic picture is one of shifting focuses and ambiguous characterizations.

The source for this work is drawn largely from Shakespeare's plays. Documentation is also taken from contemporary sources of pro-theatrical and anti-theatrical material, from apologists, Puritan opponents, and disinterested observers from the period.

The study is divided into seven sections: the importance of the 1599 date and general introduction; an account of medieval playing and the development of Elizabethan playing styles; the "traditional" presentational forms of the 1590s from which the Chamberlain's Men diverged; the changes found on the London stages in the late 1590s and early 1600s--particularly those differences between the Chamberlain's Men and the Admiral's Men; the "New Drama" of Hamlet; Shakespeare's perspectival drama in the tragedies, especially, and some Blackfriars plays; and a conclusion. Although each of these areas could be a full-length study in its own, the judgment offered as to the presentational forms used on Shakespeare's stage is for the most part focused on a specific company within a specific time, so that that judgment can be tested against a limited corpus of dramatic scripts.

Acknowledgement

I have been fortunate in my studies to have benefited from the generosity of the department's faculty, who graciously gave of their time and knowledge, and my fellow students, who warmly offered their friendship and many kindnesses. Thanks are owed as well to Lynn Kadison, our department assistant, for her timely consideration and help over the years. My gratitude to all often went unacknowledged but never unappreciated. I particularly wish to thank those who have read this manuscript and offered their suggestions and encouragements: Martin Stevens, who commented on the Medieval Drama chapter; the members of my committee, Steven Urkowitz and Patrick Cullen, for whose time and advice I am very grateful; and most especially, my adviser Speed Hill, whose opinions as both scholar and friend I value highly. His careful attention to argument and to style was characteristically generous.

All errors or shortcomings found within this work are, of course, my own.

Preface

In 1965, G. E. Bentley noted that "the greatest need in Shakespeare studies is an expansion of our knowledge of Shakespeare's plays as products designed for Elizabethan theatres" ("Opportunities for Shakespearean Research" 3). In the past twenty years scholars such as Richard Southern, Alan Dessen, Daniel Seltzer, and Andrew Gurr, among others, have studied Shakespeare's art in the light of practical theatrical considerations, giving new attention particularly to his stage facilities and the influences upon his works. But the Elizabethan player, the medium of Shakespeare's art and essential part of his designed product, remains relatively unstudied. My purpose is to investigate one important aspect of the Elizabethan/Shakespeare stage: the manner in which some of those plays were presented. This study looks at the playing styles used by Shakespeare's company and, by concentrating on the King's Men from 1599 to 1611, argues that his players used a mixture of styles during this period, which allowed for more "natural" action to complement an older, more formal style of play.

A need exists in Shakespearean research to see the player as an integral part of the poet's craft, especially within Shakespeare's company, where the acting abilities and presentational styles of players undoubtedly influenced the writing of plays. Bentley was one of several scholars who

identified a lack of theatrically based scholarship in the work of Shakespearean critics: "One would conclude from their writings that Shakespeare prepared the texts of his plays carefully to be handed down to posterity and to twentieth-century critics" (3). Such was obviously not the case. Whether the practical considerations of the players determined the artistic directions of Shakespeare's works or the players learned to adapt to the exigencies of the poet's art is an interesting question, though it was surely some of each. And the symbiotic link between player and dramatist becomes most noticeable in, though not exclusive to, Shakespeare's so-called "tragic period," perhaps reflecting the needs of a more sophisticated, stable, ensemble-acting company, whereby the players' abilities made a new mode of drama and a new style of presentation both possible and necessary. Considering this possibility, I will argue that about 1599 the acting of the King's Men deliberately extended its presentational forms to accommodate a new drama, and that this new style was, using terms for the moment with which we can identify, more inclined toward naturalism than previously seen on the London stage, so that after 1599 the Chamberlain's/King's Men used at least two (and possibly more) acting styles. Shakespeare's new drama is one of "perspective games," where shifting emphases develop dramatic action and characterization, implemented in part by the players' new style of acting.

Why 1599? For a number of reasons this date helps to demarcate Shakespeare's art and his players' styles into a clear expansion of the presentational forms available to him and his fellow actors. First, in this year Shakespeare begins his great tragedies, where protagonists are individuated figures and conventions such as the soliloquy and asides are often used in more subtle and reflective ways than in his earlier drama. Second, Hamlet (1599-1601?), the first of these tragedies, is itself a "theatrical manifesto" of the new drama, containing the most specific and comprehensive treatise on acting in the period, which sought to reform the quality of playing. Third, the largest change in personnel took place in the Chamberlain's Men about 1599, so that the original number of five sharers, which grew to seven in 1595, was increased to ten (the final number by 1604 was twelve). This is an important point. The larger company would have less need to double important roles and thus less reason to rely on stock, emblematic presentation, and the growing repertoire of plays would have led to increased nuances as parts were replayed. Finally, the Globe theatre was built in 1599, which, as Bentley suggested, was a major event in the development of the Chamberlain's Men. As a major shareholder, Shakespeare would have a say in the specifications of the building. The structure influenced his art in much the same manner as the smaller, more intimate Blackfriars theatre would nine years later.

Although each of these considerations indicates that 1599 was an important date in the changing development of Shakespeare's art and his players' acting styles, that year did not bring about a drastic or abrupt reversal in presentational styles. Nor did a more naturalistic acting style become the sole style of playing; rather, it supplemented the players' repertoire and made possible a palette of various available presentational styles. After 1599 Shakespeare's art and his actors' skills had matured to the extent that playing styles were as much conventions of his theatre as other stage practices, such as iambic pentameter in verse or rich displays in clothing. The tragedies used the new style to a greater extent than did the romances, though even in the late plays a naturalistic playing style was often found. It is a mistake to think that the dramatic form of the artificial, stylized romances is necessarily matched by an artificial, stylized playing style. On the contrary, the greater realism in presentation often made the unreality of the play more acceptable and believable to an audience, and Shakespeare's late plays are richly full of naturalistic touches in stage directions and dialogue.

My argument is based on three kinds of evidence. First, the plays of the era, stage directions as well as dialogue, contain a surprising number of references to acting. Most passages about acting in Shakespeare's plays, including Hamlet's advice to the Players, refer to poor

playing, suggesting that the art his players aimed for was more subtle and refined than that of his rivals and may have differed stylistically as well. Second, contemporary pro-theatrical and anti-theatrical polemics contain comments on both good and bad acting, from Puritan writers like Stephen Gosson and William Rankins to apologists like Thomas Lodge and Thomas Heywood. Third, various references exist to both plays and players that appear in sources unrelated to the theatre: English traveller Fynes Moryson's Itinerary (pub. 1617) and Thomas Wright's rhetorical work The Passions of the Mind (1604) are examples.

When compared to other aspects of Shakespeare studies, Elizabethan acting must be regarded as thin in available documentary resources, especially considering the ephemerality of stage performances--scripts reporting what they did can never tell us how they did it. Therefore it is necessary to take a catholic approach to the subject and gather material not limited to Shakespeare and his contemporaries alone. I also include some limited information on the early Tudor drama and the rise of the professional player. A brief consideration of Renaissance visual art helps to establish what the English in Shakespeare's day viewed as natural and thus to locate for us important ideas such as realism, game, and illusion. Other sources of information are reports of the virtuoso playing of tragedians and clowns, the abilities of the boy actor on the professional stage as called for by scripts,

the players' associations with rhetoric and the art of the orator, and the apparent "standard" of playing from 1590 to 1599, from which the Chamberlain's/King's Men diverged. Although each of these areas could be a full-length study in its own, the judgment I offer as to the presentational styles used on Shakespeare's stage is focused on a specific company within a specific time so that that judgment can be tested against a limited corpus of dramatic scripts.

Table of Contents

Preface	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1. A Favorable Period for Actors	4
2. The London Theatre	8
3. The Player-Dramatist Feud	11
4. The Players' Eminence	14
5. The Globe Venture	16
6. The Globe Players	19
7. Formalism vs. Naturalism	23
8. Directors, Players, Dramatist	25
Conclusion: The Unique Globe Company and the Art of "Personation"	28
Chapter Two: The Medieval Heritage	32
1. The Players' Game	34
2. The Acknowledged Game	40
3. Difference in an Acknowledged and Presentational Style	46
4. The Presentational Game	53
5. The Conventional Game	60
6. Two Games, Two Acting Styles Emerge: Conventional and Presentational	65
Chapter Three: A Playing Tradition	69
The Traditions of a Craft	71
1. Audiences	73
2. The Players' Actions	77
3. The Repertory Schedule	82
4. Performance Time	84
5. Conventions	87
a. Verbal Images: the "Descriptive" Style	88
b. Stage Symbolism	96
Conclusion	98
Chapter Four: Changes in the Playing Tradition	101
1. Playing in the Provinces and the City	103
2. Puritan Opposition	108

(Chapter Four cont.)	
3. The Virtuosos	115
a. Clowns	117
b. <u>Theatrum Mundi</u> : From Clown to Tragedian	123
c. Tragedians	127
4. Reform and Change in Styles	129
5. The Boy Actor	140
a. The Boys and the Company's Repertoire	144
b. An Influence on Dramatic Style	145
Conclusion: Tradition and Change	152
 Chapter Five: The New Drama	
and Dramatic Perspective	155
1. Dramatic Maturity	157
2. <u>Hamlet</u> and the New Drama	161
Artifice and Realism	
a. Artifice	166
b. Realism	168
3. "Dual Consciousness"	172
4. <u>Hamlet</u> and the "Plausible" Style	174
5. Perspective: A Mirroring Technique	177
6. Focal Contrast: Inner Life and Outer Form	180
Conclusion: Two Ways of Seeing, Two Styles of Play	182
 Chapter Six: Plays and Acting	
Styles in the New Drama	187
 <u>Othello</u>	188
<u>King Lear</u>	202
<u>Macbeth</u>	207
The Romances	213
<u>Cymbeline</u>	216
<u>The Winter's Tale</u>	220
The Blackfriars	223
Conclusion	225
 Chapter Seven: Conclusion	227
1. Performance Style	228
2. Players	232
a. Tragedian: Richard Burbage	233
b. Clown: Kempe and Armin	235
c. Boys	239
3. Playing Art and Dramatic Style: A Composite Picture	246
Conclusion	250
 Works Cited and Consulted	253

Chapter One: Introduction
From The Theatre to The Globe

After James Burbage, father to the leading player in Shakespeare's company, Richard Burbage, had built the Theatre in 1576, players were far more secure in their profession than in days on the road, at fairs, or even when attached to noble households. Still in a tenuous occupation, players turned to London because it offered patronage, the crowds of the city, and permanent places to perform; competition was fierce, and good performers were at a premium.

The term "player" had been one of disparagement in London since long before the Theatre was built. Touring companies were often met with holiday-like enthusiasm and expectation in the provinces. The Cambridge plays, 1 and 2 Return From Parnassus (ca. 1600), poke fun at the extravagance of professional players and their unwarranted "status" in the eyes of the locals. But life was difficult for touring companies, which could not count on welcome receptions everywhere they went. Acts that restricted their playing and included players as vagabonds and beggars were a means for the Crown to check and regulate the growing number of playing companies in the sixteenth century. In 1559, the mayor's permission was required by players before performing in towns and villages. Records of performances often refer

only to the "mayor's play," a sample of the company's intended performance, given especially for him and the town council. If they were pleased, players were permitted "two or three additional performances, depending on the importance of their patron" (Wasson 4-5). The pamphleteer who wrote Ratseis Ghost, or The Second Part of His Madde Prankes and Robberies (1605) offers a glimpse into the life of a travelling company. Meeting the players at an inn, the highwayman Ratsey doubles their usual performance earnings of twenty shillings to play for him. Ratsey praises their skills, advises the lead player to go to London to get rich, but disparages the players' social inferiority as he watches them walk down the road alongside a wagon heaped high with their baggage.

In response, players sought ways to ennoble their craft and to dignify their profession in the eyes of authority.¹ Playing was a game presented by players, while acting had connotations of the orator's "actions" (expressive gestures) and thus his art. The player's craft was inconsequential while the orator's art was honorable. Thus "actor" implied

¹ As Bentley has shown, "player" is used almost exclusively in the age, rather than "actor." The theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe always used the word "player" in his Diary; the parish records of St. Giles Cripplegate, where the Fortune theatre was, lists "player" as occupation, never "actor"; the same was true at St. Savior's Southwark (where the Globe, Hope, Swan, and Rose were); and, as well, the records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels (1623-1642) uses the word "player" rather than "actor" (Profession of Player x, xi).

more than mere "player." M. C. Bradbrook observes that the "more honorific title of 'actor' meant a master of an art and was meant to defend the 'players'" when it was used (Webster 183). Rhetoricians such as Abraham Fraunce objected to more than the borrowing of terms: the orator, he believed, must use gestures "gravely and decently," and not "parasitically as stage players" use them (The Arcadian Rhetoric [1588]).

Although "actor" appears relatively infrequently in the Elizabethan/Jacobean period, it does so more often after 1600. Shakespeare, for example, uses the word in Troilus and Cressida (1602?) with a possible distinction between it and "player."² The noun is used in "A Prologue arm'd, but

² Shakespeare uses "actor" twenty-three times in his plays--eight times prior to 1599--once in Sonnet 23, and again in Lucrece (Marvin Spevack, The Harvard Concordance To Shakespeare, 1973). In some instances the word appears to be interchangeable with "player"; but in most, the distinction between the two terms is subtle yet noticeable. In Hamlet, a play preeminently concerned with appearances, "player" is used seventeen times and "actor" six times. Invariably, "player" refers to the travelling troupe who arrive at Elsinore, as in Hamlet's ironic comments on learning of the current fad for children's companies:

Will they not say afterwards, if they should
grow themselves to common players (as it is most
like, if their means are no better) their writers
do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their
own succession? (2.2.347-51)

"Actor" is a more ennobling term, even when Polonius uses it: "The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical" (2.2.396-97). The distinction between the derogatory "A Common Player" (in John Stephens' Satirical Essays, Characters, and Others [1615], written by J. Cocke) and its rebuttal and defense of

not in confidence / Of author's pen or actor's voice"
 (Prologue. 24)³ to suggest a bold, impressive self-
 assurance, whereas the verb "play" suggests a low, apish
 mimicry when Achilles encourages Patroclus to mock their
 fellow Greeks: "'tis Agamemnon right! / Now play me Nestor,
 hem, and stroke thy beard, / As he being dress'd to some
 oration" (1.3.164-66).

1. A Favorable Period for Actors

Prior to Burbage's Theatre, "player" suggested mere
 idlers and vagabonds to the City authority; were it not for
 the favors of the nobility and Court, performers would never
 have taken foothold in London. In 1572, "An Acte for the
 punishment of vacabondes and for Releif of the Poor &
 Impotent" required players to belong to a nobleman of
 baronial degree or greater. That same year, Leicester's Men
 asked to wear the livery of the Earl's servants in order to
 avoid the the penalties act. It was they who had obtained
 the first patent to play in London, reversing a 1559
 proclamation that forbid public playing (Chambers 2:86-87).
 This patent referred to playing as an "arte and facultye";

the profession, "An Excellent Actor" (an Overburian
 Character [1615], probably written by John Webster) is
 telling.

³ All citations from Shakespeare in this work are
 taken from The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore
 Evans, et. al.

however, the Privy Council called it a "trade" in 1581--a view that moderated somewhat over the years, for a year later they called it a "profession," and in 1593 a "qualitie" (Chambers 1:309). Whatever common players might be called, they remained rogues, vagabonds, and worse to the Puritans, who increased their attacks upon them until finally closing the theatres in 1642. But in spite of the opposition, the players' popularity with Londoners and the Court and the establishment of a permanent theatre conspired to confer upon them an idea of selfhood in earnings, prominence, and legitimacy.⁴

The attempt to dignify the players' "trade" into the actors' "art" was helped by successful enterprises such as the Globe; moreover, the players in Shakespeare's company evidently sought to justify themselves, economically and artistically, by reforming the players' profession. In the next two decades several events would better their reputations: the publication in folio by Ben Jonson of his play scripts as Works in 1616;⁵ Alleyn's gift of Dulwich

⁴ See M. C. Bradbrook's "The Status Seekers" in Bentley, The Seventeenth-Century Stage, 55-69.

⁵ An inadvertent honor perhaps. Jonson was the first to separate player and role in a published text of a play. Previously, title pages carried a printed list of characters--often headed by the names of the players--which, as Beckerman noted, indicated an incomplete distinction between the player and his part (Shakespeare & "The Purpose of Playing" 7-8). Still, though he had been an actor, Jonson sought to dignify dramatists over players. The resentment that dramatists often felt for players was a common aspect of the Elizabethan stage. See below.

College (1619); and various apologies for the craft by Thomas Heywood, Nathan Field, and Ralph Crane,⁶ among others (Bentley, Profession of Player 10). But there were more practical matters that led the way. E. K. Chambers believed 1597 to have been a crucial year for players and their companies, since the Crown placed London playing directly under the control of the Privy Council, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Master of the Revels rather than the local government (1:309). The transfer of authority checked the players' greatest threat, the growing power of Puritans within the City of London. These various political and social developments all point to the increasing social status and economic substance of the licensed companies; this, in turn, supported and sustained the "players' 'art'."

The acting companies in London in the 1590s had many reasons for expecting success. As Bradbrook notes, this was a period of financial expansion in London: trade guilds and their numbers were increasing, overseas markets were flourishing, and though the leaders of the guilds--who had great power in the City government--disapproved of plays, "the smaller fry among the guildsmen were speculating in theatrical enterprise" (John Webster 15-16). By 1599 opportunities were such that John Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday could celebrate both the large and the small

⁶ Apology for Actors (1612), "Field the player's letter to Mr. Sutton, preached at St. Mary Overs, 1616," and The Works of Mercy (1621), respectively.

investor, as well as the swift, though insecure, change that successful enterprise could make in a Londoner's social standing.

But the end of the century brought turbulent times. Despite the success that the guilds were enjoying, the country was in the midst of a depression, plague reappeared frequently in the hot summer months, Elizabeth was old, and there was nervousness over regal succession. The London theatres were fortunate to have any audiences at all because of an isolated though dangerous incident. All theatres were ordered closed and destroyed by the Privy Council after The Isle of Dogs was performed--a lost play of 1597 that gave offense to the Crown, probably written in large part by Thomas Nashe but also by Ben Jonson, who acted in it as well. The play was labeled seditious, and while Nashe fled, Jonson and two others went to jail. The theatres were obviously not destroyed, though they came under siege more than ever from Puritans, City Fathers, and even the Crown in political matters. Yet in the midst of such turbulent years--perhaps because of them--playhouses flourished.

2. The London Theatre

By mid-decade two companies dominated the London theatre: the Chamberlain's and Admiral's Men.⁷ Before there was a Chamberlain's company, Lord Strange's Men had merged with the Admiral's into a joint company, necessitated by the many companies that were breaking or reforming. It was this group that Shakespeare probably first wrote for and performed with,⁸ along with Burbage and the leading tragedian of the day, Edward Alleyn. Another company, Pembroke's, fell on hard times when on tour in 1593, selling their costumes and scripts.⁹ The players from these three companies eventually coalesced into the Chamberlain's Men--with Burbage and Shakespeare--who played at the Theatre, and the Admiral's Men--headed by Alleyn--who played for Henslowe

⁷ See the debate between Rosalyn Knutson and Andrew Gurr with regard to the number of companies playing in London at this time (Shakespeare Quarterly 39 [1988]: 391-95). Knutson cites the Queen's, Derby's, and Pembroke's Men as also playing in London in the 1590s. Gurr counters that while these companies had only "intermittent tenure" the Admiral's and Chamberlain's Men were the two principal companies, a right granted by an order of the Privy Council in 1598 (see Chambers 4:325). The license was granted to these two companies in order that "they might be the better enabled and prepared to shew such plaies before her Majestie," which was the ostensible reason for allowing any playing in London.

⁸ Shakespeare may have written for the Queen's Men prior to Strange's, but this is not certain.

⁹ The remnants of the ill-fated Pembroke's company remained in the provinces until 1598, when they returned to London at the Swan, only to once again be dispersed in The Isle of Dogs affair.

at his Rose playhouse.

Henslowe was the perfect example of the middle-class impresario: besides owning a starch-works and several brothels, he bought plays, rented his theatre, purchased costumes, loaned money, and hired dramatists. Shortly after the construction of the Globe he built his second theatre, the Fortune, modeled after the Globe. The London theatre made Henslowe a wealthy man. While his famous Diary reads like a Who's Who of the Elizabethan stage and is of inestimable value for its references to plays and daily theatrical life, it also reveals a man who understood the profitability of the London stage.

Emulating the great success of the Chamberlain's and Admiral's Men, several more acting companies began playing in London around 1600, increasing competition and the variety of what was offered on stage as well.¹⁰ At the turn of the century, the London theatre was a place where players could make a very good living wage. Dress and behavior often indicated their successes. In 2 Return From Parnassus (see p. 1, above), Studioso describes the preening entry of a company on tour:

England affords those glorious vagabonds
That carried earst their fardles on their backs
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streets

¹⁰ See Gurr, "Intertextuality at Windsor" 189. The dramatic fare varied considerably, with children's companies returning to the City as well.

S[w]ooping it in their glaring satin suits,
 And pages to attend their masterships.
 (5.1; qtd. in Harbage, Shakespeare And The Rival
 Traditions 12)

They looked even finer on stage. Worcester's Men paid £6. 13s. for Mistress Frankford's gown in A Woman Killed With Kindness (1602-03), which, as Alfred Harbage noted, was "13 shillings more than Heywood was paid for the play" (Rival Traditions 11-12). One has only to glance through Henslowe's Diary to see the discrepancy between money paid to playwrights and scripts and money used for performance assets--especially costumes, since they provided the pageantry and beauty of an otherwise plain stage. The power of the Elizabethan stage may have been the language and the imagination it provoked, but the visual expression of that power was placed literally on the backs of the players, whose costumes were yet another complement to their talents. It was the money to be made by these talents that inspired the pretensions of the "common" players. In Ratseis Ghost, Ratsey professes enough faith in the player's talent to wager his money on him in the role of Hamlet, presumably against Richard Burbage's performance, suggesting that the provincial player would share in those profits. But even more wonderful, the player could be knighted as "Sir Simon two shares and a halfe," the "first knight that euer was player in England" (B1). Was it then any wonder that the City Fathers would denounce them for their social

pretention? Puritans for their finery? or the playwrights for what they believed was rightfully theirs?

3. The Player-Dramatist Feud

Money, and the status it brought, was at the heart of the very real hostility between the players and playwrights, notwithstanding their obvious interdependence. This fact is responsible for the first mention of Shakespeare that we have, Greene's bitter attack on players and their pretensions:

Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shakespeare in a country. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. (A Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance [1592].)

Greene's anger, aimed at a mere player daring to rise above himself, while as a university-educated dramatist Greene lies dying in poverty, provokes a resentment that ran deep. In the same work where he attacks Shakespeare, Greene recounts meeting someone he thought to be "a substantial man," only to learn his true profession: "A Player! I took you rather for a gentleman of great living, for if by outward habit men should be censured, I tell you you would be taken for a substantial man." Greene said what other

writers believed as well. Strutting players spoke the elegant words of poets yet earned considerably more than the university-educated dramatists, as Studioso had complained of.

Not all actors, of course, were financially successful: there were differences in both talent and remuneration between provincial players, "hired men" on the London stage, and actors who were also sharers in a company. Hired men, as opposed to sharers, were paid by the performance and had no share in the theatre's receipts. According to Henslowe's records, hired men were paid 2 to 10 shillings a week in prosperous times, less in bad times (Bentley, Dramatist 237). The dramatists' resentment was aimed principally at the actor-sharers who profited the most from the playwrights' scripts. Yet, as Greene's attack on Shakespeare suggests, the differences between players and at least some dramatists were social as well as economic.

Still, if Henslowe's records are any indication, dramatists were not poorly paid. Henry Chettle averaged £25 per year and Dekker £19. Such professional dramatists earned far more than schoolmasters or other professions they may have chosen (Bentley, Dramatist 104; 108). Compared with other writing, playwriting also paid quite well--pamphlets brought about 40 shillings,¹¹ new plays were

¹¹ Bentley notes that 40 shillings appears to be the standard amount paid for pamphlets; he cites David Nichol Smith, "Authors and Patrons," in Shakespeare's England

bought for £6, and revisions of plays earned one-third that amount (Bentley, Dramatist 84, 91-92).¹²

Playing as a sharer, however, was the most profitable of all for an actor. After the Globe was built, for example, the Chamberlain's Men would take in about £10 from a good house, from which they would pay their rent, debts, and hired men, dividing the rest among themselves according to the size of their share in the company.¹³ The sharers in the Admiral's Men did not fare as well; as owner of the Rose, Henslowe was paid rent by companies who used his theatre, as well as fifty percent of the galleries, where the better seats were (Ruoff 197). Shakespeare's company was obviously more profitable for the actor-sharer, given equal audiences; yet when compared to dramatists, sharers at

(1916), who collected the various allusions of payments made to poets (Dramatist 91).

¹² It is difficult, however, to set a standard fee paid for "additions." William Bird and Samuel Rowley were paid £4 for their changes in Doctor Faustus in 1602 (Henslowe's Diary 206), which indicates perhaps considerable revision, while Henry Chettle received 20 shillings in 1601 for his additions to Cardinal Wolsey (Chettle was paid another 20 shillings in 1602 for more revisions [Diary 175; 200; see Bentley, Dramatist 246-47]). See also Rosalyn Knutson, "Henslowe's Diary and the Economics of Play Revision for Revival, 1592-1603," Theatre Research International 10 (1985): 1-18.

¹³ While prices for goods and food fluctuated in London, the fees paid for plays, histories, pamphlets, and other literature--and the profits made on them--remained consistent from about 1590 to 1640 (see Bentley, Dramatist 91-93). The usual fee paid for Court appearances was £10, until after the accession of James, when it doubled.

Henslowe's Rose theatre still made handsome salaries.¹⁴

4. The Players' Eminence

Given the amounts of money that Henslowe paid for clothing worn by and stage props used by players, and considering the differences in earnings between dramatists and principals in a company, the player emerges as the primary element on the Elizabethan stage. A final illustration helps to confirm the actors' importance. On 22 September 1598, Ben Jonson and Gabriel Spencer fought a duel with rapiers in Hogsden Fields, north of London. The two knew each other well, having both been members of the Admiral's Men, working for Henslowe at the Rose and having spent several months in the Marshalsea prison for their involvement in The Isle of Dogs affair, Spencer as player and Jonson as player and collaborating author. Each was an integral part of the London stage, both on the verge of greatness. Ironically, at perhaps the very moment that Spencer was dying, Jonson's Every Man In His Humour was being performed by the Chamberlain's Men at the Curtain, not

¹⁴ Carson suggests that the weekly shares may have been between £1 and £2, and that income at the Fortune theatre may have been even higher, benefiting the principal players the most (43). A sharer's income is difficult to estimate due to the nature of money collection at theatres such as the Rose or Fortune especially, with actors receiving revenues from the outer door or a portion of the gallery (see Carson 39).

far from the duel.

In many ways the fight was emblematic of the difficult, turbulent last years of the sixteenth century. Jonson and Spencer were men who epitomized the mood of their era, gifted, contradictory, and contentious. Spencer, a young actor whose playing quality foretokened greatness, had killed a shop-owner's son less than two years previously in an argument over goods, an argument over goods, and J dramatist, was fast acquiring a reputation for truculence. Both were involved with the London stage, yet each was regarded differently with respect to his rank within the system. Whereas the dramatist Jonson had been a minor actor (although Dekker's Satiromastix [1601] alleges that as a travelling player he played Hieronimo in Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy), Spencer was a rising star. Each was suited by temperament to his own appropriate niche in the London theatre milieu: Spencer, large of ego, was young, handsome, and energetic; Jonson, impatient with lesser minds, was also egoistic and given to didacticism. Henslowe undoubtedly echoed the sentiments of those who knew both when he ignored the reasons for their fight, as well as their temperamental natures, rather making comment on the unfortunate result: Jonson lived while Spencer died. In a letter to Edward Alleyn, Henslowe wrote:

I haue loste one of my company wch hurteth me
greatley that is gabrell for he is slayen in hoges
den fylldes by the hand of benge[men] Jonson
bricklayer. (In Henslowe's Diary 286)

The disparagement of Jonson as a "bricklayer" is perhaps due to Henslowe's smarting over Jonson's defection to the Chamberlain's Men with Every Man;¹⁵ after all, he had only recently loaned the imprisoned Jonson four pounds to meet jail expenses (one year later Jonson would again be in Henslowe's employ and debt). Yet Spencer too had only months before his death borrowed heavily from Henslowe--though as a sharer, Spencer repaid Henslowe his debts with his share of the galleries (Diary, April 1598)--and was leaving him to join Francis Langley's theatrical venture, the Swan. The diary entry seems to reaffirm the fact that the most important members of the theatrical scene were the actors, not the dramatists. Quite simply, good playwrights were cheap while good players came dear; and it was the players who made enterprises like the Globe theatre possible.

5. The Globe Venture

The Globe venture was remarkable because the company was controlled by actor-sharers, one of which was its own resident playwright. Their theatre was probably similar to

¹⁵ However, the statement was true. Jonson had apprenticed as a bricklayer and was a member of the guild.

James Burbage's Theatre, built in 1576. The story of the clandestine, nighttime dismantling of the Theatre and its subsequent rebuilding across the river as the Globe is well known. The experienced carpenter in charge of removal and reconstruction, Peter Streete, had twelve men who followed his instructions, marking the timber at various joints in order that the structure be raised in similar fashion at its new site (see Smith 120). The basic physical design of the Theatre would undoubtedly appear the same, but where experience in stagecraft dictated interior changes Streete would have made the corrections, suggested by a quarter-century's experience. So too adjustments would be made for seating an audience, gathering money, or accommodating the better patrons--in short, whatever twenty-three years of London playing had taught the Burbages and their fellow players about practical theatre from either side of the pit. As Irwin Smith notes, when the Globe went up "the Curtain, the Rose, the Swan, the first and second Blackfriars had been built and each contributed positively or negatively" to the development of the stage (113).

The theatrical history in London that dictated the building of the Globe probably translated into personnel experience as well. Consider, for example, the stability that would result from the sharers employing the same hired men for their plays. These "gatherers" took in the receipts, swept out the theatre, and walked on and off stage as soldiers, messengers, or townspeople. The ten

shareholders no longer had to share these people with another company as they had when sharing a theatre; after several years together as a company, they undoubtedly knew whom they could trust or invest with some performance authority. In short, the Globe players, a company newly augmented in size itself, was developing its own repertory company of workaday actors who appeared only briefly on stage but who were important theatrical assets.

The number of hirelings in any large company, difficult to determine, probably varied from theatre to theatre. By 1624 the King's Men required twenty-one "musitions and other necessarie attendantes" (Adams 75; qtd. by Carson 36). David Bevington estimates that thirty players, which includes the sharers, hired men, and eight or more backstage personnel who may have also briefly appeared on stage, was the usual number of actors needed in a company in the 1590s (From "Mankind" to Marlowe 105-06).¹⁶ Because a company such as the Chamberlain's Men were responsible for so many people, it was to everyone's advantage that the company remain in London and not tour, and that it perform where a

¹⁶ Carson agrees with Bevington's figure (37). Richard David points out that the Hope theatre used at least nineteen hired men between 1613 and 1615 (151), which would also total approximately thirty actors, including boys. Gurr, however, places the number of required hired men at thirty (Sh. S. 66). On the other extreme is William Ringler's argument that Shakespeare's pre-Globe plays, with two exceptions, could have been played with twelve men and four boys ("The Number of Actors in Shakespeare's Early Plays," in Bentley's The Seventeenth-Century Stage, 110-34).

large audience was accommodated in a structure designed for the special needs of the players.

It cannot, therefore, be stressed enough that the Elizabethan theatre was a commercial venture. Permanent playhouses were not aesthetic requirements of an emerging art form but practical answers to the needs of players. Shakespeare too demonstrated his priorities, apparently unconcerned with publishing a "final" version of his plays and shrewd enough to invest his playing profits in real estate. As, uniquely, a player-playwright, he used old conventions and new experiments with an audience because his livelihood was at stake; as a shareholder in the company, this would hold true for one of his plays or another's.

6. The Globe Players

When Shakespeare and his fellows began their venture at the Globe in 1599, they carried one step further the gains players had made in twenty-plus years since the erection of the Theatre in 1576. Uniquely, they owned their own theatre, plays, costumes, and properties. This fact contributes greatly to an emerging sense of selfhood and new respect for their profession in London around 1600. In the years before the Globe they amassed a repertory of play scripts, costumes, and performance experience. New shareholders in their company were added, perhaps to raise the necessary capital for their investment, or perhaps as a

result of prosperity: new skills would improve their company all the more. Because all sharers were part owners, they were rewarded for blending their playing skills with sound business sense. Henslowe might listen to a prospective property read over wine or ale in a tavern,¹⁷ at times only a portion of a promised work, imagining its successes in his theatre. Shakespeare and his company, however, had a working knowledge of the stage, often playing scripts supplied by Shakespeare himself either as new plays or revivals, works undoubtedly written for and ideally suited to his fellow Globe players.

The organization of the Chamberlain's Men was an

¹⁷ Bentley maintains that Henslowe was more agent than purchaser of plays, even for his own theatres. To substantiate his point that Henslowe was merely a middle man, Bentley cites a letter written by Samuel Rowley, an actor and dramatist, requesting that Henslowe act on his behalf to buy a script:

Mr. Henslowe, I have heard five sheets of a play of the Conquest of the Indies and I do not doubt but it will be a very good play. Therefore I pray you deliver them forty shillings in earnest of it and take the papers into your own hands and on Easter eve they promise to make an end of all the rest. (Profession of Dramatist 63-65; Qtd. by Bentley 64-65; Henslowe's Diary 294)

However, this same letter is often used by scholars to demonstrate that the players were in fact the middle men who received some fee for bringing buyer and seller together. On another occasion Rowley wrote: "M^r hincheloe I praye ye delyver to John Daye thurty shyillyngs whych Is vpon the thurd parte of [the play] Tom Strowde" (Diary 315). Usually seeking a loan, Rowley is one of the most often noted names in the Diary. Yet if Bentley is correct, then Henslowe had little say in what was potentially profitable on his own stages.

unusual one in the era. However, though the Globe players were different in several ways from other Elizabethan acting troupes, scholarship for the past thirty years has rejected the singling out of Shakespeare and his players from their contemporaries, seeing the Chamberlain's Men as more similar than dissimilar from other acting companies. This is particularly true with regard to speculations about Elizabethan acting styles.

Because Shakespeare's work is frequently exalted over that of his contemporaries, so the argument goes, it was probably unavoidable that some critics would also believe the productions of his company to have been superior as well. Thus, whatever "usual" acting abilities and styles existed for all London companies, the Globe players were exempted. Alan Downer, for one, reacted to the "misconception" that distanced Shakespeare and his players from other performers. In 1964 he voiced this concern when he observed three generally accepted beliefs about Elizabethan acting:

1. All Elizabethan actors were strutting ranters, except Shakespeare's, of course.
2. All Elizabethan actors contented themselves with the graceful reading of lines and formal, stylized gestures--except Shakespeare's, of course.
3. All Elizabethan actors were something of ballet dancers, something of acrobats--except Shakespeare's, of course.

Yet to many scholars it appears that Shakespeare and his fellow players were attempting to distance themselves from the playing styles of other acting companies. In some instances they are.¹⁸ The essential distinction between companies is that different acting and dramatic styles did exist and that Shakespeare's company deliberately sought to differentiate theirs from those of the other companies. Downer went on to say, "it is essential to remember that Shakespeare was a part of--not apart from--his theatre" ("Prolegomenon" 625). Any distinction made for Shakespeare would obviously, as Downer implies, implicate his fellows as well. But there is no contradiction in seeing Shakespeare and his players as both within and distinct from the theatre of their time. They were dissimilar in many ways: the organization of the company was unlike any other in London; the company was successful from the first, and they managed to erect their own theatre after only five years together; and, as Bentley noted, their principal poet wrote exclusively for one company, which was unheard of at that time (Profession of Dramatist 281). Their differences from the other companies of the era would suggest that their performances were distinctive as well--indeed distinct enough that when James came to the throne in 1603 he gave

¹⁸ See Chapter Four. Bradbrook noted that Shakespeare's references to actors and acting are most often negative, though other scholars read these references differently--as Righter does in Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play.

them royal patronage as The King's Men.

7. Formalism vs. Naturalism

Downer was reacting to a number of essays from the 1950s that attempted to establish a single style of play for all Elizabethan actors. His essay does not involve itself with the uniqueness of the Globe players but attempts to clarify a starting point for the study of Elizabethan acting, one that would avoid the traps of terminology and modern aesthetic biases that tainted studies of the subject in the previous decade. A brief recounting of the arguments regarding the player's art prior to Downer's article is necessary.

In "Elizabethan Acting" (1939), Alfred Harbage maintained that the acting of the day was what we understand as "formal"--the player symbolizes, recites, and represents--as opposed to "natural"--the player portrays, impersonates, and engages in real conversation (687). Others, principally M. C. Bradbrook (who had briefly described an Elizabethan style in 1932, "there would be comparatively little business, and gesture would be formalised" [Elizabethan Stage Conditions 109]) agreed with Harbage. B. L. Joseph's Elizabethan Acting (1951) was the culminating expression of the formalist position: "given two actors of equal talent, each would be able to perform the same speech in exactly the same way, apart from differences

of voice and personal appearance" (153). In his review of Joseph's book, however, Harbage acknowledged a moderated opinion, believing two styles of play existed (Review 360-61). Harbage chose for comparison Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy (3.1) and the graveyard scene (5.1) as indicative of different playing styles in one play, a "formal" one in Hamlet's soliloquy and a "naturalistic" one in the graveyard scene. Then Joseph also changed his opinion, when, in the revised edition of Elizabethan Acting (1964) he argued for a "naturalistic" style, though drawing on the same source material for both editions.

In the 1950s, several influential articles sought to correct the "formalist misconceptions" about the Elizabethan player. Most notable were John Russell Brown's "On the Acting of Shakespeare's Plays" (1953) and Marvin Rosenberg's "Elizabethan Actors: Men or Marionettes?" (1954). Rosenberg took particular exception to Joseph's first study, concluding that far from the "marionettes" he believed Joseph to have described, "a Shakespearean character must be somebody--some recognizably human combination of emotions, desires, actions. The playwright left it to the actor to give an identity to that combination" (109). Brown encouraged those who would emulate Elizabethan playing today to "play all the time for an illusion of real life" (54). A few scholars, such as Bernard Beckerman (Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609 [1962]) argued for mixed styles: in clarifying Harbage's terms, Beckerman suggested that the

major difference between the two stylistic approaches is that the formalists speak of the means an actor employs in his art--voice, gesture, movement--while the naturalists describe the effect the player attempts, an imitation of life (111). Yet a distinction between the two styles has persisted as the starting point for arguments on playing in Shakespeare's day.¹⁹ Robert Weimann's Shakespeare and the Popular tradition in the Theatre (1967; rev. 1978) uses the terms "naturalism" and "convention" in referring to both the Blackfriars plays and their playing styles as well (246-52).

8. Directors, Players, Dramatist

One of the differences in Shakespeare's company is that the Chamberlain's/King's Men developed a style of play distinct from and superior to other companies. Since Shakespeare is not known to have written for any other company, he may have acted in the capacity of director for his group, in collaboration with their leading player Richard Burbage. David Klein's "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" uses the same title as that by Alfred Hart some twenty years earlier (MLR 36 [1941]) in refuting Hart's assertion that no one knows who directed the rehearsals or

¹⁹ Cf. Lise-Lone Marker's "Nature and Decorum in the Theory of Elizabethan Acting" (1970), and Jane Donawerth's "Shakespeare and Acting Theory in the English Renaissance" (1982; expanded as Shakespeare and the Sixteenth-Century Study of Language, 1984).

allotted parts to characters. Klein lists ten instances where indication is given as to direction, most always by the poet (MLR 57 [1962]: 556-560).²⁰ The most famous of these is Johannes Rhenanus' (a German writer who accompanied Prince Otto to England in 1611) visit to London in the early part of the seventeenth century in which he reported that the London actors "are daily instructed, as it were in school, so that even the most eminent actors have to allow themselves to be taught their places by the dramatists" (from Speculum Aestheticum, qtd. by Klein 556). With regard to this comment, the editors of The Revels History of Drama in English observe that it is difficult to "imagine Burbage taking daily acting lessons from Shakespeare, and one

²⁰ They are Johannes Rhenanus' visit to London, Thomas Nashe's Summer's Last Will And Testament, Prologue and 3.236 (Works, ed. McKerrow), Jonson's Cynthia's Revels 4:35 and 4:40 (Works, ed. Herford and Simpson), Thomas Dekker's Satiromastix 5.2 (Works, ed. Bowers), Virgidemiarum, by Bishop Hall, 1.3.45 ff. (Poems, ed. Davenport), Nashe's Unfortunate Traveller 2.249-50, John Marston's Histriomastix (Works, ed. Wood), and Robert Herrick's Hesperides (1648, which implies that when Jonson died, so too did natural acting; Works, ed. Martin). William A. Armstrong says that "instruct," "instructor," and "Instruction" are the words most frequently used by Elizabethans to describe a playwright's participation in rehearsals. He notes John Aubrey, in Brief Lives (2:226, ed. Clark), calling Jonson "an excellent instructor." Also, Richard Flecknoe's A Short Discourse of the English Stage (2:94-95, ed. Spingarn) says that actors are fortunate in having poets instruct them. And finally, John Downes says in Roscus Anglicanus (1708) that William Davenant instructed Betterton, after getting his instruction from John Lowen, a player who was instructed by Shakespeare (21, 24; "Actors and Theatres" 195-97). However, another actor, Joseph Taylor, is also said to have been instructed in a role by Shakespeare, though Taylor joined the company (possibly replacing Richard Burbage) three years after Shakespeare had died.

wonders if the visitor really understood what was happening" (3:113). Yet if Shakespeare as poet/author did "instruct" Burbage as actor, it would show how one theatrical art form would influence the other, Burbage enacting what Shakespeare envisioned.

While the probable arrangement for the Globe's play production was one of a cooperative ensemble among shareholders, the leadership of Shakespeare as resident dramatist and Burbage as lead player cannot be ignored. The lead clown or tragedian had traditionally headed a company and directed its players--as Edward Alleyn had done with several companies, and as the lead Player does in Hamlet. After nearly ten years together, Burbage and Shakespeare undoubtedly worked well in tandem--trained in large measure by previous experience with other companies and leading tragedians such as Alleyn.²¹ In dealing with scripts by writers other than Shakespeare, Burbage's stage sense would be invaluable. But as a constructor of plots and characters to enact them, Shakespeare's judgment in framing a moment or building a scene would be of inestimable benefit, especially with regard to his own plays.

The considerable talents of Burbage, who was regarded as the premier performer of his age,²² and the many

²¹ Alleyn, born in 1566, was two years younger than Shakespeare and about three years older than Burbage, whose date of birth is unknown (see Chambers 2:296).

²² It is Burbage whom Ratsey suggests is the finest performer in London (Ratseis Ghost B1). In Ben Jonson's

abilities of Shakespeare, dramatist, player, and director, were unique to the Globe players and explain why the company excelled. In a cooperative theatrical enterprise, two exceptional performers worked within a continuing ensemble where the talents of each member were used to the company's best advantage.

Conclusion: The Unique Globe Company and the Art of "Personation"

In all, the distinctions of the Chamberlain's Men from those of other playing companies points to a special working and artistic arrangement previously unseen in the era. That these elements came together about 1599 was fortuitous, yet simple economic success was not the sole reason, though it did give the requisite stability and personnel resources. Rather, the unique causative agent in this case is the

Bartholomew Fair (1614), Cokes, looking at the puppeteer's cloth actors, asks, "Which is your Burbage now? Your best actor" (5.3.90;92). Alleyn and Burbage were both praised as the finest performers of their day, though the style of their acting probably differed (see Chapter Four). The younger Burbage dominated the London stage after Alleyn's retirement in 1597 (he returned to playing a few years later). E. A. J. Honigmann suggests that Alleyn and Burbage played the two leading roles, John and the Bastard respectively, in Shakespeare's King John. Honigmann believes the play dates from 1590-91, rather than the more traditional date of 1594-95, and was performed by a combined company of the Admiral's Men, with Alleyn, and Strange's Men, with Burbage and Shakespeare. Honigmann observes, "why does the Bastard almost oust John from the centre of interest in the play?" It "may partly reflect the growing challenge of young Burbage to the theatrical supremacy of Alleyn" (New Arden "Introduction" lii ff.).

dramatist-in-residence as actor-sharer-director. No other company had such an arrangement, because no other company had the talents of a Shakespeare or his equivalent. At the end of the century, we can observe stylistic changes in Shakespeare's writing as well as personnel changes in his company players, both of which point to a new dramatic style of play on the Globe stage. A new term describes that style very well.

In 1599, John Marston wrote Antonio and Mellida for the Children of Paul's, a newly formed children's company. The play continued attacks on Ben Jonson begun in Histrionomastix--also of 1599 and partially written by Marston--as a vain, pompous writer of little worth. Both plays present a clearly defined character to life in a way that identified the person impersonated. When Jonson retaliated, the so-called "War of the Theatres" began. However, Marston coined a new word in describing this act of character definition, "personation," first used in the Induction to Antonio. Used several times in the next century, the word clearly singles out special abilities on behalf of the player. Heywood uses it in his Apology for Actors when he defends playing as a noble profession: it surpasses the orator's art by qualifying "euery thing according to the nature of the person personated" (qtd. in Bentley, The Seventeenth Century Stage 14). In "An Excellent Actor" (1615), an Overburian Character likely written by John Webster and modeled after Richard Burbage,

the writer says of the actor, "What we see him personate, we thinke truely done before vs" (qtd. by Chambers 4:258). The word was used to make an association between the arts of the orator and player in 1616: "as an Orator was most forcible in his elocution; so was an actor in his gesture and personated action" (T. G., The Rich Cabinet; qtd. by Gurr, Sh. S. 97). The Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, took offense at James Shirley's satire The Ball (1632) because the players made it too real: "ther were divers personated so naturally, both of Lords and others of the court, that I took it ill" (Adams, Herbert Papers 18-19). And Edmund Gayton's Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixote (1654) cites personation as the cause for the strain placed upon players, accounting for their strange, off-stage behavior (140-44; see McNeir 579).

We might use "personation" aptly to describe the new style that the Globe players used to supplement their previous modes of acting. A new drama begins with the tragedies, where interior feelings and emotional responses are reflected in a new unity of feeling and action, where action seemingly reveals emotion. Emotional thought and revelatory action are no longer merely described through the poetry but spring to life as the words are spoken--what Daniel Seltzer defined as a "descriptive" style giving way

to a "presentational" one ("Prince Hal and Tragic Style" 14-18).²³

In the early plays of Shakespeare his players evidently used a formal playing style where actors represented the passions with which they were endowed; soliloquies and asides described interior thought; and stylized movement, gesture, and speech predominated. Gradually, and especially culminating around 1599, a stronger inner life emerged in his characters for which no single gesture or appearance sufficed. The individual could no longer be explained or expressed by the sum of his actions. The player's style was often less formal and stylized because his character's outward show of passion was not necessarily indicative of a person's nature; soliloquies and asides were often introspective musings that required no specific action to bring them to life; movement, gesture, and speech were less mannered and more in concert with life off the stage. With the great tragedies, "personation" complemented the new art on Shakespeare's stage.

²³ For Seltzer this "emotional spontaneity" is seen in characters as early as Richard III and develops into a clearly indicated inner life by 1 Henry IV. While there are indications of changes in characterization as early as Richard III, and certainly in 1 Henry IV, the sustained style of play that translates into a distinctive form of play comes later.

Chapter Two: The Medieval Heritage

"he shall rise and play"

Glynne Wickham has said that "scholars have often deplored the paucity of information that survives to us about acting and production techniques in Elizabethan and Jacobean public playhouses; yet much, if not all, of this information still exists to be consulted within the surviving but neglected scripts of Moralities and Interludes" (Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage 40). Indeed, the earlier Tudor drama and the English mystery plays that celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi offer a remarkable amount of information about the player's art. Yet the ways that these plays reveal acting styles is principally by defining what the player's function is in the drama, that is, how he represents himself and his material.

By noting the ways in which the players' defined functions change over time, we are led to a clearer indication of performance styles in the Elizabethan theatre, especially on Shakespeare's stage, where a new style is added to the traditional player's available presentational forms, one that complements the new drama and uses the player to different purposes. To understand the several acting styles employed by Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's/King's Men, I propose to look at the idea of "game" and the player's changing presentation of game and

play upon the stage in both the mystery plays and Tudor moralities, and I will suggest that two forms of playing eventually emerged that were used by the professional London actor: a presentational and a conventional style. Because these styles were refinements of "stage games" played by professionals as early as the late fifteenth century, much of my interest is with their development and, in particular, the distinctions between the professional's game and that of the amateur's.

The terms "professional" and "amateur" are suggestive of a modern bias with regard to playing ability, but the distinction between the two was at one time largely a matter of appearance and not necessarily skill. Amateurs and professionals apparently coexisted throughout the Middle Ages.¹ The distinction between amateur and professional players is, John Wasson notes, "hopelessly obscured by

¹ The earliest reference to professional players may be during the reign of King John (1199-1216) when a "tumultuous Rout of Fiddlers, Players, Cobblers, debauched persons, both Men and Women" frightened away their Welsh attackers by the great clamor they caused (Records of Early English Drama: Chester, Laurence M. Clopper, ed., 487; qtd. by Wasson 2). Wasson records references to players, both professional and amateur, as early as the thirteenth century. In the city of Exeter, Bishop John de Grandisson complained of lewd and sacrilegious plays performed by amateurs "in theatro"; while in 1428-29, also in Exeter, amateurs performed before the mayor's doorway. "Open" performances, Wasson suggests, were largely those of amateurs (3; 5). Professionals appear to have performed in guildhalls, churches, and public buildings--but such records indicate the "best" of circumstances for an acting troupe, that is, their acceptance into a community to earn their livelihood.

confusion in the Latin terminology" whenever references to actors appear: lusores appears to have been reserved for amateurs, and a distinction between minstrels, mimes, and histriones is never clear (1). However, if we can distinguish their respective playing styles, we can see that the differences between amateur and professional playing, evident beginning with the mystery pageants, are responsible as well for the eventual players' strategies played on the Elizabethan stage.

1. The Players' Game

"Game," the admitted artificiality and make-believe of stage action, implies that there are accepted rules and boundaries that govern the interactions of players and spectators and that the activity is social, enjoyable, and often spiritually refreshing for its participants. John Skelton's Magnyfycence (c. 1520)² makes the purpose of game

² The plays chosen for this chapter from the mystery pageants and Tudor plays illustrate possible acting techniques, and therefore my examples are from a variety of sources. Although for the most part in chronological order, they are meant to illustrate types of game played before and after this amateur-professional discontinuity. The reader will find, I trust, that definition is more important than chronology. The editions for the moralities and interludes are by necessity many, and I list them here for convenience. The cycle plays (unless otherwise noted), Mankind, The Castle of Perseverance, Play of The Sacrament, Johan Johan, and Wit and Science are taken from Medieval Drama, ed. David Bevington, 1975. Hycke-Scorner, Nice Wanton, and Damon And Pithias are from John M. Manley's Specimens of The Pre-Shakespearean Drama, 2 vols., 1897; 1967 rpt. Jack Juggler, King Darius, and The Nature of the Four Elements are taken

explicit: "for though we shewe you this in game and play, / Yet it proueth eyrnest, ye may se, every day" (1948-49). V. A. Kolve termed this "serious game" (20), one that had purpose beyond temporary pleasure and had a restorative, recreational effect upon the viewer.

The seeming paradox of serious game, as Johan Huizinga pointed out in Homo Ludens, expressed for the Middle Ages "the two cardinal moods of life," which, as Erasmus noted in his Praise of Folly, were not contradictory (Huizinga 6). Skelton's Magnyfycence makes this point, as does The Castle of Perseverance: "Thus endith oure gamys. / To save you from sinninge, / Evyr at the beginnunge / Thinke on youre last endinge!" (3645-48). These dual moods are rooted in the Corpus Christi pageants as well, which were at once celebratory and instructional; as Kolve notes, once Church drama moved into the streets and greens it was in the realm of man's domain, where the message of God was revealed to the "unlettered and un-Latined" and redefined as game (19, 3).³

from Early English Dramatists: Anonymous Plays, ed. John S. Farmer, 1905-08; 1966 rpt. Lusty Juventus is edited by R. Dodsley, vol. 2, 1874. Wisdom Who Is Christ is from The Macro Plays, Furnivall and Pollard, eds., 1904. Magnyfycence is from Four Morality Plays, ed. Peter Happé, 1979. Enough Is as Good as a Feast and All For Money come from English Morality Plays and Moral Interludes, Edgar T. Schell and J. D. Shuchter, eds., 1969. Like wil to like is from Early English Dramatists, ed. John S. Farmer, 1906; 1966 rpt. Fulgens and Lucre is from English Moral Interludes, ed. Glynne Wickham, 1976.

³ This is not to suggest, however, that drama evolved from the church to the guildhall, inn, or marketplace, as suggested in the theories of Karl Young and Hardin Craig

For the medieval Christian, his physical, quotidian experiences confirmed what Anne Righter calls the "awesome immediacy" of the spiritual (16); games recreated truth and promise; as Mercy says in the Epilogue to Mankind, "Think and remembyr the world is but a vanite, / As it is provyd daly by d[i]verse transmutacion" (909-10). In contrast, the Elizabethan drama primarily uses game as a reflection of this life and not the next, and actors represent every man's predictable actions and pretenses that are set within the finite bounds of entrance and exit, birth and death.

Life as a game to be played is the dominant metaphor of the Elizabethan stage, as expressed by the motto borne on the Globe theatre: Totus mundus agit Histrionem ("The whole world plays an actor's part"), which we recognize as a widely held Renaissance concept in general and a theatrical conceit in particular. Equating the world with the stage, theatrum mundi, the English Renaissance dramatist depicted life as play (or game) that was presented by players. Not new of course with the Elizabethans, the trope had been used by Church Fathers and by the secular world of antiquity to suggest the tragicomedy of life.⁴ Ernst Curtius

(see below). Professional plays were frequently acted in the church, even after the Reformation: Leicester's Men and the Queen's players acted several times in churches. About 1600 it appears that actors were no longer allowed to play in churches; from about 1575 until that date, all references to performances in churches disappear (Wasson 7-8; and see Bevington, From "Mankind" to Marlowe 12).

⁴ Democritus says in Plato's Philebus, "The World's a stage, life a play."

distinguished between the ethoi of Christian and pagan by comparing two contemporaries. Augustine looked beyond this life:

Here on earth it is as if children should say to their parents: come! think of departing hence; we too would play our comedy! For nought but a comedy of the race of man is all this life, which leads from temptation to temptation. (Expositions of the Psalms 127)

His Egyptian contemporary Palladas phrased the metaphor somewhat differently: "All life is a stage and a game: either learn to play it laying by seriousness, or bear its pains" (Anthology X: 721; both qtd. by Curtius 138).

The latter epigram seems remarkably similar to the Globe motto in concept and sentiment. So too Jacques' melancholic speech in As You Like It, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players" (2.7.139 ff.), is a secular statement of the brevity of life and the universality of its experiences. We recognize a conceptual similarity in Shakespeare's theatrical game with that of Palladas: "laying by seriousness" for some two hours' traffic was more Shakespeare's interest than administering to man's spiritual needs.⁵

⁵ Shakespeare's trope is theatrum mundi, where life is part of a worldly and universal whole; yet he invests the metaphor with freshness. Jacques' speech comes in response to Duke Senior's statement that "This wide and universal theatre / Presents more woeful pageants than the scene / Wherein we play in" (2.7.146-48). By reminding his audience of the game played before them, Shakespeare further limits his attention to the particular even as he writes of the

That we now view the medieval and Renaissance dramatic periods as discontinuous is, in a way, unfortunate. What is lost in the idea of discontinuity is the evolution of the stage player, who adapted himself to the necessities of dramatic material with abilities that were continually refined, from local performer to itinerant entertainer to London professional. That there is no clear line of evolution in the types of dramatic demands made on the players' skills may be true; nor do we need to insist on one to see a continuity in the actor's art. Rather, the changing idea of game and its presentation allows for a dramatic line that remains essentially unbroken from medieval to Elizabethan stage.

David Bevington has suggested two major discontinuities in medieval acting, an amateur/professional split and the religious/secular division of plays ("Discontinuities in Medieval Acting Traditions"). Yet the relevance of these divisions is the different symbiotic relationships between player and game, which changed with the needs of the one or the other and led to divergent types of games and acting. The most important distinction we can make in the earlier tradition of the pageants and conversion plays is that between, on the one hand, an acknowledged style of play and, on the other, a presentational style. The acknowledged

universal, checking seriousness at every turn--even those plays concerned with the difficulty, predictability, and shortness of life.

style was didactic, presenting spiritual truth through the player, whereas the presentational style was entertainment, reflecting the world about the actor. These differences emphasize how deviations in the purposes and styles of playing took place.

What distinguished the medieval player from his Renaissance counterpart was a difference in the purpose of his game and play. If we look at the players' changing presentation of game and play upon the stage in both the mystery plays and Tudor moralities, we find that game offers a context for dramatic expression, in form and presentation as well. Game tells us much about how plays were acted, principally by defining what the player's function was in the drama, that is, the ways he represented himself and his material. And because these playing styles were refinements of stage games played by professionals as early as the late fifteenth century, their development involves the distinctions between the professional's game and that of the amateur's.

The differences between Shakespeare's game and the game of the pageants or moralities is considerable, and how these games are dissimilar and the ways that players present them is important for an understanding of acting styles in both eras. However, the similarities that exist between the medieval and Elizabethan player are also important, though today similarities in the two traditions are deemphasized, because continuity from the miracle cycles to the London

stage implies evolved development or natural transition from "primitive" to sophisticated form. Thus recent scholarship has rejected the idea of Darwinian development in order to dispel prejudices that the earlier drama was merely a naive, immature progenitor of the Elizabethan theatre.

2. The Acknowledged Game

The players in the Corpus Christi pageants never meant to deceive their viewers; rather, the recognizable settings of daily life and familiar faces of the community made God's plan of creation easier to understand and to appreciate, putting divine ideas within the ken of man's capacities. With the close proximity between audiences and players, the "reality" of God's eternal truth was reinforced in the face of man's brief, illusory life. Entertainment made the message attractive and more easily grasped by a community.⁶ Although the miracle plays could be paradoxically coarse, bawdy, and earthy in their presentation of themes meant ultimately to be spiritual, the seriousness of the players'

⁶ In the Banns for N Town, Primus Vexillator announces that first, the plays are for the glory of God, and second: "For we purpose us peertly [openly] style in this prese, / The pepyl to plesse with plays ful glad." Yet in acknowledging the pleasure that the plays gave, not all were convinced of their goodness, as the Wycliffite tract Treatise on Miraclis Pleyinge (c. 1400; in John E. Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1926) makes clear, for it objected to playing because of its pretenses, illusionistic lies, and appeal to the senses, a physical rather than spiritual response (see Olson 153).

presentations was the purpose behind their game, and pageants such as Wakefield's Creation and the Fall of the Angels and The Slaughter of the Innocents from N Town were quick to acknowledge that instructional purpose. John Mirk had noted in a fifteenth-century sermon that the "sygt of ymages and payntours" were beneficial and necessary in Holy Church (Kolve 5). As participants in play, viewers were presented with living symbols and pictures, which asked them to see the truth within the outward form, much as their imaginations saw the blood and body of Christ within the wine and host. Thus the literal God made common man an active participant in the mysteries of his own salvation; he, in turn, used game to acknowledge and to celebrate that understanding.

J. W. Robinson sees two modes of play in use in the miracle and conversion plays, a formal style mixed with an occasional "naturalistic" one. To indicate the simple, demonstrative formal style, Le Mystère d'Adam, a twelfth-century Anglo-Norman play, is often used because of its richly detailed directions:

And let Adam himself be well instructed when he must reply, lest in replying he be either too quick or too slow. Let not only Adam, but all the persons be so instructed that they shall speak coherently, and make gestures agreeing with the thing they are speaking of; [for by action the body talks, so that it is all the more necessary to make it agree with the thought, Cicero, De Oratore, III, 222] and to the metre of the verse let them neither add nor subtract a syllable, but let them pronounce every thing clearly; and let

those things that are to be said be said in their due order. (Qtd. by Robinson 86)

The stage instructions reinforce the intention of Le Mystère. In content, the miracle dramas were episodic narratives that sought to reveal God's history, and what was shown on stage was an unquestioned truth. Moreover, by interpreting the action the spectator was an active participant in the game, and players indicated, pointed out, and reminded them of accomplished facts; what we understand as "formal" or "demonstrative" is descriptive of an acting style that reflects the content and purpose of its dramatic material. What Robinson refers to as aspects of "naturalism" I prefer to describe as "associative realism," the likenesses of commonplace events, situations, or recognizable behavior by which a viewer could identify with the frailties and possibilities inherent in mankind, as they were circumscribed by religious doctrine.

Pageant plays balanced the ordinary with the extraordinary. For example, in the Wakefield cycle realistic, everyday touches, such as Noah's arguments with his wife, the parsimony of the evil Herod, or the brutal yet childish behavior of Christ's tormentors, serve to make cosmic events more applicable to the ordinary life of the spectator. Christ's agony, perhaps Abel's death in the pageants, and Jonathas' hand torn from his arm in the conversion play Play of the Sacrament (mid-fifteenth century) are other moments that remind one of the

potentially personal relevance and seriousness of the game. Associative realism reinforced the immediacy of "stage truth," because the player was primarily a conduit and presenter for, as Anne Richter says, "an audience accustomed to regard its drama as the reaccomplishment rather than the imitation of an action" (17). In other words, the spiritual meanings inherent within the narratives were confirmed with each re-enactment, much as the Mass reaccomplished a sacred act.

Although a player who presented Christ on the cross or Jonathas without his hand would obviously need the aid of illusion, the language used to describe the player's work shows that he never thought of it as such. Illusion is the conscious attempt at presenting a reality where none exists and thus is reliant upon a technique of deception. This deception was--at least in the intention that informed the miracle plays, however momentary--a reflection of a deceptive world, a part of man's experiences rather than God's history. In Christ's Death and Burial from York, for example, the character Jesus speaks a fusion of Christ's parables, his actual last words, and paraphrases of both in portraying the idea of Christ's agony from the cross rather than using the language to emphasize his physical suffering.

Manne, kaste thee thy kindnesse by kende,⁷
 Trewe tente [attention] unto me that thou take,
 And treste [trust].
 For, foxis ther dennys have they,
 Birdis hase ther nestis to paye,
 But the sone of man this daye
 Hase noght on his heed for to reste. (189-95)

So too, Jonathas' language in Sacrament suggests an emphasis on the meaning of the event as opposed to how it was achieved. After Jonathas seizes the host, which clings to his hand, the stage direction reads, "Here shall thay pluke the arme, and the hand shall hang still with the sacrament his hand." As the four Jews go off to consider what has happened, Jonathas says

I must enduer!
 Now hastely to owr chamber lete us gon,
 Till I may get me sum recuer [recovery].
 And therfor I charge yow every-choon
 That it be counsell, that we have doon.
 (520-24)

Their attempts at desecrating the host, the body and blood of Christ, by laying hands on it, nailing it to a post, and burning it in an oven are unsuccessful. The host endures, representative of Christ's trial, agony, and victory over death. When Jesus appears before them, Jonathas acknowledges him as Lord:

O thou Lord, whiche art my defendowr,
 For dred of thee I trymble and quake!
 Of thy gret mercy lett us receive the showre;

⁷ Bevington glosses this line, "Man, think upon your feelings of kindred held by natural affection, in order to pay true attention and trust unto me."

And mekely I aske mercy, amendys to make.
(742-45)

The many stage "illusions"--the hand clinging to the host, the blood released from the host, the oven breaking apart--have symbolic significance. Jonathas' contrition washes his heart and restores his missing hand, indicating the "healing" process that he has undergone: "thou hast sent me lighting that late was lame" (791). This is not to suggest that these scenes were not realistically portrayed but that their "truth" lay more in the intended meaning of the scene rather than in illusionistic presentation.

What we see in the acknowledged game is truth rendered by and within the illusion of our physical existence; realism was less an acting technique as an indication of a serious game, which is why acting terms such as "formal" and "natural" are not only out of place but misleading. To describe this reenactment as "naturalistic" is, I believe, a mistake; after all, a nineteenth-century term is anachronistic in this instance. Yet this is not to deny the emotional force of its rendering nor to detract from the impression received from its perception.

Whether roaring as Herod, Pilate, or Satan, or using recognizable behavior to enact Noah, Joseph, or the disheartened Apostles, these different emotional patterns were probably fused into a single style of broad presentation, which included occasional graphic realism, rather than a conscious attempt at different playing.

Instead of "naturalistic" aspects of performance style, a player's acting conveyed a greater "truth" than what stage realism might suggest. More likely, an associative realism existed in the truth of the situation, that is, in the familiarity of the comedy or pathos of the event. Realism and stylization were inseparable, essential elements within the player's acknowledged stage action. Thus the literal and emblematic were complementary means to convey established truths; as Bevington says, "'realistic' and emblematic interpretations reinforce one another" in these plays (Medieval Drama 290).

3. Differences in an Acknowledged and Presentational Style

I have avoided the terms "amateur" and "professional" for the most part because of the connotations those words have for us today. Nevertheless the question of what constituted a "professional" must briefly be addressed. The acknowledged game rendered the pageant plays as living icons--literally as tableau vivants in the oldest Corpus Christi processions--acted by players known to their community, a powerful check against illusion. Players were paid for performances as early as 1451 in York; in 1461 and 1462, eighteen shillings was apparently the standard fee paid by the Mercers (Johnston and Dorrell 12-13). These payments appear to be more for expenses than professional

skills. Additional entries in the York civic records reveal that money was also paid for "drynke to ye players," "ye playris super," and in 1463, what ironically anticipates the Puritan objections to games and playing in Shakespeare's day, four pence was spent for "kakkys & alle" at a first rehearsal.

In the York City Archives (House Books) for 1476, instructions are given for locating the best talent in the city, as well as restricting the number of pageants any one player might perform in:

yerely in the tyme of lentyn there shall be called afore the Maire for the tyme beyng iiij of the moste con[n]nyng discrete and able player[es] within this Citie to serche here and examen all the plaiers and plaies [and] pagent[es] throughtoute all ye artificer[es] belonging to corpus ch[risti] Plaie And all suche as ay shall fynd sufficient in p[er]sonne and Co[n]nyng to hono[ur] of the Citie and Worship of the side Craftes for to admitte and able and all oth[er] insufficient p[er]sonnes either in Co[n]nyng voice or p[er]sonne to discharge a[m]move and avoide

And that no plaier that shall plaie in ye saide Corpus ch[risti] plaie be co[n]ducte and Reteyned to plaie but twise on the day of the saide day. (REED 109)

Perhaps regular professional performers were actively involved in the York miracles by this time, but to what extent scholarship has yet to agree. Robinson believes that those "discrete and able players" were professionals, attached to noble households and hired to select the best

local talent (88).⁸ This suggests that York had by this time enough self-consciousness to care as much about how the performance appeared as what it represented. Supporting this idea is a somewhat later record from Beverly in 1520, where a man was fined for his poor play and a guild called to account for bringing contempt upon itself and the town "before so many strangers" (qtd. by Tydeman 183).

In York, those responsible for selecting players may have merely sought a high level of quality no different from any other year, for poor or embarrassing playing would call as much attention to a performer as extravagant or self-conscious acting would. The puzzler in the York entry is the injunction against hiring more than a single player for more than two pageants, and there has been much disagreement

⁸ Wickham has suggested that professionalism in acting "grew up at Court and worked its way outwards into society" (The Medieval Theatre 194), and medieval entertainers, like their Elizabethan counterparts, would be fortunate to secure patronage. However, while we may suppose that those performers attached to noble households were the finest of jugglers, tumblers, mimes, etc., their skills were by no means unique. Travelling performers merely extended many of the activities found in folk ludi--dancing, miming, etc.--attracting a crowd by means of their parade: a preliminary pitch wherein they bragged about their abilities (Chambers 1:85). But the Church, opposed to the ludi of professional minstrels, also objected to many folk games, which had pagan origins. Thus the Church regulated and even directed village activities in ways that made them acceptable. If Robinson's speculation concerning these "discrete and able players" is correct, it is another indication that the serious games of the pageants were incorporating what Chambers called the spectacula of the minstrels (1:93). Chambers also noted Jusserand's observation that Herodias dancing before Herod is often depicted as tumbling or standing on her head in medieval miniatures (1:71).

as to what it means. Margaret Dorrell has conjectured that it prevented delay in pageants due to actors running from one wagon to another;⁹ but the injunction seems aimed rather at protecting the City from a possible dilemma. An actor playing roles in different pageants would undoubtedly hold up processional wagons, as Dorrell suggests (at York, at least 24 to 27 Christs would be required for the cycle). What the City may have tried to prevent, however, was the unfamiliar face of the professional actor from outside the community that would bring some degree of illusion to the cycles. Perhaps the York injunction was an effort by the City at maintaining control over their own pageants, even as flourishing trade guilds and commerce initiated a change in the concern, preparation, and performance of its plays. Given the popularity of the plays and their inevitable expansion to accommodate the expectations of enormous crowds, a change in the game's purpose, by player and viewer alike, was inevitable. A small town like Beverly may have been forced to hire players merely to mount a respectable number of pageants and to encourage people, who spent money

⁹ Martin Stevens disagrees, speculating instead that a familiar face appearing in successive pageants would blur dramatic illusion, which suggests that the underlying concept of actor as selfless, reflective instrument of God had changed to self-reflexive artist. But if, as Stevens offers, the pageants were played in one place, would it not be of benefit to suggest an illusion by continuity in character? Stevens' "The York Cycle: From Procession to Play" was written in 1972. In a conversation with him in May, 1988, he told me that he no longer believes there were two separate events.

in their town, to return. Small towns may have exchanged extravagance in costuming and staging for a reputation in excellent acting; even the idea of "players"¹⁰ would conjure up an image of street entertainer as holiday attraction, as colorful banners and decorative pageant wagons festively announced the actors' arrival.

The blurring of the players' professional/amateur distinctions in the eyes of the viewer is important because of expectations about styles of performance. Stage illusion was perhaps inevitable because, as the community-centered celebrations grew in size,¹¹ people from other towns would

¹⁰ The Oxford English Dictionary indicates that the English word "player" pertained to juggler or acrobat as early as 1430 and stage "Enterluder" from about 1463, though the term was probably in use as a designate of "actor" even earlier than this. A "player" was one who took part in a game, such as a Mummers Play, which served the commercial interests of performers and community alike. Wickham notes several expenses listed by the Churchwardens of East Harling in Essex, among them

1463 Item, in expenses, when Keningale Game came to town at Wrights vj^d.

1467 Bread and ale to the Keningale Players.

He speculates that these visiting players were a means toward raising funds for a community, as well as a social honor for their own village (The Medieval Theatre 146). Prior to 1430, designations for professional or amateur players are recorded in Latin as ludores, histriones, or ministralles. See above pp. 33-34.

¹¹ Going through a number of changes since their inception, the pageants of the late fifteenth century were spectacles that had outgrown even large commercial centers such as York. Briefly, the feast of Corpus Christi was implemented by Clement V in 1311, confirming from nearly one hundred years earlier the papal bull that asserted Christ's real presence in the mass, the dogma of transubstantiation. The celebration was to fall, depending on Easter Sunday, between May 23 and June 24--June 4 to July 6 on a modern

not recognize the players as familiar tradesmen presenting God's truth but as actors who performed a game, if still serious in its intentions. In the secular realm of man's games, jugglers, acrobats, or street entertainers were readily identified as performers, who promised diverse entertainments for their viewers. By identifiable dress or displays of skills, their outward appearance called attention to their own particular games and audiences anticipated what the player represented. More than money, it was the recognition of a player as such that constituted a distinct professional status. Amateur players had received some form of pay for years, as the York records indicate, but they had no need to call attention to their own abilities, because through the acting of religious plays they offered the eternal verity and reality of God's order. But in his own entertainments, the professional was representative of himself; reflecting the world about him, his ludens vitae were played in the sensual realm of man. Distinct from the acknowledgement and the reaccomplishment of sacred history, his playing was primarily as a self-reflexive performer rather than as a conduit to God.

calendar (Bevington, Medieval Drama 230). In the late fourteenth century, as Bevington notes, the trade guilds were flourishing and the civic nature of the religious pageants held great appeal for them (234). One hundred years later that appeal must have been considerable, if not primary. The York records indicate the growing sophistication of preparation and concern for their pageants, which had twelve acting stations in 1417 and sixteen in 1554 (see Bevington 238).

At their most impressive, the Corpus Christi pageants were probably acted by the finest performers available, whether local guild member or strolling street entertainer; but, while a difference in dramatic form was subtle, the manner of presentation underwent considerable change.¹²

¹² With regard to dramatic form, it may be that the plays of the "Wakefield Master," to name but one example, reflect a change in attitude toward the presentational form of the miracles. His more realistic approach may be due to a new concept of game and how it was played. Yet the writer of plays such as "The Killing of Abel" balances dramatic techniques that are both old and new. The pageant opens with a familiar device. Cain's boy, Garcio, opens the pageant with direct audience address, setting the action and preparing the spectators for his master's entrance. Cain's rough, blustering manner and colloquial farm language, however, make him far more interesting than the usual sinful villain of the cycles. Moreover, we may assume that his representation of a farmer working with plough horses and crops lent a realism to a play set before an audience familiar with such things. Cain's ability at the moment of the murder to intimidate his audience is particularly notable in suggesting a "realistic" performance style:

(to Abel) Yei, lie ther, old shrew! lie there, lie!
 (to audience) And if any of you think I did amis,
 I shal it amend wars then it is,
 That all men may it se.
 (after a probable pause)
 Well wars then it is,
 Right so shall it be.

Similar "realism" found in other Corpus Christi cycles may indicate the degree to which social influences such as commerce were able to affect the drama. York especially gives evidence of changes in its celebration due to a growing sophistication in concern and preparation.

4. The Presentational Game

The importance of physical appearance in determining the form that a game might take can be seen in Henry Medwall's Fulgens and Lucres (1497), a Humanist interlude where outward form is indicative of birth and ability, preeminent concerns for society and secular equivalents to salvation. The servants A and B confuse the expectations that appearance gives, and their comments anticipate the splendor that would mark the stage player, to the great irritation of his Puritan detractors, years later in Elizabethan London:

- A. I thought verely by your apparell
That ye had bene a player.
- B. Nay, never a dell!
- A. Than I cry you mercy,
I was to blame; lo, therfor I say,
Ther is so moche nyce array
Amonges these galandis now aday
That a man shall not lightly
Know a player from a nothr man. (I:50-57)

The suggestion that gallants and stage players may be indistinguishable indicates in two ways the evolution that game was undergoing: first, the world and stage were identified as compatible, in appearance at least; second, and more important, the denial of being a player, coming as it does from an actor, offers a second perspective to the presentation of game that is self-consciously ironic rather than serious.

Fulgens and Lucre represents but one of many diverse dramatic forms that existed in the latter half of the fifteenth century that the professional player acted in, wherever he could make a living. Two very different morality plays further illustrate the changes that game was to undergo. "Player" as a designation for one who performs or takes part in a dramatic game, first appears in 1430 at Lynn (see Wasson 3) and again in 1463 in an act of Parliament (O.E.D.). At about the same time as the latter date, the street-show morality Mankind was acted by six itinerant performers who passed the hat at a critical moment in the play: "Now gostly [devoutly] to ovr purpos, worschipfull soverence, / We intende to gather mony, if it plesse yowr necligence" (459-60). The money assures a visit by the devil Titivillus and a promise that the game will not end. The Castle of Perseverance also travelled and depended on contributions to sustain itself; like Mankind, it too was an acknowledged game. Mankind's soul lies beneath the castle that figuratively represents the assaults that humans are prey to in this world for three thousand lines until the stage plan says "he shall rise and play," a direction that captures the play's dual intention of pleasure and instruction.

But the play and game of the two moralities are farther apart than the forty years suggest. The Castle of Perseverance was serious game, though filled with humor and entertainment, while Mankind, in spite of its ostensibly

serious intentions, used broad scatological humor to entertain its audience and was in every way simpler and more profane than other moralities or the pageants of Corpus Christi. In both plays professionals performed, but the players' actions in Mankind are meant to reflect their abilities; indeed, the play seems constructed from the players' perspective in order to give their talents a favorable vehicle. Moreover, because the intentions are different, the presentational, self-reflexive game played in Mankind differs from the acknowledged game found in Castle. From such troupes as those who performed Mankind, Bevington notes, eventually come the inn-yard London companies (Medieval Stage 901).

Professionals and amateurs played alongside one another until the forced closing of the pageants initiated in the mid-sixteenth century.¹³ The game had long since been changed, however, by street theatre and indoor plays which offered players the opportunities to refine their techniques through repeated use and adaptation to their settings. Moralities like The Castle of Perseverance, or even the miracle plays, were largely fixed in content and thus,

¹³ See H. C. Gardiner's Mysteries' End, Yale UP, 1946, and Chapter Two, "The Suppression of the Mystery Cycles," in The Revels History of Drama in English, vol. 2, ed. Norman Sanders, et. al., for a brief overview: "Between 1569 and 1580 the four major English cycles were put down by the intervention of some power or other" (10).

perhaps, to a great extent style as well.¹⁴ Christ's Baptism in N Town (1475) has a direction that says, "Here Jesus comes towards John. Seeing Him, and pointing to Jesus with his finger, let John say, 'Behold, the lamb of God'," an action that reflects the stately tenor of the play's presentational purpose. Yet in a play like Mankind, with its physical humor and music, it is hard to imagine such a demonstrative direction having any place--not only is the material less dignified, but Mankind is a game at home in the streets and marketplace.¹⁵

In a dramatic form that narrowed its focus from cosmic history to mankind's spiritual journey, the moralities

¹⁴ This is not true in every case. An especially effective drama, the Passion from N Town depicts the cosmic dimensions of Christ's suffering; the extraordinary circumstances are aided by the ordinary realism of noise, chaos, and private meditation. Although all the pageants are effective theatre, the dramatic style of the Passion--and perhaps its playing style--is noticeably different from the accompanying plays in the cycle.

¹⁵ Which is to say that the game considered its spectators as fellow players, with the playing styles possibly reflecting more realistic, everyday behavior. Mankind's appeal may have included a wide audience, but its humor and moral lessons were particularly directed toward the simple, earthy people of rural communities who understood hard work and recognized rogues, such as those who tempt Mankind, for what they were. The openly commercial quality of the play, moreover, appears to be consistent with the purpose of the marketplace as a site to exhibit and profit from one's labors. Later moralities too, like Fulwel's Like wil to like quod the Devel to the Colier, have presentational qualities that reflect the nature of their audience. In Fulwel's play, the marketplace and village society are backdrops for its farcical action. The troupes that played such games as Mankind and Like wil to like had to be adaptable, given the variety and uncertainty of professional playing.

depicted man as the focus of his own game--what Curtius referred to as scena vitae--even when presented amidst an abstract, allegorical form. Since the late fifteenth century the predominant game was one that presented players as craftsmen, not God's emissaries. That is not to say they were no longer God's instruments but that the twofold nature of game was fixed firmly in man's domain, growing ever more disparate in its duality: still instructive and personal, the game became ever more entertaining.

Perhaps encouraged by the particular skills of the player during the economic expansions and dislocations of the sixteenth century, the need and the opportunity for recreation became the justification for increasingly secular plays and interludes. As the prologue to Jack Juggler (anon., c. 1560) says:

he [Cato the wise] doth al men advise
And they may be Englished briefly in this wise:
Among thy careful business use sometime mirth and
joy,
That no bodily work thy wits break or 'noy.
For the mind (saith he), in serious matters
occupied,
If it have not some quiet mirth and recreation.

.

...as I savyed you, so save I all¹⁶
That in like jeoperdy chance to fall.
When Tediousnes to grownd hath smitten them,
Honest Recreation up doth qui[c]ken them

¹⁶ The echo of Jesus in the miracle plays, especially the Wakefield Resurrection (cf. ll. 310 ff.), lends greater authority to this "secular" morality and further emphasizes the importance and virtue of recreation.

With such honest pastimes, sportes, or games.
(385-90; 95-99)

The player as entertainer is most apparent in the dancing, singing, and knockabout--purportedly symbolic of mischief and temptation--that are prominent in the farces and moralities of the sixteenth century. In The Nature of the Four Elements (c. 1510), Ignorance uses song and dance to test Humanity; the Devil enters singing and dancing in Lusty Juventus (c. 1550); in A Morality of Wisdom Who is Christ (late fifteenth century; also known as Mind, Will, and Understanding) evil creatures corrupt all they touch by dancing the Devil's dance; and in Like wil to like quod the Devel to the Colier (Ulpian Fulwel; 1568), Nichol Newfangle and the Devil dance together "as evil favoured as may be devised," says the stage direction.¹⁷ What dance suggested is best indicated by Nought's invitation for Mercy to join his foolishness with New-Guise and Nowadays in Mankind: "Anon, off with yowr clothes, if ye will play"; but Mercy refuses: "Nay, brother, I will not daunce" (1:88, 90).

¹⁷ Dance may have been used in the miracle plays too, but for different purposes. In Doomsday, the last pageant of the N Town miracles, the Animae damnandum cry out "Ah! mercy! / We rub we rave," which R. T. Davies glosses as "we fret, wring our hands, go frantic." While the three devils lead the souls of the damned out of their graves, perhaps something like the "dance of death" took place, where the frantic actions of the damned were grotesquely set to music and dance, as the doomed souls, linked together in a chain, were led off to punishment. Herod too may have been led off in a mockery of death's dance in Slaughter of the Innocents: Diabolus takes him saying, "I shall you bear forth with me, / And show you sportes of glee."

Music too was indicative of riotous behavior. Whereas a symbol of divine order in the cycles--whether drinking song or Magnificat (Rastall 115)--in the moralities it often signaled disorder and was closely allied to Pleasure, Folly, and their namesake, Youth, as in Lusty Juventus' entrance song:

In a herber green, asleep whereas I lay,
The birds sang sweet in the middes of the day;
I dreamed fast of mirth and play:
In youth is pleasure, in youth is pleasure.

Knockabout too is prominent in the moralities and especially Tudor farces, offering excellent opportunity for actors to demonstrate their tumbling and acrobatic skills. In the instructional though festive play Wit and Science (John Redford; 1530-48), Tediousness, a basher of brains, enters helmeted and armed with his club to "have at" Wit. After several blows Wit succumbs and dies, only to be resurrected by Honest Recreation. In the following scene it is the ladies' turn for rough and tumble, as Honest Recreation and Idlenes get into a nasty argument that threatens to turn violent, which the delighted Wit encourages: "There, go to! Lo now, for the best game!" (341).¹⁸

¹⁸ An example of knockabout of a different sort is found in Medwall's Fulgens and Lucres. As nameless servants called A and B engage in mock warfare for the love of the lass Jone, B warns: "With boyes game thou mayst not be gyn" (1:1108). While the entertainment is not a boy's game (as the brutal clubbing of Wit was when ironically first performed by children), the parodic tournament, though never threatening to either, symbolically represents a darker

5. The Conventional Game

Besides straightforward entertainment, there is an effort to merge presentational skills with dramatic form in the moralities, which, given the physical limitations of the stage and the demands of dramatic material, required performance techniques that relied on frequent uses of illusion. For example, stage directions often indicate the necessary attempts at make-believe required of the actors, as in Nice Wanton (1560), where Baily (Iniquity) tries to corrupt the judge, Daniel, yet also to taint his honor by being overheard in a supposedly private bribe: "He tellet[h] hym in hy[s] eare, that a[ll] may heare" (353). In Magnyfycence, after Poverty relieves Magnyfycence of all his possessions, the direction reads "Here Magnyfycence dolorously maketh his mone" (2047). And in Enough is as Good as a Feast (c. 1560-70), the Physician is instructed to "Be busy and daw [rouse] him as though he were dying" when tending Worldly Man (1348).

There does not appear to be a consistent, chronological change in the dramatic structure or playing techniques of

confrontation of aristocratic honor beyond the gamesmanship of two foolish servants (much as Romeo and Juliet would). While the sport within their game demonstrated their physical abilities, it also appealed to an audience familiar with the pageantry, honor, and martial arts of the medieval tournament. The general lack of naïveté and innocence usually found in the comic characters of the miracles is notable; as professional players, A and B play a game that is realistic and serious, drawing on a familiar tradition that could be appreciated and understood for what it was.

the morality plays, rather a continuous working out of dramatic form according to the exigencies of each play. Wickham suggested that these actors would never create their own styles of play since their livelihood was at stake. Rather, they would follow the lead of those who had preceded them, thus giving the audience what it expected (Early English Stages 1:258 ff.) What worked with an audience, however, was obviously contingent on the player's and the dramatist's skill at presenting a unified, dramatic whole, and stage technique would go through several evolutions in various stages of development.¹⁹

Alan Downer observed the early attempts in Tudor drama to justify and rationalize behavior, such as Courage's soliloquy in The Tide Tarrieth No Man (1576), spoken by a man "reasoning with himself," and a direction that asides in Cruel Debtor be "spoken among yourselves a good way off" ("The Tudor Actor" 78). But there are far earlier attempts to work out problems of direct address and the limitations of the presentational stage, as in A Mery Play Betwene Johan Johan The Husbande, Tib His Wife, And Sir Johan The Preest (1520-33; John Heywood [?]), a farce with no other purpose than to entertain. Direct audience address, asides, and soliloquies meant to represent private thoughts are used

¹⁹ Clearer lines of development are easier to see in the Elizabethan/Jacobean plays, where there is more evidence, and sophisticated dramatic and playing styles had established traditions upon which to build.

almost simultaneously in rondo by three actors, which, because of the play's efforts at believability, require all the make-believe viewers can muster. Johan acknowledges the audience--"God spede you, maysters, everychone!"--but then appears to debate with himself in half exposition and half soliloquy until more than one hundred lines have passed and Tib enters. Tib and Johan, in their mutual contempt for one another, speak asides that reveal their inner thoughts, and an attempt is made to justify these asides as words too inaudible to quite make out: "What say'st thou?"; "What is that that thou hast saide?" (131; 238). Unintelligible for the other player, these asides are meant for fun, much as the audience feels privy to information withheld from the stage actors in Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors or Twelfth Night.

Stage techniques in Johan Johan suggest an attempt at a literalness that was eventually abandoned for a set form, or "convention": a shorthand action that was a substitute for reality and accepted in its stylization by the player and spectator alike.²⁰ Owing to an increasingly sophisticated game that required a more organized form of play, the conventional game allowed for play that was free from attempts to justify all action and removed the physical

²⁰ See R. A. Foakes, "The Player's Passion," Essays And Studies n.s. 7 (1954): 62-77: "To call something a convention is to say that it is a shorthand form which stands for reality, or a norm abstracted from reality" (66).

limitations that believability imposed, becoming the second style along with presentational game that players used on their stages.

Richard Edwards' "tragical comedy" Damon And Pithias (1564?) illustrates the conventional game in its use of soliloquies and asides: stage techniques rely on the accepted games of viewers and players alike. Asides are plentiful and an integral part of dramatic structure. Although no attempt is made to "justify" his private meditations, the soliloquies of Aristippus describe action off-stage, reveal his own thoughts, and further stage action (ll. 466 ff.; 646 ff.; 1008 ff.). Serving a secular rather than spiritually instructive purpose, however, his direct address offered at the play's beginning is a familiar dramatic preamble found in many morality and mystery plays--as in The Castle of Perseverance, Mankind, or Wakefield's The Creation and the Fall of the Angels.

As with dramatic structure, changes in presentational styles appear to follow no clear chronology; rather, the game's purpose seems to have influenced stagecraft technique. T. Lupton's All For Money (1577), for example, is a late morality that didactically presses its point about the dangers of wealth, avoiding a conventional game by means of explanatory dialogue attached to every character's entrance--Art: "My name is called Art, wherein is used much vice" (58)--and frequently their exits--Adulation: "I have ever to you, Pleasure, born such love / That to depart with

you my heart doth me move" (250-51). Exits in the play, as Schell and Shuchter observe, are usually for the purpose of clearing the stage or preparing for the following scene rather than motivated by the plot (ll. 311, n. 12).

In fairness, Lupton's play cannot be called "unsophisticated," since his attempt at dramatic perspective is innovative--the same moral lesson, the corruptible power of money, is depicted four different ways. Yet the serious intention of the game predominates over its presentation; the relationship between audience and play is different from that of Damon and Pithias, for instance. Hicke-Scorner (anon., c. 1530), an older morality that attempts to replace dramatic activity with narrative variety, also sidesteps the need for conventions in its serious game, making an apparent effort to overcome stage limitations by means of callow technique and straightforward presentation:

Pity:	I thank God that we be met together.
Contemplation:	Sir, I trust that Perseverance shortly will come hither.
Pity:	Then I think to hear some good tiding.
Contemplation:	I warrant you, brother, that he is coming.

[Enter Perseverance]

Much as the pageants had been organized narratives and ensemble presentations of divine history, in like manner the moralities sought an organized, workable dramatic structure. Moreover, that scheme had to make allowances for the entertainment capabilities of the player, affording him the

opportunity to represent himself as player-actor even as he was the representative, allegorical medium for the serious game he played in.

6. Two Games, Two Acting Styles Emerge:

Conventional and Presentational

Both traditions--the presentational game and the conventional game--evolved to the player's advantage. We may recognize the entertainment arts particularly as staples of the clown's routines on the Elizabethan stage, where his presentational game at times complemented, more often brought to a halt, the more dominant conventional one, in which poetry, ensemble playing, and established set-forms replaced and stood for a familiar, realism of everyday life.²¹ The necessity for doubling was another subsequent

²¹ The Vice was the lead performer of the moralities, playing both outside and within dramatic structure, depending on his entertainment abilities and the requirements of a plot. Just as the character Herod in the miracle plays gave the excited amateur a chance to overact, so too the Vice was loud, devious, and always the center of attention. While devils left little room for character development because of their fixed, religious significance, the Vice was a protean deceiver who lulled people into pleasure and sin. His character, whether comedic or serious, was often the choice part in any performance. With increasingly sophisticated characterizations, the Vice declined in popularity toward the end of the century, to be replaced by the tragedian and clown and their own particular skills. Both were virtuosos: the clown demonstrated his abilities for the most part outside the organized, dramatic structure, while the tragedian played in the conventional game--though his skills were nonetheless showcased by dramatic soliloquies or moments of forceful and emotional action. For the development of the Vice and his

improvement in his art. Forced by conditions to limit their numbers, strolling players matched the splendor of the pageants with spectacle and casting (Bevington, From "Mankind" to Marlowe 115-16).²² Doubling broadened the players' acting skills and refined dramatic technique, especially distinctions in characterizations. In tandem, the conventional and the presentational games offered different perspectives that shifted attention from organized play to the self-reflexive arts of the individual and back again, conspiring to make the type of game and actor's style of play synonymous.

If there were a second discontinuity in medieval acting other than the acknowledged-presentational split, it would be the players' defection from a purportedly more serious purpose to a game of their own making. Bevington suggests the secular/religious division; but the same styles of game crossed these boundaries, and we recognize this discontinuity between the two traditions only from a vantage point of time where demarcations are more easily assigned. Perhaps for lack of a better date, the building of James Burbage's Theatre in 1576 may serve as a convenient moment

transformation on the Elizabethan stage, see Spivack's Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil.

²² For example, six actors are required for Mankind, Titivillus and Mercy being doubled, while King Darius (1565) advertises that, as for its twenty characters, "six persons may easily play it." The most ambitious play for doubling is the tragedy Cambises (1560-69), which divides thirty-eight roles between six men and two boys.

when players gained a sense of legitimacy and permanence and took the control of their games firmly into their own hands.

At the close of the fifteenth century, Fulgens and Lucres showcased the clowns' abilities and demonstrated an attempt at a conventional formula in which the world of Rome was suggested by way of a thoroughly identifiable Tudor England.²³ Both presentational and conventional games were used in a simple two-part dramatic structure. The presentational game exhibited the performer's skills, who came to play largely outside the organized narrative structure of the play, while the conventional game played within the fictional, narrative structure, substituting shorthand actions for a literalness in action and behavior. At the Theatre in 1576, those two games were still being played, which, due to an increasingly sophisticated dramaturgy, were part of a unified dramatic structure--²⁴

²³ After the entertainment offered by the musicians and mummers, Lucres asks where these "goodly creatures" were from: "Were they of England or of Wales?" B replies, "Nay, they be wild Irish Portugales" (2:394-95). As well, Wickham comments on the "boldness" of Gaius' comments (2:635 ff.), with his "outspoken attack on the aristocracy, so explicit in its details about the conduct of many of them during the War of the Roses."

²⁴ The soliloquy, for example, is part of the conventional game yet came to demonstrate the virtuosity and emotive powers of the player in his presentational art. On Shakespeare's stage, the presentational game was eventually considerably limited; Hamlet, for instance, in admonishing the visiting Players concerning their clowns and tragedians, is suggesting a more conventional stagecraft that restricts those players who represent only themselves and their abilities on stage.

much as Fulgens had attempted to do--becoming "styles" of the player's art. In time, it was the conventional game that became the dominant style of play in the Great Halls, inn yards, and permanent London theatres.

The players' games that began in the streets and greens had come a long way in development when in that same year of 1576 several playing companies wanted to be known as "Her Majesty's Players" whenever they played in London. After a new company, the "Queen's Men," was formed from the finest players of these acting troupes, John Stow made comment on the playing quality of the earlier, itinerant players:

Comedians and stage-players of former time were very poor and ignorant in respect of these of this time; but being now [1583] growne very skilfull and exquisite actors for all matters, they were entertained into the service of divers great lords: out of which companies there were twelve of the best chosen, and, at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, they were sworn the queenes servants, and were allowed wages and liveries as groomes of the chamber. (Chronicle [1583]. Ed. by Howe in 1615; qtd by Murray 4-6)

The "poor and ignorant" skills of the medieval actor were tested continually by the need for adaptation. These talents and dramatic techniques gave to the Elizabethan players a native tradition and continuity of playing art; and, though the game had lost much of its formal religious seriousness, it had grown, by contrast and in compensation, more pointed socially and emotionally more expressive.

Chapter Three: A Playing Tradition

"Come, give us a taste of your quality"

Although in 1590 the dramatic tradition of the permanent London stage was less than fifteen years old, players drew upon a performance tradition considerably older. But even with the stability of permanent playhouses, players had to continually change and adapt to meet the needs of growing audiences and an art form that was rapidly evolving. It is necessary therefore to ascertain what playing was like on the Elizabethan stage of the 1590s, when tradition and change precariously coalesced, in order to understand how Shakespeare and his company altered their playing from their contemporaries, thereby accommodating the new drama that began with Hamlet.

While the great variety in plays, playhouses, and the companies that acted them make the first twenty years of the seventeenth century the finest of the Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre, the last decade of the sixteenth century is most representative of what we commonly refer to as the Elizabethan Stage. Although Pembroke's, Derby's, and the Queen's Men played sporadically in London in the 1590s, two companies, the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's Men, dominated the London theatre from 1594 until 1600. Only these two companies received official sanction from the City

government.¹ An investigation into the similarities and differences in these two successful companies will, therefore, offer an assessment of how Elizabethan acting may have appeared on the London stage of the 1590s. After 1600, assumptions about playing styles are more difficult, due to the reappearance of the Children's companies and renewed playing by adult companies in London.² By looking at the documentation regarding the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's Men, the following two chapters will note how these Elizabethan actors drew upon an English tradition of playing for their performance styles.

¹ In 1598, a letter sent by the Privy Council to the Master of the Revels and the Justices of Peace of Middlesex and Surrey states that license to play in London had been granted exclusively to the Admiral's and Chamberlain's Men (Chambers 4:325). The reason for the letter was to suppress an unnamed third company from playing in the City (perhaps Pembroke's Men? The Isle of Dogs affair had been the previous year, which Chambers believes was played at Francis Langley's Swan theatre [2:132]. Langley was unable to get his playing license renewed). This third company prepared no plays for performance before the Queen, the purported reason for allowing any playing in London (see Chapter One), nor had they been subject to the Master of the Revels. See Shakespeare Quarterly 39 (1988): 391-95, for a debate between Rosalyn Kutson and Andrew Gurr as to the dominance of these two companies in London from 1594 to 1600.

² The "Queenes Majesties" players, for example, resumed playing in the City in 1604--they were soon to be known as Queen Anne's Men--and Lady Elizabeth's Men played in London from 1611 to 1614. Other companies, as had Pembroke's and Derby's Men in the 1590s, appeared in London occasionally and remained on tour most of the year. See Chambers, vol. 2, for an account of the various playing companies in London and the provinces.

The Traditions of a Craft

When the Players arrive at Elsinore, Hamlet greets them with the expectation and excitement that mimic the emotions of the typical, educated London playgoer. As the Players enter, he cheerfully receives them, forgetting all other matters and noting the many changes that have taken place in the company since last he saw them:

You are welcome, masters, welcome, all.--I am glad to see thee well.--Welcome, good friends.--O, old friend! why, thy face is valanc'd since I saw thee last; com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?--What, my young lady and mistress! by' lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falc'ners--fly at anything we see. (2.2.421-30)

Before their evening performance, Hamlet asks for a small demonstration of their skill: "we'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality. Come, a passionate speech" (ll. 430-32).

Hamlet's welcome reveals two things. First, he makes note of the many changes that have occurred in the Players' ranks. Second, by dignifying them with the honorific title "Masters," and by requesting a sample of their "quality," he demonstrates his respect for the traditions of their craft. The Player's speech that then follows offers a contrast to Hamlet, the play it is framed within, and comments on how

tradition and change were at that moment influencing the Elizabethan Stage.

Coleridge referred to the Player's soliloquy as "epic pomp,"³ but the tone and subject matter of the address make it difficult to decide whether it is a parody of bombastic verse or a lofty passage on a noble subject, the Trojan War. Whichever, the tone of the Player's speech stands out as deliberately archaic and is differentiated from the verse and prose of Hamlet. Thus the Players illustrate a style of performance that was once used, perhaps was in use still by some of Shakespeare's contemporaries, and provides an occasion to prompt Hamlet's disquisition on properly reformed playing. By asking for an old speech that "pleas'd not the million, 'twas caviary to the general" (436-37), Hamlet demonstrates a critical taste that sets him apart from the general audience; but he also acknowledges the force of that audience in determining the fare presented on stage.

The Hamlet Players' art was contemporary with the days of noisy fairs, street shows, and banquets, when tumbling, acrobatic feats, jigs, and various festive games were prevalent. As M. C. Bradbrook puts it, "dramatic art as an independent skill emerged but slowly from the cocoon of playing" ("Status Seekers" 56). When audiences from those

³ Shakespearean Criticism 1:25, 37. T. M. Raysor, ed., 1960. For this and other comments on the Player's speech see Jenkins, Arden ed., Hamlet 478 ff.

older and unsophisticated theatrical performances moved indoors with the players, their tastes did not suddenly change; they still wanted what they had come to expect from shows: action and pageantry. Despite City and Puritan opposition, plays remained extremely popular, and what we know of the playgoers in the London theatres tells us much about the type of acting that took place on stage. It was the boisterousness that characterized plays that chiefly worried the City Fathers.

1. Audiences

In 1574 an Act of Common Council of London speaks of the many people attending "playes, enterludes, and shewes," causing "ffrayes and quarrelles, eavell practizes of incontineneye in greate Innes, having chambers and secrete places adioyninge to their open stagies and gallyries," which were used for various vices. The Act notes the inconveniences of so many people gathering to view plays, but it is especially concerned with the young who were supposedly led astray by such things (qtd. by Chambers 4: 273). Given the opposition of City Fathers and Puritans, the one concerned with riot and sedition, the other with their spiritual equivalents, the rhetoric arguing for the necessity of such Acts must be taken with a grain of salt; as they were critical of players, it was obviously in their interests to exaggerate the need for their control.

Scholars disagree as to the potential unruliness of audiences. The "emotional temperature" of the audiences, says Bradbrook, was "set high enough that any crowd could turn into a mob" ("Status Seekers" 61). Henslowe's repair costs for the Rose were high--£108 in 1592 and £108 19s. in 1595--which, Bradbrook conjectures, "must have been partly due to depredations of the audience" (65). Chambers too believes that riot was always a danger in the playhouses, as well as picked pockets and private arguments (1:317). But Harbage disagreed, believing the "viciousness" of the crowd to be exaggerated; perhaps the occasional incident was taken as the standard (Shakespeare's Audience 8). Gurr too thinks the unruliness of the crowd to be overstated, with the sound of nuts cracking and the hiss from the bottled ale more a disturbance than anything else (Sh. S. 206-09). Still, any large gathering in a city that had no standing police or military force had to be taken seriously.

When playhouses and bear-baiting attracted large numbers of people, anywhere from eight to fifteen hundred on an average day and more on holidays, violence was always a very real possibility.⁴ In Norfolk, for example, Kett's

⁴ Harbage estimated that in a city of one hundred fifty to two hundred thousand people, the Chamberlain's and Admiral's Men drew approximately fifteen thousand spectators each week after 1594 (Shakespeare's Audience 22-34; and see Gurr, Sh. S. 196; but also see Carson, who estimates a more conservative number by three to four thousand, 41). Still, the popularity of the London theatre relative to the population of the City is difficult to exaggerate.

Rebellion in 1549 began at a play and lasted for six weeks with the city controlled by the mob (Bradbrook, "Status Seekers" 61). And as late as 1616, on a Shrove Tuesday--a traditional apprentices' holiday when violence was common--three to four thousand apprentices rioted at Lincoln's Inn Fields and Drury Lane, destroying costumes, props, scripts, and injuring players; houses in the vicinity were torn down and prisoners in Finsburie were let out of jail. When order was restored the punishment was not as severe as expected, though a few were made an example of and hanged, drawn, and quartered (Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage 6:54-56).

While we may assume with Harbage that such events were the exception and that perhaps "vicious" is too strong a term for playgoers, "rowdy" is not.⁵ But it is also

⁵ Ben Jonson's stage-keeper begins Bartholomew Fair (1614) by asking the audience for patience; the apples they have thrown are being eaten by the "bears within." This also indicates the double purpose of the Hope theatre as an arena for bear baiting. Edmund Gayton's Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot (1654) mentions an incident where a "passionate Butcher" at a now unknown play called The Greeks and Trojans took to the stage to aid Hector in his struggle against the Mirmydons:

He strooke moreover such an especiall acquaintance with Hector, that for a long time Hector could not obtaine leave of him to be kill'd, that the Play might go on; and the cudgelled Mirmydons durst not enter againe, till Hector, having prevailed upon his unexpected second, return'd him over the Stage againe into the yard from whence he came. (Qtd. in Bentley, Jacobean and Caroline Stage 5:1345-46)

This incident has been used by several scholars to indicate the involvement of the audience and the realism of stage action; indeed, Gayton's purpose is to demonstrate the

probable that as the fare matured on the stage, so too did the responses by its audience. For example, the predominant images in both Titus Andronicus (1593-94?) and Macbeth (1606?) are of blackness and blood; yet the plays are hardly comparable in the emotional responses they elicit from viewer or reader: the style of presentation accounts for the difference. In the 1590s, audiences greatly affected stage style. A large, noisy throng of people demanded plenty of action: "high astounding tearms" (Prologue to 1 Tamburlaine) spoken by powerful voices, verbal repartee of clowns with viewers, and lively, bawdy jigs to conclude the day's performance. In most plays, Shakespeare's included, they were not disappointed. Some dramatists and others were only too aware of this as a problem. For example, the printer of the 1592 edition of Tamburlaine The Great apparently agreed with Hamlet's advice to the Players with regard to the "unskilful" in the audience (3.2.24-28), for he cut some comic business from the play:

I have purposely omitted and left out certain fond and frivolous gestures, digressing, and, in my poor opinion, far unmeet for the matter, which I thought might seem more tedious unto the wise than any way else to be regarded, though haply they

superiority of plays and players in an earlier age than his own. While it may do that, it is more likely that whenever this event occurred, it is indicative of an overly excitable spectator after too many ales. After all, the line between viewer and player was slight: some dandies sat on the stage itself, the "penny public" stood in the pit at the edge of the stage, and plays such as The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607; Francis Beaumont) mock this very sort of "audience participation."

have been of some vain-conceited fondlings greatly gaped at, what time they were shewed upon the stage in their graced deformities: nevertheless now to be mixtured in print with such matter of worth, it would prove a great disgrace to so honourable and stately a history. (Qtd. in Marlowe, Havelock Ellis ed., 1)

2. The Players' Actions

The stage plays of the 1580s and early 1590s especially are dominated by action and pageantry. In 2 Tamburlaine The Great, Tamburlaine enters in one scene in a chariot drawn by the Kings of Trebizond and Soria, with bits in their mouths like horses. As Tamburlaine whips them like animals he cries out

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!
 What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
 And have so proud a chariot at your heeles,
 And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine?

.

To make you fierce, and fit my appetite,
 You shal be fed with flesh as raw as blood,
 And drinke in pailles the strongest Muscadell;
 If you can live with it, then live, and draw
 My chariot swifter than the racking cloudes;
 If not, then dy like beasts. (4.3.1-4; 17-22)

The scene is fantastic yet indicative of the physical visualness of the stage. Perhaps Tamburlaine's entrance was announced by the cracking of his whip, scepter of the warrior-king, as he is drawn by his laboring victims. Riding high in his chariot, the relationship between conquered and conqueror would further underscore

Tamburlaine's majesty, similar to the sight of England's monarch riding high on the shoulder's of her people.

No less visual is Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI (1590-91?) in its panorama of English history. Richard's mockery of King Henry's royal blood and the stabbing of Henry even after the King is dead has a Marlovian grandeur in its staged representation of evil:

What? will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have
mounted.
See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death.
O may such purple tears be alway shed
From those that wish the downfall of our house!
If any spark of life be yet remaining,
Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither--
I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.
(5.6.61-68)

What Shakespeare visualized the player doing is reinforced by the verse, and because of the verse we have a tendency to describe the Elizabethan stage in terms of its aural quality, to describe it as "imaginative," as if this were somehow apart from the visual. It is often remarked upon that the Elizabethan theatre used little or no scenery but merely expressed the visual through the poetry, but this is simply not true. Although bare, the stage displayed a physicality meant to impress and convince through the eyes.

On the earlier sixteenth-century stage particularly, the doubling of characters had conveyed action on a scale meant to suggest a grandeur otherwise impossible with four men and a boy: Vice figures danced, juggled, and leapt about

acrobatically. The action on the later Elizabethan stage continued to be no less physical. The tradition of doubling characters gave even greater breadth and epic spectacle to the modest facilities. So too, with the defeat of the Spanish Armada and a renewed national pride, history plays with their battle scenes were especially popular. As latter day pageant plays, the histories offered a warfare of good and evil, raging melodramatic tyrants, and the slaughter of innocents. And in an age of rapier and dagger, when most educated men, servants, and even apprentices had some knowledge of fencing--certainly a familiarity with weapons--no crowd of eager, excitable spectators would permit players to brandish their rapiers in stylized or "poetic" thrusts at one another. Nor would they likely be happy at not seeing the sort of tumbling, dancing, or physicality that any lesser provincial touring company was capable of.⁶ The

⁶ M. C. Bradbrook argued that the "inflated delivery, exaggerated movement, and conventional posture," associated with a large acting style, were necessary to hold a viewer's attention in a setting where the actor's face was unrecognizable (Themes and Conventions 21). No spectator was, in fact, more than seventy-five feet from the farthest part of the stage (see Rosenberg 101; he arrives at this figure by taking the outside diameter as eighty feet, with fifty-five feet across the yard, and a stage that extended from a back wall to the middle of the yard, or twenty-seven and a half feet, which was forty-three feet wide). Given the three tiers of seating, as called for in the plans to the Fortune theatre--modeled after the Globe--even when a theatre was full players would not be faceless forms who had to rely on enormous gestures or poetry alone to convey their facial expressions (the clowns certainly had no problems when mugging). When standing forward on the stage, a player would be roughly at equal distance from all of his audience, about twenty-seven to thirty-five feet, standing in the "round," with spectators on three sides (the distance from

famous clown Richard Tarleton was also a Master of Fence; his successor Will Kempe was famous for his dancing abilities, as his Morris Dance to Norwich was meant to illustrate. Even Ben Jonson boasted of having killed a man in single combat while a soldier in the Low Countries, and he certainly killed his fellow actor, Gabriel Spencer, in a duel. Thus to emulate the robust, physical, and oftentimes violent society of Elizabethan England, and to hold the attention of these spectators, the players had to fill their stages with action.

The players on the stages of London were exceptional swordsmen, fighters, and acrobats. Armies in battle may have needed the audience's help in making "imaginary puissance" (Henry V Prologue) but two combatants did not. An indication of how far they were prepared to go in stage action is seen by an incident in 1587, when the Admiral's Men accidentally killed a child, a pregnant woman, and injured

ground level to the upper eaves of the Fortune was thirty-five feet; thus, if the stage were five feet high, the actor would be at an equal distance on all sides from top, middle, or bottom galleries; see Hodges, and Richard Hosley's "The Playhouses and the Stage" in A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies 15-34, for dimensions and conjectures about the Globe, Fortune, Swan, and Hope theatres). In recent excavations in London, the foundation for the Rose theatre has been discovered. Among the several surprises uncovered so far is the polygonal design of the building, perhaps as many as sixteen to eighteen sides, and a smaller than expected circumference--eighty to eighty-five feet. C. Walter Hodges is quoted as saying that "nobody was very far away from the actors" (The New York Times, March 4, 1989). Today, arena stages or theatres with thrust stages are considered intimate, not ceremonial; movement from back to front or side to side is relative depending on the viewer's perspective.

a man when an actor, appearing to shoot a victim tied to a post, missed.⁷ That the actors would actually load the gun with shot and not just powder may give us some indication of how seriously the players took their illusionistic attempts at reality and what the spectators could look forward to seeing.

Audiences also expected the finery of stage players that separated viewer and player alike from the ordinary and everyday. The money that Philip Henslowe paid out for clothing for his actors far surpassed any other expense--£4 15s. for a pair of "rownd howsse paned of vellevett" (Diary 325)--and costumes took the place of colorful backdrops or stage fixtures. The stage was hardly "bare" when players in their finery leapt and fought across it; the beauty of their productions was animated rather than merely scenic.

If stage action was sometimes rough, physical, and "bigger than life" (as in Tamburlaine), conveyed in sumptuous costuming as well as lofty language, and meant to satisfy the demands of a boisterous crowd, must we not then also assume that the style of the player was often equally vigorous? Of necessity players gave to viewers what they had come to expect; the audience was the principal influence upon the type and form of play on the stage in the 1590s.

⁷ A witness, Philip Gawdy, wrote a letter to his father saying, "I fynde by this an old proverbe veryfyed ther never comes more hurte than commes of fooling" (qtd. by Chambers, 2:135). The scene may be the execution of the Governor of Babylon in 2 Tamburlaine, 5.1.

3. The Repertory Schedule

The physical requirements of acting were extraordinary. With six performances a week and plays always in rehearsal, the players' memories must have been prodigious and their stamina remarkable. Gurr cites the Admiral's 1594-95 season when a total of thirty-eight plays were given--of which 21 were new to the repertory--as an example of the fast-paced repertory system (Sh. S. 102).⁸ Besides playing six days a week, a company would be in continual rehearsal in order to add new plays and to refresh old ones in their schedule. Beckerman estimated that a player would learn a new role every second week, with thirty to forty roles in his head. Edward Alleyn, lead player for the Admiral's Men, would learn not only fifty new parts but retain twenty or more old ones as well over a three-year period (Beckerman 9; 30). One example must serve to illustrate their impressive recall abilities. After the Essex rebellion, Augustine Phillips, member of the Chamberlain's Men, was questioned concerning the performance of Richard II the night before the rebellion. Phillips answered that money alone was the sole reason for performing the play, because it was "so old and so long out of vse as that they shold have small or no Company at yt" (qtd. by Harbage, Shakespeare's Audience 11).

⁸ See Revels, vol. 3: Chapter Four, for a list of known performances from 1576 to 1613.

The play was about five years old, yet the company performed Richard II the next day.

A new play was added about every two weeks. In the Admiral's company, only eight plays lasted from the 1594 to the 1595 season, and even the most popular plays--Marlowe's --were presented about once a month (Sh. S. 102). Obviously the world of the players, with their scripts, rehearsals, and performances, was a hectic one.

Thus the fast-paced nature of the stage with its many demands must have influenced playing, and greatly nuanced style, which would depend on long rehearsals to refine, most probably was not possible. Because plays such as Tamburlaine 1 or 2 and Henry VI 1, 2, or 3 could contain as many as 28 or 40 characters (and additional soldiers, townfolk, etc.), while enacted by probably 5 or 6 sharers, 3 boys, and hired men for the lesser roles,⁹ players probably rushed in and out of costumes, checked plot boards for

⁹ In a study by Scott McMillin of The Taming of a Shrew, The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, and The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York (so-called "Bad Quartos" of The Taming of the Shrew, 3 Henry VI, and 2 Henry VI), he argues that each could be performed by a total of twenty players: eleven adults, four boys, and five or six hired men ("Casting for Pembroke's Men: The Henry VI Quartos and The Taming of A Shrew," Shakespeare Quarterly [23] 1972: 141-59). William A. Ringler, Jr., maintained that all of Shakespeare's plays prior to 1599 could be performed with a total cast of sixteen, excepting Titus Andronicus and Two Gentlemen of Verona ("The Number of Actors in Shakespeare's Early Plays," in Bentley, The Seventeenth-Century Stage 123).

sequence,¹⁰ and gave little thought to "character development." In most plays before Hamlet, characters came on stage with full personalities in place, and the colorful costumes, props, and physical vigor of their actions were the focus and enjoyment for audiences.

4. Performance Time

Prior to 1594, plays began at 4 p.m. (afternoon prayer began at 2 p.m.) and the late beginning meant that during winter months crowds went home after dark. Not until 1594 did plays begin at 2 p.m., a time set by the City and adopted by the theatres. Playing was forbidden on Sundays, Saints' days, during divine services, and during Lent. That the players were allowed to perform at all was a defeat for the Puritans; that players were only restricted in time and season was their consolation prize.

Some plays that call attention to their playing time state that, like Romeo and Juliet (1595?), their action will unfold within "the two hours' traffic of our stage" (Prologue). Whether or not this time should be regarded as literal has been a point of contention among scholars for years. The second Quarto of Romeo in its entirety, complete

¹⁰ An outline of the play with actors listed next to the characters they played. The plot of 2 Seven Deadly Sins (1590) still exists (Dulwich MS. XIX; a facsimile is in W.W. Greg's Dramatic Documents of the Elizabethan Playhouses, vol. 2, no. 11).

with at least one jig and probable comic impromptu by Will Kempe,¹¹ was most likely longer than two hours. Even allowing for a faster pattern of speech than we are accustomed to today, and given the Elizabethan audience's ability to "hear" a play,¹² many scholars still insist that two hours can only be a figurative term of convenience. Lord Hunsdon wrote to the Lord Mayor in 1594, stating that his new company, the Chamberlain's Men, would "begin at two and have done betwene fower and five" (qtd. by Klein 437). It may be that "two hours" was an optimistic indication by the players to suggest cooperation with the City authority, regardless of how much time their performances really took.¹³ However, there are many plays that purposely make

¹¹ Kempe was famous for his comic roles. In Q2, 4.5.100, "Enter Will Kemp" is written instead of "Peter," the part he evidently played; yet Peter is a small role and the impromptu clowning Kempe was famous for is not indicated in the text.

¹² Cf. Shrew's Induction.2.134: "you hear a play / And frame your mind to mirth and merriment." See also Shrew Induction.1.91 and MND 5.1.349.

¹³ Besides Romeo, the two hour limit is mentioned in plays such as Lodowick Barrey's Ram-Alley (1609), in the Epilogue, Robert Tailor's The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl (1613), also in the Epilogue, and William Davanant's The Unfortunate Lovers (1638), Prologue. Plays that offer different times are George Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra (1578)--3 hours--Thomas Nashe's Summer's Last Will and Testament, Epilogue (1592)--"Some hours"--Thomas Dekker's If It Be Not Good, the Devil Is in It, Epilogue (1610)--3 hours--John Fletcher's Loyal Subject (1618)--3 hours--and James Shirley's "To the Reader" in the 1647 Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays also mentions a 3 hour playing time (Klein 434-36). Klein also believes that the children's companies may have had a strict time limit imposed, such as the Children of Paul's, and he cites a note by William Percy (qtd. by Chambers, E.S. 2:21) that assured

note of a longer playing time when the play is in fact exceptional in length, which may point to a literalness in the times offered by dramatists. Jonson, for instance, says in the Induction to Bartholomew Fair that it will take "the space of two houres and a halfe, and somewhat more." Alfred Hart argued the strict observance of the two hour period because of weather, darkness, audience "needs," and cuts made by the dramatists (413). Plays may have been cut in consideration of the season or conditions under which they were given. Hamlet, for instance, was perhaps cut a great deal for touring, somewhat less for winter months in London, and perhaps little or not at all during the summer.

Given all the events that made up a performance, these plays, whether two hours or three, were played at a rate of speed that would suggest a rapid delivery of lines with action equally as fast. Therefore an economy of gesture and what it indicated would be a desirable asset to stage performance. Even such conventions of the stage as the soliloquy or aside would permit the actor to convey emotions or thought economically.

the authority they would be done by 6 p.m., when supper was served and the gates shut (437).

5. Conventions

Conventions of course were more than economical indicators of emotion, arising from the early days of the Medieval theatre, when actors found it necessary, due to the physical restrictions of the stage, to replace literal actions with abstractions from reality. Conventions were an understood shorthand that suggested actuality (Foakes 66), conveying more feeling and tone in a single gesture, posture, or look than in a series of actions or developed exposition, and often more effectively.

The economy that conventions afforded is an indication of playing style, though not merely indicative of time alone. The relationship that existed between stage and audience was a convention in its own right, a justification of the players' actions for the benefit of the audience. The direct interaction between the two was at the heart of the English drama, as many Tudor plays indicate: Mankynd (c. 1465), The Magi, Herod, and Slaughter of the Innocents (c. 1475), and Fulgens and Lucrece (1497), to name but three.¹⁴ Such instances suggest an attempt at a literalness that was eventually abandoned for a set form of stylization that was

¹⁴ Cf. Alan Downer's observation of the early attempts in Tudor drama to justify stage action, such as Courage's soliloquy in The Tide Tarrieth No Man, spoken by a man "reasoning with himself," and a direction that asides in Cruel Debtor be "spoken among yourselves a good way off" ("The Tudor Actor" 78; See Chapter Two, pp. 61 ff.).

accepted by player and spectator.

a. Verbal Images: the "Descriptive" Style

The soliloquy and aside are two of the most obvious and familiar examples of such conventions; others are more telling in indicating a style of playing. First among these is the poetry of the drama, which does considerably more than merely set the scene; poetry describes images for the imagination of the audience, conveys mood and tone, and describes emotional responses by the actors, which are established more by suggestion than by action. Consider for example the grief visually enacted by Tamburlaine in his response to Zenocrate's death: "Behold me here, divine Zenocrate, / Raving, impatient, desperate, and mad, / Breaking my steeled lance" (2 Tamburlaine 2.4).

Actions would complement the suggestions, but the poetic description of what one was intended to see removed the need for much physical detail. In the images offered in King John (1595-96?), as the King suffers from poisoning, the descriptive images of his pain convey more than actions alone can:

There is so hot a summer in my bosom
That all my bowels crumble up to dust.
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

.

And none of you will bid the winter come
 To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
 Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
 Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
 To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
 And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,
 I beg cold comfort; and you are so strait
 And so ingrateful, you deny me that.
 (5.7.30-34; 36-43)

Although the images would call for some literal enactment or posture to indicate King John's suffering, the poetry frees the player from the impossibility of a literal representation that would undermine his pathos and prevent him from speaking.

Shakespeare's plays of the early and mid-1590s are largely dependent upon verbal emblems to convey a character's inner thoughts and behavior toward others; the emblems established by the poetry constitute a part of his actions. Wolfgang Clemen and others have noted that Shakespeare's early style is marked by a preponderance of similes, whereas his later style uses metaphors.¹⁵ This distinction points to the style of playing on the stage at this time too, one that reflects the poetic image as idea or emotion and player as agent or "likeness" of that image. In Richard II (1595?), the despondency that Richard feels is revealed primarily by the poetic images he creates from the sights and sounds that surround him. Music heard outside his jail in Pomfret Castle is not played "in time," an

¹⁵ See The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery 22.

explicit comparison to Richard's life:

I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;
 For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock:
 My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
 Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward
 watch,
 Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
 Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
 Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is
 Are clamorous groans which strike upon my heart,
 Which is the bell. So sighs, and tears, and
 groans
 Show minutes, times, and hours; but my time
 Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
 While I stand fooling here, his Jack of the clock.
 This music mads me. Let it sound no more.
(5.5.49-61)

Aided by increasingly short clauses, the text has a feeling of urgency about it that is broken by mid-line pauses (especially at the end of "Bolingbroke's proud joy") that gasp more than breathe. Richard's emotional state was probably confirmed by a strong action with "Let it sound no more," an action that reinforced poetic suggestion rather than action representing intention alone. Thus the player is more reliant upon the tenor and description of the poetry to convey meaning than "realistic" behavior, because his character is bound by poetic and physical comparison. And the poetry, which establishes the tone of a scene, creates a "real" response on the part of the viewer. The emotions that poetry can elicit are no less real than the emotions that come in response to realism.

Daniel Seltzer defined this writing style as "descriptive" ("Prince Hal and Tragic Style" 17), marked by

a poetical representation of character found within the descriptions of mood, tenor, and appearance within a scene, rather than in a character's behavior or interaction with others. Poetical expressions not only set the tone for the action but indicate the unambiguous behavior of its players. On the other hand, the actor speaking of the verse does indeed create character. Richard II, for instance, is defined by his excesses. His poetry is lofty and grandiloquent one moment, extravagantly pessimistic the next, employing the same object to create images that contrast in mood:

I weep for joy
To stand upon my kingdom once again.
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.
As a long-parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
And do thee favors with my royal hands.

(3.2.4-11)

Richard's excessive gestures upon returning to England are equaled by the sudden depths of his despair when he learns of the defections from his army. Once again, the earth is the object of that expression:

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
Let's choose executors and talk of wills;
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?

(145-150)

Not limited to Shakespeare, the descriptive style informs the drama of the era in general as part of the expressive convention of verse. A few additional illustrations must suffice. In The Spanish Tragedy (Thomas Kyd, 1589?) Horatio, Hieronimo, and Balthazar are primarily stock characters who use emotional descriptions to indicate their behavior, sorrow, and intentions. Hieronimo's soliloquy of Act 2, when he finds the body of his son Horatio, is an example of description that also indicates action:

What outcries pluck me from my naked bed,
And chill my throbbing heart with trembling fear,
Which never danger yet could daunt before?
Who calls Hieronimo? Speak, here I am.
I did not slumber, therefore 'twas no dream,
No, no, it was some woman cried for help,
And here within this garden did she cry,
And in this garden must I rescue her.¹⁶

¹⁶ According to Wolfgang Clemen, this speech is an example of poetry with internal stage directions (see below), and therefore "not only spoken but acted" (English Tragedy Before Shakespeare 103; qtd by Mulryne 44). However, Clemen is making a distinction between soliloquy and stage dialogue, where actions are frequently indicated within the lines; otherwise, this incident would hardly be unique. Nor can it be inferred that embedded indications of stage action within the dialogue was a "first" with The Spanish Tragedy, a play often cited as first in many stage techniques; an older and far cruder example of the technique that Clemen refers to is found in The Magi, Herod, and Slaughter of the Innocents from the Coventry Cycle, when stage directions are given, "Here Erode ragis in the pagond and in the strete also," which is reinforced in the play by Herod's "I stampe! I stare I lok all abowtt!" and then "I rent! I raive! and now run I wode!" (ll. 779, 81; in Adams). Faustus is another play rich in interpretive cues within its monologues. Though possibly several years older than Tragedy (see note 18; the older date is set at 1592-3), it was probably not greatly influenced by it, though cuts and comic additions make it difficult to fairly judge.

The poetry suggests somewhat contradictory emotions, urgency compounded by fear. Confirming the verbal images of Hieronimo's anxiety and sense of foreboding, the actor probably made a hesitant entrance that conveyed his fear at what he would find, perhaps with his hand resting on his chest to still his "throbbing heart." His language indicates the conflict that leads him to the garden, though he fears the outcome, and the verse offers an example of an interpretive cue for the player's action embedded in the dialogue. That is, indications of emotion are given in the text instead of relying upon the playing of an action alone to elicit what emotions it would. Such instructions within the verse underscore the conventional presentation,¹⁷ since an emotional effect is sought that not only complements poetical expression but equates it with a particular physical action. Another illustration of the inner stage direction occurs when Isabella joins her husband moments later in the garden, only to find her son dead:

Isabella:

is my son gone too?
O, gush out, tears, fountains and floods of tears;
Blow, sighs, and raise an everlasting storm:
For outrage fits our cursed wretchedness.

¹⁷ Stage directions embedded within the dialogue were not due to the inability of spectators to see clearly the players' faces, as argued by Bradbrook: see note 6.

Hieronimo:

Sweet lovely rose, ill plucked before thy time,
Fair worthy son, not conquered, but betrayed:
I'll kiss thee now, for words with tears are
stayed. (2.5)

The contrast between Isabella's language with that of Hieronimo's indicates two different styles of actions. Her grief finds only verbal expression that has no physical counterpart, while his subdued, resigned pain creates emotion through an action. Perhaps their actions were meant to contrast, she flailing her arms wildly and he reacting with a quiet kiss. Moreover their different behavior at finding Horatio's body indicates the degree of expression that demonstrable grief can take, and their language offers profound justifications for two disparate reactions.

Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (1589-92?¹⁸) offers a further example of the descriptive style, and an embedded direction that elicits an action, in Faustus' passionate response to the scholars' pleas to call on God:

On God, whom Faustus hath abjur'd! on God, whom
Faustus hath blasphem'd? Ah my God, I would weepe,
but the Divell drawes in my teares. Gush forth
bloud in stead of teares, yea life and soule: oh
hee stayes my tongue: I would lift up my hands,
but see, they hold 'em, they hold 'em. (5.2.)

¹⁸ Marlowe's play is now thought to be later than previously dated because of its source, The Historie of the damnable life, and deserved death of Doctor John Faustus, printed in Frankfurt in 1587, was only translated into English in 1592 by "P.F." (see Doctor Faustus, Fredson Bowers ed., in Christopher Marlowe, Works 123-24).

In this instance the language describes an inability to act, to use gestures that would indicate repentance, and thus the verbal images suggest all the possible actions that are, in fact, not present. Probably what the actor did portray was the inability to move or gesture at all, as if some unseen force--"they"--prevented him.

This scene in Faustus shows very well the differences between what Seltzer called the "descriptive" playing style and the playing style that I term "plausible," that is, one marked by a naturalness of action that would appear in many of the post-1599 plays of Shakespeare (see Chapter Five). For example, in Hamlet Claudius is "held" from making his peace with God, as well:

Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will.
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
 And, like a man to double business bound,
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
 And both neglect.

.

O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
 O limed soul, that struggling to be free
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels! Make assay,
 Bow, stubborn knees, and heart, with strings of
 steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
 All may be well. [He kneels.]
(3.3.38-43; 67-72)

His actions are in the eyes of Hamlet and audience alike indicative of Claudius' repentance. But unknown to Hamlet, Claudius cannot feel nor can he demonstrate that repentance.

His inability to return to God is only made clear when expressed in a simple statement that belies his outward appearance: "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: / Words without thoughts never to heaven go" (97-98).

b. Stage Symbolism

Theatrical symbolism served a function similar to the descriptive imagery within the verse, visually conveying images and moods far more complete and expressive in suggestive representation than in actual demonstration. Color symbolism is the most obvious example (Hamlet in black, Malvolio with yellow hose, Isabella's white for purity).¹⁹ But other symbolism includes indicators of specific emotions, such as madness and excessive grief, suggested by a disheveled appearance. For women the hair was unfastened, as in the entrance of Ophelia in 4.5 of Hamlet. According to the Folio, she enters "distracted"; but Q1 reads "Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing." Queen Elizabeth enters in 2.2 of Richard III (1591?) "with her hair about her ears" (Folio), the Folio stage direction for King John has Constance appear with "her

¹⁹ See Gurr, Sh.S. 182. Jean MacIntyre also observes the ways that costumes are used to signal a changed moral state in characters (105), a convention that by 1600 affected the costume requirements of many plays. Coriolanus was given five costume changes, whereas in the 1590s Shakespeare rarely gave even two costumes to a character.

hair dishevel'd" (2.3), and probably other characters were portrayed this way too, such as old Queen Margaret in Act 1 of Richard III. Similarly, Petruchio shows up on his wedding day in a tousled state, which Tranio would see through: "He hath some meaning in his mad attire" (The Taming Of The Shrew [1590-94?] 3.2.124). And finally, when Romeo responds to Friar Laurence's words of comfort at the news of his banishment, his utter despair is indicated by an action that finds no outlet in speech:

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear
thy hair
And fall upon the ground, as I do now.
(Romeo and Juliet 3.3.64-69)

Other indicators or shorthand were similar to those of iconography in the visual arts, such as the lover standing with his arms folded or a hand resting on his heart.²⁰ Love was also indicated by the sigh, necessary because it released excessive heat from the heart, as in the "ay me" of both Romeo and Juliet (1.1.161; 2.2.24). The convention that lovers fall in love at first sight--such as Prospero's aside in The Tempest (1611) as to Miranda and Ferdinand: "At

²⁰ See Alan Dessen's Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters for some of the theatrical "shorthand" that actors conveyed to an audience. And also see Gurr's Sh.S. 179 for a picture of Nicholas Hilliard's famous miniature (c. 1590) of a lover's posture.

the first sight / They have chang'd eyes" (1.2.441-42)--may have been rendered by a moment of complete immobility followed by startled speech, as in Miranda's first reaction to Ferdinand: "What is 't? a spirit?" (1. 410).

Another indication of the "amazed" posture can be found in Boyet's description of the King of Navarre to the Princess of France and Katharine in Love's Labors Lost (1593-4?): "His face's own margent did quote such amazes / That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes" (2.1.246-47; see Foakes 66). Boyet describes the love-struck King as one whose "senses were lock'd in his eye," and therefore "his tongue did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be" (11. 242; 238-39).

Theatrical gestures were an important element in a dramatic design that relied on its poetry and characterization rather than sets and stage properties to color and emphasize its action. This economical, shorthand expression, in conveying the mood and tenor of a scene to an audience, permitted a playwright more latitude in developing a character's or scene's dramatic potential.

Conclusion

Whether familiar behavior, iconographic postures, or stage conventions, theatrical indicators--such as color symbolism, a dishevelled appearance, the lover's sigh, or the "amazed" posture--served to suggest as much in a

codified gesture as would take a prose paragraph or more to convey. Thus theatrical symbolism, or poetry, with its descriptive and imaginative freedom, were valuable because they expanded the possibilities for illustrating mood, emotion, or action impossible within the confines of a realistic stage. Although they certainly allowed more to be expressed in the time at hand, they were not used merely to speed up performance--if so, we would see a tendency toward shorter and not longer plays.²¹ But given the two- to three-hour performance time, a reliance upon conventional devices would undoubtedly be necessary and desirable, meaning a player's conventional poses would be as important as an original physical action, a finely developed individualizing or conventional gesture as valuable as his generic swordplay. The player was a physical simile and physical metaphor, a correspondent to and function of the poet's dramatic purpose.

Other physical considerations for determining a playing style, such as the size of the public theatres, structures opened to the skies at the top, and the sightlines of the stages must also be taken into account. For example, Beckerman maintains that to be seen in the playhouse, a

²¹ Gurr has observed that there is a marked increase in play length after 1594, and especially after 1600, but that productions remained for the most part structurally the same. After 1600, plays increased on average from 2500 to 2900 lines, Hamlet and Bartholomew Fair being two of the longest at over 4000 (Sh. S. 161-62).

player had to turn out to the main part of the house, thus reinforcing the "ceremonial" style of acting (129).²²

Although these aspects of the London playhouses do not prove, in their own right, that a particular playing style predominated, they reinforce more substantial arguments. The noise and size of an Elizabethan audience, for example, argues for a large, demonstrative style of acting, grand enough in its actions to command the attention and involvement of its viewers. Yet stage facilities alone could not determine playing style; companies performed at court, at inns, and at smaller locales on the road too. Even today, summer stock performances are given in large amphitheatres--many without electronic amplification--that do not require a drastic alteration in style, only a modest modification to accommodate the facilities. Rather, the scale of the public stage argues for only a few necessary adjustments of style, in volume, size of gestures, and perhaps facial expressions. Elizabethan players modified their acting for different circumstances, and, as we shall see, for different plays as well.

²² But see note 6.

Chapter Four: Changes in the Playing Tradition

"I am doubtful of your modesties"

The ways in which the theatre was changing within its brief decade of accelerated transition give us the best idea of what an Elizabethan playing style was like. Seltzer suggested that the rapid change in Tudor drama was responsible for the paucity of documentation on stage practices and performance skills, and that a lack of the descriptions on those arts may reflect the new, changing techniques that they used ("The Actors and Staging" 35). However, we can suppose that the establishment of a permanent theatre in London altered for the better the lifestyle and art of the players; this in turn gave the players' craft some permanence, which the Puritans greatly feared, and it may have led to a measure of conformity in acting style.¹

¹ Eventually, an increased playing security would lead to artistic diversity. However, the immediate effect of stability within the profession was a conformity of style and production. Companies in London were aware of one another's repertory and performances, and playing styles and production techniques were borrowed as readily as successful dramatic genres, scenes, or entire plays. And when audiences showed preferences in the dramatic fare they too could choose from, they probably influenced what was done on stage. Hamlet's tastes in acting styles are echoed in the pamphlet Ratseis Ghost (1605), where the highwayman Ratsey offers advice to a player: "for some of you not content to do well, but striving to over-doe and go beyond your selves, oftentimes mar all; yet your Poets take great paines to make your parts fit for your mouths, though you gape never so wide" (A3b). Perhaps the author of Ratseis Ghost was merely

Within the brief life span of the London public theatre, the changing dramaturgy and staging portray a discernable acting style. Unlike the earlier Tudor drama, changing playing techniques on the Elizabethan stage of the 1590s are the best indicators of style when they point to a "standard" from which they diverge. Areas offering evidence for a general, contemporary style of play are the distinctions between the city and touring companies, Puritan opposition, virtuoso performers, the deployment of pageantry by Marlowe and Shakespeare, and the boy actor on the professional stage. Collectively, these five areas reveal a dramatic tradition approaching its maturity.

observing a common complaint against poor acting, a style that, as Hamlet says, "out-Herods Herod." Yet Ratsey flatters the player by praising his skills: the player is good enough to challenge even Richard Burbage in the role of Hamlet, a contest that Rastsey would wager money on. The fact that some spectators did wager on performances suggests that a degree of excellence was sought; their playing similar enough to make comparison. But how these standards were judged or how the actual wagering took place we do not know. A contest in playing may have matched two players with different styles enacting the same dramatic material, but more likely it pitted the skills of two performers in successfully eliciting praise from their audience. Edward Alleyn was sent a letter requesting that he accept a playing wager against two noted actors, Bentley and Knell (Greg, Henslowe's Papers 32). Murray Bromberg listed several references to such wagers, in Dekker's Jests To Make You Merrie (1607), The Gull's Hornbook (1609), and Beaumont's Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607). "Wit contests" were also common in the era, matching clowns or pamphleteers against one another (see The Works of John Taylor, Spenser Society Folio Edition [1869] 2:144 ff.).

1. Playing in the Provinces and in the City

The first obvious change evident by the 1590s was the distinction made between the London player and the "strowler."² Players had established themselves in the City long enough to secure some measure of respect, but away from their permanent homes they "reverted to the status of the minstrel" (Chambers 1:345). The number of references to poor or country playing (often considered one and the same) suggests the divergence that had grown up between the City and the provinces, as when a player in Thomas Middleton's Father Hubburds Tales (1604) is accused of "screwing his face like one of our country players, which must / needs make him look like a fool" (Works, A. H. Bullen, ed. 3:68). Marston's Histriomastix (1599), written for a boys' company, suggests that life on the road could be very unpleasant, if the difficulties faced by the caricatured Sir Oliver Owlet's Men are any indication.³

In Shakespeare's plays there are many references to

² The usual term for players on the road, as in Dekker's The Wonderfull Yeare ([1603]; see Chambers, E. S. 1:332).

³ The company, which seems not much more professional than the mechanicals in A Midsummer Night's Dream, is comprised of four players who are eventually left in ruin. Written for Paul's boys, Marston's play is contemptuous of the popular stage in particular and actors in general, whom he sees as poor, seedy entertainers unaware of their lack of talent. Marston's portrayal of Ben Jonson as the pompous, scholarly dramatist Chrisogonus apparently prompted the so-called "War of the Theatres."

travelling or amateur players; but a clear distinction is made especially between amateurs and professionals. Peter Quince and his absurd company are treated gently by Duke Theseus, for all their artlessness: "For never anything can be amiss, / When simpleness and duty tender it" (5.1.82-3). Hippolyta's dismissal of their play, "This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard," causes Theseus to reply, "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination mend them" (210-12). So too the entertainment arranged by the locals in Love's Labor's Lost is expected to be bad: King Ferdinand says "they will shame us. Let them not approach" (5.2.511). The Princess of France, however, is more understanding:

Nay, my good lord, let me o'errule you now.
That sport best pleases that doth least know how;
Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
Dies in the zeal of that which it presents.
Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,
When great things laboring perish in their birth.
(515-520)

Professional players, however, are met with a far more critical eye. In The Taming Of The Shrew, the Lord is pleased to see the Players because of the joke he wishes to play on Christopher Sly; nevertheless, as he recalls their skill he offers a warning:

But I am doubtful of your modesties,
Lest, over-eyeing of his odd behavior
(For yet his honour never heard a play),
You break into some merry passion,
And so offend him. (Induction 94-98)

In Hamlet we find the most famous example of practical dramatic criticism: the Prince's enthusiasm at seeing the travelling company is enough to clear his melancholy, if only temporarily; yet he takes the opportunity to discourse on proper playing and the excesses actors are given to, which are many. Shakespeare frequently distinguishes between artlessness and poor art, sympathetic with the former but critical of the later.

Besides playing in the provinces, English players toured the Continent as well. Fynes Moryson reported from Frankfort in 1592 that the Germans loved the action of the English players, even though they could not understand a word. While travelling in the Netherlands he noted that the "actours" were also popular there, though in both instances he found them especially bad and thought "the poor artizans of England would have both penned and acted it much better" (Shakespeare's Europe 373). Chambers was perhaps harsh in his assessment when he said that "those who essayed a career in Germany were the failures of London" (1:345); but since action was obviously of greatest importance when a language barrier existed, it is easy to see how a discrepancy in style could exist between the companies in Europe with those in London: "We can be bankrupts on this side and gentlemen of a company beyond the sea: we burst at London, and are pieced up at Rotterdam" (The Run-away's Answer [1625]; qtd. by Chambers 1:346-47).

The difficulties in touring--acceptance into a community and uncertain earnings--came not only from the distinctions and competition between acting troupes but between acting companies and nondramatic entertainment as well. No longer the great novelty in the seventeenth century, players often received less money for their offerings than those who manipulated "Italian motions" (puppet shows; Jonson mentions them in Bartholomew Fair 5.3) or provided the unusual--"a child borne without armes"--or the bizarre--"an Italian that thrust himself under the side to make experiment of his oyle." Travelling companies soon learned the value of adding such attractions to their plays, as in "the King's Players and hocus pocus," which got 20 shillings from the town of Coventry in 1638 (Thaler 498-99).

The German version of Hamlet called Der Bestrafte Brudermord, complete with the clowns Phantasma and Jens, has a scene where a sentinel drops his musket when the Ghost slaps him. Vaudeville material lent itself very well to plays performed in Germany; especially popular there were Titus, Julius Caesar, Romeo, Faustus, and A Midsummer Night's Dream (a separate play called Absurdica Comica or Mr. Peter Squenz grew out of the apprentices' wedding interlude; see Wright, "Variety Entertainment" 303). Whether forced to the Continent or merely into the provinces to make a living, a distinction between acting abilities and repertoires was a growing fact for Elizabethan players that

suggests the players' quality may have been diverging as well.

Indeed, in the general economic turmoil of English theatres in the 1590s (compounded by the threat of plague), the stable companies--the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's Men--set a standard of performance quality that increased proportionately with their management responsibilities for larger, more stable companies. Although the organization of the two companies was somewhat different, new sharers added to both their numbers were among the best of the London actors, as were the hired men chosen for a play. Increased revenues also influenced script selection and repertory decisions, since successful plays were often revised and emulated. Their success or failure as a company lay in their collective talent and business sense, and any association with the nobility that reduced them to mere domestic status was by this time a "legal fiction" (Carson 34).

Yet opportunity and competition did not assure artistic or commercial success for all the playing companies; later theatres like the Red Bull would be known for a type of drama that, though popular, continued to offer the worst excesses of the London stage. A converted inn with a regular company around 1605-06, the Red Bull was known for broader, more physical playing (see Gurr Sh.S. 54). In Pleasant Notes, Gayton mentions them as "teare-throats." A broad spectrum of dramatic fare could be found on the London

stages by this time. Only two generations after Shakespeare's death, critics would pine for the excellence of his company (as in Flecknoe's A Short Discourse of the English Stage, 1664), and a playwright like William Davenant would emulate the successes of the King's Men, even claiming a blood kinship to its dramatist as Shakespeare's illegitimate son. In fact, not many years after Shakespeare, the excesses of the stage that he had railed against and taken trouble to reform returned in full, when the knockabout of the clowns once again dominated.⁴ The brevity and flux of the London stage is striking: established in 1576, it achieved maturity some twenty years later yet was already in decline before the end came in 1642. And always close by were two fears that could send the player back to minstrel status: plague and the Puritans.

2. Puritan Opposition

While plague was always a very real threat that often interrupted a playhouse repertory and sent companies back on the road, for the actor the Puritan was the far more formidable danger. Puritans were as much an instrument for change and improvement of the players' craft as his

⁴ See Gurr, Sh. S. 92. The leading clowns of the 1620s and '30s, known for their knockabout clownage, were John Shank of the King's Men, Timothy Reade at Salisbury Court, and Andrew Cane at the Fortune.

permanent facilities or the blank verse of his poetry. When the Crown placed London playing directly under the control of the Privy Council in 1597, it was none too soon for the player. Chambers observed that "in the Tudor, as in the mediaeval, scheme of things there was ample room for the stage and its players"; however, "those extreme champions of reformation principles" would find a lack of morality in the native love of spectacle and festivity (1:236-37).

Humanists countered the Puritans' objections by pointing to the morality taught in plays, as well as the lessons on eschewing immorality.⁵ But the allegiances and responsibilities of mankind were viewed quite differently by the two groups.

Following the construction of the Theatre, Puritans led a sustained attack against plays and players. In several pamphlets, writers took great care to attack this pestilence lest it spread: Stephen Gosson's School of Abuse (1579), Anthony Munday's Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres (1580), Gosson again in Plays Confuted in

⁵ To Horace's ideas in De Arte Poetica of plays mingling delight and profit, Chambers added Hamlet's remarks (taken from Donatus [Commentum Terenti], which he attributed to Cicero), which echo the commonplace of Renaissance thought that art should imitate life:

the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. (3.2.20-24; Chambers 1:238)

Five Actions (1582), Philip Stubbs' Anatomie of Abuses (1583), and William Perkins' A Golden Chain (1603). These writers, either Puritan divines or sympathizers,⁶ evidently foresaw what could come to pass: plays might become too popular to suppress if immediate direct action were not taken, and a time might come when people would mistakenly view these people as artists rather than layabouts.

In 1588, Puritans managed to restrain playing on Sundays, Lent, and religious holidays, but it was small compensation for the many objections they had to the theatre, which was a lie and deliberate deception and one that encouraged young men to commit sodomy by confusing sexual identity (Deuteronomy forbade men wearing women's clothing). The theatre also encouraged sloth and violence, leading young apprentices especially away from their skills and trades and into sin. As evidence of their evil, plays brought forth God's wrath in the form of plague, though, ironically, even in the worst of the infection players appear to have suffered proportionately fewer deaths than other Londoners, perhaps because they were forced into touring and out of the crowded, infected city.⁷ The

⁶ See Margot Heinemann, Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts. Heinemann believes that many so-called Puritans were not: Stubbs may have been seeking patronage from an announced Catholic, and Gosson was probably hired by the City Fathers to attack the stage; his sermon "The Trumpet of War" is anti-Puritan (28-29).

⁷ Even an opponent of the theatre admitted as much: J. Cocke said in A Common Player that "players cannot tarry

restraint of playing by only a few days each year was therefore small compensation for the hostility the Puritans felt.

When moral appeal alone did not check the players, Puritans argued for additional help from City authority. During the 1570s and 1580s players had been subject to numerous Acts, accountable to both local and central government (Bradbrook, "Status Seekers" 59). While Puritans had opposed playing for years, they had been in position to do little but preach against it and bring pressure upon local authorities; however, they were soon growing in numbers within the City government. The austere lifestyle and philosophy of the "Precisian" was ideal for administering a growing working class but critical of those who played or gamed--especially if they were so godless as to do so on the Sabbath, which, being a day free from work for many who could swell their audiences, players had been wont to do. Puritans' fears after 1576 were soon recognized as accomplished facts, as reflected in William Prynne's Histrion-Mastix. The Players' Scourge or Actor's Tragedy (1633), the culminating expression of the Puritan hatred for the theatre: "even in vitious Nero his raigne there were but three standing theatres in Pagan Rome, (though farre more spacious than our Christian London) and those three too

where the plague raignes; and therfore they be seldome infected" (in John Stephens' Satirical Essays, Characters, and Others, 1615).

many." To this Prynne added in the margin: "And if three Play houses were too much in heathen Rome, shall sixe be suffered in Christian London? God forbid" ("Epistle Dedicatory").

In "To The Christian Reader," Prynne attested to the popularity of the theatre, calling it a "puissant army" and a "large spreading gangrene."⁸ Indeed, the extent that the theatre captured the imagination of Londoners from the last decades of the sixteenth century makes the metaphor of infection apt. When in Twelfth Night (1599?) Sir Toby asks Malvolio, a "kind of Puritan" (2.3.140), "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (ll. 114-16), he is mocking the Puritans' objections to traditional festive occasions in general. From the stage, Puritans were seen as opposed to any merriment, notwithstanding their claims that the theatre was

⁸ Prynne's work is encyclopedic, more than one thousand pages, and at times he goes to extreme lengths to prove his thesis. For example, in evidence of the evil found at plays he mentions the

visible apparition of the Devill on the stage at the Belsavage Play-house, in Queen Elizabeths dayes (to the great amazement both of the actors and spectators) while they were there prophanely playing the History of Faustus (the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it) there being some distracted with that feareful sight. (556)

Prynne was reviving a story found in The Blacke Booke (1604) by "T. M." (perhaps Thomas Middleton), which recorded an appearance by the devil on stage during Doctor Faustus, "when the old Theatre crackt and frighted the audience."

sodomitical, violent, blasphemous, and instructive of evil, causing men to lust and women to be whores.⁹ William Rankins succinctly summed up the various opinions of actors in 1587: "some terme them Comedians, othersome Players, manie Pleasers, but I Monsters" (The Mirror Of Monsters fol. 2^r).

Whatever the many objections that Puritans could cite, it was the character of the plays, playhouses, and players themselves that offended them and initiated their attacks. In reaction to these charges, players and dramatists justified their own morality and that of their profession. Thomas Lodge's pamphlet Honest Excuses (1579) is one such attempt at a humanist response to the Puritans' charges; on a more satiric level is Henry Chettle's Kind-Harts Dreame (1592), where Tarleton's ghost advises the young to avoid the theatres lest they disturb the peace found there, while at the same time every sin peddler in the City resents the competition that the actors give them.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the players had triumphed, if only temporarily; more companies than ever were playing in London, attendance increased, and the Privy Council, as opposed to the City government, regulated playing. An addition by the printer to Th'Overthrow of Stage Playes (1599) says of actors that some "haue not bene

⁹ John Northbrooke, Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine Playes, or Enterludes (London, 1577) lists these and many additional evils that women in particular learn from attending plays.

afraied of late dayes to bring vpon the stage the very sober countenances, graue attire, modest and matronelike gestures & speaches of men & women to be laughed at as a scorne and reproch to the world" (Preface)--as we find in Twelfth Night.¹⁰ But while defending themselves against the Puritans and the pressures they brought to bear, the players became more aware of their need for sober and modest behavior. Thomas Heywood defended the players and their art:

as we are men that stand in the broad eye of the world, so should our manners, gestures, and behauiours, sauour of such gouernment and modesty, to deserue the good thoughts and reports of all men, and to abide the sharpest censure euen of those that are the greatest opposites to the quality. (An Apology for Actors; in Bentley, Seventeenth-Century Stage 15)

Puritan opposition was but one factor in the evolution of the London companies, one which encouraged players to improve their social standing, defend their profession, and develop their craft. Similarly, because the days of the road were not far removed--they were still a fact in time of plague--the competition for work was fierce enough to force poorer players out of London and back to the provinces, or even beyond. Companies like Pembroke's Men, which broke up

¹⁰ However, the Privy Council did step in and forbid the showing of a play at the Curtain theatre in 1601 that impersonated "some gentleman of good desert and quality" (J. R. Dasent, Acts of the Privy Council of England [1895]: 31:346; qtd. in Revels 3:44).

while on the road in 1593,¹¹ made the competition even more intense; the better players might be accommodated into another company, but the rest were set at liberty. So too, invitations to perform at Court, which were lucrative and prestigious for actors,¹² increased competition between companies.

Puritan and City opposition, the vagaries of plague, and the quality of talent were only three of the circumstances that saw that only the best players were working on the London stage in the 1590s. But the abilities of the lead players--the virtuoso performers--were also instrumental in establishing a standard of play.

3. The Virtuosos

When in 1594 the Lord Chamberlain's Men was formed, the players from the Admiral's, Pembroke's, and Strange's Men had consolidated into two companies, the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's, and these two companies in turn were centered upon the particular talents of their leading players. In the case of the Chamberlain's Men, that meant the playing abilities of Richard Burbage and Will Kempe, the most famous

¹¹ Cf. the expression "we burst at London" from The Runaway's Answer.

¹² £10 was the standard fee paid for an appearance at Court under Elizabeth; James doubled the amount.

clown of his day.¹³ The leading tragedian of the company, Burbage, was about twenty-six at this time. His rival and possible tutor was Edward Alleyn, lead player for the Admiral's Men. Kempe, Alleyn, and Burbage were probably fellow players at some point, though the exact dates and circumstances are difficult to pin down. While Kempe and Alleyn appear to have been members of different companies in the 1580s, Leicester's and Worcester's respectively, by 1594 they were both members of the Admiral's, performing in The Knack to Know a Knave (anon., 1592). Burbage too was with the Admiral's about 1590 as part of the joint Strange's-Admiral's company. In 1591 an argument between Alleyn and the Burbage family concerning profits split the two companies, with Alleyn taking the Admiral's Men to Henslowe's Rose theatre. Brian Morris conjectures that Richard Burbage may have gathered some of the younger players together to form Pembroke's Men.¹⁴ Whether or not

¹³ While Kempe was an obvious asset to the group, he was not part of what the other two apparently planned for their company. There is evidence that probably Burbage and definitely Shakespeare had plans to limit Kempe's style of play from very early on in their partnership, which dissolved about 1599. Kempe's leaving the Chamberlain's Men was a literal and symbolic end to a mode of play on the Elizabethan Stage (see below).

¹⁴ Hence the reason why the company had three plays of Shakespeare's that are described as so-called "Bad Quartos." These plays may have been reworked by the actors, since the playhouse copies were in another company's possession (Shrew, Arden ed., 52 ff.). The theories are many regarding Pembroke's Men and how they came to have these plays; the most commonly accepted view is that the Bad Quartos are "pirated" copies, but see note 43 below.

Burbage formed a new company at this time or not until 1594, the lives and talents of these three performers, Kempe, Alleyn, and Burbage, are bound up in such a way that their differences tell us much about the stage in general and playing styles in particular.

Not until the next century did the talents of Burbage dominate the stage; his fame, great in his own day, continued into the eighteenth century. However, Kempe and Alleyn, who epitomized the stage in the 1580s and 1590s, illustrate the changing styles and tastes in the London theatre, which Shakespeare and Burbage would further alter in the next few years. As clown and tragedian, Kempe and Alleyn were the stars of their day, but their uneasy alliance divided the stage into two disharmonious forms of play, eventually giving way to a new direction in Elizabethan drama.

a. Clowns

Much has been written regarding the clown of the Renaissance stage: was he a descendant of the medieval Vice? an ancestor of the wandering entertainer? or perhaps the village "natural" (Gray 673-74)?¹⁵ Shakespeare apparently believed that the fool, clown, and vice had descended from a single medieval type. In Twelfth Night Feste is called

¹⁵ Spivack's Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil gives the most thorough lineage of clown, vice, and fool.

Clown in the Folio speech headings, Fool by Olivia, and recognizes himself as Vice in his song of 4.2. Whatever his origins the clown was the premier player on the Elizabethan stage until supplanted by the tragedian.

What is most noticeable about the clown is that he often performed outside the narrative and illusionistic structures of the play,¹⁶ acting the mimic, making faces, and drawing attention to his own particular talents in songs and dances, impromptu routines, or wit contests with the audience. A master of these abilities, Kempe followed in the tradition of two equally famous names of the Elizabethan stage from the 1570s and 1580s, Richard Tarleton and Robert Wilson, both of the Queen's Men. Tarleton especially was famous for his jigs and impromptu skits, a skill which Gabriel Harvey referred to as "Tarletonizing" (Foure Letters and certeine Sonnets [1592]; see Gurr Playgoing in Shakespeare's London 121).

In the 1590s Kempe was regarded as one of the best of the clowns, and his name alone promised success. The title page to The Knacke to Know a Knave advertises "Kemps applauded Merrimentes of the men of Goteham, in receiuing the King into Gotsham";¹⁷ yet what Kempe did in the play may

¹⁶ See David Wiles, Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse: "The clown performed with, and not to, an audience constructed as equals" (179).

¹⁷ Yet the title page ascribes the play to "Ed. Allen and his Companie," indicating the fame of Alleyn, which, as Chambers observed, is unusual since the company of the Lord is not so noted (2:297). Thus in advertising the play, the

only be conjectured because merely a few quips by the "mad men" are evident in the text. In Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humour (1599), mention is made of a probable comic routine: "Would I had Kemp's shoes to throw after you" (4.5).¹⁸ We also know that he played Peter in Romeo because his name is substituted for the character's in 4.5 of Q2-- "Enter Will Kemp"--yet the byplay with the musicians is so slight for such prominent a player, as is the role, that additional extempore comic business may have been added, of which we now know nothing.¹⁹ His comic routines and style may have been influenced by the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, which he would have seen on his frequent tours abroad. In a pamphlet called "An Almond for a Parrat" (1590, possibly written by Thomas Nashe), Italian comedians are said to find Kempe a master of their style of play (Wright 517; and see Winifred Smith, The Commedia Dell'Arte [1912] 171).

name of the lead actor and the antics of a famous clown are both selling points.

¹⁸ However, Kempe is not in the cast list for the play, though he does appear in Every Man in His Humour one year earlier. He probably left the Chamberlain's Men prior to its staging, having sold his shares in the Globe that same year.

¹⁹ He also played Dogberry in Much Ado About Nothing (1598?), and though a comical role, it is limited in what may have been a deliberate attempt to check Kempe's excesses. W. A. Armstrong said that the bumbling Dogberry has a discursiveness that seems to anticipate "such digressions, by-play, and improvisations as Kempe may have brought to the role" ("Actors and Theatres" 195). See below for Donald Friedman's ideas about Kempe and Midsummer.

Kempe's greatest strengths were dancing and the jig.²⁰ John Marston commented in Scourge of Villainy (1598) that "the orbs celestial Will dance Kempe's jig" (3.372); and Edward Guilpin said in Skialetheia (1598) that "whores, bedles, bawdes, and sergeants filthily Chaunt Kems Jigge." His most famous dance was his "morris to Norwich" (Stationers' Register, 22 April 1600), undertaken on a bet, just after he left the Lord Chamberlain's company. Chambers commented that Kempe was perhaps jesting upon his recent departure from the Globe when, in an "Epistle to Ann Fitton," he puns "I haue daunst my selfe out of the world" (2:326).

With dancing before a play, impromptu antics during, and a jig after, the clown must have been a difficult presence to contain for dramatists or tragedians. If Doctor Faustus is any indication, no play was safe whatever the material.²¹ But Tarleton's and Kempe's type of role and

²⁰ Jigs were not mere dances but songs and bawdy knockabout farces filled with commentaries on current events and people (see Gurr, Sh.S. 157).

²¹ The texts that survive to us of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (1592-94?) have been changed by a number of rewritten scenes and additions to the original play. Most of these additions--by William Birde and Samuel Rowley in 1602, others by unknown authors--are expansions of the clowns' roles or comic action by Faustus, so that much of the play is a vehicle for clownage. The play was enormously popular, being revised on many occasions even up to 1631. But to what extent these revisions contained "new Additions" (as stated in the 1619 edition) that departed from the original text is unknown. The earliest extant editions of the play, called the A-text and the B-text, date from 1604 and 1616 respectively, and some conflation of the two generally serves as copy text for modern editions. See the

play were ending with the close of the sixteenth century; in the seventeenth, the term "jig" was one of contempt. Jonson said in The Alchemist (1610) "wherein, now, the Concupiscence of Daunces, and Antickes so raigneth, as to runne away from Nature, and be afraid of her, is the onely point of art that tickles the Spectators" ("To The Reader"); he repeated his objections in the "Induction" to Bartholmew Fair (1614). Shakespeare is equally unkind when Hamlet refers contemptuously to Polonius' performance tastes: "He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps" (2.2.496). After the turn of the century, only the Fortune, Curtain, and Red Bull playhouses offered jigs, and these were suppressed by the county authorities in 1612 (Gurr, Sh. S. 159).

That Shakespeare was well aware of the excesses of which Kempe was prone is clear from the advice Hamlet offers to the Players on controlling their clown: "And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them" (3.2.38-9). Nearly forty years later, the dramatist Richard Brome mentioned both Kempe and Richard Tarleton in The Antipodes (1638) as part of an older, more primitive drama. As in Shakespeare's Hamlet, Brome is apparently speaking his own opinions through the mouths of his characters. In Act 2, Richard Burbage and Edward Alleyn are given credit for rescuing the drama from its earlier

Revels edition, ed. John D. Jump, and Works, ed. Fredson Bowers.

"barbarisme" to the "perfection it now shines with" (2.2.16 ff.). The character Byplay is accused of the same offense to which Hamlet objected, distracting the audience. It was a fault found in "the days of Tarlton and Kempe" (11. 40-49). The entire scene offers actors advice on proper playing: avoid undignified posture such as "holding out your bum in a set speech"; stand still and pay attention to other players by "minding the reply"; and make certain to address "your coactors in the Scene" rather than the audience.

There is indication that Shakespeare sought to curb Kempe's impromptus early on, perhaps in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Donald M. Friedman has suggested that Kempe played the role of Bottom in the play and that Shakespeare anticipated all the extempore routines a clown would engage in if left to his own devices: to prevent his face-making, an ass's head is placed on his shoulders, to anticipate his mimicry, Bottom offers to play every part, to restrain his ad libs with the audience, he is given similar yet controlled repartee as Wall in Pyramus and Thisbe (Friedman 5,6).

Curtailling the clown's playing excesses was a necessary part of Christopher Marlowe's drama too. In the Prologue to Tamburlaine (1588?), he made a point of dismissing the clown along with bad rhyme, announcing that both the poetry and playing that spectators were accustomed to would not be found in his tragedy:

From jygging vaines of riming mother wits,
 And such conceits as clownage keepes in pay,
 Weele leade you to the stately tent of War....

Tamburlaine established a new direction for the stage, one that relied upon the tragedian's skills to lift the drama above the petty routines of clownage and to return it to the spectacle it had once been on the medieval stage.

b. Theatrum Mundi: From Clown to Tragedian

Marlowe's "high astounding tearms" conveyed a pageantry equalled only by the earlier Cycle plays, which in the eyes of Shakespeare, at least, had degenerated into noisy stuff.²² At their finest, the Mysteries had presented a cosmic view of God's universality that man could only witness, even when represented as active player, like Adam, Noah, or Abraham. The stage was the theatre of God's world, meant to represent the majestic plan of Creation. But the Tudor Morality play, concerned with the immediate,

²² Cf. Hamlet's advice to the Players when he objects to the loud, over-passionate actor who appeals only to the simplest viewer: "I would have such a fellow whipt for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod, pray you avoid it" (3.2.12-14). Termagant and Herod were both characters from the Cycles known for their violent, stupid behavior--as in the N-Town play The Magi, Herod, and the Slaughter of the Innocents, where Herod proclaims "I rent! I rawe! and now run I wode!" and proceeds to do so. Shakespeare is using what for him was an extreme example to prove his point. It is commonly believed that he saw at least part of the Cycle in Stratford when a boy (see Armstrong, "Actors and Theatres"; and Chambers, M.S. 2:358); the Mysteries were suppressed by the Crown in the 1570s.

individual questions of man's salvation, was less a theatre of the eternal than one of the present, represented by what Ernst Curtius called scena vitae.²³ Scenes of life not only particularized man's experiences but the skills of the professional actor as well, especially the clown's interplay with an audience.²⁴ Marlowe's plays lifted the drama to a secular, majestic universality that concerned itself with fantastic, titanic figures--godlike in their majesty--who used mankind, as God in the Cycles had, as witnesses to their grandeur.

Marlowe's drama is theatrum mundi, where empires and worlds are depicted as the playthings of great men, gained and lost between first entrance and final exit. He and Kyd reflect the Senecan influence of the singular, focused plot, where attention to the individual is paramount, as in *Faustus*, *Tamburlaine*, or *Barabas*.²⁵ Marlowe's supple blank

²³ Ernst Curtius traced the stage/world metaphor from antiquity to Christian Humanism and saw a development from scena vitae to theatrum mundi (138 ff.; and see above, Chapter Two, pp. 36-37). While the metaphor may have changed in concept as Curtius suggests, the depiction of life on the English stage went back and forth from theatrum mundi to scena vitae, until Shakespeare blended the two, particularizing the universality of life.

²⁴ The Tudor morality play was often a political instrument as well, offering temporal messages to its listeners, and serving the Protestant cause against Catholics (and vice versa) following Henry's split with Rome.

²⁵ Adding to the focus on the superhuman figure was the renewed sense of nationalism following the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which encouraged the history cycles that glorified the nation as well as its leaders; it was still a

verse, couched in dramatic dialogue, was more expressive for writer and player--superhuman characters concentrated action and emotion into pageantry that was swept by poetry, color, and spectacle.

As the most conventional, unrealistic aspect of the stage, poetry especially, with its forceful appeal, lent itself to more than decorative effect. So too, the powerful, revolutionary blank verse of Marlowe transformed the theatre. Stephen Greenblatt writes that Marlowe's verse must have appeared "after the jog-trot fourteeners of the preceding decades like reality itself" (222). While the 1590s were the "flowering time of the English Renaissance," when the English of poets, dramatists, and prose writers matured and reflected the vigor of the language (Salingar 68-7), poetry made easier and more natural the actions of players, as well as giving a majesty and stateliness to the action on stage and images in verse. A change in verse style facilitated a change in stage practices. One of Marlowe's contributions to the English Drama was to give the dramatist more responsibility for stage action and its representation, investing the playwright with new dramatic possibilities. The verse style of Marlowe caught the rhythms of English speech, and the expressive power of its images gave the dramatist far greater possibilities of dramatic tone and character development.

"world to bustle in," as Richard III says, if limited in size to England (R3 1.1.152).

The stylistic change in writing required a performance change as well: the virtuoso play of the tragedian, who held sway in Marlowe's drama, competed with the clown for prominence on the stage. In the earlier travelling companies, the clown was most often the premier player; the leading actor of a troupe took the role of the Vice and was often accompanied by the devil (see Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe 107 ff.). Going beyond mere allegorical features, the Vice took on a "distinctive theatrical personality" in the later moralities that made him the "homiletic showman, intriguer extraordinary, and master of dramatic ceremonies" (Spivack 135; 151).

Obviously the prominence of such a role made it the most desirable for players. Audiences too appreciated the Vice: Peter Happé found the greatest popularity of the character to be between 1550 and 1580, until an increasing sophistication in the drama led to a deemphasis in the Vice (Hammond, Introduction to New Arden: Richard III 100). On the later Elizabethan stage, the Vice was more often a secondary role of comedic mischief maker.²⁶ By 1594, when

²⁶ As a foil to good, representing human weakness and poor judgment, the Vice could still be the most interesting person on the stage, as he was in the Tudor plays. Shakespeare makes use of him with his tragedian in Richard III, and with his clown in Twelfth Night (though in true Shakespearean paradox, Malvolio is more a vice than is Feste or Sir Toby), The Merry Wives of Windsor (1597?), and 1 and 2 Henry IV (1596-7?; Kempe probably played Falstaff). On the Tudor stage, the devil was a secondary figure to the Vice, a buffoon who behaved stupidly, and the two were usually adversaries. Obviously the structure of a play and the company that played it determined what roles the clown

The Knack to Know a Knave appeared, the title page gave prominence to "Allen and his companie" over Kempe's "merrimentes."

c. Tragedians

At the center of Marlowe's spectacle was Edward Alleyn, by all accounts the most gifted tragedian of the London stage until rivaled in encomiums by Richard Burbage.²⁷ Both were credited by Richard Brome as the two who had lifted the theatre from the "barbarism" of the 1580s, raising it to "the perfection it now shines with" (The Antipodes [1638] 2.2.16). In 1583, at the age of seventeen, Alleyn was one of Worcester's players and at some point in the next seven years joined the Lord Admiral's Men. By 1592 he was recognized as the finest tragedian on the stage. Nashe says in Pierce Penilesse (1592) that "not Roscius nor Aesope, those admyred tragedians that haue liued euer since before Christ was borne, could euer performe more in action than

or tragedian played. In Marlowe's plays there is no doubt which roles were meant for the tragedian Alleyn; Shakespeare's plays are not always so clearly drawn in role definition.

²⁷ Alleyn retired in 1597, but when the Fortune Theatre opened in 1600 he returned to playing. Besides his business interests in the new theatre, it was said that the Queen herself had asked him to return to the stage. A letter from the Privy Council that interceded on Alleyn's behalf with the Middlesex justices of the peace, signed by the earl of Nottingham, Lord Hunsdon, and Robert Cecil, said that it was her request that he should perform again. (See Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare 13, and Chambers 4:297).

famous Ned Allen." And in commenting on Edmund Spenser in that same year, Nashe again praised the talents of Alleyn: "his very name (as that of Ned Allen on the common stage) was able to make an ill matter good" (Strange Newes; Works, 1:215; 296).

Alleyn's roles include Tamburlaine, Barabas, Faustus, Muly Mahamet (Battle of Alcazar [1589], Peele), Tamar Cam (1 Tamar Cam [1592], now lost), Cutlack (Cutlack, a lost play), and Sebastian (Frederick and Basilea [1597], anon.), with Orlando (Orlando Furioso [c. 1591], Greene) and Hieronimo (Spanish Tragedy) as probable. By all indications his style was big and demonstrative, as the bigger-than-life roles obviously call for: Edward Guilpin said in Skialetheia (1598):

Clodius me thinks lookes passing big of late,
With Dunston's browes, and Allens Cutlacks gate.
What humours haue possest him so, I wonder,
His eyes are lightning, and his words are thunder.
Stalking and roaring like Iobs great deuill.

A coney-catching tract from 1597 by "E. S.", called The Discovery of the Knights of the Post, makes an association with one of Alleyn's performances: "S. bent his browes and fetcht his stations vp and downe the rome, with such furious Iesture as if he had beene playing Tamberlane on a stage." Jonson mentions his objections to Alleyn's "ranting style"

in the Induction to The Staple of News (1626);²⁸ yet Alleyn himself had acknowledged that style, calling himself "the fustian king" in a self-deprecating letter to his wife (qtd. by Bradbrook, "Common Player" 196). For King James' triumphal pageant of 1604, Alleyn took the part of Genius: "his gratulatory speech was delivered with excellent Action, and a well tun'de, audible voyce" (The Magnificent Entertainment [1604], Dekker). His performance style was evidently equal to the pomp, size, and impressiveness of James's arrival into London; as an actor, Alleyn was exceptionally powerful in voice and bearing.

4. Reform and Change in Styles

For Shakespeare's company, the styles of playing of a Kempe or Alleyn were apparently objectionable. As we have seen, Kempe's type of acting was probably curtailed by Shakespeare's scripts not long after the formation of the company, and certainly by Twelfth Night he retired or was replaced by a clown more restrained in his style of play.

²⁸ The year Alleyn died. In Epigram lxxxix (1616), Jonson compared Alleyn to Roscius and Aesop--as had Nashe in 1592 (Chambers 2:297). Gurr suggests that Jonson's earlier praise was used when "act" still had rhetorical connotations ("Who Strutted?" 97). Possibly Jonson's later criticism of Alleyn is due to a distinction in styles, the later one lacking in a new naturalness, while the former was suited to "action." However, Jonson's mercuriality must be kept in mind; with regard to Shakespeare, he criticized him while alive in private and praised Shakespeare in public after he had died.

Although not a member of the Chamberlain's Men, Alleyn was part of the small fraternity of professional players in London, and Shakespeare would know his style very well; if done poorly, it was apparently offensive enough to merit , special mention along with the uncontrolled clown in Hamlet's advice to the Players.

Scholars have disagreed as to whether or not Kempe and especially Alleyn are the objects of Hamlet's derision--or even if Hamlet is speaking for Shakespeare.²⁹ There are

²⁹ Dover Wilson (Hamlet [1941] 181; 195) and G.B. Harrison (Shakespeare and the Theatre [1927] 83) are two who believed that Alleyn was the object of Hamlet's scorn. But Harbage maintained that Hamlet's advice was merely a plea for "moderation and good taste," which was profitable for anyone ("Elizabethan Acting" 689), and Armstrong argued that Hamlet's reference to having "a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant," which "out-Herods Herod," was not, as many believed, referring to Tamar Cam--a lost play that Alleyn played in--but rather a tyrant taken from the Miracle plays, who was known for bombast ("Shakespeare and the Acting of Edward Alleyn" 82). David Wiles is another who maintains that Shakespeare is not speaking through Hamlet: "The men who stood in the yard of the Globe would not have tolerated Shakespeare's play had they not been able to make the obvious distinction between 'Hamlet' and Shakespeare" (ix). Yet groundlings, and we may assume those who paid for seats, "tolerated" a considerable number of personal references by playwrights, especially comments upon topical matters of the day. While the so-called "War of the Theatres" involved the private playhouses and their dramatists, Shakespeare may have briefly made comment on their satirical, moral attacks upon one another in Duke Senior's retort to Jacques' seeming hypocrisy in As You Like It (2.7.64-69; see Harbage, Rival Traditions 112). As well, Love's Labors Lost is a play filled with the parodies of writing styles, behavior, and, perhaps, people. Wiles maintains that in Hamlet "the discussion of acting is introduced because of its bearing upon Hamlet's state of mind" (ix); but that does not explain why the subject is couched in contemporary events, and it suggests that the character has a living, breathing existence apart from what was on Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the play. Hamlet's scenes with the Players are filled with topical material, which the public playhouse audiences

reasons to believe, however, that Shakespeare and his dramatic character held the same views on acting, which reflect directly on the styles of Kempe and Alleyn. As a sharer in the Globe company, Shakespeare surely had the competition on his mind when he wrote Hamlet, probably in 1600. As lead player for the Admiral's Men, Edward Alleyn had retired from the theatre in 1597. He returned to the stage and rejoined his former company in 1600 when they moved into their own new building, the Fortune, thus renewing his rivalry with the Globe and its players. It is not surprising then that in Hamlet Shakespeare makes a statement on his dramatic medium, the player's art, in order to advertise their superiority over rival actors and their theatres. Dramatic material was obviously a matter of choice; companies, even Shakespeare's, bought what plays they could from various dramatists to fill an exhausting repertory schedule. But where one theatre differed from another was primarily in the quality of their players.

To understand Hamlet's advice to the Players (3.2), it is necessary to place it in conjunction with two other scenes: Rosencrantz's announcement of the approach of the "tragedians of the city" and Hamlet's welcome of the Players (both in 2.2). These earlier scenes are concerned with topical events and the physical realities of playing.

apparently delighted in, and, more than mere aesthetic pronouncements, that material has relevance for the economic interests of Shakespeare and his company (see below).

Rosencrantz comments on "the late innovation," which had forced the company onto the road, and then on an "eyrie of children, little eyases" who offer competition to the adult actors. The "eyrie of children" is a reference to the re-establishment of children's companies in London with the Children of the Chapel who played at the Blackfriars. After 1600, the children's companies would give the public theatres considerable competition, with dramatists such as Jonson and Marston writing for them. Shakespeare, in fact, was one of the few who did not.

When Hamlet instructs the lead Player on proper acting, therefore, it is in a context of familiar, contemporary events, from which the audience can make associations, because the fictional travelling company at Elsinore has similarities with that of the Globe. They too occasionally tour, face competition from noisy, little creatures, and, most importantly, are more successful in playing than the other men's company, the skills of Ned Alleyn notwithstanding. The audience is continually reminded of the performance aspect of the play, a self-consciousness of the actor's craft that the knowing spectator is invited to respond to.

Merely claiming a superiority of playing for his company is not enough, so Shakespeare furnishes specific instances of poor playing and argues by visual example, making distinctions between the playing styles of the Players and the Chamberlain's Men, as in Hamlet's anger with

the character Lucianus: "leave thy damnable faces and begin" (3.2.253). Taken in their entirety, the scenes involving the Players are set within the common experiences of the audience, emphasizing the disparity between their world and the fictional stage world they watch.

While illusion can take many forms in its presentation of reality, for Hamlet impersonation is best presented by an attention to articulation, temperant and discrete gesture, not tearing a "passion to totters," and by a proper imitation of humanity. By example, he says

I have seen play--and heard others praise, and
that highly--not to speak it profanely, that,
neither having th'accent of Christians, nor the
gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so
strutted and bellow'd that I have thought some of
Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made
them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.
(29-35)

Hamlet's derision has specific reference. In the New Arden edition of the play, Jenkins glosses "Christian" as "ordinary decent beings," but Shakespeare may be wittily referring to some of Alleyn's roles, pagans like Tamberlane, Tamar Cam, Muly Mohomet, and Barabas. The part of Faustus would even make the word "Christian" ironic, just as Marlowe himself had charges of impiety brought against him. Because Hamlet declares that "the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature" (20-22), then the "Nature's journeymen" described by him are probably the hired personators, the

minor workmen who present her on stage.³⁰ In like manner, it may be argued, Hamlet is alluding to Alleyn's style of bombast, also foreign to artful playing because it is more worthy of the hired man, not the skilled sharer of a company.

Both the virtuoso performers, tragedian and clown, are singled out by Hamlet for change: "reform it altogether" (38); his remarks regarding the clown are meant to curb the "pitiful ambition" of that player's ego, which interferes with the "necessary question of the play" (42-44) by adding to his part--what today we refer to as "upstaging," that is, drawing attention away from the primary action to oneself.

Shakespeare had clear ideas about quality playing; as early as Richard III he may have mocked the poor actor:

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
Speak, and look back, and pry on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw;
Intending deep suspicion, ghastly looks
Are at my service like enforced smiles;
And both are ready in their offices
At any time to grace my stratagems. (3.5.5-11)³¹

³⁰ The Oxford English Dictionary defines "journeyman," first used in 1463 (and the current definition), as "one who, having served his apprenticeship to a handicraft or trade, is qualified to work at it for a days' wages"; and "distinguished on one side from 'apprentice,' on the other from 'master'."

³¹ The implication is that the "deep" tragedian, meaning one whose mind is profoundly absorbed (O.E.D. 10), uses these gestures to indicate the seriousness of his thoughts, and therefore the mannerisms identify for the character Buckingham how the tragic actor feigns behavior. However, Richard is the consummate actor; for Buckingham to emulate a "stage player," he has only to imitate Richard. Their scene together before the Lord Mayor was probably far

Following Hamlet, Shakespeare again alluded to the type of acting that he objected to in Troilus and Cressida, when Ulysses says that Patroclus' mimicry and "awkward actions" are

like a strutting player, whose conceit
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound
'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage.
(1.3.153-56)

Bradbrook has noted that most passages on acting found in Shakespeare's plays ridicule poor playing (Elizabethan Stage Conditions 106).³² However, Hamlet offers a pointed and

more exaggerated in the mannerisms described by Buckingham than in the rest of the play, thus increasing the depths of their insincerity. As Richard Burbage and the man playing Buckingham acted in the manner of the "deep tragedian," the audience probably enjoyed the moment all the more for the more obvious duplicity of their characters. Calling attention to a particular style of play and then demonstrating it would point up the distinctions between the actor's style and the character's "acting," much as would the Players in Hamlet as compared to Burbage's personation of the Prince. Note too the contrast that the word "deep" has in this scene with that of Clarence's "O God! if my deep pray'rs cannot appease thee, / But thou wilt be aveng'd on my misdeeds, / Yet execute thy wrath in me alone!" spoken before the Keeper of the Tower just prior to Clarence's murder (1.4.69). The contrast points up the disparities in "true" and feigned emotions.

³² Two examples can be offered from 1 and 2 Henry IV: Falstaff, in his changed roles with Prince Hal at the tavern, says "I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyes' vein" (2.4.386-87), which mocks Thomas Preston's Lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of plesant mirth, containing the Life of Cambises, King of Percia (1569). "Cambyes' vein" was an idiomatic expression used to suggest an old, ludicrous playing style, as in Buckingham's Rehearsal (1672): "There, strutting Heroes, with a grim-fac'd train, / Shall brave the Gods, in King Cambyes' vein"

specific treatise on reform, worked neatly into the play so as to be unobtrusive as possible.

Harbage maintained that the Preface to The Cyprian Conqueror, or The Faithless Relict (anon., 1633) contains the "earliest specific instructions for acting extant in English" ("Elizabethan Acting" 698-99). The Cyprian Conqueror, written by a "country man," is a manuscript play evidently intended for academic use, as Harbage himself admitted. Because bad, stereotyped acting manuals have appeared even when acting has been relatively unforced and natural, Harbage would not admit the play as evidence of what was then taking place on the Elizabethan stage (698-99).³³ The instructions in the Preface are very exact, as

(Prologue; see The New Arden 77, A. R. Humphreys, ed.). In 2 Henry IV, Pistol goes to Justice Shallow's orchard to find Falstaff and report to him the King's death:

Fal. I pray thee now deliver them like a man of
this world.
Pist. A foutre for the world and worldlings base!
.....
Fal. O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news?
Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof.
.....
Pist. Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons?
And shall good news be baffled?
Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap.
.....
Why then lament therefore. (5.3.97-108)

Humphreys has commented on the "highflown Orientalism" of these lines (174), which, along with the "histrionic tag," again remind us of Marlowe's plays: "The Guise is slain, and I rejoice therefore" (Massacre at Paris [1593] xviii.150).

³³ See Rosenberg in Bentley, Seventeenth-Century Stage 102.

the following demonstrates:

The other parts of action, is in y^e gesture, w^{ch} must be various, as requird; as in a sorrowfull parte, y^e head must hang downe; in a proud, y^e head must bee lofty; in an amorous, closed eies, hanging downe lookes, & crossed armes, in a hastie, fuming, & scratching y^e head &c....
(Qtd. in Gurr, Sh.S. 99)

But it is Hamlet's advice to the Players that provides the earliest, most thorough instructions on acting in the English drama, if we believe that Shakespeare shared Hamlet's preferences.

These tastes in acting were surely tempered by time and experience, because he did write bombastic parts, as those of Titus and especially Richard III indicate. Yet even in these plays, a degree of recognizable humanity moors the characters to a modicum of reality, helped in part by self-referential dialogue that calls attention to itself by mentioning the playing art. Indeed, that art is continually apparent in the work, as if Richard were part of a play-within-a play.³⁴ Buckingham's speech from Richard III, above, is an indication of this self-consciousness, while Titus Andronicus offers another example. After Titus' hand is cut off (3.1), he plays upon the word "hand" several

³⁴ Anthony Hammond notes that the role of Clarence in Richard III "allowed the span of the poet's abilities. His suffering, fear, guilt and death make a powerful impression early in the play; they serve to remind us that Richard's schemes are not played out upon mere puppets" (New Arden 111).

times: "What violent hands can she lay on her life?" (3.2.25), "O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands" (3.2.29), "justice at his hands" (4.3.104), "his own right hand" (5.3.37). The image suggests that Titus has no voice, as certainly as Lavinia has none, because he has no hand to lend gesture to his words; he is stage mute, having neither voice nor demonstrable emotions. Speaking to Marcus he says: "Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands / And cannot passionate our ten-fold grief / With folded arms" (3.2.5-7). The final statement of Titus' inarticulate state comes when Tamora says, "Titus, I am come to talk with thee"; Titus replies, "No, not a word, how can I grace my talk, / Wanting a hand to give 't that accord?" (5.2.16-18). Although Titus is quite articulate about his inability to gesture, and thus to "talk," like many of Shakespeare's characters his own eloquent words ironically persuade us that he is indeed unable to speak.³⁵

³⁵ Probably the best example of the paradox of an "inarticulate" character speaking articulately is that of Hotspur in 1 Henry IV, whose eloquence and wit are used to deny that he is capable of such things: "I had rather be a kitten and cry 'mew' / Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers" (3.1.123-24). But on the subject of honor he is quite hyperbolically poetic:

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honor from the pale-fac'd moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honor by the locks.
(1.3.201-05)

It is unclear whether Titus should be seen as a "concession to the pit" at a time when revenge plays were popular, as a piece of pure spectacle, or as dramatic fare with subtler political and social pretensions that may have played to the groundlings but satisfied more educated tastes as well. Still, the dark, somewhat grotesque reminders of his and Lavinia's mutilations are instances that point up humanity in the play, because they are self-referential reminders of the players' art and stage practices, which ironically wink at the grotesqueries. In Titus, we find repeatedly that without the large action there is no language, no meaning. The play appears to reflect, perhaps makes comment upon, the type of dramatic fare and the style of acting on the stage at that time.³⁶

Shakespeare's script sharply distinguishes between the excesses of Glendower's prose and Hotspur's "simple" language, yet Hotspur's eloquence is meant to establish a plainspoken character for the audience:

Glend. I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
Hot. Why, so can I, or so can any man,
 But will they come when you do call for them?

Glend. Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
 Against my power, thrice from the banks of Wye
 And sandy-bottom'd Severn have I sent him
 Bootless home, and weather-beaten back.
Hot. Home without boots, and in foul weather too!
 How scapes he agues, in the devil's name?
 (3.1.50-52; 60-65)

³⁶ Commenting on Richard III, Harold Brooks says it is a play in which "neo-classical and the popular native traditions were brought together" (qtd. by Hammond, New Arden 95). This extends somewhat to Titus as well, notwithstanding its more obvious Senecan qualities. Whether tragedy or melodrama, Titus was a very popular play. Jonson, who favored a different sort of drama, notes in his

5. The Boy Actor

As in Shakespeare's earlier drama, the art of the boy actor in the adult companies was also probably dependent on the large action to suggest emotion, and that style may have marked their playing on the Elizabethan stage in general. Seltzer's term "descriptive" is particularly apt for indicating their performance style. Contemporary writers praise the abilities of these "boy-actresses,"³⁷ some to a remarkable extent. The most noteworthy example is found in Jonson's The Devil is an Ass (1616) where Richard Robinson, a well-known boy actor, is said to have attended a dinner party as a woman, to have flirted and quipped bawdily with the men, and yet no one saw through his disguise (2.8). Harbage pointed out in "Elizabethan Acting" that this "performance" was "off the stage on the stage" (691 note; italics his), suggesting that such theatricality was not truly of the stage but extra-theatrical. However, this explanation seems strained; whether a theatre audience would accept such realism is arguable, but the ability to do so

Induction to Bartholomew Fair the great appeal of Titus, when he likens it to the type of play long out of date:

Hee that will sweare, Ieronimo, or Andronicus are the best playes, yet, shall passe vnexcepted at, heere, as a man whose Iudgement shews it is constant, and hath stood still, these fiue and twentie, or thirtie yeeres.

³⁷ Harley Granville-Barker's term, Prefaces To Shakespeare (1927) xxvii.

cannot be ignored. There are many other instances within plays, Jonson's Epicoene; or The Silent Woman (1609) for one, Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew (Induction) for another, that extol the personation abilities of these boys.

Apprentices began as young as ten years old and continued to act women's roles (or young boy's) until their voices changed or they grew too big.³⁸ Perhaps they did not have the emotive skills of men; however, it is a mistake to think of them as artless children. The tradition of child acting was a long one, with training as choirboys in abbeys and churches, playing Latin plays in grammar schools, and taking part in Mystery pageants and pageants of welcome for visiting sovereigns (Hillebrand 9). Their training was extensive, especially in singing and dancing. Harold Hillebrand observed that prior to 1580 there was virtually no distinction between their work and that of the men's, that they performed similar plays, and that "the years 1515 to 1580 belong to the child players of the Elizabethan theatre" (253-54).

Because the boys were faced with the task of portraying the temperament, mannerisms, and experiences of women, they were most likely aided by poetically descriptive portraits and a mannered stylization of play.³⁹ And because they

³⁸ See Herbert Berry, "The Player's Apprentice."

³⁹ See Peter Hyland, "'A Kind of Woman': The Elizabethan Boy-Actor and the Kabuki Onnagata." Hyland comments on the paradox of a highly stylized, conventional style merged with believable characterization: "There must

performed with adults in all the London companies, the boy actor was also most likely the common denominator for the actor's art on the Elizabethan stage, that is, their playing art and style had to complement and to merge with that of the adult players. Two entirely different modes of presentation, like two keys in music, would be difficult to sustain simultaneously when two characters were interacting.⁴⁰ And, since the boys performed with the adult players, it argues for a more formal approach to style by all actors when the boys appeared on stage, a style that maintained stability for the shifting perspectives that would come from a multi-stylistic approach to stage action.

inevitably have been a high degree of artificiality in the performances of the boys' companies, as anyone who has seen a school boys' production of Shakespeare will agree; paradoxically, the women's roles could have been amongst the most realistic, since a boy in a dress is more like a girl than a boy in a white beard is like an old man" (1). Also see Kathleen McLuskie, "The Act, the Role, and the Actor: Boy Actresses on the Elizabethan Stage." McLuskie notes R. A. Foakes' Illustrations of the English Stage 1580-1642 (1985), which shows that the representation of women on the Elizabethan stage were modeled after contemporary iconographic traditions. "The representation of a lover," says McLuskie, "or a tyrant or a woman is part of a system of representation rather than the result of a single conventional attribute" (123).

⁴⁰ Such incompatibility would perhaps argue for the need to replace Kempe if his impromptu clowning and playing style conflicted with that of Burbage and the other players. The idea that different styles of playing were not used simultaneously would also support my contention that the clown of the 1590s predominantly played outside the narrative, fictional script, in a style that I have called "presentational," that is, one that was meant to display the entertainer's own particular talents (see Chapter Two). Within the narrative, the clown's style was probably different enough to signal that he was part of the play proper and using a "conventional" playing style.

The conventional style established a proper decorum for the boys' behavior and presented a point of visual reference in a shifting dramatic picture, a style that relied upon the indicative gesture, demonstrable action, and poetic description to suggest what emotions were being expressed and what an audience should see.

The principal problem that we face today with regard to the boy actress is an aesthetic difference from the Elizabethans, who accepted the illusion of boys personating women.⁴¹ They were the most prominent of theatrical conventions, yet their talents were more than adequate to sustain dramatic illusion. In attempting to assess their playing, scholars have raised the question of their talents as compared to children today. Harbage maintained that "common sense dictates that Elizabethan boys were no different essentially from boys today" ("Elizabethan Acting" 702). While perhaps no different in spirit, they were certainly different in ability, given their extensive training. Consider, as an analogy, the vast differences in

⁴¹ S.L. Bethell coined the phrase "dual consciousness" to describe the audience's ability to focus on the play and the player simultaneously; the viewer's consciousness is forced from convention to illusion and back again, which explains how the stage could be intensely realistic one moment and use the most mannered of conventions the next (see Chapter Five, p. 172). The continual shift from fiction to reality and contemporary event to dramatic tale is an acquired ability that we today are unaccustomed to ("Shakespeare's Actors" 203; or see Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition 28-42). Honigmann refers to this as "double consciousness," which is essentially the same idea ("Shakespeare's Theatre," in Alexander's Introductions To Shakespeare 42).

sports figures today--many still children--from only a few decades ago; the degrees of training and concentration on skills have vastly improved their abilities. So too, the degree to which children were trained in Shakespeare's day argues for a great difference in playing skills from children today. Michael Jamieson quotes Sir Sidney Lee's statement that "the nature of boys is a pretty permanent factor in human society" (Shakespeare and the Modern Stage [1906] 19) as an example of the "Toryism of this Boys-will-be-boys view." As a rebuttal to Lee, Jamieson quotes from George Pierce Baker:

Much of the current wonder that Shakespeare's heroines could have been adequately represented by boys and youths vanishes if one knows the contemporary evidence as to their exceeding skill and realises how long, thorough, and varied the training of an Elizabethan actor could be. (The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist [1907] 56-57; qtd. by Jamieson 73)

The inability of some scholars to believe that youthful performers were capable of presenting a complete stage personality appears to be a reflection of modern biases--much as Elizabethan acting styles are often seen only from a modern day understanding and perspective.

a. The Boys and the Company's Repertory

More young men than boys, the boy apprentices appeared as walk-ons and minor characters until adequately prepared

for larger parts, which probably did not occur until the age of fifteen or sixteen.⁴² Given the commercial nature of the stage, boys would be chosen from the most promising of young actors and given extensive training before being entrusted with a portion of the company's livelihood. In Shakespeare's plays from the mid-1590s to the end of decade, the women's roles are multifarious and increasingly prominent. Following Twelfth Night, however, there is a noticeable lessening in role size for the boy actresses. There are several possible explanations for the change, which in turn may have influenced the repertory of Shakespeare's company.

Perhaps the change in how boys were used after 1600 was simply a matter of dramatic genre; the love entanglements of the comedies and especially the pastorals made more use of their talents than did many of the tragedies or even the romances. Whenever necessary, the talents of the boy actors could once again serve new dramatic scripts, as in the tragedies King Lear, Macbeth, and especially Antony and Cleopatra, while the boys also performed the plays in the older, pre-1600 repertory.

b. An Influence on Dramatic Style

But another possibility exists as to why the art of

⁴² See Richard David's "Shakespeare And The Players," 150.

these young players was apparently deemphasized following Twelfth Night. Shakespeare certainly fashioned his plays and the company's repertory around the particular talents of his players, using them to their best advantage.⁴³ Richard Burbage, about thirty years old at this time, had at least a decade's playing experience to draw upon, and his abilities cannot help but have influenced Shakespeare's scripts. The stage experience of the boy actresses during the 1590s most likely affected Shakespeare's plays as well. A line of roles by physical and character "type" can be traced from mid-decade, when the company was formed, to the end of the century. Mention is made of age: Juliet's youth is an essential part of Romeo, argued by her mother as "not fourteen" (1.3.12); complexion: Rosalind describes Phoebe by her "inky brows, your black silk hair" (AYL 3.5.46); and height: "How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak: / How low am I? I am not yet so low / But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes" (Hermia, MND 3.2.296-98). While wigs could

⁴³ Rosalind in As You Like It has more lines than either Macbeth or Prospero, requiring a boy with true virtuosity (Hill 84; and see Baldwin 228-29). Steven Urkowitz notes that some women's characterizations in the "Bad Quartos" often vary considerably between Folio and Quarto texts. At times in the earliest version a female character is reserved, modest, and unobtrusive; yet in a later text she becomes a significant and active presence in the scene, in language and in gesture. What most editors have called "pirated" texts, Urkowitz suggests may indicate dramatic revisions (292-304). The talents of particular boys, like those of the men, argue for such revisions. In Twelfth Night, for instance, if a boy who could sing were to have played the role, might we not expect to find a scene (cf. 2.4) where Viola rather than Feste sings to Orsino?

change the coloring of a boy, and his bearing might suggest youthfulness or maturity, Shakespeare surely took advantage of their physical characteristics as much as possible--as he did with his adult players, so indicated by the names Slender or Aguecheek.

It is speculation to suggest what roles may have been played by the same boys; however, like the physical descriptions of his poetry, Shakespeare appears to use the particular talents of his boy actresses to frame his characterizations in subsequent plays. For example, the taller Helena in A Midsummer Night's Dream--or perhaps Hermia, literally growing in the roles⁴⁴--would have played Portia, Beatrice, Rosaline, and Viola, since certain characteristics follow each of these characters. Portia disguises herself as a man, as do Rosaline and Viola, and each is invested with wit, vivacity, and the ability to more than meet men on their own terms. Similarly, the confidante roles of Hero, Celia, and Olivia point to a boy who may have been slowly improving in craft, given to more serious

⁴⁴ Hermia is the sprightlier of the two roles, which is more in keeping with the following lead-boy actress parts. Because they changed physically in a short time, it is difficult with the boys to follow a clear line of roles. When mention is made of smallness or youth, we more often assume that a new boy was in the role; Maria, for instance, in Twelfth Night. Sir Toby says, "Look where the youngest wren of nine comes" (3.2.66-67). One could trace a line from Juliet to Hermia, roles but one year apart, to Portia, Mistress Ford, Beatrice, Rosalind, and Viola, the boy having grown sufficiently for Rosalind to say "I am more than common tall" (AYL 1.3.115).

observations in the course of the action, until the role of Olivia, where a subtle cleverness and sophisticated charm are evident. After A Midsummer Night's Dream, the lead boy actress and his confidante appear to consist of two halves to one personality, buoyancy and wit on the one hand and down-to-earth seriousness on the other.⁴⁵

By making mention of complexion and size, Shakespeare is aiding the boy in his personated behavior, using his real physical characteristics to blend into the illusion of a suggested appearance that must be given by poetical description. The audience is led in stages as to what it should see, as when Orsino says to Viola,

For they shall yet belie thy happy years,
That say thou art a man. Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part. (1.4.30-34)

The boy actress may also have been aided by his playing a girl disguised once more as a boy, which perhaps helped some actors during physical changes in adolescence--voice and gait, for example: his feminine disguise would be helped by

⁴⁵ Robertson Davies says that Rosalind has no alter ego but moves through the play alone, in effect having no confidante (66-67). However, Celia is the subtle voice of reason and gentle reminder to Rosalind that she is endangering her emotional well-being by her game of disguise:

You have simply misus'd our sex in your love-prate. We must have your doublet and hose pluck'd over your head, and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest. (4.1.201-04)

an exaggerated, more artificial style that mocked its own deceit. Portia describes how she'll appear as a "bragging Jack":

When we are both accoutered like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride. (Merchant 3.4.63-68)

At the end of the century, Shakespeare's two most gifted boys probably ended their careers, as boy actresses at least. When Rosalind speaks the Epilogue in As You Like It, it was an honor in Shakespeare's infrequent use of the afterword.⁴⁶ And with two female leads, Twelfth Night is arguably a "farewell" piece that showcased their talents, an exceptional work that displayed the art of the boy player to the fullest. Both roles of Olivia and Viola suggest the art of particular boys.⁴⁷ Viola, the most boyish of the

⁴⁶ Epilogues appear in 2 Henry IV, All's Well That Ends Well, Pericles, and The Tempest; Chorus ends Henry V, and Puck has a short end piece in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Puck too was surely played by a boy; but Rosalind's address is unique in its request for deserved praise. However, it may be possible, even likely, that many prologues and epilogues written for specific occasions have been lost to us.

⁴⁷ The roles may indicate age as well. Olivia requires the mature, self-possessed assurance of a young woman in control of her private and public life. And when Viola says "I can sing" (1.2.57), but never does--Orsino calls for music but Feste is sent for, even though Viola is standing by the Duke's side (2.2)--it suggests the art for which the boy actors were known. In this instance, however, perhaps his voice was cracking or had already changed enough to make it impossible.

disguised women's roles, is the mainspring of the action. The role tested the abilities of the young man more than any previously, not only in the size of the part but in the emotional stretches required of the character: Viola's love for Orsino, rejection of Olivia, melancholy for her brother, and fear of Sir Andrew together require a total personality.⁴⁸

Olivia too is a part that demonstrated remarkable talent, principally in its need for restraint while suggesting an effortless ease of manner. Echoing an observation by Granville-Barker, Robertson Davies says that Shakespeare's women seldom display coyness or emotional states that show a vacillation of will, which may lead to a self-exploration that destroys dramatic illusion (Shakespeare's Boy Actors 42-43). Nevertheless, though Olivia is strong of will, her coy flirtations with the Duke's young messenger depict a woman coming to terms with her own desires, which supersede her brother's mourning. She is a character confident of her sexuality.

With regard to the art of the boy actor, a combination

⁴⁸ The role of Viola, as is Cleopatra, is notable for its variety and range of expression. It is possible that the part presented contrasting acting styles, with the more formal style used in scenes with Olivia especially, in order to suggest the artfulness of their witty repartee and to maintain a proper decorum of two "women" in a love match. However, as I have suggested above and argue particularly in Chapter Five, the art of the boy actor was predominantly formal so as to act as a focal point for the shifting perspectives that came from a mixture of dramatic styles.

of individual playing skills as well as changes in genre influenced the repertory--as reflected by Shakespeare's plays--of the Chamberlain's-King's Men around the turn of the century. Perhaps a few years were needed to give the former apprentices the stage experience needed for more demanding roles. By the time that Hamlet was written, the company's repertory had expanded, offering the company greater freedom in the older plays that it chose to return to the stage.

The boy actors were the great levellers of style upon the stage in that they held the adult players to the necessities of the boys' stylizations. But this is not to denigrate either their abilities or their more stylized approaches to their playing art. On the contrary, two different styles within the same play, while not used simultaneously, offered an increased dramatic perspective of stage action that heightened dramatic irony, suggesting multiple ways for an audience to interpret action. Much like any other theatrical convention, these different styles, one "stylized" and the other more "natural," indicated theatrical symbolism to an audience. Shakespeare's plays after 1600 suggest that a mixture of playing styles were called for in his scripts; this was but one more change in his dramatic art that we can see developing out of the traditions of the English stage.

Conclusion: Tradition and Change

If we attempt to set a standard of playing on the London stage of the 1590s, we should first note that a compelling bigness of style, symbolic and demonstrative in movement and gesture, was fashionable early in the decade. Performances were conventional, that is, they relied upon a shorthand form that indicated reality. Yet stage fights were physical and convincing, because their illusion was enhanced by realism; like songs and dances, they demonstrated the players' skills. Audiences expected an array of wonderfully costumed, larger-than-life figures, who could transform the noisy, open-air wooden theatre with mighty voices and furious actions. They awaited the clown's routines and improvised business that tested his wit. Musicians played as boys would sing, dance, and lend their youthful, costumed beauty to the stage. Everywhere was circus-like pageantry, in the brilliance of the spoken poetry, the color of their clothing, or the grace of their gestures. Movements were exaggerated to match their language, so that an action or a look was unmistakable, projecting as loudly as their speech. Standing still they posed, to suggest an attitude or to prominently display their finery. The descriptive force of the poetry was undoubtedly conveyed in the same prominence and physicality as an expensive costume; audiences listened to the poetical images that led their imaginations, that told them what they

should see, and in turn were enhanced and brought to life by corresponding actions. Whether through clothing, gesture, or poetry, the player sought to arrest the eyes and ears of his spectators.

While indications of how Tudor performers appeared are few, those actors on the London stage first noted for their excellence were the clowns, Tarleton, Wilson, and Kempe. However, by the late 1580s a change is noticeable, when Marlowe's theatrum mundi required a tragedian of unusual abilities, and Marlowe was able to fashion his plays around the talents of Edward Alleyn. By the late 1590s, Shakespeare and his players transformed playing once again, so that the physicality and spectacle of the stage were enhanced by a variety in playing style, presenting alternative ways of seeing stage action. Characterization in particular took on a new emphasis. Richard Burbage's skills influenced Shakespeare's playwriting as Alleyn had Marlowe's. Moreover Shakespeare appears to have also made particular use of his boy players whenever possible, actors whose capabilities stretched the limits of their conventional style of playing.

Besides an indication of acting excellence in the Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's dramatic form appears to have checked the impulsive virtuosity of the clowns, bringing their jests and banters with the audience back into the organized framework of the play. Although pageantry was no less evident on his stage, Shakespeare merged the

players' talents with his own stagecraft, presenting a more unified dramaturgy. The player was still paramount, as he had been since professional entertainers turned their minstrel skills into playing arts. But dramatists like Marlowe had evolved those earlier arts into a dramatic playing style, which Shakespeare's company briefly shared during the 1590s until refining it further about the turn of the century. Shakespeare's new drama benefitted from the experiences of performances generations earlier, on pageant wagons, in marketplaces, or in Great Halls, but it changed to accommodate a more demanding drama.

Chapter Five: The New Drama and Dramatic Perspective

"Seems, madam? nay, it is, I know not 'seems'"

While it is apparent that the study of Elizabethan stage practices benefits an understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare's plays, the ephemerality of theatrical performances, especially those of nearly 400 years ago, unquestionably hinders that understanding. As leading player of the Chamberlain's Men, how Richard Burbage played Hamlet in 1603, for instance, would help us to know the "interpretation" that he and Shakespeare shared concerning the responsibilities of one's own nature and filial duty within a contradictory world

A play rich in images, problematic in moral and social questions, and often oblique in ethical outlook, Hamlet was meant to take energy and find expression in live performance. Burbage's verbal emphases, gestures, and attitude toward his role would tell us much about the play's intentions. So too the acting technique of the Chamberlain's-King's Men, insofar as it can be reconstructed, offers insight into Shakespeare's works, because the player's craft is the medium of Shakespeare's art. Playing styles and dramatic form were complementary elements of the same artistic expression.

Beginning with the great tragedies of the 1600s, Shakespeare and his fellow players appear to have used two

styles of acting to texture and to give depth to scenes in his plays. Scenic contrasts and framed action pointed out and underscored dramatic and thematic ideas. A newer, more "natural" acting came to complement an older style of play, presenting a multiperspectival drama that incorporated within a single script alternative ways of seeing stage action. Ambiguity was stressed, rendering Shakespeare's drama more "realistic" in its mirroring of life and the vagaries of human nature; this augmented style in the Globe player's art was due, in turn, to the unique resources of that acting company.

Evidence for this comes from contemporary comments and documents regarding the players' skills and, in particular, scenes in Shakespeare's plays that themselves illustrate contrasting styles of presentation. Documents can tell us what Shakespeare's actors did, or repeat praise offered them by their contemporaries, but they do not translate into how these actors performed.¹ We can more easily conjecture how their acting may have appeared by seeing indications of these varying styles within the plays themselves, defining those styles by aesthetic terms of our own time.

¹ Alfred Harbage's "Elizabethan Acting" (PMLA 54 [1939]), an early, important essay on the question of Elizabethan acting styles, acknowledged the problem of positing how Richard Burbage, lead player for the Chamberlain's Men, and others played by an assessment of what was said about their performances: "we are told what the actor did (in the estimation of the spectator), but not how he did it" (692).

Before doing so, however, some considerations must be noted. First, the question of dramatic "maturity" and development must briefly be addressed, because Shakespeare's work illustrates a creativity that experimented and redefined existing dramatic forms. Second, we must acknowledge the rapidly changing nature of the Elizabethan/Jacobean stage and, rather than making general assumptions about all his plays, specify the particular period in Shakespeare's career to be examined. As an end to the Elizabethan period or frontispiece to the Jacobean, the post-1600 plays are clearly transitional, in no way more so than in their treatment of realism as an extension of an illusory reality one moment, and then as something new, transcendent, and revelatory the next. Equally various are the differences in style between Shakespeare's tragedies and romances. Both concerns, dramatic maturity and changes in the post-1600 plays, are related; it is the changes in his dramatic style, I suggest, that made adjustments in playing styles necessary and desirable.

1. Dramatic Maturity

While admitting that some so-called "periods" in Shakespeare's career are merely different as opposed to more or less mature, there are some clear distinctions between early and later plays that point to a mastery of dramatic craft. 1 Henry IV, for example, illustrates a sophisticated

play structure that juxtaposes characters and situations in a double plot with a single, concentrated theme. Imagery in particular begins to serve a revelatory function within that play structure, developing character beyond mere description. As Wolfgang Clemens' The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (1951) argues, Hamlet and the other great tragedies use imagery as a complex and interrelated means of joining character with the overall tone and feel of the play, as opposed to the rhetorical, often "inserted" uses in Shakespeare's earliest plays.² Moreover, in the

² Rhetorical forms are another part of Shakespeare's stylistic development, with the early plays demonstrating a noticeable technique and symmetry of forms that, though still present in his later work, become far less obtrusive and apparent in their "artfulness." Brian Vickers suggests a comparison between and Richard III and Othello, where the same forms (anaphora, isocolon, parison, and epistrophe) are found but translate into a more "intense" and "personal" feeling when used in Othello:

She for an Edward weeps, and so do I:
I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she.
These babes for Clarence weep, and so do I:
I for an Edward weep, so do not they.
(R3 2.2.82-85)

In Othello, however, a simple balance of words and ideas translates into a measured statement of clarity and purpose, reflecting less the art of the language than the attempts of Othello to disentangle his thoughts and observations.

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof. (3.3.384-86; Vickers 87 ff.)

To this I would add that the early plays of Shakespeare use the player as a means for the physical expression of verbal ideas and descriptive forms, while the post-1600 plays use the player and his expression as an integral part of dramatic structure. See Chapter Six for a discussion of three scenes from Macbeth--Duncan's murder, the Porter

tragedies imagery no longer necessarily establishes character; rather, it defines a tone within which introspective protagonists particularize their conflict and struggle against conditions partly of their own making. Imagery in the later plays, therefore, conveys a mood that reflects a play's atmosphere and characterization, while in the earlier plays it defines behavior.

Richard II, for example, is shaped as a character by excessively poetic images that debase his credibility and lead an audience to question his emotional stability. His speeches swing in mood from soaring optimism to the darkest pessimism, often within a single scene. Richard uses the same object--the "earth"--for an expression of two very different moods in Act 3:

I weep for joy
To stand upon my kingdom once again.
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.
As a long-parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
And do thee favors with my royal hands.

.

Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
Let's choose executors and talk of wills;
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?

(3.2.4-11; 145-50)

scene, and the discovery of the king's body--for an illustration of the playing purposes of a "rhetorical" style of playing.

By contrast, Hamlet's imagery of darkness and brooding, while partially defining who he is, is more a reflection of the disease and corruption imagery that describes the court, suggesting the tone that informs the play. His first soliloquy offers direction for how we view the events to follow:

O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't, ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed, things rank and gross in
nature
Possess it merely. (1.2.132-37)

Character is thus created and developed differently in the two plays: that of Richard unfolds and reveals itself in discrete stages, while that of Hamlet is unpredictable, ambiguous, and more plausible. The dramatic play craft is radically different in the later play: imagery, characterization, and dramatic form are blended in a more unified theatrical whole, demonstrating an earlier technique evolving into a more sophisticated play craft.³ The new dramatic style makes possible a realism of character that

³ Imagery is but one example; to this may be added the development of dialogue as a more "spontaneous" expression of thought and emotion: the romances especially convey the difficult, at times inarticulate, speech of figures in conflict. The significance of puns in defining character is another aspect of Shakespeare's technical skills that appear to "improve" with time. And finally, the uses that he makes of theatrical conventions, as I will argue in Chapter Six, are expanded in the post-1600 drama so as to accommodate a more intricate stagecraft.

conveys probable, believable action. As a performance thesis statement for the acting of his later plays, Hamlet initiates Shakespeare's new drama of "plausibility" and gives evidence of how that style was used.

2. Hamlet and The New Drama

Concerned with two kinds of "acting," Hamlet is a play based upon an elaborate quibble. On the one hand, it is the acting or the doing of a thing in which Hamlet is remiss. Left alone on stage following the Player's demonstration of his "quality," Hamlet says

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all the visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, an' his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing.
(2.2.545-551)

Hamlet's angry observation comes from his inaction, whereas his own, justifiable passion should inspire him to act. The soliloquy, indeed the play, turns upon a two word volta, "yet I," that compares play acting with the "reality" that he faces:

Yet I,
A dull and muddy-meddled rascal, peak

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing. (ll. 566-69)⁴

Hamlet the play is also concerned with this same dichotomy between acting on stage and the reality that it is intended to convey. More than any other play of Shakespeare's, Hamlet confuses the actual doing of a thing with the meta-theatricality that the stage players present.

As viewers or readers we feel that we are watching mirrors reflecting mirrors, never certain which image is primary or the more "truthful." And, as with Shakespeare's other works, Hamlet begins with a scene that contains a thesis for the rest of the play. Barnardo's "Who's there?" as he comes on duty, appropriates the question rightfully asked by Francisco, the sentinel on duty, initiating the play's confusion as to just what is real and what is not.

The recurrent motif in Hamlet of appearance contrasted to reality is accentuated by references to the stage player's art; indeed, the play's treatise on acting makes specific mention of contemporary theatrical events in

⁴ Cf. a similar "turn" earlier in the same scene:

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals; and yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?
(ll. 303-08; my emphasis)

Hamlet's eloquent statement of humanism is predicated on what man can do; his own inaction nullifies those capabilities.

London. In 1599, the company moved into their own theatre, the Globe, and added as well three sharers for a total of ten.⁵ In addition to financial stability, the company worked together for at least six years before Hamlet was performed,⁶ permitting the development of an ensemble style of play that culminated in personnel changes that Shakespeare appears to have preferred.⁷ They also had a resident dramatist and probable "instructor" in Shakespeare, who acted in his own plays as well.

These last two considerations are, of course, related. The personnel of the Chamberlain's Men would obviously influence in some degree the drama written, staged, and performed by one of the company's own. Hamlet's instructions to the visiting Players to "not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently" (3.2.4-5) reflect Shakespeare's instructor's eye, as he would direct his own players through Hamlet to "acquire and beget a

⁵ The original five sharers was increased to seven in 1595; the final number in 1604 was twelve. Chapter One discusses the importance of the Globe theatre to the Chamberlain's Men.

⁶ Several members of the company were certainly acting together before the inception of the Chamberlain's Men in 1594. See Chapter Four.

⁷ See Chapters Four and Seven for a discussion on Armin's replacing Kempe as the company's clown and the possible indications for Shakespeare's preference in the matter, as well as arguments for Edward Alleyn of the Lord Admiral's Men as one who "strutted and bellowed" (3.2.32-31). Kempe and Alleyn are representative of those players whom Shakespeare would reform.

temperance that may give it smoothness" (ll. 7-8). Hamlet goes on to single out the excesses of the clown, which he finds intolerable, and the acting of some tragedians, who "tear a passion to totters, to very rags."

Besides references to tragedians and clowns, there are other indications in Hamlet that Shakespeare was critical of presentational styles at this time. Surprised to learn of the child companies, who "so berattle the common stages" (2.2.342), Hamlet asks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about the children's popularity, voicing Shakespeare's own conception of dramatic art and its rendering on stage as opposed to that of other playwrights--Jonson's and Marston's, to name but two.

The children had obvious limitations. In acting tragedy, especially, they faced obstacles. Passionate emotions rendered through the immaturity and inexperience of young players, however skillfully done, argues that the children may have acted their tragedies satirically. Preferred by those who wrote for the boys, satire worked well in the hands of the children because it judged humanity against an ideal society, which the child companies could symbolically indicate and represent. On the other hand, Shakespeare's drama considered characters against an existent rather than an ideal norm, as experienced participants rather than as symbolic indicators. Therefore his drama had a greater range of presentational expression,

etched by convincing, re-created experience.⁸ Hamlet notes the apparent reason for the success of the boys by using the analogy of Claudius' new found popularity once he has been made king:

It is not very strange, for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mouths at him while my father liv'd, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. (2.2.362-65)

Besides suggesting an inconsistency on the part of audiences, "in little" indicates the miniature character representations by the boys and the attractiveness their audiences found in their satiric renderings: children's companies called attention to the artificiality of stage action and the equivalent artificiality of social posturing being ridiculed.

Hamlet is a play that, among other things, sets forth a new dramatic thesis for Shakespeare's work. It makes specific references to objectionable styles of acting, doing so within familiar, topical events. But the play also gives evidence of a new dramatic form that is facilitated by the addition of a new acting style. Hamlet uses several dramatic techniques in Shakespeare's "new drama": a constant tension between artifice and realism; a "mirroring effect"

⁸ That is not to say, of course, that satire does not have as much expression as other dramatic "kinds"; rather, the ways to present dramatic satire are limited, especially when acted by children.

for enhanced dramatic perspective; and, the diffusion and ambiguity of characterization, thus providing alternative ways for seeing stage action.

Artifice and Realism

a. Artifice

Shakespeare notwithstanding, Elizabethan dramatists sought to maintain a balance between the artifice of their theatrical games and the conscious attempts at realism. Ben Jonson, John Marston, John Webster, and others used the "Induction" as a device to distance an audience from a too familiar identification with illusory stage action.⁹ The device insured that the artifice of the game was primary and that no spectator identified or empathized too much with a character. For example, Jonson's *Stage-Keeper* in *Bartholomew Fair* mentions the actor's preparations backstage. And when the citizens take over the stage in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), Ralph speaks a "huffing part" by quoting Hotspur from *1 Henry IV*: "By heaven, methinks, it were an easy leap / To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon" (1.3).

⁹ The relationship of artifice and illusion can be problematic in Jonson's plays: in *Every Man In His Humour* (1599) he called for a more realistic stage. See below "Realism."

Webster's Induction for the third edition of Marston's The Malcontent (1604), written for the King's Men, noted the differences in dramatic aesthetics between the children, for whom Marston wrote his play, and the adult players who adapted it to the Globe stage.¹⁰ Called a comedy and a satire by Marston, the play is nonetheless a realistic tragedy until the very end of its last scene, when it slips into comedy. Possibly the children played it in such a way that the play's tragic quality was made to appear ludicrous and excessive; but an adult company would render it a far different play without changing a single line. Hence, in the eyes of those who wrote such works, there was apparently a need for an Induction that would serve in some measure to check realism.

Webster's Induction, portraying four famous actors from the King's Men--Will Sly, John Lowin, Henry Condell, and Richard Burbage--who discuss the Globe theatre and its rival acting companies, reminds us of the Players' scenes in Hamlet (2.2, 3.2). Shakespeare uses a favorite dramatic device of his in the play: the breaking of illusion and the "alienation" of his audience by calling attention to the

¹⁰ Webster's Induction reflects an apparent retaliation on the part of the King's Men for a performance of the The Spanish Tragedy, which they considered their property, by the children at the Blackfriars. In revenge, Marston's Blackfriars play was adapted to the Globe stage. Besides revealing a difference in aesthetics between the public and private theatres, the Induction is valuable for what it indicates about the different stages and audiences of the era.

player's art. Whether by induction, plays-within-plays, or meta-theatrical references to acting, Shakespeare frequently sets limits on the reality found in his works.

b. Realism

What then do we mean by "realism" and, in particular, Shakespeare's realism? When we speak of realism, we generally mean "life-likeness" or representational form that reproduces a socially agreed upon recognition of accepted, commonly shared experience. Yet this is obviously a limited definition, for we at once recognize the many realistic experiences that are not so easily defined. A street scene where nothing happens would be realistic, but few of us would sit in a theatre for two hours to watch it.¹¹ Realism can exist in many forms, but a common denominator of those forms is the attempt made at rendering factuality.¹² A

¹¹ Even a modern play like Samuel Beckett's Waiting For Godot, which Vivian Mercier remarked was a play in which "nothing happens, twice," is obviously not a "slice of mundane life."

¹² One difficulty with the term "realism" comes from a too ready assumption that "naturalism" and realism are one and the same; they are not. Realism isolates a moment or event with enough attention given to detail so that one distinguishes between that which is and is not recognizable experience; it develops through an emphasis upon the particular. Naturalism, on the other hand, investigates at length and in depth more than the particular, developing the detailed, everyday aspects of life, and seeking to recreate "ordinary" as well as extraordinary experiences. Although we use them interchangeably, "realistic" means "believable" while "naturalistic" implies "day to day." Thus a

moment or a brief scene may be all that is necessary to ground an episode in the "here and now" and to suggest the probability or even possibility of actual, daily experience. When the Moscow Art Theatre produced Chekov's The Three Sisters, mice could be heard scratching at the wainscoting from within the walls of the degenerating Prozorovs' home;¹³ but if a viewer wondered how or by whom this was done, then the illusion and not the reality was paramount.

Our identification of what appears real and believable depends largely on our shared common perceptions and common understandings of how or why things happen as they do. E. H. Gombrich has observed that "what we call seeing is invariably coloured and shaped by our knowledge (or belief) of what we see" (Art and Illusion 394). Therefore, it is not so important that we know how reality appeared on the

naturalistic acting style suggests that the player is behaving just as he might on a daily basis, but realistic acting merely indicates the believability of the player's intentions. One may be believable yet not be naturalistic.

¹³ This example of naturalism on the stage is famous; Gurr mentions the effect in Stanislavski's production to illustrate his point that "the nature of theatrical illusion for the Elizabethan player was not based on the literal-minded realism which insists on a two-dimensional picture as backdrop to the action, or which sets mice scratching behind the wainscoting" ("The Elizabethan Stage and Acting" 254). It should be noted, however, that Stanislavski's intentions with the effect were surely more than realistic atmosphere. The Prozorovs, as in most of Chekov's plays, are victims of their environment. As an outsider, Natasha is representative of that corrupting environment, hastening the destruction of the family insidiously from within, as forces beyond their control work from without. Thus the mice within the walls are symbolic reminders of infestation, corruption, and destructive change.

Elizabethan stage but that they found it realistic and identified it as such. Even if we saw the most realistic scene of the era, would it appear so to us? Every age has believed that its representational arts are mirrors of nature (Seltzer, "The Actors and Staging" 36). Vasari related how Giotto painted a fly on a portrait's nose so realistically that his master Cimabue was fooled; yet Vasari, 300 years later, found Giotto's work stiff and unnatural (Lewontin 27). The perceptions of one age are rarely those of another; indeed, the perceptions of one contemporary observer often differ from the next.

On the Elizabethan stage, "reality" was used occasionally as counterpoint to their drama of convention, to color the poetic drama through changing presentational modes, and to give it texture by shifting emphasis from conventions to reality and back again.¹⁴ In texturing their plays, a number of contrasts were central to the Elizabethan dramatists. In Hamlet, for example, artifice and reality often serve as interchangeable components of stage "truth." The artfulness of the Players performance in the play-within-the-play comments on the actors playing Hamlet, as one acting style reflects on the other. Furthermore,

¹⁴ Cf. Jonson's The Alchemist (1610), where each character projects a particular humour, a personality "type": Face, Subtle, Doll Common, Dapper; yet the stage action takes place in the Blackfriars district, where the play was also performed, and the length of performance is equivalent to "real" time. See below for Bethell's idea of "dual consciousness."

reality is never a fixed concept in the play: while the early scenes confirm reality by group experience, the later scenes make that reality a subjective experience. Even the spectator is put to the test of what is real and unreal. The Ghost, whose existence is confirmed by Barnardo, Horatio, and Marcellus in Act 1, returns in Act 3 to Hamlet in Gertrude's chamber, but not to Gertrude.¹⁵

In recreating familiar places and colloquial dialogue on stage, the Tavern scenes in 1 Henry IV are evidence that Shakespeare's reality could be one of imitation and factuality. But in the post-1600 tragedies, realism is often a matter of perspective, something for an audience to reorder as experience and frequently to question.

Never dominating Shakespeare's plays, realism is at times balanced by the "game" of playing. Shakespeare frequently calls attention to the make-believe aspect of his drama by players pointing to other people's personations in contrast to their own "reality," as Polonius does in

¹⁵ The Ghost is of course seen by the audience as well. But this does not confirm its reality beyond or outside of the mind of Hamlet. On its first appearance, Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo see the Ghost before Hamlet does and Horatio and Marcellus again as it beckons him on. In Gertrude's chamber, it appears only to Hamlet, perhaps merely to confirm to the audience that Hamlet does in fact believe that it exists. After all, Hamlet is so deeply involved with a confusion of appearance and reality at this point that an audience needs some indication that he is not play-acting on this occasion. Indeed, Hamlet's first words appear to appropriate those that the Ghost would speak, as Hamlet states his own reason for the purpose of its visit.

Hamlet¹⁶ or as Cleopatra does after meeting with the
victorious Caesar:

The quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels: Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' the posture of a whore. (5.2.215-20)

That artifice and realism could so easily coexist in Shakespeare's drama is difficult for us as modern viewers of Elizabethan plays to understand. And that is one reason why many scholars of the past forty years have insisted upon either a "formal" or "natural" acting style, as if one presentational form that would suffice for all stage action. Artifice and reality were more, however, than disjunctive halves to a dramatic whole. They were complementary aspects of the dramatist's and player's art.

3. "Dual Consciousness"

In 1944, objecting to a then current trend of "psychological naturalism" imposed upon Shakespeare's plays, S. L. Bethell coined the term "dual consciousness" to explain how a nonrealistic theatre could also be realistic

¹⁶ Polonius says "I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' Capitol. Brutus killed me" (3.2.102-03), probably reminding his audience of his earlier role in Julius Caesar and anticipating the same actor killing him in Hamlet as well.

(Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition 28-42); that is, when the viewer's consciousness is forced from convention to illusion, from reality to acknowledged make-believe, the result is dramatic perspective. Perspective textures the play and its characters by shifts in points of view and by conflicts that require audiences to question and to re-think what they see and understand.

In Jonson's Bartholomew Fair, framed within an Induction and an Epilogue is the idea that art imitates nature but cannot truly represent it. In the Induction, the Stage-Keeper argues for a realistic, actual representation of the Smithfield Fair and its assorted characters, suggesting the very actors needed to bring the play to life. But the Book-Holder runs him off the stage, claiming that the author is "loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like drolleries," that is, romantic fantasies with the likes of giant bears or Calibans. While the Bartholomew Fair characters appear to have been drawn remarkably to life in mannerism and speech, they are no more than they appear: brief emblems of observable behavior. Jonson illustrates this point by the puppet who can refute Puritan arguments, convert one into a "beholder" of plays, yet remain a sexless cloth figure.¹⁷

¹⁷ Arguing with the puppet as though he were alive, the Puritan Zeal-Of-The-Land Busy says, "my main argument against you is that you are an abomination, for the male among you putteth on the apparel of the female, and the female of the male." Puppet Dionysius replies

Two competing theatrical manifestoes thus appear at the beginning of the century, both calling for a more "realistic" theatre: Jonson's statement in Everyman In His Humour (1599) and Shakespeare's thesis for a new drama in Hamlet. But whereas Shakespeare's plays seek the same balance between patent illusion and apparent reality that do Jonson's, for Shakespeare the contrast is less an aesthetic principle than a means to develop the perplexities that come from a multiperspectival drama. And, with a company of actors at his disposal, Shakespeare had the expressive means to put his thesis into practice.

4. Hamlet and the "Plausible" Style

A "presentational" style of play dominated the early Tudor moralities, in which entertainers presented their own unique skills before their audiences. The virtuoso performers of the early London theatre, the clowns and tragedians, were the beneficiaries of this style of play, descending from the morality Vice. But besides the styles used by the virtuosos, a "conventional" playing style

It is your old stale argument against the players,
but it will not hold against the puppets, for we
have neither male nor female amongst us. And that
thou may'st see, if thou wilt, like a malicious
pur-blind zeal as thou art!

The puppet then "takes up his garment" to illustrate his point (5.5). See Rose A. Zimbardo's "Dramatic Imitation of Nature" 72-75.

appeared as well, in which the physical limits of the stage were transcended by shorthand actions that stood for reality. It was this conventional style that came to dominate the Elizabethan theatre: plays depicted kings, queens, and momentous history; boys played the roles of women; and the stage was for the most part unadorned, save for the actor's splendor in dress and poetic language.

Although the presentational and conventional styles coexisted on the London stage, there is evidence that the presentational style was coming to an end in Shakespeare's day. Through his character Hamlet, Shakespeare, as had Marlowe, denounced the extempore playing of the clowns outside the narrative structure of the play. But Shakespeare went further, extending those objections to the playing styles of some tragedians as well, those who "strutted and bellowed." Thus the Chamberlain's Men took existing playing styles and refined them, as Shakespeare had with many other dramatic techniques. Starting about 1599, his plays begin to seek a more ensemble form of presentation and his experiments with dramatic styles were in turn complemented by different acting styles. The new playing style that complemented his post-1600 drama I call the "plausible" style. It rendered action more "realistic," more natural, and was meant to contrast with conventional playing for a multiperspectival effect within a play's narrative structure. The plausible style never came to

dominate Shakespeare's stage; rather, it was used for counterpoint and to dramatically texture his plays.

Moreover, the plausible style of play may have been staged in a different fashion from that used for conventional playing. For instance, in Hamlet a dramatic question asked in one form is answered in a different one: Hamlet's soliloquy of Act 3, where he questions whether to live or die and what comes after death, is answered for him in the graveyard scene with Horatio and the gravediggers in Act 5. The emphasis upon the questions of life and death in the two scenes is also a movement from the general to the specific.

The shifting focus from large to intimate, fiction to reality, and contemporary event to dramatic tale in Hamlet suggests a dramatization that is similar in its concept to physical movement on stage; physical staging and dramatic expression were mutually dependent. Hamlet is a play that apparently stretched to the limits the range of physical space that the Globe stage allowed. When Hamlet confronts his father's Ghost (1.5), for example, it moves about the stage and finally beneath it. The Ghost's "Swear" from "in the cellarage" accentuates the doomed restlessness that is its punishment. But the movement also has symbolic significance, suggesting the condition of Hamlet's father, "doom'd for a certain term to walk the night." Similarly, Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy is spoken as the silent figure of Ophelia is also seen on stage. Thus the

visual disparity expresses an ironic balance between the questions of life, death, and father-child relationships between both figures.

Besides physical staging, Hamlet marked the beginning of a new Shakespearean drama in which the limits of characterization were extended as well. This was achieved through two different playing styles: a conventional style calls for large, rhetorical playing, while a plausible style demands more natural, intimate action.

5. Perspective: A Mirroring Technique

If realism, played as counterpoint in a plausible acting style, gave dramatic texture to a scene, then how is the style used in Shakespeare's plays? In particular, how is it rendered through performance? Hamlet, again, offers the best illustration. As Hamlet enters the gravedigger's scene, he reinforces the clown's play as part of, rather than apart from, the narrative structure of the play. And the change in the clown's role is notable.

Two clowns appear as gravediggers at Ophelia's burial. Their conversation, filled with puns and malapropisms, serves two dramatic functions. First, their scene is a contrast to the apparent purposeless clowning found in some Elizabethan plays: Wagner in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, for

example, Launce in The Two Gentlemen of Verona (2.3),¹⁸ or, in a later play, the role of Lollio in Middleton and Rowley's The Changeling ([1622] especially 1.2). The clowns in Hamlet are integral parts of the narrative structure and serve a dramatic function. As the gravediggers argue the philosophical and moral conflicts with relation to Ophelia's suicide and the Church, they mirror Hamlet's own dilemma, his entanglements with reason and passion. Furthermore, when the clowns reflect on the validity of Ophelia's Christian burial, in the light of her apparent suicide, they question the integrity of the holy service: "If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out a' Christian burial" (5.1.23-25). Through its focus upon Ophelia, the scene points up the dichotomy of the principal character, Hamlet, and the play's primary theatrical conceit, the conflicts between appearance and reality.

Shakespeare develops this appearance and reality conceit into more than a recurring dramatic motif. He presents his game as alternative perspectives on a single question, and the different dramatic styles in Hamlet suggest that different presentational styles were also used to establish that opposition. With a few variations, the graveyard scene is a mirror image of Hamlet's "To be, or not

¹⁸ The comic routine played in the opening of the scene, apparently by Will Kempe in the role of Launce, is probably noted in Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humour (1600): "Would I had Kemp's shoes to throw after you" (2.3.).

to be" (3.1) speech. In the later scene, the first clown's banter establishes a more relaxed mood. The scene is intimate and familiar. Yet Hamlet's jests with the clown and Horatio in the graveyard raise the very questions he first asks himself in his Act 3 soliloquy, when he wonders aloud whether there is an "undiscovered country," if justice and truth await each of us in another, better life. As he watches the gravedigger toss lifeless skulls out of old graves, the same questions return to him. But this time Hamlet has an apparent answer: truth and finality lie together in a dust which makes all men equal, save what imagination can bestow upon the living:

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio!
Why may not imagination trace the noble dust
of Alexander, till 'a find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot, but to follow him thither
with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it.
(5.1.202-08)

The scene suggests a different perspective on Hamlet's earlier questions regarding life and death. In a relaxed prose colloquy between Horatio and Hamlet, introduced by the irreverent comedy of the two gravediggers, the dramatic focus shifts from the rhetorical formality of Hamlet's soliloquy--archetypal in its universal questioning--to the relaxed musings of two friends on the particular. The shifts in perspective from the general to

the particular, uses of colloquial prose, or the personal exchanges between two friends draw an audience into stage action, contrasting to rhetorical playing. A mirroring of prior scenes in a new dramatic and presentational form provides an alternative way of seeing stage action.

6. Focal Contrast: Inner Life and Outer Form

Perspective is also created in Shakespeare's post-1600 plays by a contrast between what a character says and what he does. In A Book Named the Governor (1531), Thomas Elyot said that outward appearance was the only way to know a person (146 ff.), an idea modified somewhat by Thomas Wright in Passions of the Mind (1601 ed.), who said that passion was an all-consuming characteristic that was revealed by one's behavior (see Beckerman 143). Dramatists, however, had often reversed such wisdom for theatrical effect. In a long, self-expressive soliloquy that reveals his character, Richard admits in 3 Henry VI how easy it is to disguise his true nature:

Why, I can smile, and murther whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content!' to that that grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions. (3.2.182-85)

As an ironic confirmation of this ability, Gloucester says to young Prince Edward in Richard III

Sweet Prince, the untainted virtue of your years,
 Hath not yet div'd into the world's deceit;
 Nor more can you distinguish of a man
 Than of his outward show, which, God he knows,
 Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.
 (3.1.7-11)

In the tragedies after 1600, the dichotomy of a character's intentions and how he outwardly appeared was essential to character development. Dramatic focus shifts toward the development of character as primary to dramatic structure. Figures are no longer carried along by the plot; rather, it is a character's actions, made plausible by his emotional life, that move the story.

By the many references to acting, Hamlet's deliberate deceptions are meant to present a contrast to his true emotions; there is an emphasis on ambiguity. When Queen Gertrude asks Hamlet why, when "'tis common, all that lives must die," his grief seems "so particular" with him? He answers, "Seems, madam? nay, it is, I know not 'seems'" (1.2.72; 75; 76-77). Throughout the play, however, he attempts a variety of outward appearances, though in doing so he proves the truth of the statement to his mother, that he does not know "seems," and that he cannot alter his appearance or feign his emotions without paying a great penalty. While his "antic" behavior manages to confuse Polonius, Claudius is less easily convinced: "Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go" (3.1.188). By the time that Hamlet appears in Gertrude's chamber, his "seeming" madness is more than mere disguise, ironically brought out

by his statement when forcing her to submit to his intentions: "You go not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you" (3.4.19-20). One senses in reading or seeing the play that this line is meant as much for Hamlet as for his mother. Shakespeare has brought the appearance-reality game full circle, and Hamlet's predicament is now that, like the other characters who observe him, he can no longer distinguish how he seems from what he is.

Conclusion:

Two Ways of Seeing, Two Styles of Play

The ambiguity between "seems" and "is" gave Shakespeare a greater range for character development. With his players as the literal expression of an appearance-reality conceit, the plays of the 1600s have more dramatic texture, a deeper perspective, wherein figures reveal themselves in ambiguous yet plausible actions as well as in predictable, conventional ones. This "plausible" style of play, when played along side the conventional game, results in a multiperspectival dramatic portrait. In the conventional game dominant on the Elizabethan stage, poetry, asides, soliloquies, place, time, etc., were never intended as "realistic." By contrast, as in Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy and the graveyard scene, when a more natural

effect was attempted, by comparison it appeared far more realistic.

Hamlet's first scene with Gertrude at court reflects his own grief and his objections to her behavior in a rhetorical, conventional structure: dressed in black, which indicates his state of mind as well as his filial respect, he says

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 No customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
 That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
 For they are actions that a man might play,
 But I have that within which passes show,
 These but the trappings and suits of woe.
 (1.2.77-86)

Hamlet's stately pronouncement on mere appearances is balanced in argument and image. The rhetorical trope of anaphora signals and underscores his denials of having only the "trappings and suits of woe," as Hamlet artfully moves through a category of the senses to press his point. With conventional eloquence, he offers up an emotional and physical composite of the loving son in mourning.

Yet the mirror scene to this one, which occurs in Gertrude's chamber (3.4), suggests a comparison of the two events for its audience, doing so in two presentational styles: it asked viewers to reorder their observations, their own experiences by which they understood the tragic

figure of Hamlet. In Act 3, gone is the eloquent rhetorical form; in its place, a fast-paced dialogue is enforced by sudden actions. We are presented with a different Hamlet, violent and out of control. Especially bothersome is his easy dismissal after killing Polonius: "I took thee for thy better" (l. 32). Gertrude's observation of Hamlet as the Ghost appears, "Alas, he's mad!" (l. 105), confirms our own suspicions that perhaps he is--and has been all along. In contrast to her earlier behavior, Gertrude gains with our sympathy a small measure of credibility in regard to her innocence in the king's death. On the other hand, Hamlet's question to the Ghost both answers and mocks his bold assertion in Act 1 that his mourning is not false: "they are actions that a man might play, / But I have that within that passes show":

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
(3.4.106-08)

Because who Hamlet is and what he does are at variance, there is irony in his belated passion and subsequent action in Gertrude's chamber. By using a different presentational style, actors could mirror such previous action by changing to prose, modifying their gestures, and generally behaving in a more familiar manner than usual stage presentation--what for lack of a better term we refer to as "natural." The changes in behavior would signal a shift in dramatic

emphasis for an audience, as the disparity of styles would point up any discrepancies in a character's actions with his stated intentions, while also inviting comparison of two different dramatic scenes with a common thematic idea.

This, I submit, is "dramatic perspective."

While Hamlet is the first of Shakespeare's plays to indicate this blend of conventional and "plausible" playing, it was only one of many on the Globe stage. I do not mean to suggest that Shakespeare never used a more "natural" playing or different style of play in any drama prior to 1600. 1 Henry IV, for instance, invites obvious comparisons of play between the tavern scenes and those at Court or with the rebels. So too, Hotspur's scenes with Glendower and Mortimer as compared to those with his wife are very different. They are more than just shifts in mood or changes from poetry to prose: the latter scenes are "relaxed" and intimate, where a rhetorical playing style would have no place. But these differences are not used to the same purposes that the latter plays would put them. Seeing Prince Hal in different dramatic situations, rendered according to decorum in time and place, adds dimension to his character; but it is still through pairings and correspondences that he is revealed--as is Falstaff--rather than by the ambiguity and the uncertainty of his actions. And while the king-prince game of Falstaff and Hal has obvious parallels to the Henry-Hal relationship, as well as the father-son relationship between Hal and his father and

Hal and Falstaff, the inversion game they play does not offer a different, more realistic perspective on previously played dramatic material. The Hal-Falstaff tavern scene illustrates and parodies an idea that informs the play: the proper education of a prince and the importance of his own choices and responsibilities in that training. Playing style in 1 Henry IV is not an integral part of the play's dramatic structure, any more than Falstaff's "I must speak in passion, and I will do it in Cambyses' vein" (2.4.386-87) is meant to define his character; it illustrates rather than represents.

Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's Men did not, of course, invent a new way of behaving. They incorporated a different presentational mode of play into a conventional playing style in order to expand dramatic possibilities. This, I believe, constitutes dramatic "maturity" on Shakespeare's part: he took preexisting forms and developed them into a whole at once more complex and ironic yet still unified in effect.

Chapter Six: Plays and Acting Styles in the New Drama

"Now do I see 'tis true"

Shakespeare's "new drama" informs the post-1600 plays, especially the great tragedies, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth, and the players in his company were integral parts of that stagecraft. The techniques of dramatic perspective--"mirroring" scenes, contrasting staging from the large to intimate, and refracting characterization through an ambiguity of inner form and outward appearance--are means toward achieving those ends. As a result, in Shakespeare's plays beginning with Hamlet an audience's perceptions are constantly changing, being questioned, and demanding re-evaluation. Using two different acting styles, a conventional and a plausible style, players implemented this drama by presenting alternative views of stage action and illustrating multifarious characterizations. Through its performance Hamlet had set forth Shakespeare's thesis for the new dramatic style and for his actors' playing art. With some variations, the plays following Hamlet developed these skills into complementary aspects of a single dramatic vision.

Othello

Like Hamlet, Othello is a play that is preeminently concerned with appearances. But whereas Hamlet begins with questions, Othello starts with assertions:

For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In complement extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.
(1.1.61-65)

Iago's mockery of Yahweh's statement to Moses, "I am what I am" (Exodus 3.14), establishes the dimensions of his lies and the extent of his false appearances. Mimicking Judas in 3.3.117, "My lord, you know I love you," Iago underscores his evil quality--not only in his likeness to the betrayer of Christ but as the Anti-Christ who mocked the throne of God in the miracle plays. By appropriating two biblical statements, one from each covenant, he thus takes upon himself the role of Alpha and Omega and establishes himself as the archetypal inverter of truth.

Iago's inner emotions and outer form are continually at odds, not only when dealing with Othello but, as well, with his supposed confederate Roderigo. The changing perspectives offered by Iago's confessed intentions, as contrasted to the face he shows to Othello, are further complicated by the changes in the Moor's "free and open nature" (1.3.309), itself growing increasingly perverse.

When Lodovico witnesses Othello striking Desdemona he is shocked: "Is this the noble Moor, whom our full Senate / Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature / Whom passion could not shake?" (4.1.264-66). Iago's reply is typical of his gift for terse, economically evil statements that contain more truth than lie: "He is much chang'd."

Once again, as in Hamlet, Shakespeare develops the dramatic potential in the discrepancies between a character's inner and outer form. Being and seeming are radically at variance. Because his actions are ambiguous, the character is more interesting, less predictable. The soliloquies of Iago in particular obfuscate a "linear" characterization, that is, one that confirms and further illustrates behavior and intention from our earliest view of a character. At first Iago's soliloquies appear to be straightforward. Somewhat like Richard III's speeches that establish his motives, Iago defines himself by the confidences he shares with his audience, though he is far more subtle than Richard:

And what's he then that says I play the villain,
When this advice is free I give, and honest,
Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
Th' inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit.

.

So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. (2.3.335-341; 360-62)

Subtlety quickly turns into ambiguity, however, when his original purpose for revenge upon the Moor--ridding Cassio from his own rightful place (1.3.383-404)--gains a secondary motivation: "it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets / H'as done my office. I know not if't be true, / Will do as if for surety" (387-90). This second reason for revenge becomes primary when it is repeated in Iago's next soliloquy:

For that I do suspect the lustful Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat, the thought whereof
Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards,
And nothing can, nor shall content my soul,
Till I am even with him, wife, for wife.
(2.1.295-99)

Once again, another purpose is briefly touched upon with regard to Desdemona:

Now I do love her too,
Not out of absolute lust, (though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin)
But partly led to diet my revenge. (291-94)

This develops into a final motivation: a need to revenge himself on Desdemona as payment for his own disgust at desiring her. By harming her he satisfies himself on those who love her:

I'll pore this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor;
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,

And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh 'em all. (2.3.356-62)

The many motivations of Iago turn a stage Vice and his stated machinations into a multifaceted, though unified, personality. Each of his confessions forces viewers to reconsider their expectations with regard to Iago's intentions and his place in the drama. We know more of Iago than Othello for whom the tragedy is named. And though Iago appears to be completely in control--brilliantly pushing as far as he dare, cruelly probing Othello's vulnerabilities--his own shifting intentions reveal a troubled mind searching for a rationale in its actions.

It may be argued that a stage Vice has no need for motivation, convention dictating his behavior and the reasons for his behavior. Shakespeare, however, has met that expectation with a deliberate motivational opacity that demands a reaction to the incongruity of Iago's intentions. As if to confirm the importance of ambiguity in this drama, Othello succumbs to Iago's evil, using his own unfocused ambiguous utterances for his intentions toward Desdemona in Act 5: "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul."

The perplexing behavior of Iago and Hamlet are the best examples of Shakespeare's tension between what one is and how one appears. So too, the opposition of being and seeming in Othello, as in Hamlet, is a game of perspective, creating dramatic texture by requiring an audience continually to question and to assess what it sees. Whereas

in Hamlet this appearance-reality conceit was made physical by Hamlet's feigning madness and his finding "the name of action" in killing Polonius, in Othello it is physicalized by Othello's blackness, the color of the devil in English folk plays and perhaps on some miracle stages.¹ Iago, on the other hand, wears the expressions of friendship, loyalty, and goodness; yet it is he who would be recognizable to an Elizabethan audience as a devil or a Vice figure, as Othello makes clear when he realizes what Iago has done: "I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable. / If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee" (5.2.286-87).

Hamlet renders perspective by comparisons and shifts of focus between one scene and another, as well as by conflicts between inner and outer form; but in Othello it is wholly concentrated in characterization. Iago's machinations are made more terrible by the simplicity with which he goes about his work. Needing only to suggest what he wants Othello to believe, his lies are really "half-truths." Iago tells no deliberate lie until he has pushed Othello as far

¹ According to the biblical paraphrase The Genesis and Exodus (c. 1250), Lucifer, the "lightbearer," took flight after the war in heaven and set his seat on the north side of heaven between heaven and hell and became, as a result, a black drake. In the Coventry miracles (N Town), devils were hairy and carried clubs (Cushman 5; 23; see also Alan Brody, The English Mummers and Their Plays, U of Penn P, 1969, for the idea that fools or clowns in folk plays wore patched clothes and had their faces blackened in order to show their descent from the devil [72]).

as possible; only then does he invent Cassio's confession, purportedly given while talking in his sleep. Ironically, Othello responds to Iago's lie by "Now do I see 'tis true" (3.3.444). His eyes "seemingly" now opened, Othello's relationship with Iago and Desdemona is reinforced as an inverted Edenesque trinity and fall: Iago tempts Othello by means of a partial truth, thus bringing death to the Moor and Desdemona.² We are reminded once again of Hamlet, his denials to his mother, "Seems, madam? nay, it is, I know not 'seems'," and his ironic, self-reflexive demand, "You go not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you." The confusion between what is and what appears to be heightens dramatic tension, diffusing a clear focus as to what the characters will do and where the scene will lead.

² Like Othello, Hamlet makes use of the trinity for dramatic effect too: the relationship of Hamlet, Ghost, and Claudius--or Hamlet, Ghost, Gertrude--encourages a view of Hamlet caught between the spiritual and grossly physical. When Ophelia substitutes for Claudius or Gertrude, the result is a different perspective of Hamlet, one where he is less the unfortunate instrument for revenge and more the manipulative prince. With regard to religious imagery, the parallels between Iago and Richard III are striking. One thinks of Richard's entrance aloft in 3.7 between two bishops and its religious symbolism with that of Iago's symbolism as the devil in Othello's paradise. Both characters are of course Vice figures, encouraging such perverted significance. But it may be that Shakespeare found opportunity to rework his earlier Vice creations, incorporating as well his other Vice from this time--Aaron the Moor in Titus Andronicus--into a subtler, less melodramatic figure, one who was far more frightening in dramatic potential, especially in his avoidance of the outright lie.

However, while the mirroring technique found in Hamlet is not found in Othello, there are other indications that changes in acting styles were used for enhancing and implementing perspective. In the final act of the play there is evidence for contrasting styles of play within a single scene. The death of Desdemona appears to be constructed for two forms of presentation: Othello's behavior toward Desdemona as opposed to his actions toward Emilia.

The second scene of Act 5 begins with a clearly stated purpose with Othello's concise statement as to what he intends to do to Desdemona. But the motive for his action is ambiguously stated, with the "it" having no specific referent. The ironic juxtaposition of a clear objective with an ambiguous cause sets the tone for what follows:

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
(5.2.1-6)

Othello's brief soliloquy is perhaps meant to assure the audience that the enactment of an otherwise realistic death will in fact not appear so real as to break dramatic illusion. His description of the death before it occurs distances an audience rather than drawing them into the

realism of a woman's strangulation.³ The scene then continues, with Othello informing Desdemona of her death sentence in order that she might prepare herself through prayer. Thus the anticipation of what soon follows makes the scene extremely moving, and we may suppose that a graphic portrayal of her strangulation was unnecessary. Indeed, the scene further illustrates that realism can exist in many forms, and for Shakespeare in this instance it lay more in the idea and horror of the event and the ability of an audience to identify or to understand the attendant emotions conveyed than in a graphic, physical portrayal of murder. A focus upon the pathos of the scene is primary, anticipated as it is by the innocent death of Desdemona, which Othello cannot clearly justify to himself.

The scene was, I believe, played in a large, rather stylized manner for a number of reasons. First, realism lay in the pathos of the event and not in the manner of its playing. Marvin Rosenberg cites a performance of Othello by the King's Men at Oxford in 1610 as an indication of how

³ This same device, for similar purposes, is used in the Hamlet-Gertrude chamber scene as well. In Hamlet's soliloquy that ends 3.2 ("Tis now the very witching time of night"), he indicates for the audience's benefit (much like Othello) that he will not harm his mother when he confronts her with her sins:

Soft, now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature! let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom,
Let me be cruel, not unnatural;
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.
(11. 392-96)

"realistically" the scene was played ("Elizabethan Actors: Men or Marionettes?"). The following is an extract of a letter written in Latin by a spectator, who found that the play was "acted with appropriate decorum." The players

caused tears not only by their speaking but also by their action. Indeed, Desdemona, although greatly successful throughout, moved us especially when at last, lying on her bed, killed by her husband, she implored the pity of the spectators in her death with the face alone. (Qtd. and trans. by Tillotson 494)

However, Daniel Seltzer noted that Rosenberg, "in his zeal for realism, translated the Decorum part as 'well and effectively acted'" ("Elizabethan Acting in Othello" 201). The mention here of a simple look, a moment of quiet meaning is most notable, since it was this and not the violence of the scene that stayed in the mind of the viewer. This in itself might argue for a "naturalist" playing style, were it not for other indications that suggest it was the dramatic incident and not the manner of portrayal that moved the audience.

Second, an indication for a more formal style of playing is the internal stage directions that further underscore the conventional presentation of the scene. Physical indicators of emotion are given in the text instead of relying upon the playing of the scene alone to elicit what emotions it would. Desdemona says of Othello's wild behavior, "I fear you; for you're fatal then / When your

eyes roll so" (ll. 37-38); then "Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip? / Some bloody passion shakes your very frame" (43-44).⁴ What Seltzer called the descriptive style of acting, one where a character's emotions were described in his address rather than coming to life with his words, was more formal, rhetorical, and marked an earlier style of playing. In this instance, the descriptions lend an artfulness to the scene that contrasts in style to the one that follows, and dramatic perspective is the result.

And third, Desdemona's violent suffocation, symbolized by the lingering pleas, "O Lord, Lord, Lord!", and Othello's inability to finish quickly the awful task, "Not dead? not yet quite dead?" (ll. 83; 86), takes place amid the clamorings of Emilia from within.⁵ Completing the deed, Othello uses highly figured and rhetorical language as an emotional coda to his act:

My wife, my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
O insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe
Did yawn at alteration. (97-101)

⁴ Following the killing of Polonius we find an internal indication of more formal action that is similar to those found in Othello, when Hamlet says to Gertrude "Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down, / And let me wring your heart" (3.4.34-35). The mixed presentation of two styles of play draws an audience into stage action even as it alienates them from too emotional a response.

⁵ Compare the banging at the gate in Macbeth when Duncan has been murdered. In both plays the tension is heightened by the noise and perhaps rhythm as well of the knocking.

As seen by Othello, Desdemona's death is on a universal scale, and his interjections are offered up like invocations to the intangible, unseen forces responsible for his actions. The repetition of "my wife" enforces the irony for the murderer's supposed justification, the loss of his wife to adultery. But then the scene changes to a contrasted calm, becoming more personal and being reinforced by a naturalness of dialogue. As Othello opens the door he says: "I had forgot thee. O, come in Emilia. / Soft, by and by, let me the curtains draw" (103-04). His passion spent, Othello appears almost reasonable once again as he quietly responds to each of Emilia's threats and accusations--even as Desdemona revives long enough to die before him a second time.

While Othello's actions with Desdemona and Emilia may seem two levels of emotion in one performance style, the internal stage directions, level of diction, and information that Othello gives to the audience prior to her death argue for a form of "alienation." These dramatic techniques distance an audience rather than draw them into a realism of stage action, much as do plays-within-plays or meta-theatrical references to acting. This distancing sets into "relief" the tension and inevitability of the play's catastrophe, set as it is against a different style, one meant to appear more natural. The impact of the two scenes is thus much greater when contrasting styles are used: the

conventional one for Desdemona's murder and the plausible--
 "naturalistic"--style for Othello's dealing with Emilia.

The same dramatic effect of "formalism" buttressed
 against "naturalism" occurs in one of Shakespeare's later
 plays as well, when a brief, silent action suddenly shifts
 our perceptions and responses to what we see. In Coriolanus
 (1608), a simple gesture effectively indicates the
 denouement. Pleading that Rome should be spared from her
 son's impending attack upon the City, Volumnia's high-flown
 persuasive rhetoric is at first matched by an equally lofty
 response from Coriolanus:

O mother, mother!
 What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
 The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
 They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
 (5.3.182-85)

The language of Coriolanus is indicative of his character.
 His interjections "O" and "Behold" have an invocatory
 effect, affirming the mother's god-likeness in the eyes of
 her son. Established as well is the familial distance
 between mother and son, a formality based primarily on duty,
 allegiance, and respect, suggestive of the god-man
 relationship. But wedged between Volumnia's statement and
 her son's answer there appears a remarkable stage direction:
 [Coriolanus] "holds her by the hand, silent." As in
Othello, the contrast between a conventional presentation
 and a plausible style, in this instance a simple, mute

action, is notable; the contrasts set into sharp focus the play's most crucial and poignant scene.

In his tragedies of the 1600s, Shakespeare presents alternative ways of seeing stage action, showing figures in multi-perspectives that eventually define their character, as the results of contrasts in being and seeming. However, while always revealing, these images are never complete in themselves.⁶ Hamlet and the later tragedies, as well as the

⁶ In the post-1600 plays, the continual shift in focus blends into a dramatic form different from that of the 1590s, where representational action was rendered in a clear, sharply focused linear style of presentation. Hamlet and Iago are excellent examples of "non-linear" characters (see below). The post-1600 dramatic style that shifts its emphasis in staging and characterization may be defined as "painterly," that is, a drama rendered in changing perspectives that requires a fixed point of reference, a focal point from which all action becomes relative. An audience identifies changing perspective only when they have a stable, familiar area of experience from which to depart. Bradbrook observes that in the 1970s "it was fashionable to illustrate Jacobean tragedies by comparisons with Italian mannerist or baroque painting" (see especially William S. Hecksher's "Shakespeare in His Relationship to the Visual Arts" and Lois Ziegelman's "Hamlet: Shakespeare's Mannerist Tragedy"); yet, she continues, "it was the baroque art of Inigo Jones" and the perspective used in his masques that a later theatre audience came to know (Webster 7). But this is somewhat misleading. Jones' study of Italian architecture led to the introduction of the picture stage and proscenium arch to the English theatre. But the techniques of Italian baroque art were not unknown in England prior to 1615, the year that Jones returned from his study of Palladian architecture. Shakespeare was at least marginally familiar with painting techniques, especially the use of perspective (see also Sonnet 24; All's Well That Ends Well [5.3.48]; Twelfth Night [5.1.217]; and Chapter Seven). For a tournament in 1613, Shakespeare designed the impresa for Francis Manners, sixth earl of Rutland (1578-1632). Thomas Scrivin, Rutland's steward, recorded the following:

Item, 31 martii, to Mr Shakespeare in gold about my Lordes impresa, xliij s, to richard Burbage for paynting and making yt, in gold xliij s.

so-called "problem plays," indicate an absorption with the "perspective games" that depict the ambiguous, unfocused actions of protagonists. In Troilus and Cressida (1601-02) characters are diffused in a play that sets no absolutes. While in Measure For Measure (1604), it is the absolute in conflict with human inconstancy that shifts perspective and causes instability. Hamlet especially lacks dramatic focus. His intentions are never clearly defined, nor are his actions; both his deeds and meditations bring into question his stability. As a character, Hamlet has a diffused quality, intensified by the unrelieved melancholia conveyed through the imagery of weeds, rankness, and dark desires. Thus Hamlet's lack of fixed definition gives an audience many different ways of seeing and understanding him. Similarly, in Othello, Iago presents a character who demonstrates a lack of clarity by his many confessed and unconfessed motivations for evil, which are constantly changing. That ambiguity is capped at the play's end by his refusal to speak when confronted with his guilt.

These games of perspective develop characterization by presenting the conflicts and ambiguities of human nature, forcing an audience actively to participate in the drama by reevaluating their own experiences in the light of what they

Burbage was famous for his skills as a painter as well as an actor, and Shakespeare probably created the impresa displayed in Act II of Pericles (1608). See William Hecksher's "Shakespeare in His Relationship to the Visual Arts: A Study in Paradox."

see. Dramatic perspective is made possible through the players' art of "personation," John Marston's term from the Induction to Antonio and Mellida, that suggests an immersion into a role rather than an oratorical presentation.⁷ Both John Webster and John Heywood later used the term to indicate a naturalness of performance and believability of action: as Webster said with regard to Richard Burbage, "What we see him personate, we thinke truely done before vs" ("An Excellent Actor"). What I have identified as the plausible style of acting was, I believe, the actor's new art of personation, where actions appeared more "natural" and familiar to an audience's quotidian observations of human behavior. As a counterpoint to the more dominant conventional style of play, the new style implemented Shakespeare's perspective techniques of mirroring scenes, contrasting the large to the intimate, and diffusing characterization. We find it used to special effect in many plays besides Hamlet and Othello.

King Lear

King Lear (1605), like Hamlet, offers another example of "mirror" scenes for a changed focus, as well as contrasting views of character definition. In this

⁷ See Chapter One, section 7: "Directors, Players, Dramatist."

instance, the mirroring not only demonstrates perspective but develops dramatic irony. Once again, a plausible acting style becomes an instrument for a new way of reseeing previous action.

The conventional acting style begins the play with Lear's regal, imperious demands upon his daughters, his "darker purpose," when he requires a statement of devotion: "Which of you shall we say doth love us most, / That we our largest bounty may extend / Where nature doth with merit challenge?" (1.1.51-53). Cordelia's formal asides add to the conventionality of the scene, indicating her inability to feign more than the devotion and love she properly feels, as her sisters had done. Angered by her response, Lear calls upon the gods and forces of nature to witness her ingratitude and to hear his sentence:

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. (ll. 113-116)

Lear's madness takes the form of a similar despotism in the storm scene, as he commands nature's furies to do their worst:

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage, blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the
cocks!
You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! (3.2.1-6)

The storm scene offers an obvious example of acting stylization as well, since Lear must contend with imagined wind, rain, and "sulph'rous and thought-executing fires," which could only be approximated in terms of stage-effects. But in Act 4 another view of Lear presents itself, one extraordinarily subtle, suggesting a style reliant on quiet nuance and on gestures made more striking by its contrast to the other style of play. The scene ironically mirrors images from Lear's wrath in Act 1, and his mad passion in Act 3:

Lear: Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
 I am mightily abus'd; I should ev'n die with pity
 To see another thus. I know not what to say.
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
 Of my condition!

Cor.: O, look upon me, sir,
 And hold your hand in benediction o'er me.
 No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear: Pray do not mock me.
 I am a very foolish fond old man,
 Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
 And to deal plainly,
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind. (4.7.50-62)

The intensity and economy of gesture sets forth a pathetic image of old age when parent and child reverse roles--made especially striking by its contrast to Act 1--an image dependent upon the depiction of an aged, broken man. The latter scene of Lear's reunion with Cordelia, when his "great rage" is waning, and the storm scene in Act 3, also

give alternative mixtures of dramatic texture: they shift perspective from large to intimate, from the general to the specific. Ambiguity, an instrument of such perspective, prevents or delays focus in the scene between Lear and Cordelia, allowing the actor more room for his own coloring of the role of Lear--an aspect of a more personal, plausible playing style.

Seemingly lost, alone, and uncertain as to his future, Lear is unpredictable at this point in the play. Character definition is diffused and ambiguous. Gone is the confidence and self-knowledge; when Lear's certainty is gone, we as an audience become uncertain too in our expectations and reactions to him. Instead, the questioning and self-doubts of Lear make for an unsettled scene, as his confusion contrasts violently to the opening of the play. An audience, I suggest, will empathize with the instability of the stage character, delaying their own judgments as to what their observations tell them.

Perhaps more than any other Shakespeare play, Lear presents games of perspective. Besides mirror-image scenes and character diffusion we find a dramatic device that anticipates the later plays. Act 4 in particular reminds us of the techniques found in the romances.

Edgar begins the Act with the type of tortured language that in the late plays often indicates a troubled mind in conflict with itself:

Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
 Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
 The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
 Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.
 The lamentable change is from the best,
 The worst returns to laughter.

Much as an internal indication of emotion within the text, the language is meant to signal the dual nature of the action that follows. Edgar plays the part of narrator-actor within the scene, much as Prospero or Gower will later in the romances. His several asides when he meets his blind father (4.1) become yet one more personality among his many disguises of costume and voice. The several roles Edgar plays with his different voices put him both within and outside the stage action as player and observer. The aside, the most mannered of theatrical conventions, places him in direct contact with the audience even as he comments upon the action he sees. This changing perspective that Edgar has with stage action forces a shift in perspective between audience and stage as well. Although consciously theatrical, the aside, like the soliloquy, could be used on occasion for the purpose of expanding the possibilities for behavioral interpretation, while forcing audiences to reconsider their own roles as observers.

In this scene, we find the language and stage conventions of Edgar setting the tenor for a necessarily stylized scene, given the limitations of representing Gloucester's "leap" from Dover's cliffs when the action continues in scene six. Nevertheless the disguises and

voices of Edgar suggest the player's virtuoso skills at dialect, mimicry, and disguise. Within these two scenes between Edgar and Gloucester, then, we find a variety of stage technique: a multiperspectival character portrait, formal asides, and the virtuoso's skills of "personation"--the ability to bring interior feelings and emotional responses to life through a naturalness of action. As John Webster said, "What we see him personate, we think truly done before us" ("An Excellent Actor"). The shifting focus between a "formal-natural" presentation is typical of Shakespeare's post-1600 plays in general and Lear in particular.

Macbeth

Macbeth announces the thesis of its game in its opening scene: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair." Echoed as a restatement of the confusion of values and perversion of appearances within the play, Macbeth's first words restate its theme: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.3.38). Like Hamlet, Macbeth's character presents an ambiguous diffusion of action and passion. Pushed into actions that he cannot fully accept, imagination robs him of all reason. Banquo's ghost may or may not exist; the dagger that floats before him certainly does not. And while he attempts to work up a sufficient head of passion in order to face the tasks at hand, he is pulled in different

directions. Told by Lady Macbeth to "screw your courage to the sticking place" (1.7.60), Macbeth is soon instructed to "sleek o'er your rugged looks" (3.2.27), that is, put passion into action but disguise it. As the madness of Lady Macbeth indicates, the goal remains unobtainable.

Macbeth has several scenes that may suggest different playing styles, particularly the two scenes concerned with the murder of Duncan. When Lady Macbeth and Macbeth meet outside Duncan's chamber, their drama has a pagan, atavistic quality about it: portents abound, daggers fresh from sacrifice drip blood, and as Lady Macbeth returns the daggers, soiling her own hands red, she becomes a willing initiate into her husband's profession. Like a heartbeat made audible, the steady, incessant knocking at the gate accompanies their deadly rites and heightens the tension in the scene. The following scene, however, depicts the incongruous comic bawdry of the Porter. Focus is suddenly shifted from primal, dark ceremony to topical, humorous material: the equivocations of Father Garnet in the Gun Powder Plot of 1605, and his grotesque justifications for lying to authorities, even though a man of God.⁸ Residing

⁸ Garnet protested his innocence upon his soul and salvation, until confronted by one of his fellow conspirators. Without proof, he maintained, there was no reason for him to implicate himself; but once proof was supplied he was forced to confess, seeing no incongruity with his former denials. Equivocation, he said, had to be used for a good purpose but permitted him to swear falsely, even by his priesthood. In a grim joke, it was reported that when informed he would hang, Garnet shifted, faltered, and equivocated but was "hanged without equivocation." It

as unfinished business in the mind of a viewer, however, is the anticipation of Duncan's murder being discovered. The tension of expectation is further heightened by the ugliness of the Porter's mind, which parallels that of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth much as the sordid stage comedy mimics those of Garnet's duplicity. The contrasts between the two scenes and topical material are different perspectives of the same terrible vision. Indeed, as "devil-porter" to Hell-Gate the Porter is symbolic host to all murderers, on stage and off.

Just as abruptly as the Porter's scene begins, it ends. Once again a highly rhetorical scene follows, as Macduff's metaphorical response to Duncan's death descriptively conveys through poetical images a different perspective to how Lady Macbeth and Macbeth viewed the dead king:

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

.

Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building!

.

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.

Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell! Murder and treason!
(3.3.64-65; 66-69; 71-74)

was also said that Garnet fortified himself with sack before hanging and was even forced to deny charges of adultery (See the Arden ed., Muir xv-xvii).

The Porter scene was presented in a plausible acting style--one that emulated a recognizable, quotidian familiarity of action--situated between two stylized, conventional styles of play. The first of these rhetorical scenes, dark, primal, and atavistic, is mirrored by the Porter's low, grotesque humor that offers another perspective to the degeneracy within Macbeth's castle: high or low-born, those who inhabit this corrupt place behave similarly. Yet the audience is given an alternative way of seeing Duncan's murder with Macduff's metaphor: "murder hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed temple."⁹ The one trope is suggestive of two things, Christ's triumph over death and the divine right of kings. Thus, Hell-Gate and Macbeth's appropriation of the crown are linked, confirming the magnitude of his sin and underscoring a multi-perspectival view of evil. Those different ways of seeing stage action could only be facilitated by different styles of the players' art, as the acting styles pointed out to an audience how they should "understand" or accept what they saw, much as would any other stage convention.

As with Hamlet, one scene "mirrors" another: Macduff's discovery of the body offers an alternative perspective on the murder of Duncan and how he appears to his loyal subjects. But so too is the more "natural" Porter scene a

⁹ Speaking of his own resurrection, Christ says in John 2:19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

reflection of the primal hell that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth create with their crime. Alternative ways of seeing also come through a conflict between being and seeming, which exacts a terrible toll on Macbeth and his wife--she into madness and he into greater bloodshed. While the play concentrates on the depiction of these two characters' passions, an action by Macduff--or, more correctly, a lack of action--illustrates how the discrepancy between being and seeming could be physicalized on the stage in a plausible style.

When Macduff learns that his wife and children have been killed, his actions do not properly express his sorrow in the observation of Malcolm:

What, man, ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words. The grief thou dost not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.
(4.3.208-10)

Malcolm repeats his admonition to act out his grief:

"Dispute it like a man" (220). But Macduff has internalized his pain, the outward action being unnecessary to convey his emotions: "I shall do so; / But I must also feel it as a man" (220-21).

Macduff's quiet reaction to learning of the murders of his family contrasts to the outpouring of rhetorical images used to express his sorrow upon finding the body of Duncan. Even moments before learning of the attack on his castle, Macduff showed his passion with regard to the harm done

Scotland: "Bleed, bleed, poor country! / Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure" (31-32). A comparison of the two scenes, the discovery of Duncan's body with the learning of his murdered family, suggests a number of questions regarding Macduff's personality and why he is strangely quiet at such a moment. Is he, like Hotspur, the warrior who changes into gentle, playful family man at home? Or is he, like many of Shakespeare's warriors, too willing to set aside family and home for honor and revenge? Obviously, such things cannot be inferred from the script; however, the ambiguity created by a juxtaposition of the two scenes gives Macduff far more depth of possible characterization than usually seen in this largely static figure.

By comparison, an earlier play demonstrates a far more predictable action, one that is in keeping with the character's youthful emotional excesses. Romeo's behavior upon learning of his banishment conveys his grief through internal stage directions:

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear
thy hair,
And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

(3.3.64-70)

The contrasting actions in Romeo and Macbeth, both expressing intense sorrow, differ in the depth of

possibilities for characterization. Romeo displays his grief in a manner that we expect. He is predictable; his emotionality, much like Richard II's, is established early in the play and confirmed throughout. Macduff, on the other hand, does not behave as we expect. The "why" of his actions, when compared to what we have previously observed, provokes us as an audience to question his reasons and his character. This is the purpose behind a more plausible style. When combined with a conventional style of play, the newer style sets into relief dramatic action that makes us re-evaluate and re-question the experience we have witnessed on stage.

The Romances

While the tragedies appear to have benefited the most from the plausible acting style, when we think of Shakespeare's romances, their mannered, self-conscious artfulness usually comes to mind. Granville-Barker's observation about Cymbeline (1609?) may stand for the romances in general: these plays present an "art that rather displays art than conceals it" (1:466). Pericles (1606-07?), The Winter's Tale (1610?), and The Tempest (1611?) all emphasize the fantastic; cause and effect is once again

Shakespeare's interest and once more the force that moves the story.¹⁰

Still, evidence for a plausible style of play occurs in the romances. I have stressed the idea that this later acting style was meant as a complementary form of presentation, a supplement to conventional playing style and conventional stagecraft. What the style offered to an audience was an alternative way of seeing, and the tragedies particularly, as Shakespeare developed the introspective actions and musings of isolated figures, developed this style of play.

In the romances, the plausible style is still noticeable, though the perspectival technique is often different. First, we see an emphasis upon point of view, as action reveals different perspectives of a similar argument. The Perdita-Polixenes festival scene in The Winter's Tale (4.4) or the debate between Caliban and Prospero as to the rightful rule of the island (The Tempest 1.2) illustrate this point. Second, a character often becomes both observer and active participant in the play's narrative structure, as Prospero does in the Tempest. The return of the commentator or spokesman for stage action reintroduces the roles of Rumor in 2 Henry IV and Chorus in Henry V.

¹⁰ The most notable exception is the character Leontes, whose force of personality is of primary interest early on in the play. However, The Winter's Tale is problematic: the first half of the play is in a tragic mode, while the second half is romance.

Similar in its effect to the observer roles played by Hamlet and Edgar, the stage convention of the commentator presents both an actor in and a viewer of the stage action--as Hamlet is in the play-within-the-play. The "Murder of Gonzago," for example, makes direct comment on the plot in the main play, as well as presenting a contrasting style of acting: the "real" actors contrast to the visiting Players, who are frequently mocked. So too Prospero, in a manner reminiscent of the Duke in Measure For Measure, moves through The Tempest as choral spokesman, actor, and observer, changing his moods to meet the occasion. Thus the "spokesman" role draws attention to a twofold dramatic experience, involvement in and distancing himself from stage action, much as a scene alternately draws an audience into and alienates them from the events on stage.

However, while the tragedies used dramatic perspective to lead to a further development of character, the romances primarily investigate and reflect upon a single incident. Plot takes precedence over character. All actions in the late plays bear consequences that follow a sequential path. By reordering the attention given the different elements in a story, truth once again becomes relative: when is anger and revenge truly felt by Prospero and when is it feigned? or, can Leontes ever be forgiven for his actions and at what price? Cymbeline, like The Winter's Tale, also presents a problem in focus for an audience; while the first three acts

betoken tragedy, the rest of the play modifies itself into a more tragicomical spirit.

The feeling we have that the late plays are more "stylized" than the post-1600 tragedies comes from a language that can be subtle one moment, tangled and ornate the next.¹¹ Yet the language reflects dramatization, much as Shakespeare's dramatic "descriptive" style indicated the tenor of a scene and its characterization.¹² In the romances, occasional detours into more realistic actions set into relief the unreality of the romantic world, which serves to heighten the fantasy and develop to a limited extent characterization. Cymbeline in particular demonstrates how brief lapses into realism, presented by a plausible acting style, can reinforce romantic fantasy.

Cymbeline

When Guiderius slays the Queen's son Cloten in Cymbeline (4.2), it becomes a predictable event in the romantic world of evil Queens and their equally evil and foolish children. Yet Guiderius' brandishing of Cloten's head and his reactions to killing the prince contrast to the

¹¹ Pafford uses the example of Leontes' jealousy in The Winter's Tale (1.21; Arden ed. xxxiv). See below.

¹² See Chapter Three, p. 91. According to Seltzer, a poetical representation of character found in the descriptions of mood, tenor, and appearance within the language marked the descriptive style.

unreality and fantasy that have preceded this moment.

Commenting on the death, Guiderius says

This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse,
There was no money in't.

.

I have ta'en
His head from him: I'll throw't into the creek
Behind our rock, and let it to the sea,
And tell the fishes he's the Queen's son, Cloten.

.

I have sent Cloten's clotpole down the stream
In embassy to his mother. His body's hostage
For his return. (4.2.113-14; 150-53; 184-86)

Guiderius' brutal behavior and brusque language contrast in tone to the unreality of the play, appearing more "realistic" in a contrast to earlier stage action and language; yet this underscores two things. First, the manner of Cloten's death stresses his insignificance and triviality. Rather than feeling pity for him, we see an affirmation of cause and effect, behavior and result that follows a recognizable course with regard to character "types" as opposed to multidimensional figures. But second, the cavalier attitude of Guiderius, supposed son of the rustic cave dweller Morgan, identifies him as having noble, warrior blood. Guiderius' dissatisfaction with the pastoral life was earlier suggested in the play, anticipating his true nature:

we poor unfledg'd,

Have never wing'd from view o'th' nest, nor know
 not
 What air's from home.

.

unto us it is

A cell of ignorance, travelling a-bed,
 A prison, or a debtor that not dares
 To stride a limit. (3.3.27-29; 32-35)

Although he has not actively experienced them before, the battle arts come easily to him, his attitude and abilities affirming his nobility. Guiderius therefore takes on a small measure of dimensionality as a character--not so much as to reveal an inner life with its attendant ambiguities but to contrast to Cloten as a figure more meaningful and important within the romantic, narrative structure.

Posthumus is another character who is briefly seen in a more realistic light for dramatic effect. Throughout the play he appears as a conventional romantic figure, albeit somewhat dull and uninteresting when compared to the sprightlier Imogen, duplicitous Jachimo, or pompous Cymbeline. J. M. Nosworthy has noted that his relating of the battle in Act 5 is, however, graphic and realistic (Arden ed., lix):

the King himself

Of his wings destitute, the army broken,
 And but the backs of Britains seen, all flying
 Through a strait lane; the enemy full-hearted,
 Lolling the tongue with slaught'ring--having work
 More plentiful than tools to do't--strook down
 Some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling
 Merely through fear, that the strait pass was
 damm'd

With dead men hurt behind, and cowards living
To die with length'ned shame. (5.3.4-13)

The battle itself, as indicated by the Folio text stage directions, was stylized and not meant to appear "realistic":

Enter LUCIUS, JACHIMO, and Roman army at one door,
and the Britain army at another; LEONATUS
POSTHUMUS following, like a poor soldier. They
march over and go out. Then enter again, in
skirmish, JACHIMO and POSTHUMUS: he vanquisheth
and disarmeth JACHIMO, and then leaves him. (5.2)

Noting the absence of the usual battle scene trappings, Harley Granville-Barker said that "as it stands, the elaborate pantomime really looks not unlike an attempt to turn old-fashioned dumb-show to fresh and quaint account" (Prefaces, second series, 259; qtd. by Nosworthy 147). Posthumus' descriptions of the battle then, given his character "type" and the stylization of the battle itself, appear out of place. Yet this small measure of uncharacteristic action and language from a largely static figure gives Posthumus dimension--again, as with Guiderius, not so much as to elevate him from his romantic, heroic type but enough to add contrast and depth to the dramatic picture.

The plausible acting style facilitated these shifting perspectives of stage action. Brief moments of more natural playing and lapses into "realism" further emphasized the artificiality and unreality of the play through the contrast

of presentational styles. At times, stage directions indicate these attempts at realism that combine with stylization: "Enter the Mariners wet" (Tempest 1.1.53); "Enter Pericles, wet" (2.1.1); a scene of eating and drinking (Pericles 2.3); "Re-enter Guiderius with Cloten's head" (Cymbeline 4.2.113). By shifting dramatic focus, Shakespeare's technique of perspective can affect different aspects of his dramatization. As in Macbeth, a multi-perspectival drama can set into relief and emphasize the tenor of a play--as in the Porter scene--or serve to develop characterization--as in the changing view of Macbeth's personality when compared to the fixed qualities of Lady Macbeth.

The Winter's Tale

In Cymbeline we saw how different playing styles served primarily to underscore the romantic, unreality of the play, adding a small degree of development to its characters. In The Winter's Tale, however, the admixture between stylized and realistic behavior gives far greater depth to the figure of Leontes. Yet this characterization, true to the emphasis upon cause and effect found in the romances, gives justification for a single incident--his abrupt and explosive jealousy--establishing as cause the reasons for all subsequent dramatic action. The suddenness with which he succumbs to jealousy is surprising but conceivable in

light of the growing intensity of his passion, yet the form that his expression takes is in the formal aside.

Reading the play, it is easy to forget the silent Leontes during the fifty lines of dialogue between Hermione and Polixenes in Act 1, much as one forgets the presence of Ophelia during Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy. But in both instances the silent figures are arresting, and in Leontes' case, he is the focal point of the scene because he reacts to what he sees.

Leontes' formal asides that indicate the increasing scale of his jealousy become choral comments directing what an audience should see:

This entertainment
May a free face put on, derive a liberty
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,
And well become the agent; 't may--I grant.
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
As now they are, and making practic'd smiles,
As in a looking-glass; and then to sigh, as 'twere
The mort o' th' deer--O, that is entertainment
My bosom likes not, nor my brows! (1.2.111-19)

Acting the part of misguided stage director, Leontes attempts to convince both himself and his audience that what he believes is the same as what we see. The tension of the scene increases by the insistence of the king's observations that contrast greatly to our own.

Then, as in Lear's changes between playing the Titan in the storm and the child-like figure before Cordelia, a shift occurs in perspective when passion smolders temporarily. An

anticipation heightens as he looks at his son who has "smutched" his nose; the asides become dialogue, passions and fears are particularized, and the conflicts of his internal life reveal themselves:

Come, sir page,
Look on me with you welkin eye. Sweet villain!
Most dear'st! my collop! Can thy dam--may't be?--
Affection! thy intention stabs the centre.
(1.2.135-38)

Leontes' anger erupts into a passion that feeds upon itself and sees only what it wishes; his ridicule and contempt for Camillo even as he attempts to gain his support in confirming what he has seen is particularly realistic in depicting a man's frailties and self-doubts. His incoherency at times, as J. H. P. Pafford has observed, is indicative of the inarticulate emotions in conflict with his mind (Arden ed., lxxxv).¹³

The Winter's Tale, like Cymbeline, begins in a tragic mode but finishes in a different dramatic form, and the romances in general, like the tangled, ornate language used within them, are often problematic. Yet the same type of plausible playing style shows up in the late plays, though

¹³ Pafford says, "There is at least as high a degree of realism in The Winter's Tale as there is in most of Shakespeare's non-historical plays and Shakespeare has deliberately re-fashioned the tale to give it this illusion of actuality" (lxv), adding in a footnote, "Even the flight of Polixenes is rationalized, more, for example, than that of Macduff" (Macbeth 4.2).

it appears less frequently than in the tragedies. Dramatic perspective works, however, through the commentator role and the use of realism for dramatic contrast and "relief" when set within self-consciously artful, stylized scenes.

The Blackfriars

In 1608, the King's Men acquired the indoor Blackfriars theatre, becoming the first adult company to perform regularly in a private theatre. With a total space of 66 feet by 46 feet, including stage, galleries, and seats, it probably housed an audience about one quarter to one half that of the Globe theatre.¹⁴ To what extent the Blackfriars, a more intimate theatre, may have had on the playing styles of the King's Men we do not know. In the smaller facility nuance and subtlety would be encouraged, especially that of voice. James Shirley's The Doubtful Heir (1641), for example, was a play meant for the King's Men and intended for the Blackfriars, but its first presentation came at the Globe. Shirley asks in his Prologue, "pardon our vast stage," since the play is intended for a different

¹⁴ For the dimensions of the Blackfriars, see Chambers 2:505 ff. The interior design and seating capacity can only be conjectured, because we do not know where the stage was situated or the size of the actual playing area. See also Gurr, Sh. S. 144 ff. For a discussion about playing style at the Blackfriars see Bentley, "Shakespeare and the Blackfriars Theatre," and Seltzer "The Staging of the Last Plays."

audience, "we have no heart to break our lungs" (A3_r). But given the many venues that the King's Men played in, we cannot assume that plays given at the Blackfriars were designed especially with that theatre in mind. Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale were presumably both played initially at the Globe, according to eyewitness accounts of the plays by Simon Foreman and noted in a manuscript found among his papers following his death in September, 1611.¹⁵

The generalizations with regard to Shakespeare's romances, especially those played at the Blackfriars, have perhaps clouded our view as readers or spectators as to how those plays were presented. Scholarship has stressed the "coterie audience" that attended plays at the Blackfriars previous to the King's Men occupying that theatre, and this in turn has suggested the probable dramatic and presentational style of Shakespeare's last works. Yet Andrew Gurr notes that John Fletcher's "pastorall Tragic-comedie" The Faithful Sheperdess (1608), a dramatic form that depicted characters as exaggerated social types--after the manner of Jonson and usually played at Court or universities--was not well received by its Blackfriars audience. Fletcher angrily wrote that the play was

¹⁵ Forman's "The Booke of plaies and Notes herof & formans for Common pollicie," first discovered by John Payne Collier in 1836, was long thought to be spurious because Collier was a notorious forger. However, it is now regarded as genuine. See R. W. Hunt and J. Dover Wilson, The Review of English Studies 23 (1947): 193-200; and Nosworthy, Arden ed., Cymbeline, xiv-xv.

misunderstood by those who "missing whitsun ales, creame, wassel and morris-dances, began to be angry." Yet after the King's Men took over the Blackfriars they staged a similar Fletcher play, Philaster, with great success, setting a trend for tragicomedy for many years to come. Gurr's conclusion is that "such apparent inconsistency on the part of the Blackfriars audiences should warn us of the danger of making too absolute a distinction between the audiences at one kind of playhouse and another" (Sh. S. 212).

Conclusion

The best indications of playing styles in Shakespeare's company come from the repertory played at the Globe theatre, where dramatic form and playing styles were complementary aspects of a single play craft. Even the self-conscious artfulness of Shakespeare's romances indicate that the plausible style of acting was part of his multiperspectival drama. Assumptions about the tastes and preferences of audiences, or the distinctions between a "Globe" play and one given at the Blackfriars, often mislead us into generalizations about Shakespeare and his players' art. By the time that the King's Men were playing at the Blackfriars, there were many different types of dramatic fare to be found in London. The acting styles were equally as various. But Shakespeare's perspectival drama illustrates the theatrical dependency that existed in his

plays between dramatic forms and playing styles. Dramatic techniques of mirror-image scenes, a diffusion and lack of specificity in character development, observer roles that played within and commented upon stage action, and scenes that contrast in tenor to stage action and thereby heighten the tone and feel of a play were all means by which Shakespeare implemented a multiperspectival view of stage action. And as the medium for that art, his players were the literal expression of a new dramatic style.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

"Action is eloquence"

E. H. Gombrich relates a story in Art and Illusion
(1965) of Kenneth Clark trying to

slowly back away from a Velasquez to see when the
'brush strokes and dabs of pigment on the canvas
transformed themselves into a vision of
transfigured reality' as he stepped back. But
stepping backward and forward, he could never hold
both visions at the same time and therefore the
problem of how it was done always eluded him. (6)

When technique becomes invisible, illusion is at work.
Perhaps all we can ask of an illusionistic style of play is
that it suggests realism and plausibility. It defies the
attempt to hold the vision of how it is done simultaneously
with the perceived presentation, or perhaps it allows the
viewer more freedom of imagination than being told
specifically what he is intended to see. It was, I suggest,
this art of personation that the actors' used on the Globe
stage to complement their more accustomed conventional style
of play. Allowing for an ease of playing where technique
was largely invisible, the plausible style transmuted
dramatic presentation into alternative visions of stage
action.

Attempting to argue that this style of play was natural
or realistic in a sense that we would understand today is

meaningless. The aesthetics of one age are not those of another. Euripides, for example, was fined for making The Trojan Women too real, yet his art was far from the representation of and responses to realism that we understand today.¹ It is enough for us to know that when contrasted to the older, conventional style of play by comparison it appeared realistic. When the newer, plausible style supplemented the conventional one, viewers were alternately drawn into and distanced from stage action. Much like Valasquez's ability to "transfigure reality," the dramatic and playing techniques of the Shakespearean company transformed their drama into a unified, theatrical whole, wherein illusionistic technique was part of their dramatic vision.

1. Performance Style

Given the transitory quality of the stage in general and the aesthetic differences of four hundred years ago, can we know what those presentational forms in the Elizabethan theatre looked like? We can only approach an appreciation of the players' art, I believe, by understanding the

¹ See Lewontin's review of Joseph's 1964 edition of Elizabethan Acting where Lewontin makes this point. Lewontin takes exception to words such as "natural" and "lifelike" being used with regard to representational art, reminding us that Greek drama, though very formal, made the audience weep.

dramatic context in which styles may have been used. Conceived and presented as a theatrical unity, Shakespeare's drama and the player's art were complementary elements in stagecraft. And while there are indications of how playing styles may have appeared, it is far more important to understand how those styles contributed to a complete dramatic experience. For this reason, I have labeled the two modes of play on the Globe stage as "conventional" and "plausible" in order to suggest not only performance style but dramatic purpose. A conventional play craft was established and refined within the morality and Tudor traditions, one that defined and developed technique in the many venues of the fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century English stages. Conventional formulas that suggested realism were used in lieu of an illusionistic art, seeking to infer some greater reality rather than presenting it. As an intrinsic bonding element in the relationship between audience and stage, conventional play was adapted, shaped, and at times redefined in the London theatres.

Throughout the 1590s, this conventional stagecraft dominated. But a counterpart to the conventional playing style was the presentational games of the clowns, who entertained outside the narrative, conventional framework of the play proper, demonstrating their own unique abilities in dance, song, and impromptu routines. Thus Hamlet's disquisition on limiting the clown speaks for an opinion that would remove the personal, presentational style of

performance and in its place stress dramatic unity. His remarks regarding the tragedians who so "strut and bellow" argues for discipline and common sense in that player's art as well; the tragedians, like the clowns, had their own presentational games of self-expression.

Beginning with Hamlet, we notice shifts of focus within the plays from the general to the specific, the large to the small. Character definition and dramatic development become aggregates of contrasting images. Hamlet's madness, Othello's growing suspicions, Lear's increasing passivity, and Macbeth's gradual resolution into evil are each descents into catastrophe that provide character definition as well. King Lear perhaps more than any other play develops these contrasts, using disguise, madness, and philosophical contradiction for focal instability.² And while the written dramatic styles of these plays are purposely uneven and diffuse, so too were the presentational ones. What we think of as "formal" playing--representation as opposed to impersonation, recitation rather than real conversation, in Harbage's definition--undoubtedly existed on many stages. Shakespeare's texts, however, argue for mixed styles of acting necessary to present the dramatic disparities found

² Consider for example the philosophical conflicts in Lear's "I am a man / More sinn'd against than sinning" (3.2.59-60), Edmund's "The younger rises when the old doth fall" (3.3.25), Gloucester's "I stumbled when I saw" (4.1.19), and Edgar's "O, matter and impertinency mix'd; / Reason in madness!" (4.6.174-75).

within his plays. No longer were players merely physical similes for dramatic concepts; they were spontaneous, ambiguous characterizations within metaphorical settings and relationships, with which viewers had some identification. The plausible style of play brought out the familiar, personal aspects of behavior, doing so as counterpoint to the larger, more conventional elements of the stage. Yet the conventional style remained the dominant presentational form of play. Indeed, the many ways that Shakespeare distances his audience even as he draws them into stage action illustrates the predominance of conventional playing and marks the plausible style as an additional or supplementary convention in his stagecraft.

Acting styles were conventions that might be used to indicate a change in focus or to suggest visual contrast. They expanded Shakespeare's art through a theatrical economy, developing the full dramatic irony and potential in a scene by means of changing perspectives. Quite simply, character emphasis and multiple playing styles gave the drama surface texture and perspectival depth.

As a performance thesis for Shakespeare's new drama, the design of Hamlet in particular places the player's art in its best light, shifting stage focus and mirroring dramatic action in contrasting scenes by different types of presentation. The players' art in Hamlet emphasizes and textures a drama that takes its energy from comparison and conflict. Appearance-reality, the dominant motif in the

play, is a recurrent opposition in Shakespeare's work in general and a primary metaphor for expressing stage action. In the tragedies after 1600, the appearance-reality conflict--Iago's machinations, Edgar's many disguises, Macbeth's attempts to "make our faces vizards to our hearts, / Disguising what they are" (3.234-35)--also takes physical form in stage characterizations, where the being-seeing dichotomy is the vehicle for the specific, particularized actions and emotions of dramatic figures. In order to effect that drama, an additional form of play was necessary, a plausible style that offered a different perspective to the stage action and thereby another view of the personality under scrutiny. And as an alternative way for viewers to see dramatic material, that style represented the illusion of reality and a feeling of immediacy before its audience.

2. Players

As the medium for dramatic expression, the special talents of Shakespeare's fellow players give us some additional indication of their arts of personation as well. Returning to the three types of performers that I singled out in Chapter Four, the tragedians, clowns, and boy actresses, we can see how Shakespeare used these players to effect his drama after 1600.

a. Tragedian: Richard Burbage

Richard Burbage is known to have played Richard III, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Hieronimo in Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy among his many roles. Burbage was regarded as the finest performer of his time, with his fame spreading well into the next century. Ben Jonson paid tribute to Burbage in Bartholomew Fair (1614), when Leatherhead brings out his puppet actors in a basket, and Cokes, looking them over, says "Which is your Burbage now? Your best actor. Your Field?" (5.3.90-92).³

The model for John Webster's (?) Overburian character, "An Excellent Actor" (1615), is probably Burbage, given the references to painting:⁴ "Hee is much affected to painting, and 'tis a question whether that make him an excellent Plaier, or his playing an exquisite painter" (qtd. by Chambers 4:258). Webster goes on to say, "what we see him personate, we thinke truely done before vs" (4:257). John Marston's term "personation," first used in his Induction to Antonio and Mellida (1599), conveys more of a sense of an

³ Nathan Field, who was in Bartholomew Fair and a member of Lady Elizabeth's Men. He joined the King's Men the next year and acted with Burbage.

⁴ John Davies of Hereford linked Burbage and Shakespeare in his Microcosmos (1603) among those whom he loved "for painting, poesie" (Chambers 2:308). "An Excellent Actor" goes on to say that this actor could play "Parasite and Precisian," satirical figures for mockery. As "Precisian" was another term for Puritan, perhaps Burbage played Malvolio in Twelfth Night.

immersion in a role than the skill used in delivering it. Often associated with Burbage, the term is complemented at times by the word "lively," which suggested "naturalness" or "life-likeness."⁵

Especially notable for its specific descriptions of Burbage's acting is the third of several funeral elegies, written in 1619:

Hee's gone & with him what a world are dead,
Which he reuiued, to be reuiued soe.
No more young Hamlett, ould Heironymoe.
Kind Leer, the greued Moore, and more beside,
That liued in him, haue now for ever dy'de.
Oft haue I seene him leap into the graue,
Suiting the person which he seem'd to haue
Of a sadd louer with soe true an eye,
That theer I would haue sworne, he meant to dye.
Oft haue I seene him play this part in ieast,
Soe liuely, that spectators, and the rest
Of his sad crew, whilst he but seem'd to bleed,
Amazed, thought euen then hee dyed in deed.
(Anon.; qtd. by Chambers 2:309)⁶

Besides indicating his "lively" personations, "kind" is a remarkable adjective for a role such as Lear, one titanic in its passions and scenes of bombast.⁷ It may be that "kind"

⁵ For example, Hans Holbein was noted for a straightforward, honest painting style that was not given to unrealistic flattery. As Henry VIII prepared to marry Anne of Cleves, Thomas Cromwell reported to him of her people's admiration for her beauty and charm; the English ambassador at Cleves, however, told the king of Holbein's unflattering painting of Anne and warned Henry that it was "a very lively image."

⁶ The elegy exists in two versions: one of 86 lines, the other of 124. The longer version omits lines 2-5.

⁷ While conceivably a typesetter's error for "king," the adjective "kind" is more in keeping with the

is indicative of the manner, the "naturalness," with which Burbage brought Lear's child-like confusion and old age to life.⁸

Burbage's popularity is further illustrated by the impersonations of him in 2 Return from Parnassus (1602) and Webster's Induction to Marston's The Malcontent (1603), where he represents the highest achievement of his art. By depicting the finest actors in London in a discussion of what is to follow, Webster's Induction gives validity to a transplanted children's play on the public stage. Burbage, in this academic play, is portrayed as a "common player" who is an over-paid, uneducated, strutting actor, but he was the best of the group.

b. Clown: Kempe and Armin

Will Kempe is another famous performer who is impersonated in 2 Return from Parnassus. His playing legacy came from the famous clown Richard Tarlton. Indeed, it may be said that all clowns on the Elizabethan stage owed that most popular player of the early London theatre a great debt

descriptions of the other characters mentioned: "young," "ould," and "greued."

⁸ Joseph's first edition of Elizabethan Acting (1951) claimed that "given two actors of equal talent, each would be able to perform the same speech in exactly the same way, apart from differences of voice and personal appearance" (153). "Kind Lear" makes it difficult to believe that another actor using similar gestures could, as Joseph believed, replicate Burbage's performance.

for expanding the morality Vice figure into the protean entertainer he became.⁹

Both Kempe and his replacement with the Chamberlain's Men, Robert Armin, were described as heirs to Tarlton's greatness: Kempe was referred to as "Jestmonger and Viceregentgenerall to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton" (Weimann 191), while Armin was considered his "adopted son" (Welsford 284). Their manner of playing, however, was put to far different dramatic purposes. While the particular talents of Armin seem to have influenced Shakespeare's play craft, Kempe's style of clownage was apparently objectionable to the dramatist, as well as later playwrights such as Richard Brome, who singled out both Kempe and Tarlton in The Antipodes.

While many of Kempe's comic routines were famous, Shakespeare's plays of the late 1590s fail to enlarge, as best we can tell from their narrative structures, the opportunities for impromptu clowning outside an organized theatrical design. Donald Friedman's conjectures about Kempe in the role of Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, for example, point out how Shakespeare may have limited Kempe's style of playing. On the other hand, the Henry IV

⁹ See Weimann 185 ff. Tarlton, famous in the 1570s and 1580s, combined elements of the morality Vice with the English folk arts of song and dance (Baskerville 28) to expand the range of the old Vice into a secular entertainer who could play within, or make comment from without, the stage action.

plays give considerable alternative opportunities for the range and skill of the clown in the role of Falstaff--if in fact Kempe played that part, as John Dover Wilson has argued in The Fortunes of Falstaff (1964) and, more recently, David Wiles too in Shakespeare's Clown (1987). Falstaff the character, like the popularity of the player who portrayed him, managed to cross social barriers from upper-middle class to the lower stratas of London society. Unlike Kempe's earlier roles of Peter in Romeo and Dogberry and Much Ado, Falstaff presented a fully developed figure of sufficient scope so as to preclude a movement from the play proper to impromptu clownage. Moreover, Shakespeare's plays after Henry IV demonstrate the dramatic development of the clown into more carefully delineated characterizations--even in small scenes like that of the Porter in Macbeth, which has choral purpose within the total dramatic unity.

So too Lear's fool extends the dramatic possibilities for comedy, cynicism, and pathos in developing personality through observation and choral comment. Lear's madness is shown in many perspectives through its comparison to the feigned madness of Edgar's Tom O'Bedlam and the studied madness of his Fool, both framed in humor well within the play's dramatic structure.¹⁰

¹⁰ As Wiles has argued, Armin most likely played the Fool in Lear (see Shakespeare's Clown, Chapter Ten), even though he excelled at voice mimicry, just as Edgar does in the play. Armin's physical appearance and size, ugliness and dwarfishness, may be emphasized by the many references by Shakespeare to dogs: Thersites in Troilus and Cressida,

Robert Armin had several qualities to recommend him to the Chamberlain's Men and their drama after 1600. A dramatist as well as actor, Armin--whose stage name was "Pinks"--undoubtedly understood the problems of the digressions and "upstaging" for which Hamlet criticizes the clowns. He also had an interest in portraying madness on stage, as his own John o'the Hospital character demonstrates--a character that he reprised from his earlier writings in a stage role for Two Maids of Moreclacke (1609; see Wiles 139 ff., and Gray 684).¹¹

Armin's own interests may have influenced Shakespeare's several treatments of fools and madness in Twelfth Night, Hamlet, and King Lear. Certainly his famed singing voice was put to use in the Twelfth Night ballads.¹² Furthermore

for example, is called "dog" or "cur" several times by Ajax, and the Fool in King Lear responds to Lear's threat of the whip with "Truth's a dog must to kennel" (1.4.111; an important element in the play is the irony of the fool's gentle faithfulness as contrasted to the cruel inconstancy of Lear's own kin). Armin's nicknames "Snuff" and "Pinks" suggest diminutive qualities; and his own works present "naturals" who are more animal than human (148). It is unlikely, therefore, that Armin would play a romantic hero such as Edgar, whom Edmund says has "outside looks so fair and warlike" (5.3.143).

¹¹ Armin was author of A Brief Resolution of the Right Religion (1590), Foole upon Foole, or Six Sortes of Sottes (1600)--enlarged to A Nest of Ninnies (1608)--Quips Upon Questions (1600), and the plays Phantasma, the Italian Tailor and his Boy (1609), and Two Maids (1609). Armin also played Dogberry in later performances of Much Ado. See Chambers 2:299-300.

¹² "Hey, Robin, jolly Robin" in Twelfth Night (4.2) is probably meant to pun on his name. The refrain "With a hey-ho, the wind and the rain, For the rain it raineth ev'ry day" in Twelfth Night's "When that I was and a little tiny boy" (5.1) is heard again in Lear (3.2). Armin's musical

the prominence of Feste's role in Twelfth Night, coupled with Hamlet's disquisition on acting at the time when Kempe left the company, underscores the changes in playing and dramatic design that the Globe players were undertaking. Still, Shakespeare never fully abandoned the clown's antics and punning bawdry; plays such as Hamlet, Twelfth Night, All's Well, Lear, and Macbeth illustrate the multi-perspectival function that such a character could serve, keeping the audience's attention fixed within the "necessary question of the play then to be considered," even as he played his virtuoso game of witty entertainer.

c. Boys

Upon learning of the latest theatrical fashion for child

abilities were also probably put to use in ways now lost to us in the brief opening to Act III in Othello. Often commented upon for its seeming inappropriateness, the scene with the clown and musicians has no apparent purpose in a play with such singularity of action, ending as abruptly as it begins when Iago enters. The bawdiness of the clown, however, is certainly in keeping with the tenor of Iago's appearance; whenever with Emilia or Desdemona, Iago demonstrates his cruelty and contempt for women through sexual innuendos--cf. 2.1 and 2.3 especially (and see below, pp. 247-48). The harbor scene with Desdemona and Emilia (2.1) is surprising because of Desdemona's lack of embarrassment or chastisement of Iago's behavior; yet it may be that her rebuke is more subtle and pointed than is at first apparent, an example of what stage action can suggest. Her reply to Iago's lewdness comes as Cassio approaches her and takes her hand: "O most lame and impotent conclusion: do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband" (ll. 161-62; the O.E.D. offers George Sandys Travels 7 in 1615 as the first use of "impotent" as a sexual dysfunction, but that intimation is very possible here).

players, Hamlet asks Rosencrantz:

Will they pursue the
quality no longer than they can sing? Will they
not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves
to common players (as it is most like, if their
means are no better), their writers do them wrong,
to make them exclaim against their own succession?
(2.2.346-51)

Hamlet's questions point out the essential differences between the children's companies and the adult players. Boys playing for the private playhouses acted only with other children, left the company when their voices changed, and were parodic vehicles for the satirical attacks of the adult dramatists.¹³ On the other hand, boys trained on the common stages acted with adult players, apprenticing for

¹³ The authority granted by a royal patent also permitted boys to be impressed for service into the Children of the Chapel or the children of Paul's, both sponsored by the Court; however, the supposed academic training that plays provided for students had long since turned commercial, and managers were always alert for promising children--at times using unscrupulous means to find talent. In 1602 Henry Evans, who rented the Blackfriars theatre from James Burbage, was called before the Star Chamber for impressing boys for his own theatre, and Thomas Clifton, a student at Christ Church school who was kidnapped to serve as a member of Paul's, was returned after his family's protests. It was for his acting ability that his son was taken, maintained Clifton, because the boy could not sing. Impressed boys, who played only once a week, were housed and cared for until the age of 15; they were taught music and grammar and allowed the freedom of Court, so that positions at Court were later possible, as well as schooling at Oxford or Cambridge (Hillebrand 42-43). Nevertheless, the Blackfriars management was continually under the stress of lawsuits, charges of impressment and offensive plays, etc., with the most serious offense being "outraged majesty" (Hillebrand 171 ff.; 190).

many years and looking to the theatre for their profession.¹⁴

The dramatic art of the boy actors in the new drama, no less than that of the clowns and tragedians, is an essential element of Shakespeare's play craft, where dramatic perspective is achieved through a mixture of presentational forms of play.¹⁵ We most often find the boys using the conventional style of play, the dominant form of acting on Shakespeare's stage, from which different playing styles departed for dramatic effect.

¹⁴ The time was not consistent in the theatre and certainly not as long as the seven years that apprentices served to enter a guild. See J. B. Streett's "The Durability of boy Actors," Notes and Queries 218 (1973): 461-65. Alleyn, for example, had a boy actor whom he trained, took on tour with him, and kept in his home by the name of John Pyk (his nickname was "Pig," and scholars have often, as Robertson Davies did in Shakespeare's Boy Actors [5], confused the nickname for the surname).

¹⁵ Michael Shapiro argues for three different acting styles by the boys of the private theatres: a natural style (mimicry bordering on caricature), a declamatory style (oratory), and a parodic style (a burlesque of the men's playing). See, for example, Jonson's Cynthia's Revels (1601), where Mercury discusses with Cupid what form their acting will take: "practise their language and behaviors, and not with a dead imitation: act freely, carelessly, and capriciously" (2.1.5-7). But these styles of play are similar to what Shakespeare did in A Midsummer Night's Dream (1594), mixing dramatic styles for conventional and parodic effect (the fairy world and the artisans' play), as well as in 1 Henry IV when Falstaff acts in "Cambises vein," (parodic effect interspersed with the more natural "realism" of a London tavern). The dramatic effect is meant to call attention to itself. The mixed styles in Shakespeare's plays of the 1600s--what I call conventional and plausible games--are not parodic and, rather than merely calling attention to themselves for effect, suggest a way for the audience to see dramatic action.

The women's roles, for example, are most often presented to an audience with an emotion or character trait in place, rather than unfolding a dramatization by action and emotional response. It is this fixed characterization that other players often react to, which displays their own character traits through a contrast to the given personality of the boys. In Hamlet, for example, James Hill has observed that Ophelia plays three roles: the loving sister of Laertes and dutiful daughter to Polonius, a foil to Hamlet, and madwoman (241). In a play where reason and madness are relative terms, the different representations of insanity are notable. Rather than entering a transitional phase from sanity to insanity as Hamlet does, Ophelia's madness is an abrupt given response to grief. Her emotionality is suggested by a conventional representation, aided in part by physical symbols: "Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing" (Q1).

Gertrude too, like Ophelia, is placed in a "reactive" role to Claudius and Hamlet. In the chamber scene especially she is given a greater opportunity to initiate action because Hamlet is behaving wildly;¹⁶ but the internal

¹⁶ See Urkowitz's "Five Women Eleven Ways," where he notes the differences between the First Quarto, Second Quarto, and Folio texts of Hamlet in Gertrude's behavior before Ophelia's mad scene (Riverside ed., 4.5). While in a reactive role in Q1 and Q2, Gertrude takes command of the situation in the Folio version, giving the command to admit Ophelia and delivering a short soliloquy regarding her "sicke soule." (299 ff.).

direction "leave wringing of your hands" (3.4.34) perhaps indicates the conventional actions that suggested emotionality, much as Ophelia's appearance in Act 4 indicated madness. However, the conventional style of play used by Ophelia or Gertrude is no different from that of Lear's stylized madness in his storm scene or later when meeting the blinded Gloucester, which was an understood suggestion of insanity rather than a literal representation. Lear too is seen in these moments as reacting to other characterizations. In these instances, the stylization contrasts not to other figures in the drama but to his own changing personality and enigmatic behavior.

Similar to Ophelia, Lady Macbeth is also placed largely in a reactive role to Macbeth. Although like Gertrude and Ophelia she shows character dimension, the transitional phase from sanity to insanity is missing. Her first scene, reading Macbeth's letter, illustrates the dimensionality of her character, but it is melodramatic, complete in its portrait of a woman willing to commit any evil in order "to catch the nearest way" for what she wants (1.5.17); the extent of her passion is firmly established, from which madness will eventually result.

In like manner her scenes with Macbeth are dramatically formed in a mirror style to his, that is, large and rhetorical, at times fantastic and melodramatic, until in a crossing pattern of characterization Macbeth eclipses her, as he goes from weak vacillator to resolute, imperious

warrior-lord. Indeed, fixed into her role by the degree of passionate evil she reveals in her first scene, she has no room for development--nor need of any, since it is Macbeth's characterization that is primary, his development in comparison to hers that is of interest.¹⁷

The boy actor and his predominantly conventional style of play served to hold fast a point of perspective within an ambiguous dramatic design, one that suggested some degree of illusion by the representation of uncertainty and doubt in realistically conceived characters. In the madness of Lady Macbeth and Ophelia, a stylization exists that holds fast our perceptions, indicating the familiar signs of insanity: Lady Macbeth reenacts her guilt, speaking nonsensically ordered phrases, while Ophelia uses an unaccustomed bawdiness set to music to indicate her disordered mind.¹⁸

¹⁷ The relationship of Macbeth to his wife is ironically echoed in an economical image he uses--suggestive of bearbaiting--when he faces his enemies after her death:

They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? (5.7.1-3)

One is reminded in his statement of an earlier image she used to push him into murder:

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this. (1.7.54-59)

¹⁸ King Lear as well illustrates this conventional style of play in the feigned madness of Edgar, especially when compared to the transitional stages of Lear's, whose insanity is eventually rendered in more plausible actions.

In both plays, the boy actors' art contrasts to and heightens the dramatic irony and diffused characterizations of the principal figures, Hamlet and Macbeth.

However, the role of Cleopatra (Antony and Cleopatra, 1606-07) attempted to combine artfulness and illusion into a single character. Besides illustrating the extensive talents of the boys, the role makes more demands upon their capabilities than in any of Shakespeare's plays, even that of Rosalind or Viola. Requiring unique abilities from a boy--perhaps young man¹⁹--from suggestive bawdry to hysterical anger, the role may have presented a range of acting styles in itself. But in a play that continually shifts and changes scenes, and thus diffuses focus, the stylized artfulness of the boy actor's role was probably a necessary mooring device from which changing perspectives could find stability and resolution. In fact, it is the very changeableness of Cleopatra that becomes a welcome constant and fixed character trait in an otherwise amorphous dramatic picture. Commenting on its own diffusive,

Lear's changing mental state was understood by the Elizabethan clinical name "hysterica passio" (2.4.57): he gradually loses control, knows it, and struggles against it. As Lear does so, we see the external pressures that react on him (Hill 242; and see Kenneth Muir's note in the Arden ed.).

¹⁹ The maturity of both Cleopatra and Antony are made mention of in the text of the play: cf. the end of Act 1 when Cleopatra says, "My salad days, / When I was green in judgment, cold in blood, / To say as I said then!" (1.5.73-75); and perhaps at Antony's death, "Young boys and girls / Are level now with men" (4.15.65-66).

enigmatic quality in many ways, the play's ambiguities are best expressed in Antony's drunken description of the crocodile:

It is shap'd sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it hath breadth. It is just so high as it is, and moves with its own organs. It lives by that which nourisheth it, and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates. (2.7.42-45)

3. Playing Art and Dramatic Style: A Composite Picture

John Doeblner refers to Shakespeare's drama as a "speaking picture" (Shakespeare's Speaking Pictures [1974]): symbolism, judicious grouping, and perspective are all technical elements of his representational art. By the great tragedies of the 1600s, perspective was the most important of these elements, presenting the ambiguity of primary characters--such as Hamlet, Othello, Iago, Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth--through a multidimensionality of madness, conflicting emotions of intention and desire, or deliberate deception. Secondary figures--such as Claudius, Cassio, Roderigo, Banquo, and Duncan--as well are rendered perspectively by their relationships to tragic heroes, often reflecting indirectly the hero's qualities or contributing directly to his fate.

Dramatic relativity was encouraged by the Elizabethan public theatre, that is, the proximity of the stage to its viewers and the multiperspective of a circular setting led

to a stylistic focus. Boys playing women merely compounded a complex dramatic picture, one that a viewer could identify as common experience or common knowledge but which did so through an acknowledged conventionalism.

Terms such as depth, texture, perspectival focus, and dramatic picture are of course suggestive of the visual arts. A comparison of the visual and dramatic arts, particularly popular among some critics in the 1970s,²⁰ has not been my intention in this work. Yet a brief comparison of the visual with the dramatic arts is not entirely out of place. For example, the visual art term "relief," used to denote an illusion of distance or depth, is also apt for describing scenes such as that of the Porter in Macbeth or the beginning of Act 3 in Othello. The scene between the Musicians and the Clown in Othello is similar in its use of bawdry to that of Iago's sexual innuendoes with Desdemona in 2.1. Wedged between two scenes in which Iago "consults" Cassio, Cassio ends the comic scene by paying the Clown to deliver a message to Desdemona's chamber: "tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech" (3.1.25-26). As the brief, bawdy scene ends, Cassio and Iago are ironically linked in using Desdemona for their own purposes, and the Clown's banter sets into "relief" the ugly desires and duplicity that underscore the play--reinforced by Cassio's remarks to Iago a few lines later:

²⁰ See Chapter Six, note 6.

I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife. My suit to her
Is that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access. (33-36)

Rather than "comic" relief, which implies a release of emotional tension, we should see such scenes as providing depth and dimension to the larger picture--changes of tone, language, and audience response sharpen the texture and perspective of the dramatic picture.

Shakespeare demonstrates knowledge of the visual arts in several of his works: radical perspective, for instance, in Richard II ("perspective which rightly gaz'd upon / Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry / Distinguish form" [2.2.18]) and in Henry V ("my lord, you see them [the cities] perspectively--the cities turned into a maid" [5.2.333]). In both instances, the technique referred to is "anamorphosis," where enhanced illusion, by means of blurred and seemingly distorted images, conceals the identity of a shape until viewed obliquely. Hans Holbein the Younger, Court painter to Henry VIII, used an anamorphotic emblem in The French Ambassadors (1533) as his signature and iconographic memento mori set against the background of physical and intellectual life; when viewed from the proper perspective, the shape at the bottom of the painting reveals a skull, a pun for "hohl bein" ("hole bone").

In Antony and Cleopatra, a similar anamorphotic technique is mentioned, that of a perspective painting with

two images, the viewer seeing one image standing to one side of the painting, another image from the opposite side:

"Though he [Antony] be painted one way like a Gorgon, / The other way's a Mars" (2.5.117-18). Anamorphosis challenges the viewer actively to participate in what he beholds by testing his skill at devising and combining (Hecksher 19 ff.). This, I believe, was what Shakespeare's post-1600 drama sought to do. His art was at times radical and anamorphotic--as in Antony or Hamlet, refractive and unfocused--or it could merely challenge the accepted familiarity of stage action, as in Othello. Using his players and their arts of presentation as the brush strokes for his dramatic action, he gave to his characters the greatest illusion of dimensionality possible.

In Act 5 of The Winter's Tale, Shakespeare mentions Giulio Romano, a sixteenth-century Italian artist known for his illusionistic work. His contemporary, the painter and critic Giorgio Vasari, reported that Giulio's work appeared to "breathe." It is Giulio who is given credit for composing the lifelike statue of Leontes' dead wife Hermione:

a
piece many years in doing and now newly perform'd
by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who,
had he himself eternity and could put breath into
his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so
perfectly he is her ape. (5.2.95-100)

When Leontes sees the statue, he believes himself to be "mocked with art" (5.3.68) but soon discovers the life behind the artifice.

Perception, whether in the visual or dramatic arts, begins with what one is accustomed to seeing. Shakespeare made use of a more illusionistic playing style because of its impact as an unexpected way of seeing dramatic action. The style shifted focus away from the center of the stage picture to the perimeters--Hamlet and Horatio at Ophelia's grave site, for example, or Macduff's private grief in Macbeth--where nuance and subtlety added to the composite dramatic scene.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, an appreciation for a multiperspectival drama, one that purposely mixes playing styles in order to shift and to diffuse focus, is today largely lost to us. A modern theatregoer is for the most part a passive viewer, encouraged into a passivity by the aesthetics of our time and the predominance of realism (a substitute for active imagination) in the representational and performing arts. Exceptions of course exist, most notably children's shows that creatively mix adults with puppets--fantasy with reality--in multidimensional dramatizations. Yet an appreciation for the less realistic arts, such as opera or ballet, are largely cultivated tastes that run counter to

the ways in which our society expresses its observations and experiences. Nor are these nonrealistic artistic forms mixed genres of performance style wherein we find artful stylization blended with realism for dramatic effect in the same work.²¹

It is for these reasons that scholars since Alfred Harbage's pioneering essay on Elizabethan acting styles have argued primarily along the lines of distinction that he first advanced, choosing between "formalism" and "naturalism." An absolutism of performance style has been sought, because whether formal or natural, playing styles have still suggested in the minds of those who advanced such theories a passivity on the part of a viewer. But Shakespeare's audience was not passive, for his drama forced them to rethink and to reevaluate different ways of seeing stage action. Through a symbiotic relationship between his drama and his players' art of personation viewers were continually tested in their abilities to recombine and to assess their experiences in the light of stage action. As ideas relevant to today's aesthetic appreciations, formalism and naturalism have outlived their usefulness as contrasting points of departure in a study of the players' art, because they are complementary aspects of the same dramatic design.

²¹ Musical comedy or drama is perhaps the closest that we can come to this performance genera mixta; however, the effect, like that in children's shows, is not one of changing perspective within a single focus but that of varying expression of that focus.

"Action is eloquence," says Volumnia in Coriolanus, implying to her willful son that, as a counterpart to the words he chooses in speaking to the people of Rome, gesture is also language, another mode of persuasion. Similarly, whether speaking Shakespeare's poetry or bringing his stage action to life, Shakespeare's players developed a stage language that combined their eloquent performances with that of his own dramatic art. The ways of seeing that drama were purposely multifarious, and the medium for its expression lay in the players' skills of personation.

Works Cited and Consulted

Primary Sources

- Brome, Richard. The Antipodes. Ed. Ann Haaker. The Regents Renaissance Series. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1966.
- Campion, Thomas. Works. Ed. Walter R. Davis. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967.
- The Chester Mystery Cycle. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds. Oxford UP, 1974.
- Chettle, Henry. Kind-Harts Dreame. Ed. Arthur Freeman. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1973.
- Cibber, Colley. An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber. Ed. B. R. S. Fone. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1968.
- Davanant, William. Works. 2 vols. London, 1673. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968.
- Davies, John. Works. 2 vols. Ed. A. B. Grosart. N.p., n.d. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968.
- Dekker, Thomas. Works. Ed. Fredson Bowers. 4 vols. Cambridge UP, 1953-61.
- Downes, John. Roscius Angelicus. Ed. Montague Summers. London: The Fortune Press, 1928.
- Flecknoe, Richard. A Short Discourse of the English Stage. J. E. Spingarn, ed. Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century. 3 vols. Oxford UP, 1909. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1968.
- Fraunce, Abraham. The Arcadian Rhetoric. London, 1588.
- Fulwel, Ulpian. Like wil to like quod the Devel to the Colier. Ed. John S. Farmer. Early English Drama Society, 1906. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.
- Gayton, Edmund. Pleasant Notes Upon don Quixote. London, 1654.
- Gosson, Stephen. Plays Confuted in Five Actions. Ed. William Hazlitt. The English Drama and Stage under Tudor and Stuart. London, 1869.
- . The School of Abuse. London, 1579. 1841.

- Greene, Robert. A Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance. London, 1592. The Elizabethan Stage 4:240-42. E. K. Chambers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Guilpin, Edward. Skialethia. London, 1598.
- Hall, Joseph. Virgidemiarum. London, 1598.
- The Henslowe Papers. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert, eds. Cambridge UP, 1961.
- The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert. Ed. Joseph Quincy Adams. Yale UP, 1917. Rpt. Benjamin Blom, Inc., n.d.
- Heywood, John. An Apology for Actors. Ed. Gerald Eades Bentley. The Seventeenth-Century Stage. U of Chicago P, 1968.
- Hudson, Anne, ed. Selections from English Wycliffite Writings. Cambridge UP, 1978.
- Jack Juggler. Ed. John S. Farmer. Early English Dramatists: Anonymous Plays: 1550-1565. Early English Drama Society, 1906. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.
- Jonson, Ben. Epigrams, The Forest, Underwoods. Facsimile Text Society. New York: Columbia UP, 1936.
- . Works. Ed. C. H. Hereford and Percy Simpson. 11 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925.
- King Darius. Ed. John S. Farmer. Early English Dramatists: Anonymous Play: 1550-1565. 1906. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.
- A Knack to Know a Knave. Tudor Facsimile Texts, n.p., 1911.
- Kyd, Thomas. The Spanish Tragedy. Ed. J. R. Mulryne. The New Mermaids. London and Tonbridge: Ernest Benn Limited, 1970.
- Manly, J. M. Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama. 2 vols. Boston, 1897. New York: Dover Publications, 1967.
- Diary of John Manningham. Ed. John Bruce. London, 1868.
- Marlowe, Christopher: Five Plays. Ed. Havelock Ellis. New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1956.
- Marlowe, Christopher. Works. Ed. Fredson Bowers. 2 vols. Cambridge UP, 1973.

- Marston, John. Works. Ed. A. H. Bullen. 3 vols. London: John C. Nimmo, 1887.
- Medieval Drama. Ed. David Bevington. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975.
- Medwal, Henry. Fulgens and Lucres. Ed. Glynne Wickham. English Moral Interludes. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1976.
- Moryson, Fynes. Itinerary. London, 1617.
- . Shakespeare's Europe: A Survey of the Condition of Europe at the End of the 16th Century, being unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's 'Itinerary'. Charles Hughes, ed. London, 1617. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967.
- Munday, Anthony. Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plays and Theatres. London, 1580.
- Nashe, Thomas. Works. Ed. Ronald B. McKerrow. 3 vols. 1958. Ed. F. P. Wilson. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966.
- Prynne, William. Histrion-Mastix. London, 1633.
- The Puritan. W. S. William Shakespeare: Doubtful Plays. Oxford UP, 1918.
- Rainoldes, John. Th'overthrow of Stage-Players. London, 1600. 1629.
- Rankings, William. A Mirror of Monsters. Ed. Arthur Freeman. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1967.
- Ratseis Ghost, or The Second Part of His Madde Prankes and Robberies. London: 1605. The John Rylands Facsimiles, no. 5. The Manchester UP, 1932.
- Records of Early English Drama: York. Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, eds. 2 vols. U of Toronto P, 1978.
- S., E. Discovery of the Knights of the Post. London, 1597.
- Scoloker, Anthony. Daiphantus. Ed. William Gifford. Rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1966.
- Shakespeare, William. The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare. Ed. Charlton Hinman. New York: W. W. Norton, 1968.

- . Plays. The Arden Shakespeare. Gen. ed. Richard Proudfoot. 37 vols. London & New York: Methuen, 1954-1982.
- . Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto: a Facsimile Edition of Copies Primarily from the Henry E. Huntington Library. Ed. and with Intro. by Michael J. B. Allen and Kenneth Muir. Berkeley: U California P, 1981.
- . Works. The Riverside Shakespeare. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans, et al. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974.
- Shakespeare Allusion-Books. C. M. Ingleby, L. Toulmin Smith, and F. J. Furnivall, eds. 2 vols. 1909. Rev. by Munro. London: Oxford UP, 1932.
- Shirley, James. The Doubtful Heir. Ed. William Gifford. Works. Vol 4. London, 1833. Russell & Russell, 1966.
- Singer, John. Quips Upon Questions. Ed. Frederick Ouvry. London, 1875.
- Skelton, John. Magnyfycence. Ed. Peter Happé. Four Morality Plays. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Stephens, John. Satirical Essays, Characters, and Others. London, 1615.
- Stow, John. Survey of London. London, 1598. 1720.
- Stubbs, Phillip. Anatomie of Abuses. Ed. Frederick J. Furnivall. London, 1844.
- Tarleton's Jests. Ed. James Orchard Halliwell. London, 1844.
- Taylor, John. All The Workes of John Taylor. London, 1630.
- "Treatise of Miraclis Pleyinge." Ed. John Edwin Wells. A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400. New Haven: Yale UP, 1926.
- Wager, William. Enough is as Good as a Feast. Edgar T. Schell and J. D. Shuchter, eds. English Morality Plays and Moral Interludes. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969.
- Webster, John. "Character of an Excellent Actor". The Elizabethan Stage 4:257-58. E. K. Chambers. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Wright, Thomas. The Passions of the Mind. London, 1604.

Secondary Sources

- Altman, Joel B. The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama. Berkeley: U California P, 1978.
- Armstrong, William A. "Actors And Theatres." Shakespeare Survey 17 (1964): 191-204.
- . "The Elizabethan Private Theatres: Facts And Problems." The Society For Theatre Research 6 (1957-58): 1-17.
- . "Shakespeare and the Acting of Edward Alleyn." Shakespeare Survey 7 (1954): 82-89.
- Babb, Lawrence. The Elizabethan Malady, A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642. Michigan State CP, 1951.
- Baldwin, Thomas Whitfield. The Organization And Personnel Of The Shakespearean Company. Princeton UP, 1927. Russell & Russell Inc., 1961.
- Baskerville, C. R. The Elizabethan Jig and Related Song. U of Chicago P, 1929.
- Battenhouse, Roy W. "The Significance of Hamlet's Advice to the Players." The Drama of the Renaissance: Essays for Leicester Bradner. Ed. Elmer M. Blistein. Brown UP, 1970: 3-26.
- Beckerman, Bernard. "Shakespeare and the Life of the Scene." English Renaissance Drama: Essays in Honor of Madeleine Doran & Mark Eccles. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois P, 1976: 36-45.
- . "Shakespeare and 'The Purpose of Playing'." The Andrew W. Mellon Lectures. The Graduate School of Tulane U, 1983.
- . Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962.
- Bentley, Gerald Eades. The Jacobean and Caroline Stage. 7 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941-68.
- . "Opportunities for Shakespearean Research." The Shakespeare Newsletter 15 (Feb. 1965): 3.
- . The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642. Princeton UP: 1971.

- . The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642. Princeton UP, 1984.
- . "Shakespeare and The Blackfriar's Theatre." Shakespeare Survey 1 (1948): 38-49.
- Bergeron, David, ed. Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theater. U of Georgia P, 1985.
- Bethell, S. L. "Shakespeare's Actors." RES ns 1 (1950): 193-205.
- . Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition. Westminster: P. S. King And Staples Limited, 1944.
- Bevington, David. Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.
- . "Discontinuity in Medieval Acting Traditions." Elizabethan Theatre 5. Ed. G. R. Hibbard. The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1975.
- . From "Mankind" to Marlowe. Harvard UP, 1962.
- . "Popular and Courtly Traditions on the Early Tudor Stage." Medieval Drama: Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 16. Ed. Neville Denny. London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1973.
- Billington, Sandra. A Social History of the Fool. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984.
- Bradbrook, M. C. Elizabethan Stage Conditions. Cambridge UP, 1932.
- . John Webster: Citizen and Dramatist. New York: Columbia UP, 1980.
- . "The Status Seekers: Society and the Common Player in the Reign of Elizabeth I." The Seventeenth-Century Stage. Ed. Gerald Eades Bentley. U Chicago P, 1968.
- . Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy. Cambridge UP, 1935.
- . "Ut Pictura Poesis and the Shakespearean Theatre." Literature and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance England. John Scattergood, ed. Dublin: Irish Academic P, 1984.
- Bromberg, Murray. "Theatrical Wagers." Notes and Queries 196 (8 Dec. 1951) 533-35.

- Brown, Ivor. Shakespeare And The Actors. London: The Bodley Head Ltd., 1970.
- Brown, John Russell. "On The Acting of Shakespeare's Plays." Quarterly Journal of Speech 34 (1953): 477-84.
- Carson, Neil. A Companion To Henslowe's "Diary". Cambridge UP, 1988.
- Chambers, E. K. The Elizabethan Stage. 4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.
- . The Mediaeval Stage. 2 vols. Oxford UP, 1903.
- . William Shakespeare, A Study of Facts and Problems. 2 vols. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1930.
- Coghill, Nevill. Shakespeare's Professional Skills. Cambridge UP, 1965.
- Craig, Hardin. The Enchanted Glass, The Elizabethan Mind in Literature. Oxford UP, 1936.
- Craik, T. W. The Tudor Interlude: Stage, Costume, and Acting. Leicester UP, 1958.
- Crowell's Handbook of Elizabethan & Stuart Literature. Ed. James E. Ruoff. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975.
- Curtius, Ernst Robert. European Literature And The Latin Middle Ages. Trans. Willard Trask. Bollingen Series 36. New York: Pantheon Books, 1948.
- Cushman, L. W. The Devil and The Vice in the English Dramatic Literature Before Shakespeare. N.p.: Max Niemeyer, 1900. New York: The Humanities Press, 1970.
- David, Richard. "Shakespeare And The Players." Proceedings Of The British Academy 47 (1961): 139-59.
- Davidson, Clifford. "Death in His Court: Iconography in Shakespeare's Tragedies." Studies In Iconography 1 (1975): 74-86.
- . From Creation To Doom: The York Cycle of Mystery Plays. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1984.
- . "Iconography and Some Problems of Terminology in the Study of the Drama and Theater of the Renaissance." Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama 29 (1986-87) 7-14.

- . "The Iconography of Illusion and Truth in The Winter's Tale." Shakespeare and the Arts. Cecile Williamson Cary and Henry S. Limouze, eds. Washington D.C.: UP of America, 1982: 73-91.
- Davies, R. T., ed. The Corpus Christi Play of the English Middle Ages. London: Faber and Faber, 1972.
- Davies, Robertson W. Shakespeare's Boy Actors. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1939.
- de Banke, Cecile. Shakespearean Stage Production, Then & Now. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1953.
- Dessen, Alan C. Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye. U North Carolina P, 1977.
- . Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters. New York: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- . "Shakespeare and the Theatrical Conventions of His Time." The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies. Stanley Wells, ed. Cambridge UP, 1986.
- Doebler, John. Shakespeare's Speaking Pictures. Albuquerque: U New Mexico P, 1974.
- Donawerth, Jane. "Shakespeare and Acting Theory in the English Renaissance." Shakespeare And The Arts. Cecile Williamson Cary and Henry S. Limouze, eds. Washington D.C.: UP of America, 1982: 165-178.
- . Shakespeare and the Sixteenth-Century Study of Language. Chicago: U Illinois P, 1984.
- Doran, Madeleine. Endeavors of Art: a study of form in Elizabethan drama. Madison: U Wisconsin P, 1964.
- Dorrell, Margaret. "Two Studies of The York Corpus Christi Play." Leeds Studies In English ns 6 (1972): 63-111.
- Downer, Alan S. "Prolegomenon To A Study Of Elizabethan Acting." Maske Und Kothurn 10 (1964): 625-36.
- . "The Tudor Actor: A Taste Of His Quality." Theatre Notebook 5 (1951): 76-81.
- Edgerton, Samuel Y., Jr. The Renaissance Rediscovery Of Linear Perspective. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1975.
- Empson, William. "The Staging of Hamlet." TLS 23 Nov. 1951: 749.

- Foakes, R. A. "John Marston's Fantastical Plays: Antonio and Mellida and Antonio's Revenge." Philological Quarterly 41 (1962): 229-39.
- . "The Player's Passion." Essays And Studies ns 7 (1954): 62-77.
- Forest, Louise C. Turner. "A Caveat For Critics Against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology." PMLA 61 (1946): 651-72.
- Fotheringham, Richard. "The Doubling of Roles on the Jacobean Stage." Theatre Research International 10 (1985): 18-32.
- Friedenreich, K., ed. "A Poet and a filthy Play-maker": New Essays on Christopher Marlowe. New York: AMS Press, 1988.
- Friedman, Donald M. "Bottom, Burbage, and the Birth of Tragedy." CEMERS. Binghamton, New York: SUNY, 1989.
- Garrison, Clayton. Rev. of Acting Shakespeare by Bertram Joseph. Shakespeare Quarterly 13 (1962): 246-49.
- Goldman, Michael. Acting and Action in Shakespearean Tragedy. Princeton UP, 1985.
- . "Acting Values and Shakespearean Meaning: Some Suggestions." Shakespeare, Pattern of Excelling Nature. David Bevington and Jay L. Halio, eds. Newark: U Delaware P, 1978.
- Goldsmith, Robert Hillis. Wise Fools In Shakespeare. Michigan State U P, 1963.
- Goldstein, Leonard. "On the Transition from Formal to Naturalistic Acting in the Elizabethan and Post-Elizabethan Theater." Bulletin of The New York Public Library 62 (1958): 330-49.
- Gombrich, E. H. Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. Bollingen Series 35. New York: Pantheon Books, 1965. Rev. ed.
- . New Light On Old Masters: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance IV. U Chicago P, 1986.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. "A Note Upon Chapters XX And XXI Of The Elizabethan Stage." RES 1 (1925): 60-71.
- . Prefaces To Shakespeare. 4 vols. Princeton UP, 1946.

- Gray, Austin K. "Robert Armine, The Foole." PMLA 42 (1927): 673-85.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning. U Chicago P, 1980.
- Greg, Walter Wilson. Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots; Actor's Parts; Prompt Books. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1931.
- Gurr, Andrew. "Elizabethan Action." Studies In Philology 63 (1966): 144-56.
- . "The Elizabethan Stage and Acting." The New Pelican Guide To English Literature: The Age of Shakespeare, vol. 2. Ed. Boris Ford. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- . Hamlet And The Distracted Globe. Sussex UP, 1978.
- . "Hearers and Beholders in Shakespearean Drama." Essays in Theatre 3 (Nov. 1983): 30-45.
- . "The Many-Headed Audience." Essays in Theatre 1 (Nov. 1982): 52-62.
- . Playgoing in Shakespeare's London. Cambridge UP, 1987.
- . The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642. Cambridge UP, 1980.
- . "Who Strutted And Bellowed?" Shakespeare Survey 16 (1963): 95-102.
- Gurr, Andrew, and Rosalyn Knutson. A debate regarding Gurr's "Intertextuality at Windsor" (Shakespeare Quarterly 38 [1987]:189-200). Shakespeare Quarterly 39 (Autumn 1988): 391-95.
- Hallett, Charles A. "Analyzing Action in Shakespeare's Plays: The Beat." Papers on Language and Literature 19 (1983): 124-44.
- Harbage, Alfred. "Elizabethan Acting." PMLA 54.2 (1939): 685-708.
- . Rev. of Elizabethan Acting by Bertram Joseph. Shakespeare Quarterly 2 (1951): 360-61.
- . Shakespeare's Audience. New York: Columbia UP, 1941.
- . Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952.

- Harrison, G. B. Elizabethan Plays And Players. London, George Routledge And Sons, Ltd., 1940.
- Hart, A. "The Time Allotted For Representation of Elizabethan And Jacobean Plays." RES 8 (1932): 395-413.
- Hattaway, Michael. Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Hecksher, William S. "Shakespeare in His Relationship to the Visual Arts: A Study in Paradox." Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama 13-14 (1970-71): 5-71.
- Herbert, Barry. "The Player's Apprentice." Essays in Theatre 1 (1983): 73-80.
- Hill, James L. "'What, are they children?': Shakespeare's Tragic Women and the Boy Actors." SEL 26 (1986): 235-58.
- Hillebrand, Harold Newcomb. The Child Actors, A Chapter In Elizabethan Stage History. U Illinois Studies In Language And Literature, 1926.
- Honigmann, E. A. J. "Re-enter the Stage Direction." Shakespeare Survey 29 (1976): 117-25.
- . "Shakespeare's Theatre." Introductions To Shakespeare. Peter Alexander. London: William Collins Sons & Co., Ltd., 1964.
- Howard, Jean. Shakespeare's Art of Orchestration: Stage Technique and Audience Response. U of Illinois P, 1984.
- Hoy, Cyrus. "Artifice and Reality and the Decline of Jacobean Drama." Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama 13-14 (1970-71): 169-180.
- . "Jacobean Tragedy And The Mannerist Style." Shakespeare Survey 26. Ed. Kenneth Muir. Cambridge UP, 1973: 49-67.
- Huizinga, Johan. Homo Ludens. Boston: Beacon Press, 1950.
- Hyland, Peter. "'A Kind of Woman.': The Elizabethan Boy Actor." Theatre Research International 12 (1987): 1-8.
- Jamieson, Michael. "Shakespeare's Celibate Stage." The Seventeenth-Century Stage. Ed. Gerald Eades Bentley. U Chicago P, 1968.

- Jensen, Ejner J. "The Style of the Boy Actors." Comparative Drama 2 (1968): 100-14.
- Johnson, S. F. "Shakespearean Acting and Production." The Shakespeare Newsletter 2 (Jan.-Feb. 1952): 5.
- Johnston, Alexandra F., and Margaret Dorrell. "The York Mercers and Their Pageant Of Doomsday, 1433-1526." Leeds Studies In English ns 6 (1972): 10-35.
- Jones, Robert. "The Stage World and 'Real World' in Medwal's Fulgens and Lucres." MLO 32 (1971).
- Joseph, Bertram. Elizabethan Acting. London: Oxford UP, 1951. Rev. ed. 1964.
- Joseph, Sister Miriam. Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language. New York: Columbia UP, 1947.
- Kernodle, George R. From Art To Theatre: Form and Convention in the Renaissance. U Chicago P, 1944.
- Kernodle, George R., and Portia Kernodle. "Dramatic Aspects of the Medieval Tournament." Speech Monographs 9 (1942): 161-172.
- King, Thomas James. Shakespearean Staging, 1599-1642. Harvard UP, 1971.
- Kiremidjian, G. D. "The Aesthetics of Parody." The Journal of Aesthetics And Art Criticism 28 (1969): 231-42.
- Kirsch, Arthur C. "Cymbeline and Coterie Dramaturgy." ELH 34 (1967): 285-306.
- Klein, David. "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" MLR 57 (1962): 556-560.
- . "Elizabethan Acting." PMLA 71 (1956): 280-82.
- . "Time Allotted For An Elizabethan Performance." Shakespeare Quarterly 18 (1967): 434-38.
- Knutson, Rosalyn L. "Henslowe's Diary and the Economics of Play Revision for Revival, 1592-1603." Theatre Research International 10 (1985): 1-18.
- . "Shakespeare's New Plays for the Chamberlain's Men." Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association 9 (Fall 1983): 69-79.
- Kokeritz, Helge. "Shakespeare's Use of Dialect." The Shakespeare Newsletter 2 (Jan.-Feb. 1952): 6.

- Kolve, V. A. The Play Called Corpus Christi. Stanford UP, 1966.
- Lanham, Richard A. The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1976.
- Levin, Richard. "The Acting Style of the Children's Companies." American Notes and Queries 22 (1983): 124-44.
- Lewontin, R. C. Rev. of Elizabethan Acting (1964 ed.) by B. L. Joseph. Seventeenth-Century News 22 (1964): 27-8.
- MacIntyre, Jean. "Conventions of Costume Change in Elizabethan Plays." Explorations in Renaissance Culture 12 (1986): 105-14.
- Marker, Lise-Lone. "Nature and Decorum in the Theory of Elizabethan Acting." The Elizabethan Theatre 2. Ed. David Galloway. N.p.: Archon Books, 1970.
- McLuskie, Kathleen. "The Act, the Role, and the Actor: Boy Actresses on the Elizabethan Stage." New Theatre Quarterly 3 (May 1987): 120-30.
- McNeir, Waldo F. "Gayton On Elizabethan Acting." PMLA 56 (1941): 579-83.
- McPherson, David. "Shakespeare and the Final Speech in Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy: A Convention Crystallizes." Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama 28 (1985): 143-57.
- Mehl, Dieter. "Emblems in English Renaissance Drama." Renaissance Drama ns 2 (1969): 39-57.
- . "The Play within a Play." Renaissance Drama 8 (1965): 41-61.
- Miyajima, Sumiko. The Theatre of Man: Dramatic Technique and Stagecraft in the English Medieval Moral Plays. Avon, England: Clarendon Printing Co. Ltd., 1977.
- Mullini, Roberta. "Playing the Fool: The Pragmatic Status of Shakespeare's Clowns." New Theatre Quarterly 1 (Feb. 1985): 98-104.
- Murray, John Tucker. English Dramatic Companies 1558-1642. 2 vols. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910. New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1963.
- Nelson, Alan. The Medieval English Stage: Corpus Christi Pageants and Plays. U Chicago P, 1972.

- A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies. Ed. Kenneth Muir and S. Schoenbaum. Cambridge UP, 1971.
- Nungezer, Edwin. A Dictionary of Actors and of Other Persons Associated with the Public Representation of Plays in England before 1642. New Haven: N.p., 1929. New York, AMS Press Inc., n.d.
- O'Brien, Gordon. "Recent Studies in Elizabethan Stage Magic." Cauda Pavonis: The Hermetic Text Society Newsletter 5 (Spr. 1986): 4-8.
- Olson, Glending. Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982.
- Parker, Roscoe E. "The Reputation of Herod In Early English Literature." Speculum 8 (1933): 59-67.
- Pearn, B. R. "Dumb Show In Elizabethan Drama." RES 11 (1935): 385-402.
- Proudfoot, Richard. "Shakespeare and the New Dramatists of the King's Men, 1606-1613." Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 8. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967.
- The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare. Oscar James Campbell and Edward G. Quinn, eds. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966.
- Reibetanz, John. "Hieronimo in Decimosexto: A Private-Theater Burlesque." Renaissance Drama ns 5 (1972): 89-121.
- The Revels History of Drama in English. Ed. T. W. Craik, et al. Vols. 2, 3. London: Methuen, 1975-80.
- Reynolds, George F. "Hamlet At The Globe." Shakespeare Survey 9 (1956): 49-53.
- . The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater, 1605-1625. London: Oxford UP, 1940.
- Righter, Anne. Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.
- Robinson, J. W. "Medieval English Acting." Theatre Notebook 13 (1959): 82-8.
- Rosenberg, Marvin. "Elizabethan Actors: Men or Marionettes?" PMLA 69 (1954): 915-27.

- Salingar, L. G. "The Elizabethan Literary Renaissance." The New Penguin Guide to English Literature: The Age of Shakespeare, vol. 2. Boris Ford, ed. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.
- Seltzer, Daniel. "The Actors and Staging." A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies. Ed. Kenneth Muir and S. Schoenbaum. Cambridge UP, 1971.
- . "Elizabethan Acting in Othello." Shakespeare Quarterly 10 (1959): 201-10.
- . "Prince Hal and Tragic Style." Shakespeare Survey 30 (1977): 13-27.
- . "The Staging of the Last Plays." Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 8. Ed. Neville Denny. Edward Arnold Ltd., 1966.
- Shapiro, Michael. Children Of The Revels. Columbia UP, 1977.
- . "Children's Troupes: Dramatic Illusion and Acting Style." Comparative Drama 3 (1969): 42-53.
- Simmons, J. L. "Elizabethan Stage Practice and Marlowe's The Jew of Malta." Renaissance Drama ns 4 (1971): 93-104.
- Skiles, Howard. "A Re-examination of Baldwin's Theory of Acting Lines." Theatre Survey 26 (1985): 1-20.
- Smith, Irwin. "Theatre Into Globe." Shakespeare Quarterly 3 (1952): 113-20.
- Somerset, J. A. B. "'Fair is foul and foul is fair': Vice-Comedy's Development and Theatrical Effects." Elizabethan Theatre 5. Ed. G. R. Hibbard. N.p.: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1975.
- Southern, Richard. The Staging of Plays before Shakespeare. London: Faber And Faber, 1973.
- Spevack, Marvin. A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare. Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim, 1968.
- Spivack, Bernard. Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil. Columbia UP, 1958.
- Sprague, Arthur Colby. "The Stage Business In Shakespeare's Plays: A Postscript." The Society For Theatre Research 3 (1953): 7.

- Steadman, John M. "Iconography and Renaissance Drama: Ethical and Mythological Themes." Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama 13-14 (1970-71): 73-122.
- Stevens, Martin. "Illusion and Reality in the Medieval Drama." College English 32 (1971): 448-64.
- . "The York Cycle: From Procession to Play." Leeds Studies In English ns 6 (1972): 37-61.
- Stoll, Elmer Edgar. Art And Artifice in Shakespeare: A Study in Dramatic Contrast And Illusion. 1933. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962.
- Strong, Roy C. Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450-1650. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1984.
- . The Elizabethan Image: Painting in England, 1540-1620 (a catalogue of an exhibition organised by the Tate Gallery, 28 Nov. 1969-8 Feb. 1970). London: Tate Gallery (Publications Department), 1969.
- Styan, J. L. "The Actor At The Foot Of Shakespeare's Platform." Shakespeare Survey 12 (1959): 56-63.
- . Shakespeare's Stagecraft. Cambridge UP, 1967.
- Sypher, Wylie. Four Stages Of Renaissance Style. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955.
- Thaler, Elwin. "The Travelling Players In Shakespeare's England." Modern Philology 17 (1920): 489-508.
- Tillotson, Geoffrey. "Othello and The Alchemist at Oxford." TLS 20 July 1933: 494.
- Trousdale, Marion. "Granville-Barker and Shakespeare on Stage." Renaissance Drama ns 4 (1971): 27-35.
- Tydeman, William. English Medieval Theatre 1400-1500. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.
- Urkowitz, Steven. "Five Women Eleven Ways: Changing Images of Shakespearean Characters in the Earliest Texts." Images of Shakespeare. Werner Habicht, D. J. Palmer, and Roger Pringle, eds. U of Delaware P, 1988.
- Wain, John. "The Nature of Shakespeare's Realism." Teaching Shakespeare: Essays on Approaches to Shakespeare. Richard Adams, ed. London: Royce, 1985.
- Waith, Eugene M. The Herculean Hero. New York: Columbia UP, 1962.

- Walker, Albert L. "Convention In Shakespeare's Description Of Emotion." Philological Quarterly 17 (1938): 26-66.
- Warren, Roger. "Theatrical Virtuosity and Poetic Complexity in Cymbeline." Shakespeare Survey 29 (1976): 41-49.
- Wasson, John. "Professional Actors in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance." Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England 1 (1984): 1-11.
- Watkins, Ronald. On Producing Shakespeare. London: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1950.
- Weimann, Robert. Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of the Dramatic Form and Function. Ed. Robert Schwartz. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.
- Welsford, Enid. The Fool: His Social and Literary History. New York: Farrar & Rinehart Inc., 1935.
- Wickham, Glynne. Early English Stages: 1300 to 1660. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.
- . "Hell-Castle and its Door-Keeper." Shakespeare Survey 19 (1966): 68-74.
- . The Medieval Theatre. Cambridge UP, 1987. 3rd ed.
- . "Players At Selby Abbey, York, 1431-1532." Theatre Notebook 12 (1958): 46-53.
- . Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969.
- Wierum, Ann. "'Actors' and 'Play Acting' in the Morality Tradition." Renaissance Drama ns 3 (1970): 189-204.
- Wiles, David. Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse. Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Willeford, William. The Fool and His Scepter. Northwestern UP, 1969.
- Woolf, Rosemary. The English Mystery Plays. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1972.
- Wright, Louis B. "Variety Entertainment by Elizabethan Strolling Players." JEGP 26 (1927): 294-303.
- . "Will Kemp and The Commedia Dell'Arte." MLN 41 (1926): 516-520.

- Young, Peter B. "Mannerism In Hamlet Scene Designs." Shakespeare And The Arts. Cecile Williamson Cary and Henry S. Limouze, eds. Washington D.C.: UP of America, 1982: 95-108.
- Ziegelman, Lois. "Hamlet: Shakespeare's Mannerist Tragedy." Shakespeare and the Arts. Cecile Williamson Cary and Henry S. Limouze, eds. Washington, D.C.: UP of America, 1982: 57-71.
- Zimbardo, Rose A. "Dramatic Imitations of Nature in the Restoration's Seventeenth-Century Predecessors." From Renaissance to Restoration: Metamorphoses of the Drama. Robert Markley and Laurie Finke, eds. Cleveland: Bellflower Press, 1984: 57-86.