

1968

In the mind's eye : a study of Shakespeare's imaginative use of stage properties in six representative plays

Margaret Hart Glenn Tinsley

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/masters-theses>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tinsley, Margaret Hart Glenn, "In the mind's eye : a study of Shakespeare's imaginative use of stage properties in six representative plays" (1968). *Master's Theses*. 1318.

<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/masters-theses/1318>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

IN THE MIND'S EYE: A STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S
IMAGINATIVE USE OF STAGE PROPERTIES
IN SIX REPRESENTATIVE PLAYS

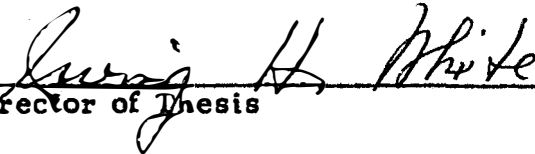
BY

MARGARET HART GLENN TINSLEY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

JUNE, 1968


Approved for the Department of English and the Graduate School by



Director of Thesis



Chairman of English Department



Dean of the Graduate School

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Introduction	iv
I. <u>A Midsummer Night's Dream</u>	1
II. <u>The Life of King Henry V</u>	15
III. <u>Troilus and Cressida</u>	29
IV. <u>King Lear</u>	44
V. <u>Macbeth</u>	62
VI. <u>The Tempest</u>	86
VII. Conclusion.	103

Appendices

A. Stage Properties in <u>A Midsummer Night's Dream</u>	115
B. Stage Properties in <u>The Life of King Henry V</u>	117
C. Stage Properties in <u>Troilus and Cressida</u>	118
D. Stage Properties in <u>King Lear</u>	120
E. Stage Properties in <u>Macbeth</u>	123
F. Stage Properties in <u>The Tempest</u>	125

Bibliography.	127
-----------------------	-----

Vita

INTRODUCTION

The unity, or stylistic oneness, that is the most salient characteristic of Shakespeare's style has been achieved with such consummate ease that the underlying pattern of workmanship is imperceptible at a casual reading. Upon analysis, however, the ingenious means which the playwright has employed, perhaps unconsciously, to create this effect of unity easily may be discerned.

This paper is an analysis of the stage properties in six plays and their function in the plays' overall design. In this study it may be seen that within each play each stage property is so imaginatively used that it seems at once both natural and wonderful. Each property, upon careful examination, yields moreover a striking significance not only to the individual play, but also to the reality-illusion motif which is the implicit theme of the entire canon.

The stage properties under consideration in this paper are examined against their background within each play, and although only those properties which are specifically mentioned in the dialogue will be considered, no attempt has been made to distinguish between real and illusory items of staging. Stage directions, a relatively

late stylistic development, will not be considered: they were rarely found in the folio edition.

The six plays under consideration have been chosen in regard to chronology and type in order to indicate Shakespeare's artistic development and to illustrate the comprehensive scope of his dramatic material.

A brief survey of the theatre in Shakespeare's day would indicate that he accepted the dramatic world as he found it. The playhouse itself was an elaborately conceived and designed structure that enabled the playwright to indulge his fancy and to create scenes in which spirits soared above the stage, ghosts appeared from nowhere and disappeared just as readily, and heavy properties were thrust out into view as needed.

Henslowe's Diary provides an elaborate and detailed account of the goods, costumes, and properties which were on inventory for his theatre, and the property maker John Carow lists the following items of staging on hand in 1574-75:

propertyes videlicet monsters, Mountaynes, fforestes,
Beastes, Serpentes, Weapons for warr as gvnnes, dagges,
bowes, Arowes, Bills, clubbes headdes & headpeeces
Armor counterfet Mosse, holly, Ivey, Bayes, flowers

quarters, glew, past. paper. and suche lyke with Nayles
 hoopes horstails dishes for devells eyes heaven, hell,
 & the devell & all the devell I should saie but not all. ¹

In addition to these lists, contemporary allusions (for example Dekker's Guls Hornebook), and stage directions and dialogue of the plays of this period indicate that the stage hands were well versed in the technical machinations that insured professional production. ² Traps in the stage floor and a hut or superstructure which extended over the tiring house wall were used to raise and lower heavy properties³ and although scenic design was not an art form in itself, wherever scenery was required by the action it must have been represented. This is not to say, however, that a forest involved a stage full of trees; rather the forest was probably symbolic and comprised only a few trees which ascended and descended at need through traps. ⁴ The frequent references to landscape within dialogue have been interpreted as attempts to stimulate the imagination of the

¹Lily B. Campbell, Scenes and Machines on the English Stage during the Renaissance, a Classical Revival (Cambridge, England, 1923), pp. 111-112.

²E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), I, 71.

³Cécile de Banke, Shakespearean Stage Production: Then & Now (New York, 1953), p. 28.

⁴Chambers, 89.

spectator who has only an imperfect representation of scenery before him.¹ George Reynolds states unequivocally that a passage of descriptive dialogue almost certainly indicated that what was described was not there at all.²

Sidney Lee believes that there was no scenery on the Elizabethan stage and that scenic illusion was created solely by means of properties such as "rocks, tombs, caves, trees, tables, chairs, and pasteboard dishes of food."³ William J. Lawrence concurs with this theory, remarking that since there was virtually no scenery the term "property" involved a wider concept than it does today.⁴ A study by Jean Fraser reveals that there is hardly a scene in Shakespeare's entire canon which is not set either by direct statement or by description within the dialogue,⁵ while Warren D. Smith finds those

¹Ibid., 52.

²The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theatre, 1605-1625 (New York, 1940), p. 186.

³Shakespeare and the Modern Stage, With Other Essays (New York, 1906), p. 40.

⁴Pre-Restoration Stage Studies (Cambridge, 1927), p. 299.

⁵Orie Latham Hatcher, A Book for Shakespearean Plays and Pageants: A Treasury of Elizabethan and Shakespearean Detail for Producers, Stage Managers, Actors, Artists and Students (New York, 1916), p. 112.

lines which locate a scene geographically in a definite minority to those which set the action.¹ "Place," Charles Lower states, "wherever narratively significant, was expressed in Elizabethan performance through dialogue, characters identified with a single narrative locale, and large stage-properties, not through a realistic visual environment on stage."²

Shakespeare accepted this world of the theatre as he found it. His plays were written for stage performance, and he catered to the audience's taste. No innovator, he took the materials of his craft--the stage, its tradition and its plays--and endowed them with the genius of his poetry. His popularity is sustained "not of an age, but for all time" by his power of expression which enables the mind's eye to create by means of his magnificent word a world of make-believe. His own words, then, will give an abundant life to his art so long as man can breathe or eye can see.

¹"Stage Settings in Shakespeare's Dialogue," MP, L (August, 1952), 32.

²"Editorial Principles and Practices for Indicating Significant Staging in a Reader's Edition of Shakespeare," DA, XXVI, 3925.

CHAPTER I

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Universality of appeal may be attained only by the creation of that which is essentially unique; thus, successful drama always particularizes, and Shakespeare's creative genius reveals itself nowhere so forcefully as in his power of giving substance to stage properties. Although he frequently chooses to leave a scene unpainted when it is not dramatically expedient, he depends for his success no more upon generalized description than upon stock characterization.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream (1594-95), one of his earliest works, the scenery and properties, to say nothing of the play's atmosphere, step forward to the forestage fully costumed and duly rehearsed to play their roles in the wedding entertainment performed for Theseus and Hippolyta. This play-within-a-play or anti-masque, central to the meaning, focuses attention on the stage properties themselves. In

satirizing most delightfully the realistic representation of place, time, and character by a more than literal presentation of stage properties-- Moonshine, Wall, and Lion--the author seems to pose a question concerning illusion and reality for two audiences simultaneously to ponder. Shakespeare draws an abstract concept, then particularizes it with a heavy crayon and while imagination hastens to amend that which is visible, the collaboration between audience and artist heightens the aesthetic appreciation. Whereas the audience realizes that the drama is not to be taken literally, the rustic actors in this situation are unable to make the distinction. Sir Philip Sidney in his Defense of Poesy asks: "What child is there that coming to a Play and seeing 'Thebes' written in great letters on an olde doore, doth believe that it is 'Thebes'?"¹ Although an audience willingly suspends disbelief, the artistic craftsman does not confuse this childlike acceptance with naïveté. Imagination never truly creates another world, despite the assistance of modern cinematography. Reality, all the while, underlies the most moving of stage performances, and pretense is never mistaken for the real thing.

¹George P. Baker, The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist (New York, 1920), p. 77.

R. W. Dent, writing on "Imagination in A Midsummer Night's Dream," calls attention to the play-within-a-play and Bottom and his cast of mechanicals who focus emphasis on the role of imagination:

On the one hand they fear their audience will imagine what it sees is real, mistaking "shadows" for reality; on the other, they think the audience unable to imagine what it cannot see. Paradoxically, although they lack the understanding to think in such terms, they think their audience both over- and under-imaginative, and in both respects irrational.¹

Thus they explain away Pyramus and Lion and create Moonshine and Wall.

Beginning with the scene early in the play when Peter Quince, who is by trade a carpenter, is discovered constructing an entertainment for royalty, there is a curious juxtaposition of illusion and reality. Bottom is refused the part of Lion:

Bottom. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quince. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the dutchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.²

¹ISQ, XV (Spring 1964), 126.

²The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Hardin Craig (Chicago, 1951), I. ii. 72-79. All quotations from plays will follow this edition.

He goes on to plead:

Bottom. . . . I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale. (I. ii. 84-85)

But the stage manager is adamant, and Bottom is assigned to the role of Pyramus, "a most lovely gentlemanlike man." He later interposes that "a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing," (III. i. 31-32) and suggests that the actor who takes the part:

Bottom. . . . Must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, --"Ladies,"--or "Fair ladies, --I would wish you,"--or "I would request you,"--or "I would entreat you, --not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;" and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner. (III. i. 37-46)

The rehearsal scene continues the topsy-turvy predicament: the bare stage which is at first transformed into a green plot then comes into use as a stage. The audience is back where it began but none the worse for the experience:

Quince. . . . This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorne-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke. (III. i. 3-5)

Yet first a device must be arranged so that the ladies of the audience will not be afraid when Pyramus draws a sword to kill himself. A prologue is prepared which will "seem to say" that:

Bottom. . . . we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear. (III. i. 20-23)

While the rustics endeavor on the one hand to dispell the illusion which they have produced, they strive equally as carefully on the other to create a mood of enchantment. In the conception of Moonshine and Wall the creative process is reversed from that which fabricated Pyramus and Lion. Bottom instructs:

. . . let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. (IV. ii. 40-41)

In marked contrast, however, they spurn the natural assistance of the moon which the almanac affirms will be available on the night of the festivities. The realistic approach in this instance fails to satisfy the mechanicals' artistic standards, and they invent a "bush of thorns and a lanthorne" which will personate Moonshine. Wall in similar fashion receives a fanciful treatment:

Snout. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

Bottom. Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some roughcast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper. (III. i. 67-73)

With this curious blending of reality and illusion these "hard-handed men . . . which never labor'd in their minds till

now" (V. i. 72) manage to suggest the several levels of artistic satisfaction to be enjoyed from a masterpiece of theatre. Because the playwright's contact with his audience involves director, actor, and producer it is less direct yet, paradoxically, more immediate than the artist-audience relationship of novelist, poet, or the plastic artist. Although there are many levels of appreciation, depending upon individual sensitivity, it is to the highest faculty of imagination that this work appeals. The vision which "ears may see and eyes may hear" transcends the normal limits of perception. When Peter Quince, the stage-manager, appears on stage as Prologue to introduce the anti-masque, his disordered speech by means of misplaced punctuation expresses quite the opposite of his intention. He is not saying what he seems to say, and his audience must take on faith his good intentions. Just so, the play is not in any regard what it seems to be. Where great care has been taken to achieve an image, words promptly dispel the intended effect, and the audience may reflect with Theseus:

The best in this kind are but shadows; and
the worst are no worse, if imagination amend
them. (V. i. 213-214)

It is, perhaps, this dramatic principle which has led one critic to assert that although Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed,

the greatest stage of all remains "the unrestricted arena of the play-goer's imagination."¹ Hazlitt is even more adamant in his judgment that A Midsummer Night's Dream may not be produced successfully: "Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate 'Wall' or 'Moonshine'."² Yet this play concerning the imagination offers significant comment on the author's universality of appeal. The conversation during the nuptial festivities between Theseus and Hippolyta points out: ". . . how easy is a bush supposed a bear." (V. i. 22) This is especially true when Shakespeare's consummate genius kindles the creative imagination of the audience to body forth "the forms of things unknown"; when his poetic pen "turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing/ A local habitation and a name." (V. i. 15-17)

The other items of staging in this play are handled more conventionally. The bill of properties which the stage-manager drew up undoubtedly included the scroll which named the players, the sword with which Pyramus killed himself, the dog and the lanthorne which

¹Roy McKeen Wiles, "'In My Mind's Eye, Horatio'," UTQ, XVIII (1948), 67.

²A Midsummer Night's Dream, Variorum Edition, ed. Horace Howard Furness (New York, 1963), p. 300.

aided Moonshine's characterization, and cement and hair, perhaps, for the counterfeit Wall. For the play as a whole seats for the wedding guests may be assumed, a throne of state may have been provided for the royal lovers, and Puck wields a broom in the last scene of the play; yet these receive no more than cursory mention, if noted at all, for Shakespeare felt under no compulsion to belabor unimportant details. In contrast, therefore, the prominent role in the story line which the love-in-idleness flower holds results in an extended description of this vital property:

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
 It fell upon a little western flower,
 Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
 Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
 The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
 Will make or man or woman madly dote
 Upon the next live creature that it sees.
 Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
 Ere the leviathan can swim a league. (II. i. 165-174)

It is this bit of magic which causes the confusion around which the major plot revolves. In order to indulge his anger against his wife, Oberon, king of the fairies, sends his fairy jester, Robin, to find a flower whose juice has magical powers. In the meantime Oberon overhears Demetrius (who loves Hermia) scolding Helena (who loves Demetrius). To amend the situation Oberon sends Robin to annoint Demetrius' eyes after he has gone to sleep. Upon

awakening he will love the first thing that he sees. Robin mistakenly applies the love-juice and turns true love into false, rather than false love into true: Lysander now loves Helena, not Hermia; Demetrius loves Helena, not Hermia; and, confusion worse confounded, Titania, queen of the fairies, is in love with the inimitable Bottom, now magically transformed and wearing the head of an ass. Shakespeare's imagination soars when confronted with such an herb. With this property alone he sets in motion a concatenation of events which satirizes most effectively the whims and fitful inconsistencies of mortal love. Horace Howard Furness notes: "This flower, the emblem of capricious phantasy, is the key of the whole play."¹

The antidote to Cupid's bewitching flower is another plant, Dian's Bud. Oberon, to remedy the situation now at hand, instructs Puck to apply this herb:

Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
 Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
 To take from thence all error with his might,
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
 When they next wake, all this derision
 Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
 With league whose date till death shall never end.
 Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
 I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
 And then I will her charmed eye release
 From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

(III. ii. 365-376)

¹Ibid., p. 287.

The fairy first chants to Lysander as he squeezes the juice on his eyes:

On the ground
 Sleep sound:
 I'll apply
 To your eye,
 Gentle lover, remedy.
 When thou wakest,
 Thou takest
 True delight
 In the sight
 Of thy former lady's eye:
 And the country proverb known,
 That every man should take his own,
 In your waking shall be shown:
 Jack shall have Jill
 Nought shall go ill;
 The man shall have his mare again, and all shall
 be well. (III. ii. 448-464)

Even the fairy queen is restored to her former vision, and Oberon himself as he releases her from the curse intones:

Be as thou wast wont to be;
 See as thou wast wont to see:
 Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
 Hath such force and blessed power.
 Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen. (IV. i. 74-78)

The flower Dian's Bud holds an even more significant position for one critic who reads in the author's mention of this herb a basis for dating the play. Gerald Massey, following Tieck, discloses that this same flower was the emblem of Elizabeth Vernon, and he thereby concludes: "This dainty drama was written with the view of celebrating the marriage of Southampton and Elizabeth

Vernon."¹ The date that he ventures is 1595.

In a work that relies upon the heights of poetic fantasy for its effect rather than upon depth of characterization, Bottom the weaver takes up these two multi-colored threads and skillfully interlaces them into one highly embroidered tapestry. No other character in the play is so vividly drawn, and he is the only one whose lines belong exclusively to him, for neither in the fairy nor the mortal world is any interest generated by character alone, with the sole exception of the weaver. In another drama the ass's head which transforms Bottom might aptly be considered to be a costume, but since this play demands a direct, intense look at what is on stage, the head serves as more than apparel: it becomes, indeed, one with the man. Schlegel notes in this regard:

The droll wonder of the transmutation of Bottom is merely the translation of a metaphor in its literal sense; but in his behavior during the tender homage of the Fairy Queen we have a most amusing proof how much the consciousness of such a headdress heightens the effect of his usual folly.²

Bottom is placed squarely in the midst of this most fanciful world, literally a jackass. He is immediately taken by Titania as her lover,

¹Ibid., p. 260.

²Ibid., p. 323.

and such is his habit of self-esteem that he readily accepts her attention. The weaver's conceit as he guides the players and contrives to smooth the way is manifest throughout the play: "I have a device to make all well," he continually comments. By partially transforming him into an ass, however, the playwright vividly portrays the vanity which he unconsciously possesses. Although he never sees himself as an ass, he nevertheless adjusts his diet accordingly:

Titania. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bottom. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow. (IV. i. 32-35)

At least two scholars interpret Bottom as a satirical thrust at the acting profession. The weaver-donkey is "only a caricature of what frequently happened in the Green-rooms of theatres in the poet's own day, and has happened since in that of every other."¹ But Dover Wilson finds a more universal significance:

In truth, there is so much of genuine human nature in this hero of A Midsummer Night's Dream, that it may not always be safe to peek into the looking-glass, lest evolution reassert itself for our special behoof, and his familiar countenance greet us, "Hail, fellow, well met, give me your neif."²

¹Ibid., pp. 316-318.

²Ibid., p. 319.

The ass's head, therefore, must be considered, even as Moonshine and Wall, as both figurative and actual, a fanciful property dramatically conceived and employed to center attention on Bottom's human nature.

Each of the stage properties previously under discussion has been provided by the playwright with a concrete visual image to correspond to his abstract concept. Shakespeare by means of real symbols has deftly persuaded his audience to bring into focus the inward eye. This dichotomy of method accommodated his design of satire by poking fun at the vehicle of illusion. The passage in which Duke Theseus calls forth his hounds, however, employs no visual imagery to aid the imagination. Here, in anticipation of the poet's mature genius, is the presentation by word alone of that which was in nowise literally portrayed:

Theseus. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
 So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
 Each under each. A cry more tuneable
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheered with horn,
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
 Judge when you hear. . . (IV. i. 123-131)

This passage contains the very essence of poetry and, also, an inherent dramatic quality which kindles the imagination to transcend

both time and place. As Touchstone in As You Like It comments:
"Truest poetry is the most feigning." The Oriental drama with its highly stylized staging attests to the readiness with which the mind may grasp a concept that has merely been suggested. A profusion of matter generally implies a dearth of art and only serves to destroy the illusion so needful to aesthetic delight. As Shakespeare matured he increasingly acquired freedom from the stage of visual imitation. With words alone he enabled his audience to share with him the artistic fulfillment of imaginative activity.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF KING HENRY V

Dramatic illusion is not the same thing as an illusion of reality. The naturalistic drama of today, relying upon realistic scenery and stage properties, engages in a constant effort, Samuel Bethell notes, "to delude the audience into taking for actuality what they are bound to know, in their moments of critical alertness, to be only a stage performance."¹ It may be stated therefore that naturalistic drama destroys dramatic illusion in direct proportion as it creates a semblance of real life. True art maintains a conscious distance, and it is in the handling of this distinction between the play world and the actual world that mastery of form is achieved. The very first words of the Prologue of The Life of King Henry V

¹Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition (North Carolina, 1944), p. 31.

(1599-1600) admit the inadequacy of the stage to represent the wide range of material to be presented. In the form of a direct address the Prologue indicates the playwright's great dependence upon the audience's imaginative receptivity:

Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
 Into a thousand parts divide one man,
 And make imaginary puissance;
 Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
 Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
 Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
 Turning the accomplishment of many years
 Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
 Admit me Chorus to this history;
 Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
 Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.
 (Pro. I. 23-34)

This prologue is followed by four more, one before each of the five acts, by means of which Shakespeare solves an artistic dilemma: the creation of a dramatic illusion without resorting to the crude vehicles of illusion which mirror reality. The culminative effect of the five choruses overcomes the difficulties of presenting the actions and scope of six years of history on stage: they give unity of time and bridge the distance between place; they call forth the color and motion of battle and martial pageantry; they stir the patriotic sentiment and encourage the pride of national heritage. As in A Midsummer Night's Dream Shakespeare motivated his

audience's thought by realistic symbolism, in this play he impels the imagination by words alone.

In regard to stage properties, the choruses fill a gap that was necessarily large, even though the Elizabethans had many more conventions or agreed upon departures from reality than our theatres of today. As Granville-Barker explains: "The 'visual law' of drama was, to the Elizabethans, a very different one, and an arbitrary and inconstant thing besides."¹ The first chorus, prologue to Act I instructs that even as "a crooked figure may/ Attest in little place a million" so may imaginary forces multiply one helmet and one small field to encompass all the fighting men of England and of France. Chorus two reports the preparation and expectation of battle, calling to mind all of the items of warfare necessary for such a venture; relates France's fear and the treachery of the three noblemen; and transports the king from London to Southampton, ready to set sail for France. An immense number of properties are summoned before the inward eye; both color and sound are gently evoked, and the senses relish the pageantry attendant upon the military endeavor:

Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies:

¹Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare (New Jersey, 1946), I, 384.

Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought
 Reigns solely in the breast of every man:
 They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,
 Following the mirror of all Christian kings,
 With winged heels, as English Mercuries.
 Now sits Expectation in the air,
 And hides a sword from hilts unto the point
 With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,
 Promised to Harry and his followers.

(Pro. II. 1-11)

Chorus three describes in detail the fleet embarking for France, and the style of expression would render a mere pictorial representation wooden and lifeless in comparison:

Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies
 In motion of no less celerity
 Than that of thought. Suppose that you have seen
 The well-appointed king at Hampton pier
 Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet
 With silken streamers the young Phoebus fanning:
 Play with your fancies, and in them behold
 Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;
 Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give
 To sounds confused; behold the threaden sails,
 Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,
 Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea,
 Breasting the lofty surge: O, do but think
 You stand upon the rivage and behold
 A city on the inconstant billows dancing;
 For so appears this fleet majestic,
 Holding due course to Harfleur. (Pro. III. 1-17)

In this epic expression very little action takes place on the stage: a narrative and rhetorical style is employed, and the choruses urge the audience to follow the action which they may not actually see:

. . . Follow, follow;
 Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy,
 And leave your England, as dead midnight still,
 Guarded with grandsires, babies and old women,
 Either past or not arrived to pith and puissance;
 For who is he, whose chin is but enrich'd
 With one appearing hair, that will not follow
 These cull'd and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?
 Work, work your thoughts, and therein see a siege;
 Behold the ordnance on their carriages,
 With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur.
 (Pro. III. 17-27)

The noise of war is magnificently evoked as the king orders the attack; the cannon blast sounds with the fading lines of the chorus:

. . . and the nimble gunner
 With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,
 And down goes all before them. . . . (Pro. III. 32-34)

Chorus four, coming as it does at the end of a scene which is replete with time references, indicates the impatience of the French, and the despair of the English. The fire of the camp is visible to the mind's eye, and the ear echoes with the steed's neigh and the clash of the anvil. Both the cock and the clock tell the hour, while in the dim light of dawn a dice game is in progress. These sounds in the shadowed atmosphere more than suggest the mood, the men, and the materials of war. Spurning the aid of counterfeit properties, with ear appeal alone this passage forms a background that is profuse in detail and that creates and sustains a dramatic intensity throughout the episodic scenes which follow:

Now entertain conjecture of a time
 When creeping murmur and the poring dark
 Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
 From camp to camp through the foul womb of night
 The hum of either army stilly sounds,
 That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
 The secret whispers of each other's watch:
 Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
 Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;
 Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
 Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
 The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
 With busy hammers closing rivets up,
 Give dreadful note of preparation:
 The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
 And the third hour of drowsy morning name.
 Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,
 The confident and over-lusty French
 Do the low-rated English play at dice;
 And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night
 Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp
 So tediously away. The poor condemned English,
 Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
 Sit patiently and inly ruminate
 The morning's danger, and their gesture sad
 Investing lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats
 Presenteth them unto the gazing moon
 So many horrid ghosts . . . (Pro. IV. 1-28)

Certainly these "mockeries" are meaningfully portrayed and disgrace not at all the name of the poet.

Chorus five begs excuse because "of time, of numbers and due course of things" for things that may not here be presented in life-like array: the crowd that gathers to see the king off to England; the roar of the "deep-mouth'd sea"; his entry at Blackheath; and the return to London. The chorus here plays the interim "by remembering you 'tis past."

All five choruses appeal to the audience to use their imagination, for by means of this device alone this play of epic scope and grandeur has been able to dispense with staging. The result to the audience is an appreciation which surpasses in reward any pleasure to be gained from mere pictorial representation. Even our realistic screen devices of today are unable to present a literal picture, and the Elizabethans, certainly, were aware of the two worlds before them. It is this awareness of the two worlds or the ability to respond on more than one level at the same time that Bethell terms "multi-consciousness."¹ He notes that this principle has largely been lost to modern man, for the motion picture has undermined the "creative naivete of the popular audience . . . the capacity to cope with verbal subtlety has largely disappeared under the welter of modern appeals to eye and ear."²

The choruses of this play, one critic notes disapprovingly, may not be cited as arguments in defense of a spectacular mode of production for all of Shakespeare. The playwright here is not

¹Bethell, p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Lee, p. 20.

bemoaning the limitations of his "wooden O," for the theatre is above all a place of the imagination, which properly appealed to may assimilate the inconsistencies and the inadequacies of not only the stage but of the real world as well. The creative intelligence moreover would choose this suggestive appeal to the senses in preference to a more direct approach.

The scene in which the Dauphin brings his horse to life on stage is certainly one of the most graphic of all descriptions in literature. With the "heat of ginger" he prances on stage, relieving the dreary hours of watching for the morning. The poetic richness of this passage may be measured equally with the comic relief which it affords. That technique which summoned on stage the hounds of Duke Theseus is hereby perfected. The horse is reproduced bit by bit, in piecemeal fashion, yet he starts to life as surely as if he had been thrust on stage:

Dauphin. . . . I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. Ça, ha! he bounds from the earth, as if his entrails were hairs; le cheval volant, the Pegasus, chez les narines de feu! When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

(III. vii. 11-19)

Dauphin. It is the prince of palfreys; his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch and his countenance enforces homage.

(III. vii. 29-31)

His personality, too, rears up before the audience:

Dauphin. Nay, the man hath no wit that cannot, from the rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb, vary deserved praise on my palfrey: it is a theme as fluent as the sea: turn the sands into eloquent tongues, and my horse is argument for them all: 'tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on; and for the world, familiar to us and unknown, to lay apart their particular functions and wonder at him. I once writ a sonnet in his praise and began thus: "Wonder of nature,"--

(III. vii. 33-43)

Certainly the Dauphin is wise to prefer such an animal to a mistress.

The tun of tennis balls which the French ambassadors deliver to Henry at the opening of the play gives rise to a verbal flight of the imagination as Shakespeare, characteristically, plays with the terms of the game--"racket," "play a set," "hazard," "match," "courts," and "chaces"--in answer to the French king's insult:

King Henry. When we have match'd our rackets to these balls,

We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.

Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
That all the courts of France will be disturb'd.

With chaces. . . . (I. ii. 260-266)

With these commonplace items of sport war is dramatically declared, and the act closes with a curtain that anticipates the conflict to follow.

The stage properties of Act II receive but cursory treatment:

Nym threatens Pistol with his rapier and several lines later Bardolph

draws a sword to put an end to the altercation. More germane to plot development, perhaps, are the papers which Henry delivers to the traitors, Richard Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scroop of Masham, and Grey of Northumberland. These men who receive them in expectation of commission find there a condemnation of their treachery. Ironically illustrating the sudden turn of fortune, the papers supply a needful bit of stage business and dramatically prepare for Henry's famed and rhetorical speech on the deception of his friend.

The leek which Henry wears in his hat on March first to celebrate St. David's Welsh victory over the Saxons is also worn by Fluellen although St. David's Day has passed:

Gower. Nay, that's right; but why wear you your leek today? Saint Davy's day is past.

Fluellen. There is occasions and causes why and wherefore in all things: I will tell you, asse my friend, Captain Gower: the rascally, scauld, beggarly, lousy, praggng knave, Pistol, which you and yourself and all the world know to be no petter than a fellow, look you now, of no merits, he is come to me and prings me pread and salt yesterday, look you, and bid me eat my leek: it was in a place where I could not breed no contention with him; but I will be so bold as to wear it in my cap till I see him once again, and then I will tell him a little piece of my desires.

(V. i. 1-14)

After forcing Pistol to eat the leek, Fluellen tosses him a groat to heal his head:

Fuellen. Eat, I pray you: will you have some more sauce to your leek? there is not enough leek to swear by.

Pistol. Quiet thy cudgel; thou dost see I eat.

Fluellen. Much good do you, scauld knave, heartily.

Nay, pray you, throw none away; the skin is good for your broken coxcomb. When you take occasions to see leeks hereafter, I pray you, mock at 'em; that is all.

Pistol. Good.

Fluellen. Ay, leeks is good: hold you, there is a groat to heal your pate. (V. i. 51-62)

And Gower joins in the argument:

Go, go; you are a counterfeit cowardly knave. Will you mock at an ancient tradition, begun upon an honourable respect, and worn as a memorably trophy of predeceased valour and dare not avouch in your deeds any of your words? I have seen you gleeking and galling at this gentleman twice or thrice. You thought, because he could not speak English in the native garb, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel: you find it otherwise; and henceforth let a Welsh correction teach you a good English condition. Fare ye well.

(V. i. 72-81)

In this manner Pistol has received his final retribution. Dr. Johnson

notes:

The comic scenes of The History of Henry the Fourth and Fifth are now at an end, and all the personages are now dismissed. Falstaff and Mrs. Quickly are dead; Nym and Bardolph are hanged; Gadshill was lost immediately after the robbery; Poin and Peto have vanished since, one knows not how; and Pistol is now beaten into obscurity.¹

Fluellen's patriotism has proved too fervent for the ancient Pistol; the lowly leek is responsible for his downfall.

¹Craig, Works, p. 766.

Earlier in the play another item worn in the hat gives rise to a less pathetic comic interlude. The king on the eve of the battle of Agincourt speaks incognito with three soldiers, John Bates, Alexander Court, and Michael Williams. The accent throughout the scene is on man and human relations, and as the men part company Williams challenges the word of their monarch. Henry quickly embraces the quarrel:

King Henry. Your reproof is something too round:
I should be angry with you, if the time were convenient.
Williams. Let it be a quarrel between us, if you live.
King Henry. I embrace it.
Williams. How shall I know thee again?
King Henry. Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my bonnet; then, if ever thou darest acknowledge it, I will make it my quarrel.
Williams. Here's my glove: give me another of thine.
King Henry. There.
Williams. This will I also wear in my cap: If ever thou come to me and say, after to-morrow, "This is my glove," by this hand, I will take thee a box on the ear.
King Henry. If ever I live to see it, I will challenge it.
Williams. Thou darest as well be hanged.
King Henry. Well, I will do it, though I take thee in the king's company.
Williams. Keep thy word: fare thee well.

(IV. i. 215-236)

Following the battle the king accosts the soldier and inquires:

King Henry. Soldier, why wearest thou that glove in thy cap?
Williams. An't please your majesty, 'tis the gage of one that I should fight withal, if he be alive.
King Henry. An Englishman?

Williams. An't please your majesty, a rascal that swaggered with me last night; who, if alive and ever dare to challenge this glove, I have sworn to take him a box o' th' ear: or if I can see my glove in his cap, which he swore, as he was a soldier, he would wear if alive, I will strike it out soundly.

(IV. vii. 125-135)

Henry instructs him to keep his vow and then jestingly tells Fluellen:

Here, Fluellen, wear thou this favour for me and stick it in thy cap: when Alencon and myself were down together, I plucked this glove from his helm: if any man challenge this, he is a friend to Alencon, and an enemy to our person; if thou encounter any such, apprehend him, an thou dost me love.

(IV. vii. 160-166)

After Fluellen goes out the king bids Warwick and Gloucester follow in order to prevent some sudden mischief. Henry here under the stress of battle reveals something of the old spirit of Prince Hal. Nothing is needed now but Falstaff to complete the scene of youthful revelry. Henry's joke succeeds, but he later sets all to rights, filling the glove with crowns:

King Henry. . . . fill this glove with crowns,
And give it to this fellow. Keep it, fellow;
And wear it for an honour in thy cap
Till I do challenge it. Give him the crowns:
And, captain, you must needs be friends with him.

(IV. viii. 61-65)

The sport effectively contrasts with the list which the herald presents immediately afterwards, telling the number of the noble dead.

The nature of this play demands the broad sweep and comprehensive scope of an imaginative mind, yet it has found favor with the populace for more than three centuries. By means of careful craftsmanship Shakespeare has directed rather than deceived his audience. With exact attention to dramatic illusion he has portrayed successfully true things by what their mockeries be.

CHAPTER III

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Troilus and Cressida (1601-02) is a philosophical comedy set against the background of the widely assimilated story of the Trojan War and the love of the constant Troilus for the faithless Cressida. This play, which is largely rhetorical, questions the validity of holding to an absolute value in the face of human frailty, as Shakespeare portrays reason at war with emotion in life's two most intense encounters--love and war. The nature of the conflict precludes any effectual ending, for there may be no clear resolution where human nature is involved. In love and war, reason must necessarily be disregarded, and the disillusionment of Troilus parallels Hector's downfall, as love story and war story conform to an archetypal code. Within this frame of reference it is the idealist who suffers, and reason proves to be ineffectual armor when passion is aroused.

The playwright's artistic handling of theme in the parallel situations provides a structural uniformity, but as effective theatre, the play has not been judged entirely successful. The most adverse commentary has been directed toward the inconclusive ending, yet it is this very spirit of questioning that gives Troilus and Cressida its thoroughly modern tone. The play, until recently, when it has not been ignored, has been almost universally maligned: Coleridge, Schlegel, and Knight read it as an ironical commentary on Homer, while Ulrici sensed, further, a didactic purpose behind the treatment of theme--a contrast of ancient civilization with the life and spirit of Christianity.¹ Brander Matthews, however, modifies this elucidation and recognizes that "It is unworthy of Shakespeare as a playwright, but it sometimes heightens our opinion of him as a poet and as a philosopher. Even more does it disclose his power as a psychologist."² It is, however, Jan Kott, a modern Polish critic, who most discerningly analyzes the play's matter and method and relates its bitter and sardonic irony to the existentialist search for order in a cruel and meaningless world. He writes:

¹Shakespeare's Dramatic Art (London, 1876), I, 524.

²Shakespeare as a Playwright (New York, 1913), p. 233.

In tragedy the protagonists die, but the moral order is preserved. Their death confirms the existence of the absolute. In this amazing play *Troilus* neither dies himself, nor does he kill the unfaithful *Cressida*. There is no catharsis. Even the death of Hector is not fully tragic. Hero that he is, he pays for a noble gesture and dies surrounded by Myrmidons, stabbed by a boastful coward. There is irony in his death, too.¹

This philosophical cruelty looks ahead to King Lear, which Kott links meaningfully with the grotesque quality of the Theatre of the Absurd. "The grotesque," he comments, "is a criticism of the absolute in the name of frail human experience";² it is "tragedy re-written in different terms."³ A mockery of idealistic standards; a contrast between appearance and reality; a sense of the futility of the human condition: this is what Shakespeare achieves in Troilus and Cressida.

On the foundation of Kott's commentary, the stage properties may be examined as imaginatively conceived aids to implement this theme. The play begins with a prologue reminiscent of the staging devices of The Life of King Henry V, and the impassioned description evokes a military atmosphere that sets the scene for a contest that

¹Shakespeare Our Contemporary (New York, 1966), pp. 82-83.

²Ibid., p. 132.

³Ibid.

is repeatedly postponed. Because of the subsequent procrastination and vacillating indecision the war-like tone of the prologue becomes, in retrospect, ironic:

In Troy, there lies the scene. From the isles of Greece
 The princes orgulous, their high blood chafed,
 Have to the port of Athens sent their ships,
 Fraught with the ministers and instruments
 Of cruel war: sixty and nine, that wore
 Their crownets regal, from the Athenian bay
 Put forth toward Phrygia; and their vow is made
 To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures
 The ravish'd Helen, Menelaus' queen,
 With wanton Paris sleeps; and that's the quarrel.
 To Tenedos they come;
 And the deep-drawing barks do there disgorge
 Their warlike freightage: now on Dardan plains
 The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch
 Their brave pavilions: Priam's six-gated city,
 Dardan, and Tymbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,
 And Antenorides, with massy staples
 And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,
 Sperr up the sons of Troy.
 Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits,
 On one and other side, Trojan and Greek,
 Sets all on hazard. . . . (Prologue. 1-22)

Against such a background, battle gear and martial accoutrements justifiably might be presumed to be major stage properties; but contrary to expectation and despite a cast of legend's greatest warriors, armaments are rarely mentioned¹ and only on one

¹See Appendix C for a list of stage properties that are mentioned in the dialogue.

occasion are they essential to the story line. It is this very omission that underscores the playwright's ironic commentary on the practice of waging war. Immediately following the prologue in the first lines of the dialogue, the militantly-armed Troilus presents an almost ludicrous picture of reason overruled by emotion, the implicit theme of the play:

Troilus. Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again:

Why should I war without the walls of Troy,

That find such cruel battle here within?

Each Trojan that is master of his heart,

Let him to field; Troilus, alas! hath none.

Pandarus. Will this gear ne'er be mended?

Troilus. The Greeks are strong and skilful to

their strength,

Fierce to their skill and to their fierceness

valiant;

But I am weaker than a woman's tear,

Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,

Less valiant than the virgin in the night

And skillless as unpractised infancy.

(I. i. 1-12)

Troilus avoids the day's hostilities to linger in conversation with Pandarus: he introduces the contrast between ideality and reality; between what should be and what is.

In the following scene, Cressida, in glib conversation with Pandarus, looks out upon the warriors returning from the field. Her attention is directed by her crafty uncle to the damaged armor of Troilus, whose appearance expressly belies his previous reluctance to fight:

Pandarus. Mark him, note him. O brave Troilus!
 Look well upon him, niece: look you how his
 sword is bloodied, and his helm more hacked than
 Hector's, and how he looks, and how he goes!
 O admirable youth! he ne'er saw three and twenty.
 (I. ii. 251-255)

The lovers' first meeting, arranged by the go-between,
 takes place in an orchard, where Pandarus draws back his niece's
 veil to encourage freedom between them:

Pandarus. Come, come, what need you blush:
 shame's a baby. Here she is now: swear the
 oaths now to her that you have sworn to me.
 What, are you gone again? you must be watched
 ere you be made tame, must you? Come your
 ways, come your ways; an you draw backward, we'll
 put you i' the fills. Why do you not speak to her?
 Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your picture. . .
 (III. ii. 42-49)

Although the coquette has planned her strategy, based on logic and
 wisdom, she quickly abandons her pose and confesses to Troilus
 the depth of her love:

I have a kind of self resides with you;
 But an unkind self, that itself will leave,
 To be another's fool. I would be gone:
 Where is my wit? I know not what I speak.
 (III. ii. 155-158)

When Cressida must leave Troy to join her father in the
 Greek camp, the pledges of faith which they exchange look back to
 the chivalric customs of the Chaucerian age. The craftsmanship
 of the playwright here, by materially depicting the lovers' pledge to

remain faithful, ironically foreshadows and heightens the effect of Cressida's broken vows:

Troilus. . . . Wear this sleeve.

Cressida. And you this glove. When shall I see you?

Troilus. I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels,
To give thee nightly visitation.

But yet be true. (IV. iv. 72-76)

In the next act Troilus, concealed by darkness, looks on while Diomede in the Greek camp beseeches Cressida for a token of her love:

Diomede. Give me some token for the surety of it.

Cressida. I'll fetch you one. [Exit.

Ulysses. You have sworn patience.

Troilus. Fear me not, sweet lord;

I will not be myself, nor have cognition

Of what I feel: I am all patience.

Re-enter CRESSIDA.

Thersites. Now the pledge; now, now, now!

Cressida. Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.

Troilus. O beauty! where is thy faith?

Ulysses. My lord, --

Troilus. I will be patient; outwardly I will.

Cressida. You look upon that sleeve; behold it well.

He loved me--O false wench!--Give 't me again.

Diomede. Whose was 't?

Cressida. It is no matter, now I have 't again.

I will not meet with you to-morrow night:

I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.

Thersites. Now she sharpens: well said, whetstone!

Diomede. I shall have it.

Cressida. What, this?

Diomede. Ay, that.

Cressida. O, all you gods! O pretty, pretty pledge!

Thy master now lies thinking in his bed

Of thee and me, and sighs, and takes my glove,
 And gives memorial dainty kisses to it,
 As I kiss thee. Nay, do not snatch it from me;
 He that takes that doth take my heart withal.

Diomede. I had your heart before, this follows it.

Troilus. I did swear patience.

Cressida. You shall not have it, Diomed; faith, you
 shall not;

I'll give you something else.

Diomede. I will have this: whose was it?

Cressida. It is no matter.

Diomede. Come, tell me whose it was.

Cressida. 'Twas one's that loved me better
 than you will.

But, now you have it, take it.

Diomede. Whose was it?

Cressida. By all Diana's waiting-women yond,
 And by herself, I will not tell you whose.

Diomede. To-morrow will I wear it on my helm,
 And grieve his spirit that dares not challenge it.

(V. ii. 60-94)

Only a few hours have passed since Cressida left Troilus; already she has weakened and succumbed to the Greek's charms. As Kott points out, it is the pledge of faith itself that is important; Cressida need not have surrendered Troilus's sleeve to become Diomede's mistress; yet, he writes, "She could not. First she had to kill everything in herself."¹ The sleeve is an outward token to Troilus that this Cressida is not his Cressida:

Troilus. This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida:
 If beauty have a soul, this is not she;

¹Ibid., p. 82.

If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,
 If sanctimony be the gods' delight,
 If there be rule in unity itself,
 This is not she. . . . (V. ii. 137-142)

The letter which Pandarus delivers from Cressida merely strengthens Troilus's resolve that this false Cressida belongs to Diomede. This cannot be the woman he has known:

Troilus. Words, words, mere words, no matter
 from the heart;
 The effect doth operate another way. [Tearing the letter.
 Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together.
 My love with words and errors still she feeds;
 But edifies another with her deeds.
 (V. iii. 108-112)

This ultimate betrayal of faith is impossible for Troilus to bear. Although he sees Cressida's wanton gestures, his rational mind refuses to accept things as they are. As G. Wilson Knight points out, he has put his faith in love, which is an irrational experience, expecting it "to stand the test of time and reason."¹

In holding to a consistent ideality, Troilus becomes a tragic hero who stands at the heart of the play and balances Thersites's savage commentary on the appalling reality of existence: "Lechery, lechery," the old man intones, "still wars and lechery; nothing else holds fashion." Troilus provides the link between the two main stories,

¹The Wheel of Fire (London, 1930), p. 76.

for his passionate constancy also figures prominently in the Trojan debate concerning the advisability of continuing the war. The Trojan camp questions the value placed on the kidnapped Helen, who is regarded by both armies as little more than a courtesan. In direct contrast to the argument of Hector, Troilus appeals to the Trojans by refusing to face the reality that fair deeds may have been incited by foul motives. Almost immediately, Hector forsakes his argument to agree with Troilus; he reveals, moreover, that he has already sent a challenge to the Greek camp.

The Greeks, in a previous discussion, have examined the weakness of their ranks and determined that discord has been planted by an indifference to degree. Ulysses, the crafty orator, is the chief proponent of this theory, yet he abandons his original position in order to urge Achilles into battle with Hector. With devious cunning, he reads a letter to Achilles:

Achilles. . . . Here is Ulysses:

I'll interrupt his reading.

How now, Ulysses!

Ulysses. Now, great Thetis' son!

Achilles. What are you reading?

Ulysses. A strange fellow here

Writes me: "That man, how dearly ever parted,

How much in having, or without or in,

Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,

Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection;

As when his virtues shining upon others

Heat them and they retort that heat again

To the first giver."

(III. iii. 93-102)

Ulysses subsequently praises Ajax, noting that time quickly erases the memory of past deeds. Achilles is aroused and recognizes that his reputation is at stake; yet it is Ajax who rides forth to do battle in answer to Hector's challenge. A trumpet heralds his counter-charge:

Agamemnon. Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,
Anticipating time. With starting courage,
Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,
Thou dreadful Ajax; that the appalled sir
May pierce the head of the great combatant
And hale him hither.

Ajax. Thou, trumpet, there's my purse.
Now crack thy lungs, and split thy brazen pipe:
Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek
Outswell the colic of puff'd Aquilon:
Come, stretch thy chest, and let thy eyes spout blood;
Thou blow'st for Hector. (IV. v. 1-11)

Hector emerges to do battle, accompanied by the Trojans, but because of the warrior's gentle nature, he calls a halt to the fight, unable to use his sword on his kinsman, Ajax:

Hector. Why, then will I no more:
Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,
The obligation of our blood forbids
A gory emulation 'twixt us twain:
Were thy commixtion Greek and Trojan so
That thou couldst say "This hand is Grecian all,
And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood
Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister
Bounds in my father's"; by Jove multipotent,
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member
Wherein my sword had not impressure made

Of our rank feud: but the just gods gainsay
 That any drop thou borrow'dst from thy mother,
 My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword
 Be drain'd! . . . (IV. v. 119-135)

Once again, emotion contends with reason in an apposite juxtaposition of the love-war theme.

Later, Hector directly confronts Achilles and entreats him to combat. The recalcitrant warrior promises to meet him, but he succumbs to passion and pleasure when a letter arrives from Queen Hecuba:

Achilles. My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite
 From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.
 Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,
 A token from her daughter, my fair love,
 Both taxing me and gaging me to keep
 An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:
 Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;
 My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.
 (V. i. 42-49)

This letter, in contrast to the letter read by Ulysses, diverts Achilles's attention from war and directs it toward love.

Before the final battle of the play, in which Hector is brutally murdered by the cowardly Achilles, Andromache and Cassandra relate their ominous forebodings in an effort to prevent the inevitable bloodshed:

Cassandra. Where is my brother Hector?
Andromache. Here, sister; arm'd, and bloody in intent.
 Consort with me in loud and dear petition,
 Pursue we him on knees; for I have dream'd

Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night
 Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of
 slaughter. (V. iii. 7-12)

Although Hector himself does not heed their counsel, he attempts to persuade his brother Troilus to unarm and remain in camp:

Hector. No, faith, young Troilus; doff thy
 harness, youth;
 I am to-day i' the vein of chivalry:
 Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,
 And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.
 Unarm thee, go, and doubt thou not, brave boy,
 I'll stand to-day for thee and me and Troy.
 (V. iii. 31-36)

With subtle irony, the playwright has emphasized Hector's fatal error: this "vein of chivalry!" with which he meets Achilles is responsible for his death. Bethell, in commenting upon the action, notes that Hector has deceived himself: this worthy man of honor should not have fought in such a cause.¹

In his interpretation of Troilus and Cressida, Bethell places singular emphasis upon the "sumptuous armour" of the unidentified Greek whom Hector kills. In this scene Hector has courteously allowed the unarmed Achilles to escape; now a resplendent warrior "in sumptuous armour" enters:

¹Bethell, p. 263.

Hector. Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a
goodly mark:

No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well;
I'll frush it and unlock the rivets all,
But I'll be master of it: wilt thou not, beast,
abide?

Why, then fly on, I'll hunt thee for thy hide.

(V. vi. 27-31)

Bethell interprets:

"Sumptuous armour" stands for the "outward show" which covers an inner corruption . . . The "sumptuous armour" with its "putrefied core" thus becomes a symbol of all the play presents to us, an allegorical enactment of the theme of "fair without, and foul within," which is applicable almost everywhere in the Troy and Troilus stories as Shakespeare re-writes them. It applies to the war, with its false chivalry and inadequate aim; to Helen, to Cressida, and a good many more of the personages involved; and it applies, lastly, to the death of Hector, with which it is so closely linked in presentation. ¹

The realities of life in this story are the sordid railings of Thersites, rather than the concepts of love, honor, and duty which both camps propound. The play explores the "seamy side of valor"² that lurks beneath the surface; it presents the universal and eternal conflict of sense at war with soul. Yet, for all its sardonic comment on the impracticality of idealism, there is a note of simple dignity

¹Ibid., p. 264.

²Margaret Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears (New York, 1942), p. 248.

which elevates this human comedy from the realm of the absurd: the integrity of Troilus to an ideal which he holds sacred imparts a sense of value to existence in this world. Peter Ure, in his very fine exposition, remarks that Troilus might well have borrowed a line from Parolles: "Simply the thing I am shall make me live."¹

¹"Troilus and Cressida" in Four Centuries of Shakespearean Criticism, ed. Frank Kermode (New York, 1965), p. 268.

CHAPTER IV

KING LEAR

In any discussion of King Lear (1605) critics are almost unanimous in their agreement that this play transcends the theatre. Following Charles Lamb they concur that here the dramatist forgot the limiting conditions of the stage and wrote a play which might best be enjoyed beside one's own fireside. A. C. Bradley, echoing Lamb, calls attention to the play's dramatic defects and argues, "There is something at its very essence which is at war with the sense, and demands a purely imaginative realization."¹ But these defects of stagecraft which Bradley notes have given rise to a sublimely perfect work of art. He goes on to state: "Here then is Shakespeare at his very greatest, but not the mere dramatist Shakespeare."² In his unconcern with the actual materials of his

¹Shakespearean Tragedy (New York, 1967), p. 204.

²Ibid., p. 222.

craft and the physical limitations of his medium, Shakespeare has recorded the very essence of poetry.

This play, of the entire canon, makes the most modest demands upon scenery and properties. Hazlitt's description in this regard is noteworthy:

[King Lear is] a huge "globose" of sorrow swinging round in mid air, independent of time, place, and circumstance, sustained by its own weight and motion, and not propped up by the levers of custom, or patched up with quaint old-fashioned dresses, or set off by grotesque backgrounds or rusty armour, but in which the mere paraphernalia and accessories were left out of the question, and nothing but the soul of passion and pith of imagination was to be found.¹

Granville-Barker also comments on the small number and simplicity of the stage properties:

But for Edgar's moment "above," some need for the masking of Lear's "state," and again for the discovery of the joint-stools and bench in the scene of the mock trial, the play could indeed be acted upon a barer stage than was the Globe's.²

Brander Matthews goes further to note that King Lear of all Shakespeare's plays loses most by a realistic, modern treatment,³ and while G.

Wilson Knight favors the sound effects of a thunderous tempest to be

¹King Lear, Variorum Edition, pp. 423-424.

²Granville-Barker, 220.

³Matthews, p. 278.

carefully alternated with the speeches in the storm scenes, he, too, would rely upon Shakespeare's words as the primary aid to significance. When staging and properties assume undue proportion, he notes, "the actors begin to dissolve, gesture and facial expression lose value, words are blurred; and, if all this were not so, the human mind, incorrigibly flirtatious always in matters of visual appeal, would swiftly prostitute its attention."¹ Lily B. Campbell, in her study of English stage practices, quotes a passage from Aristotle's Poetics which is especially pertinent to this paper: "Fear and pity may be aroused by spectacular means; but they may also result from the inner structure of the piece, which is the better way, and indicates a superior poet."² Certainly in this play of imaginative grandeur no sound and fury should be superimposed. Here the poet in appropriating the leading role from the playwright has relegated the exigencies of the stage to an obscure position.

The storm scene in Act III is a notable example of how words may bring to life that which exists only in the imagination. This tempestuous scene which stands at the heart of the play is magnificently

¹Principles of Shakespearian Production (New York, 1937), pp. 84-85.

²Campbell, p. 67.

evoked by the grief-maddened mind of the aging king: "Poor old heart," Gloucester laments, "he help the heavens to rain." Lear's cries of anguish quicken the rain and cause the wind to roar, for the storm symbolizes and echoes the torment within his mind and heart in a manner that cries for sympathy might never reveal. His ebbing life gives vitality and force to the thunderous tempest, and man and nature become one. Yet, as Knight points out, the storm is more than a symbolic device to portray the conflict in Lear's mind. It is, also, a realistic expression of violence, for Lear and the storm are essentially the same being.¹ Here man and nature meet and are immutably conjoined; thus, the theme of man's relation to the universe is explored in all of its complexity, and a sense of the sublime is achieved by means of this finite-cosmic disorder.

The speeches of Gloucester and Cornwall in the scenes immediately preceding the storm artistically prepare for the tumult which is to follow:

Gloucester. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak
winds

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about

There's scarce a bush.

(II. iv. 303-305)

¹The Shakespearian Tempest (Oxford, 1932), p. 16.

Cornwall. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a
wild night:

My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm.

(II. iv. 311-312)

Kent, in conversation with the gentleman, asks:

Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gentleman. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you, Where's the king?

Gentleman. Contending with the fretful element;

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,

Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,

That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,

Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;

Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn

The to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf

Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,

And bids what will take all. (III. i. 1-15)

Yet it is not until Lear and the Fool are alone on the heath that the full fury of the elements is released. Lear calls upon the winds, the rain, the thunder and lightning, identifying the unkind elements with his daughters in a speech that needs no visual aid to the imagination to augment the force of his words:

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 sulphurous and thought-executing fires,

Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,

Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,

Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!

Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,

That make ingrateful man! (III. ii. 1-9)

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
 I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
 You owe me no subscription: then let fall
 Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

(III. ii. 14-24)

It is this scene more than any other that has led critics to pronounce the play essentially impossible to be staged. Performances over the years have either reduced Lear's fury to an absurdity or obscured the inherent poetic drama by elaborate and extravagant staging. Granville-Barker, writing from the producer's viewpoint, justifies the staging of the play but questions the sanity of any actor who would attempt a realistic presentation. In this play, he notes, Shakespeare relies solely upon dramatic poetry rather than scenic devices:

In the storm-scenes the shaking of a thunder-sheet will not greatly stir us. A modern playwright might seek help in music--but the music of Shakespeare's day is not of that sort; in impressive scenery--he has none. He has, in compensation, the fluidity of movement which the negative background of his stage allows him. For the rest, he has his actors, their acting and the power of their speech. It is not a mere rhetorical power, nor are the characters lifted from the common place simply by being given verse to speak instead of conversational prose. All method of expression apart, they are poetically conceived; they exist

in those dimensions, in that freedom, and are endowed with that peculiar power. They are dramatic poetry incarnate.¹

Since this dramatic poetry is necessarily dissipated by realistic scenery and properties, Herbert Forjeon's incisive comment on the staging of Shakespeare is especially appropriate here: "'But in the beginning there was the word'--which 'word' itself might well be engraved on the proscenium arch of every English theatre that produces Shakespeare's plays."²

It is in King Lear also that the genius which created the hounds of Duke Theseus and brought to life the Dauphin's steed is fully realized. Making use of no physical properties yet evoking most effectively that which he wills his audience to see, the poet in Act IV reproduces Dover Cliff. Gloucester, deeply repentant of the wrong he has done his legitimate son, and cruelly blinded by the wrathful Cornwall, meets the disguised Edgar upon the heath. He entreats him to lead him to Dover where he might end his own life:

¹Granville-Barker, 266.

²Shakespeare Survey, III (1950), 135. [A review by Una Ellis-Fermor of the book The Shakespearean Scene (Hutchinson, 1949)].

Gloucester. . . . Dost thou know Dover?

Edgar. Ay, master.

Gloucester. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:

Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edgar. Give me thy arm:

Poor Tom shall lead thee. (IV. i. 74-83)

The fourth scene opens with Gloucester and Edgar, who is still disguised as Tom o' Bedlam, alone on stage. As they slowly make their way along, the antiphonal effect of the dialogue develops a pattern which is especially suited to give the impression of a steep climb. Edgar's speeches, for the most part mid-stopped, end on an ascending note while Gloucester's despairing cadence projects ever downward:

Gloucester. When shall we come to the top of that same
hill?

Edgar. You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.

Gloucester. Methinks the ground is even.

Edgar. Horrible steep. Hark do you hear the sea?

Gloucester. No, truly.

Edgar. Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Gloucester. So may it be, indeed:

Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

Edgar. You're much deceived: in nothing am I changed
But in my garments. (IV. vi. 1-10)

More remarkable, perhaps, is the subtle, psychological approach with which Edgar weakens his father's perception:

and persuades him that this is the place he has been seeking. He begins his description of the site with an almost involuntary gasp of fear and ends the speech on the same note, yet his feigned terror in no way inhibits his power with words. With poetry he sets the scene:

Come on, sir; here's the place; stand still. How fearful
 And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
 The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
 Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down
 Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
 Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
 The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
 Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
 Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
 Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
 That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
 Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
 Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
 Topple down headlong. (IV. vi. 12-24)

Gloucester, having prayed to his gods, renounces the world and falls forward.¹ The audience accepts the integrity of place as absolutely as does the sightless man.

The torch which lights Gloucester's way on the heath and the hovel in which Lear, Kent, and the Fool seek shelter are

¹It is interesting to note the stage history of this scene. Waldo F. McNeir's "The Staging of the Dover Cliff Scene in King Lear," (Studies in English Renaissance Literature, Baton Rouge, 1962, pp. 87-104), surveys this subject very thoroughly. Although Shakespearean scholars continue to maintain that his poetry does not need the aid (or competition) of realistic staging, varying methods of presentation continue to be devised. Edwin Booth solved the problem by cutting the scene entirely! The author of this paper suggests that

commonplace properties which receive a more than conventional treatment. The scene is one of comic-pathetic relief and forcefully reveals the condition of Lear's mind during the storm. Upon reaching the shelter, Kent bids the king enter, but he responds:

. . . the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. . . . (III. iv. 12-14)

He prefers the tempest on the heath to that which rages within his brain:

This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. . . .
(III. iv. 25-26)

Lear compassionately urges the Fool to enter, but Edgar, who is disguised as a madman, chants nonsense from within and terrifies the Fool. Edgar's feigned madness and the Fool's terror relieve the emotional tension which has been sustained throughout this act. One critic sees the Fool here as Wisdom in the garb of Folly, functioning to reflect the king's acts in their true character.¹ Edgar's assumed madness, one critic notes, agrees with all the

Gloucester fall from a Booth stage, arguing that a visual fall is most necessary to point up the parallel to Lear's fall into madness.

¹Variorum Edition, p. 430. (Denton J. Snider)

elements of the scene: "the night--the storms--the houselessness--Glo'ster with his eyes put out--the Fool--the semblance of a madman, and Lear in his madness, are all bound together by a strange kind of sympathy."¹

When Gloucester enters with a torch, the Fool calls him "a walking fire." Although traditionally used to indicate darkness, the torch in this play is more than a stage convention to symbolize the absence of the sun. Borne by Gloucester, who is soon to be blinded because of his kindness to Lear, it assumes an added significance and emphasizes the motif of seeing and perceiving which is basic to both plot and subplot as well. Neither Gloucester nor Lear perceives what he sees: both men misjudge their children and suffer dire consequences. Gloucester achieves true understanding only when his sight has been destroyed, while Lear sees more clearly in his madness than in his rational state. Edgar comments on this paradox:

O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason in madness! (IV. vi. 178-179)

¹Ibid., p. 425. (From Blackwood's Magazine)

Gloucester himself admits:

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
 I stumbled when I saw: full oft 'tis seen,
 Our means secure us, and our mere defects
 Prove our commodities. (IV. i. 20-24)

Shakespeare's dramatic design in this scene has brought more than a torch and a shelter from the storm on stage. He has successfully allied subplot with plot, underscored the theme of the play, and heightened the audience's sense of pity by means of a fantastic humor.

The stocks in which Cornwall places Kent when he approaches him as a messenger of the king show the ignominious treatment which the dispossessed king now receives at the hands of his daughters. Cornwall commands:

. . . Fetch forth the stocks!
 You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
 We'll teach you-- (II. ii. 135-137)

Regan concurs with her husband's order, but Gloucester entreats them not to inflict this ignominious punishment:

Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
 His fault is much, and the good king his master
 Will check him for't: your purposed low correction
 Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
 For pilferings and most common trespasses
 Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill,
 That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,
 Should have him thus restrain'd. (II. ii. 147-154)

He remains behind with Kent to offer his comfort, and the scene closes as Kent attempts to read by moonlight a letter from Cordelia. His speech anticipates the fact that Lear's youngest daughter will "give losses their remedies," and put to rights all that is now awry.

The additional properties to be discussed are thoroughly conventional in substance and may readily be seen by the most literal mind, yet they too are handled imaginatively. The very nature of the action is precipitated by the division of the kingdom in the first lines of the play. The map which Lear uses to illustrate this figures as prominently as does the handkerchief in Othello. This scene, so typically Shakespearean, dramatically presents the situation with the aid of an illustrative object:

Lear. . . .

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom: . . . (I. i. 38-39)

It is impossible to conceive of this scene, indeed of the play, without the map, for it is only by the authenticity of this property that Lear's curious challenge is rendered plausible. The existence of the map indicates that Lear's request and subsequent action is real and significant, not merely an old man's whimsical joke.

While sheltered inside during the storm, Lear seizes with intensity upon the idea of conducting a trial for his daughters. The

scene by the use of stage properties vividly depicts his deranged condition and the stress which has caused it. Edgar and the Fool, at Lear's direction, sit on the bench to render justice to Goneril, here in the form of a joint-stool:

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.
 [To Edgar] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;
 [To the Fool] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now,
 you she foxes! (III. vi. 22-25)

Again, he instructs:

Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in the
 evidence.
 [To Edgar] Thou robed man of justice, take thy
 place;
 [To the Fool] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
 Bench by his side: [To Kent] you are
 o' the commission,
 Sit you too. (III. vi. 36-41)

Edgar and the Fool respect his wishes and the mock-trial proceeds:

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here
 take my oath before this honourable assembly, she
 kicked the poor king her father.
Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?
Lear. She cannot deny it.
Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.
Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks
 proclaim
 What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!
 Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
 False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?
 (III. vi. 48-59)

Lear's obsession continues:

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

(III. vi. 80-82)

It is directly following this action that Kent announces to Gloucester, "His wits are gone." Lear's reaction to these objects, the joint-stool and bench, unequivocally reveal that the king's mind has failed completely.

The crown, always a symbol of power, in this play indicates that although Lear is insane and separated from his office he is "every inch a king." Fantastically crowned with a circlet of wild flowers, Lear meets Gloucester and Edgar in the fields near Dover:

Edgar. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.

There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O, well flown, bird! i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh! Give the word.

(IV. vi. 85-93)

Then Gloucester's words remind Lear of his kingly state and urge his mind to begin its wandering course back toward sanity:

Gloucester. The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:

(IV. vi. 108-110)

The nature of tragedy is perfectly illustrated here. As Lear goes

out, the gentleman remarks:

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! (IV. vi. 208-209)

The crown of wild flowers in grotesque manner exalts the image of the pathetic old man and serves as a constant visual reminder throughout the scene that Lear although mad is nevertheless a figure of authority, his bearing regal even in abject despair. The crown denotes a grandeur that is denied the sufferings of ordinary man.

Lear's attention to the specific, minute items of everyday life marks the return of his mental faculties. The wheel has turned full circle now, and as he awakens with his beloved Cordelia in attendance, he is fully sane:

Lear. . . . I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition!
Cordelia. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands 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.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not

Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
 For, as I am a man, I think this lady
 To be my child Cordelia. (IV. vii. 52-69)

Lear is bewildered and incredulous and overcome with joy. In the last act, however, his joy has changed to sorrow. Bearing the dead Cordelia in his arms he cries out in agony, but even as this occurs his hope is aroused. She seems to live:

This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
 It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
 That ever I have felt. (V. iii. 267-269)

His mind alternates now between the two extremes. The feather tells him that she lives, but still he cries: "I might have saved her; now she's done for ever!" His last words magnificently express the pathetic grandeur of his death. After the tempest of his life this quiet fading out into death reveals so poignantly the dignity of the man: "Never, never, never, never, never!" His cry fades away; then quietly, with courtesy, the tone is changed:

Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
 Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
 Look there, look there! (V. iii. 309-311)

In this scene the concern with a button indicates Lear's tenuous hold on reality, the fluttering of a feather imparts a heart-breaking joy. Certainly no stage properties have ever been used so sensitively. It is to these things--the pin's prick, the feather, the

button, as well as Edgar's specific description of Dover Cliff-- that Granville-Barker refers when he speaks of the simplicity which anchors the play to reality. "These things," he notes, "are the necessary balance to the magniloquence of the play's beginning and to the tragic splendor of the storm."¹ With King Lear Shakespeare's stage properties assume an immanent role.

¹Granville-Barker, 281.

CHAPTER V

MACBETH

In each play previously under consideration Shakespeare has dealt with ordinary items of staging, imaginatively adapting them to his demands, oftentimes representing that which appearance expressly contradicts; for example, King Lear conducts a mock-trial with a joint-stool as the defendant. In other scenes, the playwright has transformed a bare stage into a specific location entirely without the aid of any actual item, as in Edgar's evocation of Dover Cliff. More often, properties have served to impart a heightened meaning even while functioning as that which obligation of plot or exigencies of staging dictate; for example, the torch in King Lear must be used to signify night, yet it emphasizes the theme of seeing and perceiving on which the play is based. In this play, however, many of the stage properties lie beyond the tangible universe: Macbeth (1616) deals with

the supernatural world of ghosts and witches, where evil spirits take on shape and substance, and from whose bourne no traveler may emerge unscathed.

In this play there are few ordinary items to be imaginatively handled; rather there is a property list to stagger any stage manager: three Weird Sisters, bearded and wild; the mutilated ghost of a murdered man; the severed head of the protagonist; a procession of apparitions that includes an armed head, both a bloody and a crowned child, and eight kings from Scotland's future; the queen of the witches, Hecate herself; an air-borne dagger; the advancing wood of Birnam; and a cauldron, bubbling with a demonic brew:

First Witch. Round about the cauldron go;

In the poison'd entrails throw.

Toad, that under cold stone

Days and nights has thirty one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,

Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,

In the cauldron boil and bake;

Eye of newt and toe of frog,

Wool of bat and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,

Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,

For a charm of powerful trouble,

Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,

Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
 Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
 Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
 Liver of blaspheming Jew,
 Gall of goat, and slips of jew
 Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
 Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
 Finger of birth-strangled babe
 Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
 Make the gruel thich and slab:
 All thereto a tiger's chaudron. (IV. i. 4-33)

Extraordinary means, indeed, have been employed in Macbeth, and it is this, perhaps, more than any other quality that elevates the play to a superior level of achievement. A credible handling of supernatural forces distinguishes all great literature from earliest civilization unto the present day, and certainly Shakespeare's method here is sure, his dramatic instinct correct. It is by means of the play's stage properties, moreover, that this artistic criterion has been satisfied.

The major controversy that centers around Macbeth deals with the appearance of the Weird Sisters and their role in this tale of a good and brave man's fall into sin. These three old women are variously interpreted as an emanation from an already-evil mind; as instruments of darkness that incite the protagonist and on whom the burden of responsibility for the murder rests; or as symbols of the evil influence that dwells in the world and constantly surrounds all mankind.

In a discussion of Shakespeare's workmanship, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch credits the Weird Sisters with ennobling the tragedy. Without their influence, he notes, Macbeth is merely an "ordinary sordid story of a disloyal general murdering his king."¹ He believes that Macbeth proceeded to his crime under a "fatal hallucination"² and for this reason remained a hero despite his self-seeking, traitorous actions. This criticism is weakened, however, if Shakespearean tragedy be defined as tragedy that is not dependent upon fate, but rather upon human frailty. The majority of critics tend to modify Quiller-Couch's interpretation and follow Ulrici, who states that the Weird Sisters are the "personified echo of evil,"³ responding to the evil inherent in man, their purpose being to manifest that the will of man is only conditionally free and is always subject to outside influence and chance happenings as well as unconscious influences. Bradley notes in this regard:

The words of the Witches are fatal to the hero only because there is in him something which leaps into light at the sound of them; but they are at the same

¹Shakespeare's Workmanship (Cambridge, 1931), p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 19.

³Shakespeare's Dramatic Art (London, 1876), I, 464.

time the witness of forces which never cease to work in the world around him, and, on the instant of his surrender to them, entangle him unextricably in the web of fate.¹

In referring to these supernatural beings, Shakespeare makes no use of the word "witch," although it is almost certain that he had this image in mind, for witches were very much a part of current superstitious belief. Within the text he calls them either "weird sisters" or "fatal sisters," and it is only in the stage directions that the word "witch" appears.² Since the word "wyrd" meant "fate" in Anglo-Saxon, these appellations recall the classical fates.

The first scene in Macbeth is perhaps one of the shortest in all literature, and as effective stagecraft it is unsurpassed. The "secret, black, and midnight hags" immediately evoke an atmosphere of darkness and malevolence as they disclose to the audience their designs on Macbeth:

First Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,

¹Bradley, p. 289.

²The phrase "Aroint thee, witch!" (I. iii. 6) is uttered by the sailor's wife and indicates her conception of the hag. It is not Shakespeare himself speaking. Further, in connection with the Hecate scene, it is reasonably certain that this is an interpolation by another author, possibly Middleton.

When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch. Where the place?

Second Witch. Upon the heath.

Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch. I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch. Paddock calls.

Third Witch. Anon.

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

(I. i. 1-12)

After this opening scene, the influence of the Weird Sisters is not to be doubted. Their role is a significant one, and they will be seen again, marking the major moments in Macbeth's fall.

The Weird Sisters first appear to Macbeth on a desolate heath as Macbeth and Banquo return from a victorious campaign with Norway. The warriors accost the filthy hags, who hail Macbeth as thane of Glamis, thane of Cawdor, and king hereafter. To Banquo they prophesy:

First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Second Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou
be none:

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo! (I. iii. 65-69)

At the beginning of Act IV the brindled cat, the hedge-pig, and the harprier's cry announce to the Weird Sisters that the hour is propitious for the arrival of the witch queen, Hecate. The cauldron bubbles with its venomous brew while the sisters chant diabolical charms to entice

their leader to come forth. She appears briefly before the arrival of Macbeth, who comes seeking to know the future. Answer is made to him in the form of three apparitions and the warning, "Beware of Macduff." The first apparition, an armed head, symbolizes Macbeth's own head which will be severed from his body by Macduff in revenge for the murder of his wife and child; next, a bloody child appears, representing that Macduff was ripped untimely from his mother's womb; the last apparition is that of a crowned child bearing a tree in his hand, representing Malcolm whose plan of camouflage brought Birnam Wood to Dunsinane. Following these visions, the cauldron sinks into the ground and a procession of eight kings is shown; Robert II, Robert III, and the six Jameses. The glass held by the eighth king mirrors the successors to James.¹ The two-fold bails which Macbeth sees in the hands of some of the apparitions refer to the double coronation of James at Scone and at Westminster, thereby uniting England and Scotland; the treble sceptres indicate his title of king of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Banquo's ghost also appears in this spectral procession, and his smile indicates that these kings are his descendants:

¹Macbeth, *Variorum Edition*, ed. Horace Howard Furness (New York, 1963), p. 262 (Tolman).

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
 Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
 Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
 A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
 Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
 What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
 Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:
 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
 Which shows me many more; and some I see
 That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:
 Horrible sight! Now, I see, 'tis true;
 For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
 And points at them for his . . . (IV. i. 112-124)

The Weird Sisters appear no more; their task has been accomplished, but they may be credited with providing the palpable shroud of evil which shadows the stage from the very first lines of the play. Each speech has been rendered more pregnant of meaning, and each action has been empowered with the eye of foreknowledge by the presence of the unhallowed women. They have radiated an unearthly glow and outlined an evil that need only be recognized to be unleashed. Macbeth, himself, bears the sole responsibility for his actions, yet these fearful visions of evil have influenced the highly imaginative protagonist. Audience sympathy is elicited because of Macbeth's extremely human condition: beset by temptation, he yields, only to discover that there is no turning back after the first wrong choice has been made. Shakespeare's particularizing attention to evil, in the form of the bearded women, illustrates both the fascinating and repelling horror of the powers of darkness in the world.

Following his first encounter with the witches, Macbeth sends home to his wife a letter, which serves three purposes: by relating the details of the prophecy it incites her ambition for him; it provides thought for her soliloquy, which reveals not only Macbeth's character, but, also, her own; and it quickly galvanizes her ambition into plans for action. There is no passage of extended exposition necessary when her husband returns; indeed, all effects work toward the feeling of haste that becomes paramount as opportunity presents itself at the castle gate.

When Duncan arrives as Macbeth's guest, he comments:

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

The horror of the murder to be committed stands in sharp contrast to this idyllic picture of Inverness. Elsewhere, the whole world of the play seems permeated with darkness, broken only by flashes of light and visions of blood, while Macbeth's brooding mind and Lady Macbeth's tormented conscience augment the gloom. Yet in this scene the castle is pleasantly situated; a bird, the martlet, has built her nest in a convenient corner; and the air is delicate. The hostess greets her guest and king with expressions of pleasure, and, later, Duncan returns her hospitality by the gift of a diamond.

Emphasis is upon form and ceremony, for this is a civilized world. The enormity of the murder, then, stands out in all its horror as time and place and custom lend verisimilitude.

In another important scene, formality again presents an incongruous backdrop; the highly elaborate ceremony of the banquet on the evening of Banquo's murder contrasts sharply with the brutality of his death in the preceding scene. The feast has been magnificently prepared for the stately occasion, and the guests have been seated at table with due formality by order of degree. Into this courteous company enters an eerie phantom, to occupy the seat of the host:

Macbeth. The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth. Where?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves
your highness?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me. (III. iv. 47-51)

To the Elizabethan audience this spectre of Banquo was real; it was not an overt manifestation of a subjective state of mind. Lady Macbeth compares the ghost to the illusory air-drawn dagger which Macbeth saw before the murder of Duncan, but Macbeth himself always recognizes the difference between the two. In a study of contemporary dramatists and their stage practices, E. E. Stoll cites

that other instances parallel to this were common on the Elizabethan stage.¹ The ghost, who always appeared in order to effect revenge, indicated "that Banquo--that fate--was getting even, and how could it have such a meaning if his ghost was merely a figment of Macbeth's imagination?"² James I only recently had published his Daemonologie, an account of the practices of witches and evil spirits, and the belief in witches and ghosts was undoubtedly widespread. The majority of the audience, if not Shakespeare himself, never questioned for an instant the probability of a victim's revengeful return.

Banquo came to the feast because he was bidden, and his host's reference to him causes him to appear. Twice the ghost enters; the first time, he disappears when Macbeth begs him to speak:

Macbeth. Prithee, see there! behold! look!
 lo! how say you?
 Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
 If charnel-houses and our graves must send
 Those that we bury back, our monuments
 Shall be the maws of kites. (III. iv. 69-73)

When Macbeth has gained control of himself, he proposes a toast to

¹Shakespeare Studies (New York, 1927), p. 194.

²Ibid., p. 192.

Banquo, which, as in superstitious folk-lore, causes him to appear:

Macbeth. I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine; fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.

Re-enter GHOST.

Macbeth. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the
earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with! (III. iv. 86-97)

On the occasion of the ghost's first entrance, Lady Macbeth has mocked her husband's fears, telling him he looks "but on a stool"; but this second time, with characteristic force of will, she interrupts the feast and bids the guests good-night:

Macbeth. . . . Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.
Lady Macbeth. You have displaced the mirth,
broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.
Macbeth. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.
Ross. What sights, my lord?
Lady Macbeth. I pray you, speak not; he grows

worse and worse;
 Question enrages him. At once, good night;
 Stand not upon the order of your going,
 But go at once.
Lennox. Good night; and better health
 attend his majesty!
Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all!
 (III. iv. 105-122)

Far more than a spectral shadow to enhance the supernatural background, this ghost brings Macbeth to the realization that there is no other course left open to him now. He laments:

. . . For mind own good,
 All causes shall give way: I am in blood
 Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er:
 (III. iv. 135-138)

Stepped now into the depths, alienated from all mankind, Macbeth falls into the agony of nihilism as a result of his crimes.¹

From the very first scene, this play is set in a world of darkness, inhabited by mysterious and nebulous creatures, whose evil designs are reflected in Macbeth and his lady. The forbidding gloom that shadows Inverness is punctuated only briefly by flashes of light as the tragedy moves with swiftmess toward its close. The gleam of a bloody dagger, the glitter of a sword unsheathed, or the

¹For the preceding discussion of Banquo's ghost this paper follows closely E. E. Stoll's ideas in his previously cited work.

glow of a flickering torch marks each lurid deed; Lady Macbeth's indomitable will kindles an answering spark in her husband's spirit, as Duncan and his grooms slumber in a darkness that will bring no dawn; a shining taper accompanies the sleepwalker's remorseful pacing; while the flames beneath the cauldron cast a luminous glow on the features of the dusky hags: the lengthening rays of evil discharge a phosphorescent reflection that penetrates all the land.

If the inhabitants of the supernatural world failed to make an appearance, this play would remain a formidable work of terror, and conventional stage properties would account for much of this dread. The torches which indicate night were an indispensable item of staging for a producer who had no means of darkening his stage. In this play, however, torches accompany strange and monstrous action and intensify the effect of evil deeds. Act II opens with Banquo and Fleance in the courtyard, a scene which reveals that Banquo, too, has been tempted by ambition:

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?

Fleance. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I take 't, 'tis later, sir.

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry
in heaven;

Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,

And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers,

Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature

Gives way to in repose!

(II. i. 1-8)

When darkness descends, evil usually follows in this play of slaughter and intrigue. The next torch that is carried again illuminates Banquo; it is this that enables the murderers to execute their scheme:

Third Murderer. Hark! I hear horses.
Banquo. [Within] Give us a light there, ho!
Second Murderer. Then 'tis he: the rest
 That are within the note of expectation
 Already are i' the court.
First Murderer. His horses go about.
 So all men do, from hence to the palace gate
 Make it their walk.
Second Murderer. A light, a light!

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a torch.

Third Murderer. 'Tis he. (III. iii. 7-17)

The taper which Lady Macbeth carries in her tortured nocturnal wanderings is a vivid and concrete symbol of the remorse which burns within her. She who has schemed so resolutely toward the performance of the murder; she who has bred ambition as she might have nourished a child, now has been enfeebled by her subconscious mind. In the relaxation of sleep, it possesses her and reveals her guilt, and the imaginary spot of blood that stains her hand is more real and substantial to her than any of her husband's morbid imaginings have been to him:

Lady Macbeth. Yet here's a spot.
Doctor. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what

comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say!--
One: two: why, then 'tis time . . .

The importance of this candle which is constantly by her side may not be overemphasized; indeed, one critic summarizes: Lady Macbeth's taper is her soul.¹ In this psychological study, which anticipates the modern research of Jung and Freud, Lady Macbeth's psyche is relentlessly explored, even as the soliloquies of her husband underscore and elucidate the disintegration of his inward life.

Further augmenting the play's atmosphere of horror are the sounds that echo in the darkness and reverberate through the halls. A drum heralds the entrance of Macbeth to the Weird Sisters, while, later, a bell signals to him that the murder may proceed:

Macbeth. I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.
(II. i. 62-64)

Afterwards, in the early morning hours, an owl hoots nearby:

Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not
hear a noise?
Lady Macbeth. I heard the owl scream and the

¹Edith Sitwell in Shakespeare and His Critics, ed. F. E. Halliday (London, 1949), p. 263.

crickets cry.
 Did not you speak?
Macbeth. When?
Lady Macbeth. Now.
Macbeth. As I descended?
Lady Macbeth. Ay.
Macbeth. Hark! . . . (II. ii. 16-18)

Macbeth notes, trembling, that "every noise appals me," but the knocking at the gate that succeeds the murder of Duncan startles the audience as well. Thomas de Quincey, in a classic of literary criticism, has commented upon this scene:

In order that a new world of inhuman purposes and desires may step in, this world for a time must disappear. The murderers, and the murder, must be insulated--cut off by an immeasurable gulph from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs--locked up and sequestered in some deep recess; we must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested--laid asleep--tranced--racked into a dread armistice; time must be annihilated; relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion. Hence it is, that when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds; the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them. ¹

¹"On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," in Four Centuries of Shakespearian Criticism, ed. Frank Kermode (New York, 1965), p. 543.

Macduff, who discovers the murdered Duncan, calls for an alarm bell to announce the crime:

. . . Awake, awake!
 Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
 Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
 Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
 And look on death itself! up, up, and see
 The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
 As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
 To countenance this horror! Ring the bell.
 (II. iii. 78-85)

The night again has been disturbed by a dissonant sound.

The guilty fear that tortures Lady Macbeth in the relaxation of sleep obsesses her more highly imaginative husband's waking hours. His great capacity for mental suffering manifests itself even before the first murder has been committed:

. . . Present fears
 Are less than horrible imaginings:
 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man that function
 Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
 But what is not. (I. iii. 137-142)

Lady Macbeth need add only a word of encouragement to this specious reasoning for the die to be cast. Brander Matthews comments on this characteristic feature: "Macbeth's imagination is superior to his self-control; he can see before and after; and this power of vision redoubles his sufferings. It is due to his

imagination that he is continually gnawed by remorse."¹ Macbeth's terrible fears stress his common bond with humanity as, deeply sunk in evil, he pursues a tragic course.

The gracious Duncan has not long retired to his chamber when Macbeth, contemplating the impending murder, begins to suffer the torment that will be his to endure:

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
 The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee,
 I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
 Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
 To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable
 As this which now I draw.
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
 And such an instrument I was to use.
 Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
 Or else worth all the rest' I see thee still,
 And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
 Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
 It is the bloody business which informs
 Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
 The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
 Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
 Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
 Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear

¹Matthews, p. 324.

The very stones prate of my whereabouts,
 And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threath, he lives:
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
 (II. i. 33-61)

This dagger of the mind, foully stained with blood, presents the regicide in all its wicked convolutions, while vividly disclosing to Macbeth the nightmare of himself. His courage may withstand the purely physical horror, but his mind's eye will never give over its sinister imaginings. There are other daggers in the play, tempered of actual steel, but none holds such fascination as this figment of the mind.

The daggers used on Duncan and his attending grooms are inadvertently brought from the chamber by Macbeth. His quick-witted wife, realizing the mistake, urges him to return with them and to smear with blood the murdered grooms. Macbeth, however, has had enough of blood for the evening:

Lady Macbeth. . . . Go get some water,
 And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
 Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
 They must lie there: go carry them; and smear
 The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macbeth. I'll go no more:
 I am afraid to think what I have done;
 Look on 't again I dare not.

Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!
 Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
 Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
 That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
 I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
 For it must seem their guilt. (II. ii. 47-57)

This scene delineates again the personality contrast between the two and serves to heighten the significance of the sleepwalking scene.

The murder of Macduff's son accounts for the pathos in the play and further serves to strengthen the image of evil in the world:

Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world; where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm?

Enter MURDERERS.

 What are these faces?
First Murderer. Where is your husband?
Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.
First Murderer. He's a traitor.
Son. Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!
First Murderer. What, you egg!
 [Stabbing him.
 young fry of treachery!
Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [Dies.

(IV. ii. 74-88)

This bloody dagger, by taking the life of the defenseless child, severs Macbeth's ties with humanity.

When Macbeth arms himself to encounter Macduff's army, he depends, trustfully, upon the prophecy that death would not assail him until Birnam forest came to Dunsinane, seemingly an impossibility:

Macbeth. Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff,
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come sir . . .

. . .

I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

(V. iii. 48-51; 59-60)

With confidence, he orders that the banners be hung out:

Hang out our banners on the outward walls:
The cry is still "They come": our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up:
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. . . .

(V. v. 1-7)

Yet Malcolm's strategy brings fate into the contest to fulfill the
prophecy on which Macbeth's mortality depends:

Siward. What wood is this before us?

Menteith. The wood of Birnam.

Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough
And bear 't before him: thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host and make discovery
Err in report of us.

(V. iv. 4-7)

As the opposing army advances, bearing leafy screens, the
tragedy moves inexorably toward its close. Macbeth cries out in
despair when a messenger relates to him the supernatural phenomena--
Birnam forest moving toward Dunsinane. His agony recalls the grief
of the maddened Lear, and his words echo Lear's phrases:

. . . Arm, arm, and out!

If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
 And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.
 Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
 At least we'll die with harness on our back.

(V. v. 46-52)

Lear is also recalled in Macbeth's soliloquy which immediately follows his wife's death. This expression of anguish toward an absurd and meaningless world might also serve as a lament for all generations who question existence and undergo the despair that accompanies wisdom in a world which has recognized no God:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing. . . . (V. v. 19-28)

In the final battle Macbeth easily overcomes and slays Siward; thereby, he approaches Macduff with a false confidence, for this is the man who was ripped untimely from his mother's womb. Macduff's explanation of the prophecy brings fear to the heart of the king, yet he who was called "Bellona's bridegroom" fights courageously to the death blow:

Macduff. Despair thy charm;
 And let the angel whom thou still hast served
 Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
 untimely ripp'd.

Macbeth. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
 For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
 And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
 That palter with us in a double sense;
 That keep the word of promise to our ear,
 And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

Macduff. Then yield thee, coward,
 And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
 We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
 Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
 "Here may you see the tyrant."

Macbeth. I will not yield,
 To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
 And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
 Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
 And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
 Yet I will try the last. Before my body
 I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
 And damn'd be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"
 (V. viii. 15-34)

At the end, the severed head of the tyrannous king is borne in triumphantly by Macduff; the decapitation of the diseased head of state symbolically puts an end to the destruction and carnage that has encompassed the land.

In this play, in which appearance often belies reality, supernatural properties have played a major role. Macbeth's willingness to believe in the occult has set in motion the action; at the conclusion, this credulity has usurped his natural strength, rendering him powerless in the face of a mortal enemy. Macbeth's extraordinarily vivid

imagination has provided both the stimulus and the punishment for his action; his mind's eye has evoked both heaven and hell. The majority of stage properties, therefore, are outward manifestations of inner fears and conflicts; they are concrete representations, for the audience as well as for Macbeth and his lady, of the images of evil that are prevalent in the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE TEMPEST

In The Tempest (1611) Shakespeare employs a style that is in direct contrast to that which created the wood near Athens, that brought to life the Dauphin's horse, or that generated the cosmic storm on the English heath; here he does not enhance the background nor stimulate the senses by passages of extended description, and other than Prospero's cell and the nautical properties of the first scene there are no items of staging which localize the action. Although the reader at his own hearthside may vividly imagine the scenery of the far-off isle and picture delightedly the woodland sprites that people this never-never land, the playwright has given no definite aid to the imagination either in the form of a tangible stage property or by means of his descriptive pen. This play does not particularize in regard to setting, and it is in vain that the reader attempts to discern

a subtle blending of real with illusory stage properties or a darlingly conceived account of the fairy world. The play by its very suggestiveness alone kindles the imagination; yet, paradoxically, it is this play of the entire canon which traditionally has received the most elaborate staging. It would seem a tribute to its greatness that the splendors of production have neither obscured the beauty of its poetry nor masked the high serious tone of the theme.

One critic, in noting the success of its stage performances, recognizes the dramatic weakness inherent in the play:

The play, so marvelously attractive as literature, is possibly deficient in genuine dramatic quality. . . . Prospero's part, which has been played by the greatest of English actors, is too easy and uniform. The role of Miranda for some reason does not reward the efforts of the great actresses.¹

This dramatic weakness is due, in large measure, to the poet's failure to particularize. As in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound the main action has occurred elsewhere and in an earlier time; many of the speeches are too long; and the majority of characters (the most obvious exception being Caliban) are not individualized. The Tempest, then, might more accurately be considered to be a poetic drama in which

¹Hardin Craig, Works, p. 1249.

the author has dealt most revealingly with his theme of man's relation to the universe.

If the play is considered as poetic drama, the noted deficiencies lose their significance and the very first scene by virtue of its eloquence and terse immediacy elevates the work to a position of superiority in the genre. Act I opens on shipboard in the midst of a terrible storm. The playwright mentions in the dialogue three specific stage properties: a topsail, a whistle, and a rope. The rope which the sailors handle is linked by implication with the metaphorical rope of destiny of the boatswain, and by the power of suggestion the storm and the serious condition of the ship's hull is described. The scene, however, must be read in its entirety in order to appreciate the masterly construction. It is the salty language of the seamen--the nautical commands, the colorful curses, the references to vessel, sea, and weather--that creates a dramatic unit of action and crisis.

Caroline Spurgeon has called this scene in which the sense of hearing is involved throughout a "symphony of sound."¹ She notes:

¹Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us (New York, 1936), p. 300.

[It is] perhaps the most condensed and brilliant representation in literature of a confused and clattering din of noise, by means of which we can, even from the printed page, visualise the action in its full vividness. We can hear the boatswain yelling orders and heartening his men; the shrill whistle of the ship's master, urged to blow till he bursts his wind, the passengers shrieking their questions or lamenting so loudly that they outcry even the elements and the hoarse shouts of the seamen, ending in the chant of prayers punctuated with screams of terror and farewell; and through and over it all sound the "tempestuous noise of thunder" and the roaring of the angry seas.¹

Mention in the dialogue of the topsail, the whistle, and the rope strengthens the illusion of reality which the language will prompt and sustain:

Boatswain. Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the master's whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind, if room enough! (I. i. 5-8)

Indeed these properties need not be on stage at all, but as Quiller-Couch points out: "If you are an artist and are setting out to tell the incredible, nothing will serve you so well as to open with absolute realism."² Shakespeare's realism here bears resemblance to the storm scene in King Lear, yet since confusion and fear are to be presented rather than fury and grief a large number of characters

¹Ibid., p. 302.

²Quiller-Couch, p. 286.

are on stage at once. The storm does not become, as in King Lear, an integral part of the characters, but it is nevertheless effectively represented by the mingled cries of the shipwrecked men. The following passage will illustrate the method which the poet employed to gain his desired effect:

Boatswain. Down with the topmast! yare! lower, lower! Bring her to try with main-course. A plague upon this howling! they are louder than the weather or our office.

Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO.

Yet again! what do you here? Shall we give o'er and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

Sebastian. A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

Boatswain. Work you then.

Antonio. Hang, cur! hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker! We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

Gonzalo. I'll warrant him for drowning; though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an unstanch'd wench.

Boatswain. Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two courses off to sea again; lay her off.

(L. i. 37-53)

Subsequently, Miranda speaks to her father of the storm's fury, thereby linking the opening scene with the extended exposition which is to follow:

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,

Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffer'd
 With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
 Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,
 Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
 Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd.
 Had I been any god of power, I would
 Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
 It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
 The fraughting souls within her. (I. ii. 1-13)

The idyllic picture presented in this scene is in direct contrast to the hysterical action which has gone before. Prospero in relating to his daughter the story of his previous life and how they came to be situated in this place refers to this "cell": this is the only indication thus far that the setting is a rustic one. It has been, of course, on stage throughout the scene, yet how naturally the pastoral setting has already been assumed by the reader. Has Miranda been identified so quickly with nature through her gentleness and innocence, or has Prospero's magic imparted a sixth sense to his audience? It is, needless to say, the playwright's artistry that has created by a trick unbeknown to his reader the setting for the enchanted isle.

At least one critic sees enchantment as the central idea of this play. We are constantly reminded, R. G. Moulton notes, "How much of real life is permeated by enchantment."¹ Indeed all elements,

¹Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist (New York, reprint of 1893 ed.), p. 262.

not the least of which are the stage properties, combine to create this impression. Prospero's staff and book by virtue of their definite association with magic are the most obvious examples, but even ordinary properties take on a symbolic value in order to sustain the mood. In Act II interest is centered on a bottle in a scene of comedy that points up the vast differences which exist between men. The grotesque monster Caliban is tamed by the contents of this bottle even as Stephano and Trinculo are incited by its potency to inhuman thoughts and deeds. The half-monster here is more sophisticated than civilized man. Schlegel notes that although Caliban is rude, he is never vulgar: "he never falls into the prosaic and low familiarity of his drunken associates."¹ Baker reads this drunk scene as instrumental to contributing "solidarity to our trust in a play which throughout the artist had to watch against its becoming too ethereal,"² but Margaret Webster's comment is, perhaps, more incisive: "Stephano and Trinculo get drunk with a difference, befuddled with more than wine."³ The drunken sailors

¹Variorum Tempest, p. 380.

²Baker, p. 355.

³Webster, p. 288.

in representing the lowest rungs of civilization trespass against nature and contrast sharply with Miranda, a child of nature, and Caliban, a natural savage.

The enchantment of intoxication from "this grand licquor which hath gilded them" is not to be misconstrued, however, as being the only enchantment possible in the world. Miranda and Ferdinand fall in love at first sight: this, too, is enchantment, Moulton points out.¹ Prospero's magic has not been needed to incite this reaction, yet his intellectual shrewdness is called into play as he seeks to prevent too quick a courtship. Drawing a sword, he provokes a quarrel with Ferdinand:

Prospero. . . . Put thy sword up, traitor;
Who makest a show but darest not strike, thy
conscience
Is so possess'd with guilt: come from thy ward,
For I can here disarm thee with this stick
And make thy weapon drop. (L. ii. 468-473)

Act III opens with the lover performing a menial task, piling up logs, in order to prove his love:

Ferdinand. There be some sports are painful, and
their labour
Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness

¹Moulton, p. 260.

Are nobly undergone and most poor matters
 Point to rich ends. This my mean task
 Would be as heavy to me as odious, but
 The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead
 And makes my labours pleasures: O, she is
 Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,
 And he's composed of harshness. I must remove
 Some thousands of these logs and pile them up,
 Upon a sore injunction: my sweet mistress
 Weeps when she sees me work, and says, such
 baseness
 Had never like executor. . . . (III. i. 1-14)

Because Ferdinand must perform the same task that Caliban is required to perform, this scene is rich in symbolism. Prospero describes Caliban as his slave in Act I and thereafter instructs him to "fetch us in fuel." Later, in a preface to the bottle scene the slave is seen bringing wood in slowly:

Caliban. All the infections that the sun sucks up
 From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him
 By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me
 And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,
 Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i' the mire,
 Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark
 Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but
 For every trifle are they set upon me;
 Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me
 And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which
 Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount
 Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I
 All wound with adders who with cloven tongues
 Do hiss me into madness.

Enter TRINCULO.

Lo, now, lo!
 Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me
 For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat;
 Perchance he will not mind me. (II. ii. 1-17)

How appropriately is Caliban linked to the earth and its basic elements and to man and his base desires. A critic has noted that Caliban is "first, and lowest in the scale, [of the chain of being] . . . the gross and uncouth but powerful savage, who represents both the more ponderous and unwieldy natural elements (as the earth and water)."¹ In contrast, Ferdinand, who performs willingly the same service for his beloved, displays all of the elements of chivalric nobility. Another critic notes: "In Ferdinand, who is a noble creature, we have all the chivalrous magnanimity with which man, in a high state of civilization, disguises his real superiority, and does humble homage to the being of whose destiny he disposes."² The same property, a symbol of servitude, has been employed to express two widely diverse concepts: the man who undergoes willingly the trials of his love transcends all menial subjugation; the slave who labors not for love, who bewails his difficult fate may never surmount the disgrace of his situation.

If Caliban represents earth, then Ariel, as his name implies, is his very antithesis. His music pipes an enchantment from a higher

¹Variorum Tempest, p. 361. (Mrs. F. A. Kemble)

²Ibid., p. 372. (Mrs. Jameson)

world and heralds the magical powers of Prospero, his master. He, too, is enslaved, yet his complaints are not as loud although his yearnings for freedom are equally as strong as those of Caliban. It is through Ariel's surveillance that the plot progresses in orderly fashion, that the enchanted quality of the isle is maintained, that the will of the magician is satisfied. In the one scene of pure magic it is Ariel who flies over the banquet, causing the viands to disappear.¹ Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, and Francisco are all together on stage here and as Webster notes, they are the ordinary man whose function it is to "put all degrees of strangeness into perspective for us."² Oftentimes, magic does not seem as astonishing as reality. Antonio's unnatural action toward his brother when he was the Duke of Milan is echoed in Alonso's plan to murder the present duke. Prospero comments:

¹Although this paper deals only with those items of staging mentioned in the dialogue, it is worthy of notice here that the stage directions of The Tempest, because of their elaborate beauty, are widely accepted as being written by the poet himself. Both Chambers and Wilson propose this theory, and John C. Adams ("The Staging of The Tempest, III, iii," RES, XIV, 1938, 404-419) comments that they have been printed without explanation by every modern editor except one (Dyce).

²Webster, p. 288.

Honest lord,
 Thou hast said well; for some of you there present
 Are worse than devils. (III. iii. 35-37)

Just as the men are about to partake of the viands, Ariel interrupts their banquet. In this passage he explains the action of the afternoon and labels the men "three men of sin." They draw their swords, but he renders them helpless and pronounces a lingering perdition and a life of heart-sorrow upon them.

In the final act the two lovers are discovered playing at chess:

Miranda. Sweet lord, you play me false.
Ferdinand. No, my dear'st love,
 I would not for the world.
Miranda. Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should
 wrangle,
 And I would call it fair play. (V. i. 172-177)

Norman Holland comments upon the rich symbolism of this chess game, linking it moreover to the log-wood motif which runs throughout the play:

The chess game is a magnificent symbol. For one thing, chess is a game of war, of political fighting; here wildness has been transmuted into a game, into a civilized pastime, just as the war of the sexes between Ferdinand and Miranda has been clothed and sanctified in the rules of matrimony. Ferdinand and Miranda have risen above playing each other false. They have come to a kind of love within the rules, a playing together that transcends worldly affairs. Also, Ferdinand is now carrying wood in a way rather different from carrying logs. Those crude logs have somehow

become metamorphosed and transformed into wooden kings and bishops and knights, entire kingdoms, now seen as only "play."¹

Another aspect of the game that the critic notes is its traditional role as a symbol for life itself and an attitude toward life. Quoting from Don Quixote, he draws this parallel: "So long as the game lasts, each piece has its special qualities, but when it is over they are all mixed and jumbled together and put into a bag, which is to the chess pieces what the grave is to life."²

When Alonso interrupts the game between Ferdinand and Miranda he is almost afraid to believe that his son is truly alive:

<u>Alonso.</u>	Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!	
Arise, and say how thou camest here.	
<u>Miranda.</u>	O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!	
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,	
That has such people in 't!	(V. i. 179-185)

The love of parent for child, the joys of an unforeseen reconciliation, and Miranda's innocent delight with all of mankind are indeed among the wonders of this world. These are the pleasures that lend a peculiar charm to life, and they who are able to set forth this enchantment are truly magicians.

¹The Shakespearean Imagination (New York, 1963), pp. 317-318.

²Ibid.

The world is much like this enchanted isle where reality may be only an illusion and what seems to be is not. Gonzalo, who plays the role of chorus throughout this play,¹ says:

All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement
Inhabits here: some heavenly power guide us
Out of this fearful country! (V. i. 104-106)

It is Prospero, of course, who points the way, although he has abjured all magic:

. . . I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book. (V. i. 54-57)

The complete possession of himself which the magician has known has enabled him to reveal the world to all men. He exchanges his staff and book (and the magical properties for which they stand) for the hat and rapier of the Duke of Milan. It has been conjectured by many critics that this is Shakespeare's own farewell to the stage. Holland points out that:

in medieval times, stage directors carried a book, the promptbook or text of the play, and also a staff or wand with which they pointed out positions for the actors. Perhaps Shakespeare himself carried that book and staff, and in this speech he is giving them over, bidding farewell to his career as a dramatist.²

¹Moulton, p. 282.

²Holland, p. 320.

It is not necessary, however, to follow such a literal interpretation of the play's symbolism in order to read into The Tempest an analogy between the sorcerer Prospero and the magician Shakespeare.

This play's comment on the illusive quality of life seems to indicate that the world of make-believe is oftentimes more real than life itself and that it is only through illusion that reality may be found. Man mirrored here on stage may truly see himself, for as Gonzalo explains:

In one voyage
 Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis
 And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife
 Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom
 In a poor isle and all of us ourselves
 When no man was his own. (V. i. 208-213)

To find himself is each man's goal and the end of every endeavor. The search, perhaps, may most beneficially be led into the world of dreams:

These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits and
 Are melted into air, into thin air:
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep. . . . (IV. i. 148-158)

With this play Shakespeare's artistry has come full cycle: the luminous splendor of The Tempest immediately calls to mind the rare dream-like quality that so permeated A Midsummer Night's Dream. The two plays, in point of fact, closely parallel each other: both are concerned with the world of Faerie; both embody a masque; in both the element of magic serves to develop the plot; and in both plays the characters themselves stimulate the visual imagination. In the first play, however, Bottom and the mechanicals brought to life the scenery and properties by actually attiring themselves as Wall, Moonshine, and Lion; in this last play the characters embrace within themselves all external aspects of staging. There need be no rustic setting to indicate that Miranda is the embodiment of ideal womanhood, pure, kindly, unblemished; there need be no staff and book to reveal Prospero's divine nature; Caliban and Ariel need no grotesque costume nor elaborate symbol to connote their personifications of earth and air--the lowest and the highest in man. In this play the poet has presented in miniature man's world: to its enchanted landscape let every man bring his own daydream, and the background which it provides will be an appropriate one for the vision which is here revealed.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study of Shakespeare's imaginative use of stage properties in six representative plays has examined one means by which the playwright has achieved the unity or stylistic oneness which is the most salient characteristic of his work. The stage properties have been analysed against their background within each individual play in order to emphasize their actual role in setting forth the play's theme. The properties, while functioning in this capacity, conform moreover to a pattern which is equally as apparent as the center of metaphorical imagery within each play which Caroline Spurgeon has revealed.

This paper acknowledges that in addition to the explication of theme, the imaginative use of both real and illusory stage properties also indicates very significantly the progressive artistic development

of the playwright, and the plays have been chosen and presented chronologically with this in mind. The six plays represent each of the four periods of Shakespeare's dramatic development and are illustrative also of the various types of drama which he wrote: the first play, A Midsummer Night's Dream (1594-95), is a comedy from the early period; The Life of King Henry V (1599-1600) is a chronicle play from the period of comedies and histories; the third period is represented by Troilus and Cressida (1601-02), a somber comedy, King Lear (1605), a tragedy, and Macbeth (1616); from the period of his dramatic romances a poetic drama, The Tempest (1611), has been selected.

Of more than passing interest, perhaps, is the recognition of an unexpected correlation between the credible handling of a supernatural element within the plays and the ultimate artistic mastery of form. With the exception of The Life of King Henry V a definite element of supernaturalism runs throughout each of the plays under consideration. In the first play, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and the last, The Tempest, both of which were written as occasional pieces in celebration of a marriage, there is great concern with fairy lore. In the first play, however, the supernatural world has the ascendancy over the mortal; while in The Tempest man himself

is always in control. In the early comedy not only Bottom, but also Demetrius and Lysander are completely at the mercy of the fairy king who commands his wily helper, Puck, to place them under a spell of enchantment which proves, indeed, "What fools these mortals be." On the other hand, in the poetic drama Prospero's magic more subtly presents the fairy theme. Although the cast includes Ariel, the superhuman, and Caliban, the obverse side of the coin, the playwright's primary delineation is the enchantment of the world of mortal man. In this play, supernatural power is placed in the proper perspective and never allowed to gain control. The wonders of this earth--love, knowledge, aspiration--themselves are enchantment; man's human condition embraces sufficient magic that any Prospero might discard his staff and book.

Although this supernatural element may be traced throughout the canon--in this study touching on foreknowledge and prophecy in Troilus and Cressida and exploring madness and the extremes of grief in the mind of King Lear--the culmination of its power and horror is, without question, Macbeth. In this play man has succumbed to the evil around and within him, here concretely portrayed by the Weird Sisters, and the visions and portents which present themselves to his imagination intensify the effect of his loss of moral and mental control. The abyss of darkness which surrounds the protagonist takes on palpable

substance as visitants from another world people the stage, and the subconscious mind in convolutions of guilt and terror is relentlessly exposed.

But the artistry which this credible handling of supernaturalism connotes is mentioned only in passing; a more significant indication of Shakespeare's development as a playwright is the progressive freedom from the stage of visual imitation which may be noted in these selected plays.

In the earliest play, A Midsummer Night's Dream, concrete visual images, for the most part, were provided to correspond to abstract conceptions: the most remarkable example of this, of course, is Moonshine, in the form of a rustic actor, who appears in the anti-masque carrying a lanthorne and leading a dog. A more symbolic, but no less vivid, illustration of this personification is Bottom's transformation by means of an ass's head. Yet Shakespeare, it must be noted, was writing in a humorous vein. Even here in this early play there is a promise of the grandeur of conception that is achieved in King Lear in the Dover Cliff scene: the imaginative creation of the hounds of Duke Theseus anticipates the playwright's artistic maturity.

In The Life of King Henry V the progress from realistic representation receives momentum from the prologues which precede

each act and encourage the creative collaboration between artist and audience. These prologues not only set the scene of action, but they also relate the events of the intervening hours and create in the mind's eye the immense epic conception necessary to balance the play's rhetorical style. No pictorial representation could ever equal the comprehensive scope suggested by this dramatic device. In addition to the poetry of the prologues, Shakespeare has made an appeal to the ear in his description of the Dauphin's horse. This noble animal springs to life before our eyes, summoned by the same inspiration that gave form to the hounds of Duke Theseus.

In Troilus and Cressida, a play set against the background of the Trojan War, the progress from the level of visual imitation continues: the implements of war are conspicuous by their absence, for the warriors engage in verbal confrontations which question the value of this undertaking and cynically reveal the foul motives which oftentimes spur valiant deeds.

In King Lear the stage properties serve a more subtle function, for imaginative grandeur here attains perfection of form. By means of sublime poetry and immensity of conception the stage is set for the storm upon the heath and the wild rage of the maddened Lear; but although the heath and Dover Cliff exist only by means of a poetic conception, there are other items of staging actually at hand. The

properties, however, are not always what they appear, at first glance, to be, and in this manner they impart a heightened meaning to the play even while functioning as that which obligations of plot or exigencies of staging dictate. For example, the torch which is used to indicate night also reveals the theme of seeing and perceiving on which the play is based; Lear's concern with a button indicates his tenuous hold on reality; and the fluttering of a feather imparts a heart-breaking joy. With this play Shakespeare's stage properties have assumed an immanent role.

With Macbeth Shakespeare moves away from the conventional progressive pattern and explores a subjective state of mind. In order to accomplish this psychological examination the convolutions of evil must be materially depicted in the visible world. The playwright returns, therefore, momentarily to the theatre of visual imitation, recalling his earlier style: the Weird Sisters personify evil; a ghost and a series of apparitions represent the sinister imaginings of a guilty mind. But despite this reversion to an earlier method, the artist has not relinquished his command of material, and this device of personification serves him well when he returns to the style perfected in King Lear. Because he has shown on stage the abstract conception of evil, the mind's eye readily accepts the images of torment

which Macbeth's guilt unveils. The bloody dagger could not be more conspicuous if it had actually materialized in thin air, nor could the "damned spot" on Lady Macbeth's hand appear more real. What at first may have seemed a departure from the line of artistic development, may now be regarded as progress into another sphere.

In the final play, The Tempest, such complete mastery of stagecraft has been achieved that the play's properties have become an inherent quality of the drama. Each of the major characters embodies within himself all external aspects of staging. Prospero is the divine nature of man, and no staff nor book is necessary to portray him in this guise. Miranda, Caliban, and Ariel might be recognized anywhere in any situation: they are so wholly and completely themselves. Further, there need be no visual nor descriptive artifice to provide a background for this island which is, in miniature, man's world.

Shakespeare's dramatic progression from the theatre of visual imitation and his increasing mastery of form which the imaginative handling of stage properties implies are noteworthy conclusions of this study, but the unity or stylistic oneness which is the most salient characteristic of his work deserves further consideration. Accordingly, an analysis of each play's overall design

reveals one motif that underlies the canon of plays. This theme is the curious blending of reality and illusion in actual life.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream the stage properties themselves introduce this theme: Wall, Moonshine, and Lion are painstakingly constructed by the rustics from the fabric of actuality only to be carefully explained away--their reality is only an illusion; Bottom's transformation with the head of an ass renders him no less real to the audience for, indeed, now he becomes what previously he only seemed to be; the magical herbs, Dian's Bud and Love-in-idleness, vividly imply that man himself may be so possessed that he is able to fashion another creature, endow another being with qualities which exist only in his own mind; the hounds of Duke Theseus, by association of sound and idea, substantially appear before the inward eye, their shadowy forms invested with life only by imagination.

In The Life of King Henry V the prologues maintain that imagination may amend the actual and the veritable. The properties support this thesis: items of sport become the instrument of declaring war; what is believed to be a paper of commission serves as a disclosure of treachery; a glove indicates that a king is but a man as others are; a leek reveals that appearances alone may not be trusted; and the Dauphin's horse, even as the Duke's hounds, lives only in the mind.

The stage properties of Troilus and Cressida offer a cynical comment on the disparity which exists between emotion and reason; on the impracticality of holding to an ideal value in life's two most intense encounters--love and war. The sleeve and glove, exchanged as tokens of constancy by Troilus and Cressida, recall the days of chivalry and knighthood, but in this context they depict an utter disregard for ideality and emotion.

This play not only mocks idealistic standards, it also reveals the corruption which underlies the most noble of deeds. When legend's great warriors exhibit a reluctance to do battle, there appears to be an inconsistency of motive that is difficult to resolve. The sardonic contrast of this inaction to the scene of battle is pointed up by the relatively few stage properties which may implement the war. Hector, the hero of the Trojans, deliberately deceives himself and dies for an unworthy cause. His murder at the hands of the cowardly Achilles summarizes the meaninglessness of valor and poses a harsh question concerning man's existence; yet the constant ideality of Troilus redeems the play from the realm of the absurd.

The stage properties of King Lear illustrate the paradox of seeing and perceiving on which the play is based. They function either

as an overt manifestation of an inward turmoil--the storm on the heath; as a purely imaginary scenic device--Dover Cliff; or as an actual item that induces deception--the feather, the joint-stool, and the bench. Frequently each property combines several functions. Lear's crown of wild flowers, for example, is in actuality a mark of madness, but it also implies that he is a figure of authority; the joint-stool and the bench are common items of furniture, but they reveal the king's insanity; and the feather which seems to move stirs Lear's heart to the breaking point. Even as in A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Life of King Henry V, the stage properties of this play indicate that reality may be an illusion, and as Troilus and Cressida so bitterly exposes, appearances may not be trusted to reveal what lies within.

In Macbeth the protagonist casts his lot with an illusion; and, appropriately, it is a superstitious fear that accounts for his fall. Nowhere has the power of the imagination been so perceptively revealed. In reality, the Weird Sisters' prophecy that Macbeth shall be king has no chance of being fulfilled; yet it is founded on a half-truth and thereby becomes more credible. This belief effects the deed; from this moment of commitment reality and illusion become one. Macbeth's fears and horrible imaginings take on a substance and direct the eventual outcome of the play. Banquo's ghost, the prophetic apparitions, the bloody

dagger, the spot, as well as the man not born of woman, and the advancing wood of Birnam provoke the despairing cry "And nothing is, but what is not."

In The Tempest the stage properties conform more closely to conventional usage than those of the earlier plays, yet their function has been tightly interwoven into the spirit of the play and their symbolism augments the enchantment of that island which is the world. The cell, the viands, the bottle, and the logs as well as the chess game, the staff, and the book all betoken the magic that permeates reality, for this is the theme that underlies the canon of his work.

The stage properties of these six representative plays indicate an artistic and dramatic development in setting forth this theme of the curious blending of illusion and reality in actual life. They truly have been imaginatively employed to illustrate the role of imagination in manipulating and amending reality; to indicate the disparity which exists between sight and perception and the tragic consequences of mental blindness and misguided motive; to underscore the enchantment that permeates even the most actual of all experiences; to contrast man as he ought to be and man as he is; for they have given life to the wonders of creation and endued with substance the mystery of life itself. In Shakespeare all

things, however insignificant, blend together to contribute coherence and unity to the whole. His imaginative use of stage properties has contributed to this stylistic oneness, which is the unmistakable hallmark of genius and the most salient characteristic of his style.

APPENDIX A

Stage Properties in A Midsummer Night's Dream

scroll	I. ii. 4
flower (love-in-idleness)	II. i. 246; II. ii. 69; III. ii. 102.
bank	II. ii. 40.
green plot	III. i. 3.
hawthorn-brake	III. i. 4; 77.
calendar	III. i. 54.
almanac	III. i. 54.
ass-head	III. i. 119.
herb (antidote, Dian's bud)	III. ii. 366; 452; IV. i. 76.
flowery bed	IV. i. 1.
hounds	IV. i. 110-130.
brief (paper)	V. i. 42.
wall	V. i. 133, 156, 179, 181, 183, 190, 177, 175, 170, 163, 202, 203, 206, 207.
loam, rough-cast, stone	V. i. 162.
moonshine	V. i. 137, 239, 248, 249, 255, 260, 262, 272, 277, 278, 310
lion	V. i. 140, 221, 232, 270, 274, 275.
dog	V. i. 136, 263.
thorn-bush	V. i. 263.

lanthorne	V. i. 136, 234, 242, 261.
sword	V. i. 301, 350.
blade	V. i. 351.
broom	V. i. 396.

APPENDIX B

Stage Properties in The Life of King Henry V

tun of treasure	I. ii. 255.
tennis balls	I. ii. 258, 261.
sword	II. i. 47, 103, 104.
rapier	II. i. 60.
commissions (papers)	II. ii. 67, 68, 69, 70, 72.
horse	III. vi. 4-61; IV. ii. 2.
glove	IV. i. 227; vii. 125, 132, 162, 169; viii. 6, 7, 27, 29, 32, 39, 41, 61.
two hundred crowns	IV. iv. 49, 50.
crowns	IV. viii. 62, 65.
twelve pence	IV. viii. 68.
note (telling of the French dead)	IV. viii. 85.
note (telling of the English dead)	IV. viii. 108.
leek	V. i. 2, 22, 25, 40, 43, 49, 52.
groat	V. i. 61, 66.

APPENDIX C

Stage Properties in Troilus and Cressida

(armour)	I. i. 1.
helmet (Hector)	I. ii. 222.
sword (Troilus)	I. ii. 252.
helmet (Troilus)	I. ii. 253.
Grecian tents	I. iii. 79.
trumpet	I. iii. 213, 251, 258.
tent	I. iii. 215, 216.
orchard	III. ii. 17.
curtain	III. ii. 48.
(letter)	III. iii. 96.
sleeve	IV. iv. 72; V. ii. 67, 69; iii. 4, 7, 19, 27.
glove	IV. iv. 73.
trumpet (Trojan)	IV. iv. 142.
trumpet (Greek)	IV. v. 3, 7.
purse	IV. v. 7.
trumpet (Trojan)	IV. v. 64.
sword (Hector)	IV. v. 131.

letter	V. i. 44.
lights	V. i. 76.
torch	V. i. 92, 5.
(armour)	V. iii. 3, 8.
harness (Troilus)	V. iii. 31.
letter	V. iii. 99.
armour (unidentified Greek)	V. vi. 28; viii. 2.
sword (Hector)	V. viii. 4.
(swords)	V. viii. 10.
trumpets (Trojans)	V. viii. 16.
sword (Achilles)	V. viii. 19.

APPENDIX D

Stage Properties in King Lear

map	I. i. 38.
coronet	I. i. 141.
letter (Edmund)	I. ii. 19, 28, 37, 41.
key	I. ii. 85.
coins	I. iv. 104.
coxcomb	I. iv. 105, 107, 113, 116.
letter (Goneril to Regan)	I. iv. 359.
letters (Lear to Regan)	I. v. 1.
sword (Edmund and Edgar)	II. i. 31.
torches	II. i. 39.
sword (Kent)	II. ii. 38.
stocks	II. ii. 135, 139, 147.
letter (Kent from Cordelia)	II. iv. 173.
tree	II. iii. 2.
purse	III. i. 46.
ring	III. i. 48.
storm	III. ii.
hovel	III. iv. 1, 180.

torch	III. iv. 119.
letter (Edmund)	III. v. 11.
cushions	III. vi. 36.
bench	III. vi. 39.
joint-stool	III. vi. 53.
little dogs	III. vi. 66.
curtains	III. vi. 89.
litter	III. vi. 96.
letter (Cornwall to Albany)	III. vii. 2.
(rope)	III. vii. 28.
chair	III. vii. 35, 67.
sword	III. vii. 80.
favour	IV. ii. 21.
letter (Regan to Goneril)	IV. ii. 83.
letter (Goneril to Edmund)	IV. v. 22.
note (Regan to Edmund)	IV. v. 29.
Dover Cliff	IV. vi.
(crown of wild flowers)	IV. vi. 85.
letters (Goneril to Edmund)	IV. vi. 261.
pin	IV. vii. 53.
letter (Edgar to Albany)	V. i. 40, 46, 50.
tree	V. ii. 1.

note (Edmund to prison captain)	V. iii. 26.
glove	V. iii. 93.
glove	V. iii. 99.
trumpet	V. iii. 109, 115, 116, 117.
(paper)	V. iii. 108.
sword	V. iii. 139.
sword	V. iii. 149.
letter (Edgar to Albany)	V. iii. 157, 159.
bloody knife	V. iii. 225.
sword	V. iii. 250.
feather	V. iii. 267.
button	V. iii. 309.

APPENDIX E

Stage Properties in Macbeth

weird sisters	I. i; iii; III. vi; V. i.
drum	I. iii. 30.
(letter)	I. v. 1
castle	I. vi. 1.
bird (martlet)	I. vi. 4, 7.
sword	II. i. 4, 9.
diamond	II. i. 15.
dagger	II. i. 33.
bell	II. i. 62.
daggers	II. ii. 48, 53.
bell	II. iii. 85.
light	III. iii. 16.
(ghost of Banquo)	IV. iv. 50, 93; V. i. 123.
table	IV. iv. 47.
stool	IV. iv. 68.
wine	IV. iv. 88.
Hecate	IV. v.
cauldron	V. i.

apparitions	V. i.
crown	V. i. 113.
glass	V. i. 119.
two-fold balls	V. i. 121.
treble sceptres	V. i. 121.
 (dagger)	 V. ii. 87.
 light	 V. i. 24.
 spot	 V. i. 35, 39.
 armour	 V. iii. 33, 37, 48.
 staff	 V. iii. 48.
 wood of Birnam	 V. iv. 4, 5; vi. 1.
 banners	 V. v. 1.
 sword (young Siward)	 V. vii. 10.
 sword (Macduff)	 V. vii. 19.
 sword (Macbeth)	 V. viii. 7, 10.
 shield	 V. viii. 33.
 Macbeth's head	 V. viii. 56.

APPENDIX F

Stage Properties in The Tempest

storm	I. i.
topsail	I. i. 6.
whistle	I. i. 7.
rope	I. i. 25.
cell	I. ii. 39.
sword	I. ii. 468.
stick	I. ii. 472.
grass	II. i. 52.
(knife)	II. i. 283.
sword	II. i. 292.
weapons	II. i. 322.
wood	II. ii. 16.
cloud	II. ii. 23.
bottle	II. ii. 47, 57, 77, 97, 125, 127, (134), (146), 155, 180; III. ii. 73, 87.
logs	III. i. 10, 17, 126.
viands	III. iii. 41.
swords	III. iii. 62, 67.
grass-plot	IV. i. 73, 83.

cell	IV. i. 216.
line	IV. i. 235.
gown	IV. i. 236.
jerkin	IV. i. 236, 237, 238.
staff	V. i. 54.
book	V. i. 57.
(chess)	V. i. 171.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Source

The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Hardin Craig. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1951.

Secondary Sources

Baker, George Pierce. The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920.

Bethell, Samuel Leslie. Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1944.

Bradley, A. C. Shakespearean Tragedy. New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967.

Campbell, Lily B. Scenes and Machines on the English Stage during the Renaissance, a Classical Revival. Cambridge: University Press, 1963.

Chambers, Sir Edmund Kerchever. The Elizabethan Stage. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923.

de Banke, Cécile. Shakespearean Stage Production: Then & Now. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1953.

de Quincey, Thomas. "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth." in Four Centuries of Shakespearian Criticism. ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Avon Library, 1965.

Dent, R. W. "Imagination in A Midsummer Night's Dream." SQ, XV (Spring, 1964), 114-29.

Furness, Horace Howard. Variorum Edition, A Midsummer Night's Dream. New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1963.

_____. Variorum Edition, The Tempest. New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1964.

- _____. Variorum Edition, King Lear. New York: Dover
Publication, Inc., 1963.
- _____. Variorum Edition, Macbeth. New York: Dover
Publication, Inc., 1963.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. Prefaces to Shakespeare. New Jersey:
Princeton University Press, 1946, I.
- Halliday, F. E., ed. Shakespeare and His Critics. London:
Gerald Duckworth & Company, Ltd., 1949 (1958).
- Hatcher, Orie Latham. A Book for Shakespeare Plays and Pageants;
A Treasury of Elizabethan and Shakespearean Detail for
Producers, Stage Managers, Actors, Artists, and Students.
New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1916.
- Henslowe, Philip. Diary. ed. by Walter Wilson Greg, 2 volumes.
London: A. H. Bullen, 1904, 1908.
- Hillebrand, Harold N. Variorum Edition, Troilus and Cressida.
Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1953.
- Holland, Norman. The Shakespearean Imagination. New York:
Macmillan, 1963.
- Kott, Jan. Shakespeare Our Contemporary. Translated from the
Polish by Boleslaw Taborski. New York: Doubleday &
Company, Inc., 1966.
- Knight, G. Wilson. The Shakespearian Tempest. Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1932.
- _____. Principles of Shakespearian Production. New York:
Macmillan Co., 1937.
- _____. The Wheel of Fire. London: Oxford University Press,
1930.
- Lawrence, William J. Pre-Restoration Stage Studies. Cambridge:
Harvard University Press, 1927.

- Lee, Sir Sidney. Shakespeare and the Modern Stage, With Other Essays. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906.
- Lower, Charles Bruce. "Editorial Principles and Practices for Indicating Significant Staging in a Reader's Edition of Shakespeare." DA, XXVI, 3925-26 (N. C.).
- Matthews, Brander. Shakespeare as a Playwright. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- McNeir, Waldo F. "The Staging of the Dover Cliff Scene in King Lear." Studies in English Renaissance Literature. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962, pp. 87-104.
- Moulton, R. G. Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist. New York: Dover, reprint of 1893 edition.
- Nicoll, Allardyce, ed. Shakespeare Survey; An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study and Production. Cambridge: University Press, yearly.
- Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur Thomas. Shakespeare's Workmanship. Cambridge: University Press, 1931.
- Reynolds, George. The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theatre, 1605-1625. New York: Modern Language Association, 1940.
- Smith, Warren D. "Stage Settings in Shakespeare's Dialogue." MP, L (August, 1952), 32-35.
- Spurgeon, Caroline F. E. Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us. New York: Macmillan Co., 1936.
- Stoll, Elmer Edgar. Shakespeare Studies. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927.
- Ulrici, Hermann. Shakespeare's Dramatic Art. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1876.
- Ure, Peter. "Troilus and Cressida," Four Centuries of Shakespearian Criticism. ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Avon Library, 1965.

Webster, Margaret. Shakespeare Without Tears. New York:
Whittlesey House, 1942.

Wiles, Roy McKeen. "'In My Mind's Eye, Horatio.'" UTQ, XVIII
(1948), 57-67.

VITA

Margaret Hart Glenn Tinsley, formerly of Culpeper and Morattico, Lancaster County, Virginia, was born in 1933. After attending public high school in Culpeper, she majored in English at Westhampton College and received a B. A. degree from there in June, 1955. That same year she married Eugene Adams Tinsley, a native of Richmond, and they are the parents of two children, Gordon Glenn, born in 1957, and Lelia Spotswood, born in 1958.