'FOOLERY, SIR, DOES WALK ABOUT THE ORB LIKE THE SUN':

FOOL-CHARACTERS AND COMIC DRAMATIC STRUCTURES

IN

HAMLET, TWELFTH NIGHT, AND TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

by

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SYNOPSIS

The thesis analyses fool-characters and comic structures in Shakespeare's three plays--each play representing a different dramatic genre. The chapter on Hamlet primarily focuses on Hamlet's fool-role originating from his "antic disposition." In Twelfth Night, the study examines the topsy-turvydom dominant in Olivia's household. Sir Toby Belch, as a Lord of Misrule, and Feste, as a professional jester, are the central characters in the analysis. In the chapter on Troilus and Cressida--a dramatic work frequently categorized as a "problem play"--the dramatic functions of two fool-characters, Pandarus and Thersites, are explored.

The thesis examines the sources and theatrical traditions relevant to the analysed characters. It also investigates the various ways in which these characters create a counterweight to the social and political status quo of their respective plays, as a result of which they eventually become expelled, muted, or forced to adjust to the final social and political constellation emerging at the conclusion of the plays.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SHAKESPEARE'S FOOL-CHARACTERS: CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS

In order to clarify the subject of my dissertation, I cite two definitions of fools. The first is from the most extensive general study in this field, Enid Welsford's The Fool: His Social and Literary History. According to Welsford, the fool

> ...is a man who falls below the average human standard, but whose defects have been transformed into a source of delight, a main-spring of comedy, which has always been one of the great recreations of mankind and particularly of civilized mankind.[1]

The other is from an influential and more recent work, William Willeford's The Fool and His Sceptre. Willeford suggests that the fool is

> ...a silly or idiotic or mad person, or one who is made by circumstances (or the actions of others) to appear a fool in that sense, or a person who imitates for nonfools the foolishness of being innately silly or made to look so.[2]

Welsford's definition underlines the basic dramatic nature of fools whose chief task is to entertain their environment, that is, their audience. The key to this interpretation is the transformation of human "defects" into human "delight." Welsford emphasizes that fools' impact on their

"audience" is comical; their role in human interactions is usually comic. Willeford qualifies human "defects" and chiefly focuses on mental deficiencies: dullness, idiocy, and madness. In addition, he introduces two pairs of distinctions for fools. He refers to a dichotomy which has survived since Antiquity and which is also of great relevance to the Renaissance. He differentiates between those who are "innately silly," "natural" fools and those who are "made to look so," that is, "artificial" fools. On the other hand, he notes that fools divide their social environment into fools and nonfools.

The name "fool" is a noun with several meanings; it bears numerous denotations. From village bumpkins to court jesters, from artificial fools to natural idiots, there exist several gradations of folly and foolery. "Being a fool" may signify a profession, a permanent or temporary condition or social status. While insisting on certain freedom in the use of the category, the thesis focuses on a specific group of "fools." The subjects of the thesis are dramatic characters appearing in plays written at a given period of the English Renaissance.

The majority of the characters analyzed in the dissertation are fools because their respective dramatic communities treat them as "fools." Their "artificial" status generates a complex dramatic situation. Umberto Eco describes a general model for theatrical arts:

> In a certain sense every dramatic performance (be it on the stage or on the screen) is composed by two speech acts. The first is performed by the actor who is making a performative statement--I am acting. By this implicit statement the actor tells the truth since he announces that from that moment on he will lie. The second is represented by a pseudo statement where the subject of the statement is already the character, not the actor....Through the decision of the performer (I am another man) we enter the possible world of performance.[3]

In dramatic environment, artificial fools have two audiences--an internal (within the play) and an external (in the auditorium of the theatre). Accordingly, their "pseudo statements" are also two-fold; they announce that they will lie while they lie. This basic transposition explains why so often they tell the truth. Their "pseudo statement" is I am another man who is another man. Due to this duality in their dramatic position, artificial fools in plays frequently intermediate between the auditorium and the play-world; they are detached from their environment--their role is that of an outsider or observer.

Apart from the immediate context of the individual plays, these characters appear in a wider context provided by the theatrical and literary conventions of the period. Besides the living tradition of real court-jesters, Shakespeare's fools and comic characters also draw on the mythological trickster-figure and the Vice-character so popular in the 16th century. Karl Kerenyi defines the trickster as "the spirit of disorder"[4] and Judith Livingston Burgess notes that the trickster "...achieves his goals through

deception and trickery" and "...uses indirect means because he is in a subordinate position and has no real power of his own."[5] Appearing as inferior in the given power-structure, the trickster makes use of his relative power provided by virtue of his wit and verbal skills and ability to persuade and manipulate his companions.

J. A. B. Somerset points out in his dissertation that the name "'the Vice' occurs in sixteen moralities and four literal plays."[6] The Vice had a central function in his play and his name first was used by John Heywood in 1532 as a technical term for a fool-like character.[7] Later the name "Vice" was used as a synonym of the term "fool." David Wiles remarks that "[t]he Revels documents of Edward VI use the terms 'vice', 'fool' and 'dizard' interchangeably for a man who wears a suit of many colours and carried as his props a ladle with a bauble pendant and a dagger."[8] Their clothes and dramatic roles made these "Vice-" or "Fool-characters" distinct in their communities. It is striking that their roles did not cease existing at the end of the performances; they identified themselves with the roles and their society acknowledged and encouraged the juxtaposition between fictional roles and real lives.

At this point, another category needs be introduced--that of "the clown." An intriguing shift can be traced in the meaning of the word during the 16th century. As Willeford defines it, a clown originally was "a farm

worker, hence a boor;"[9] a country bumpkin. Later, however, great professional comic actors playing fool-characters (such as Richard Tarl(e)ton, William Kemp(e), and Robert Armin) were called "clowns." The word stood for flesh-and-blood human beings who preserved their fool-masks in their everyday lives. It is tempting, therefore, to suggest a distinction between "fools" and "clowns." In my terminology, the term "fool" covers a wider range of comic characters and--in the context of a play--it refers to a fictional role. The word "clown" refers to a living human being, to the actor who plays "the fool." In the light of this distinction, in Twelfth Night, for instance, "the fool" is Feste; "the clown" is the actor representing Feste--possibly Robert Armin in Shakespeare's time.

The importance of these clowns is enormous since they paid a generous tribute to the creation of Renaissance English comedy. Somerset comments, "[t]he products of the development of comedy in the moralities are translated into the later non-allegorical drama directly, through the actors who performed comic parts."[10] It is widely known that playwrights at the end of the 16th century created certain fool roles for certain clowns. The direct relationship between the authors and the actors secured a radical and quick development of fool-characters at the end of the sixteenth century.

The distinction between "fools" and "knaves" is another significant

duality prevalent in the period. Welsford observes, "...the words 'fool' and 'knave' were constantly coupled together, but not always in quite the same way; for sometimes they were treated as synonymous, sometimes emphasis was laid on the distinction between them."[11] A contemporary record referring to Archibald Armstrong--the court-fool of James I--exploits the semantic link between the words "fool" and "knave." In a letter from 1637, Mr. Gerrard describes to Lord Strafford the unfortunate end of the fool: "Archy is fallen into a great misfortune; a fool he would be, but a foul-mouthed knave he hath proved himself."[12] Punning on the two nouns is also a favourite device of Shakespeare's. In All's Well That Ends Well, for instance, the knave-fool dichotomy becomes a significant motif of the play as it depicts the roles of Lavatch and Parolles. At Lafeu's enquiry, Lavatch reveals his "interpretation" of the two nouns:

LAFEU:
Whether dost thou profess thyself, a knave or a fool?
LAVATCH:
A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.
LEFUE:
Your distinction?
LAVATCH:
I would cozen the man of his wife and do his service.
LEFUE:
So you were a knave at his service indeed.
LAVATCH:
And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.
LEFUE:
I will subscribe for thee, thou art both knave and fool.
(IV.5.22-33)[13]

The above cited passage illustrates the close links existing in Renaissance thinking between folly and immorality: a fool is naturally immoral in the same way as a knave is naturally foolish.

In the analysis of comic characters further definitions of literary archetypes are also possible. In Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye aptly describes the complementary duo of "eiron" and "alazon." Basing his opinion on classical works from Antiquity--chiefly those of Aristotle's--Frye defines "eiron" as "[a] self-deprecating or unobtrusively treated character in fiction, usually an agent of the happy ending in comedy and of the catastrophe in tragedy" and explains "alazon" as "[a] deceiving or self-deceived character in fiction, normally an object of ridicule in comedy or satire, but often the hero of a tragedy."[14] Among the characters analyzed in the dissertation, Pandarus and Polonius appear as "alazons;" Thersites and--in certain ways--Hamlet can be seen as "eirons."

Frye declares, "[t]he contest of eiron and alazon forms the basis of the comic action, and the buffoon and the churl polarize the comic mood."[15] He argues that such buffoons (with the Greek name bomolochoi) have "the function of increasing or focusing the comic mood;"[16] Sir Toby Belch as "the master of revels" in Twelfth Night is such a type. At the other end of this duality lies the "churl" whom Aristotle calls agroikos, literally meaning "rustic." Frye extends the concept "to cover Elizabethan gull and what in

vaudeville used to be called the straight man, the solemn or inarticulate character who allows the humor to bounce off him..."[17] Both gulls and straight men frequently appear in Shakespeare's plays; representative examples also occur in the dramas which are investigated in this study.

Examining Shakespare's fools specifically, Clara Calvo attempts to grasp their most essential attributes with the aid of four dichotomies: "dramatic character versus contemporary social type; jester versus servant; subversive figure versus scape-goat;...dominant versus dominated."[18] Some of the consequences originating from the first dichotomy have been discussed above. On the other hand, it is obvious that the audience of Shakespeare's time--who knew real professional fools--possessed a perspective on Shakespeare's fools which differs essentially from ours.

The second dichotomy reveals the ambivalent and complex social position of Shakespeare's fools. As we shall see in the chapter discussing Feste, fools in Shakespeare do not enjoy the freedom of speech and action which is frequently attributed to them. Their behaviour is strictly regulated within the perimeters of their environment. On the basis of her analysis of their dramatic discourse, Calvo points out that "...Shakespeare's fools, far from enjoying freedom of speech, as Welsford assumed..., have to resort to complex linguistic strategies to disguise their criticisms for fear of being punished."[19] They must balance between the relative freedom offered by the

jester role and the strict limitation caused by the social inferiority originating from their servant-status.

Fools seem subversive in Shakespeare's plays but their subversion frequently reinforces rather than upsets the political constellation within the plays. From another point of view, the fools serve as safety-valves in their communities. The topsy-turvydom they temporarily create helps to ease social tension and preserve the given power-structure.

As noted above, Shakespeare's fools may achieve temporary dominance over all the characters they encounter. Their relative power, however, is not sufficient enough to protect them in situations in which more powerful characters wish to exert their dominance by attacking them. As they frequently achieve momentary dominance within the realm of their otherwise characteristic dominated-status, these fool-characters create fascinating power-games in the plays' power-structure.

Fools, however, were generally not approved characters in either the Renaissance or in later periods. Sir Philip Sidney's famous diatribe from An Apologie for Poetrie against mixing elements of various genres is one of the most famous contemporary arguments opposing the omnipresence of fool-characters:

> ...all theyr Playes be neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies: mingling Kings & Clownes, not because the matter so carrieth it: but thrust in Clownes by head & shoulders, to

> play a part in maiesticall matters, with neither decencie nor discretion."[20]

Although Welsford's remark refers to a specific kind of fool, her observation reveals a general tendency: "[i]f the plays of Shakespeare are left out of account, it will be found that the court-fool does not play so prominent a part in Elizabethan drama as might have been expected."[21] By the turn of the 16th and 17th century, traditional fool-characters had lost their popularity and, as the virtues of classical aesthetics gained more and more ground, gradually disappeared from the stage. Some literary documents from the 1630-s clearly illustrate that fools were treated with contempt and generally as representatives of an old-fashioned theatrical style.[22] When the theatres reopened, the fool disappeared from the stage.

Concerning the dramatic functions of these characters in comedies, Susan Snyder makes an observation which is widely accepted among students of Shakespeare's. Discussing clowns in romantic comedies, she makes the point that "[t]he clown, whose function is usually minor, is primarily a milieu-defining figure."[23] The function of fools in tragedies is considered similar to that in comedies. Richard Hillman notes, "[c]riticism of Shakespeare's tragedies has long outgrown the impulse to excuse...the presence of fools and clowns with reference to that specious chimera, 'comic relief'."[24] One of the roles assigned to fools, in both comedies and tragedies,

is to generate a balance and a totality of theatrical experience.

Furthermore, judging the problem of fool-characters from the perspective of "mingling Kings & Clownes," Hillman argues, "...when king and clown are approached, not as characters, or even character-types, but as textual functions, it becomes clear that one possible name for such a part of dramatic speech is subversion."[25] The fool-role as a "textual function" forces apart certain textual boundaries, primarily those of the genre. The revelation that one of the roles of fool-characters is to undermine the "rules" of the genre of the plays in which they appear leads to the basic conception behind this thesis.

Hillman's above cited argument qualifies--although indirectly--three possible perspectives for investigating fool-characters; my intention is to focus on all three. Hillman remarks that "king and clown" can be approached as "characters," "character-types," and "textual functions." The three approaches define three different contexts for the analysis of dramatic characters. First, when the emphasis is on the fool-characters as "characters," the given context is determined within the individual plays in which these characters appear. In this case, the characters' dramatic function and their position in the plays' dramatic structure are central to the investigation. Second, when these characters are examined as "character-types," the context of the individual plays opens up and a wider

perspective gains dominance. The wider perspective offers comparisons and parallels from other plays of the period and casts light on the origins and sources of these characters. Third, when the roles of the characters discussed in the thesis are approached as "textual functions," it becomes possible to draw certain theoretical conclusions in connection with the plays and the given characters.

This study examines parallel comic structures and characters in three plays of different genres. In a tragedy--Hamlet--it focuses on the protagonist's fool-mask, "antic disposition", and its consequences. In a comedy--Twelfth Night--it examines the topsy-turvydom prevalent in the subplot, particularly focusing on two characters--Sir Toby Belch and Feste. Finally, in a "problem play"--as Troilus and Cressida is frequently categorized--it again selects two "fool-characters" as its object: Thersites and Pandarus. Although among these characters it is only Feste who is a professional jester, all of the characters fulfil the above described criteria for fools. Even if only temporarily, the "defects" which they all possess are "transformed into a source of delight" (Welsford) and they all can be seen as "a silly or idiotic or mad person, or one who is made by circumstances...to appear a fool in that sense" (Willeford).

Apart from the differences in genre, another reason for the specific choice of plays in the following study lies in the common supposition that

the examined plays were possibly written during the same time. The editors of The Oxford Shakespeare, for instance, decided to place Hamlet first in the chronological order of these plays (1600-1). Twelfth Night (1601) is the second and Troilus and Cressida (1602) is the third, albeit the editors remark that "[t]he degree of consensus...cannot determine whether the play [Troilus and Cressida] precedes or follows Hamlet or Twelfth Night."[26] In spite of all the uncertainties, it is widely accepted that these plays were created in a relatively short span of time. Furthermore, their similarities and differences are revealing of Shakespeare's art during these years.

Finally, as far as the approach of the analysis is concerned, the thesis is intentionally eclectic in its synthesis of various critical perspectives. In addition to the above described three techniques of analyzing fool-characters, I fuse various--both old and new--methods of criticism in order to provide a thorough study on the examined dramatic phenomena. While not wishing to appear to be an adherent of any one specific modern "school" or "tendency" of contemporary literary criticism, I have chosen to use the results and refreshing new viewpoints of these current approaches. Nevertheless, there are two basic and pragmatic perspectives which are constantly prevalent in the thesis. The first is a consciousness of the fact that the analysed texts are plays--gaining their full existence in stage-productions. Bearing this in mind, I attempt to find new and relevant

vistas on the examined characters and plays, hoping that the thesis--in parts or as a whole--may be of some interest for the producers and audiences of Hamlet, Twelfth Night, and Troilus and Cressida. On the other hand, I intend to use the results and conclusions of this thesis in my work as a university lecturer. One of the chief purposes of this study is to invite my students to analyse some of the raised questions and the thesis also serves as a catalyst for further discussions.

CHAPTER I

HAMLET'S "ANTIC DISPOSITION":

FOOLS AND FOLLY IN HAMLET

The nineteenth century taught us that Hamlet is a universal character. Altogether rather embarrassingly, Hazlitt declared, "[i]t is we who are Hamlet,"[1] and Coleridge admitted that he had "a smack of Hamlet" in himself.[2] Taine, on the other hand, claims that "Hamlet is Shakespeare."[3] Only from an extremely wide perspective can we accept the final corollary that we, both as individuals and as a group of people, unite with Shakespeare in Hamlet. This kind of "complexity" likewise dominates the interpretations of Hamlet as a character inside the dramatic structure. The "multiplicity"[4] of the play is made responsible for the protagonist's multi-faceted nature. As Harry Levin sees it in his essay on Hamlet's "antic disposition,"

> Hamlet's complexity is compounded of many simples: the frustrated scholar, the unwilling courtier, the mourner who becomes a revenger, the lover whose imagination rages like that of the lunatic or the poet, and still others--not least, the witty fool.[5]

Since Johnson's remark that "[t]he pretended madness of Hamlet causes

much mirth,"[6] it has become a consensus among students of the play that Hamlet also possesses some comic characteristics. Although there were earlier efforts to emphasise the comic features of the play, such as John Corbin's essay, "The Elizabethan Hamlet: A Study of the Sources, and of Shakespeare's Environment, to Show that the Mad Scenes Had a Comic Aspect now Ignored" from 1895[7], it is not until the middle of our century that Hamlet is seen and examined as a Fool-character or, as William Willeford more cautiously observes, when those ways were described "in which Hamlet for moments becomes a part-incarnation of the foolish presence that can be felt in the background of the action."[8] In addition to Levin's essay referred to above, which was first published in 1958, other important works from the mid-twentieth century elaborated on this theme: examples include Francis Fergusson's The Idea of a Theater (1949), L. G. Salingar's "The Elizabethan Literary Renaissance" (1955), and Geoffrey Bush's Shakespeare and the Natural Condition (1956)[9]. Essays such as these opened the way for a series of later works which have read Hamlet as a certain type of fool.

While it seems to have been agreed on that Hamlet has a "smack" of the Fool, the "smack" itself, however, is interpreted in various ways. Since the phenomenon of the Fool is quite complex and ambiguous, it offers diverse fields of associations to apply to the case of Hamlet. But can we

declare that these associations are applicable? And if we can, where and how are they articulated? To answer these questions, it is most expedient to begin with Act I, Scene 2.

As in Shakespeare's other tragedies, the opening of Hamlet is derived from ancient rituals. The opening situation of the play substantially resembles an archaic fertility rite. The Old King is dead and the New King becomes his substitute: he fulfils his predecessor's task, marries his predecessor's wife, etc. A compact description of this rite appears in Wylie Sypher's essay, "The Meanings of Comedy:"

> In its typical form the archaic fertility ceremony--involving the death or sacrifice of a hero-god (the old year), the rebirth of a hero-god (the new year), and a purging of evil by driving out a scapegoat (who may be either god or devil, hero or villain)--requires a contest or agon between the old and new kings, a slaying of a god or king, a feast and a marriage to commemorate the initiation, reincarnation, or resurrection of the slain god, and a final triumphal procession or komos, with songs of joy.[10]

This basic structure is found in all the sources of Hamlet as well as in the play itself. The "cast" is obvious enough: the Old King Hamlet has been slain, the marriage with his widow has taken place, the New King Claudius is busy establishing his new reign. In the person of the young Prince, there exists the scapegoat. Hamlet's mind is broken by melancholy; his excessive attachment to the deceased provides him with a special quality. Both his

general appearance, his "nightly colour" (I.2.68)[11] and "inky cloak" (I.2.77) and his behaviour, his "obstinate condolement" (I.2.93) and "unmanly grief" (I.2.94) indicate that he is an outcast, a kind of 'alien' in the Danish court. In addition, he is the only character who criticises the present state of affairs; he is the only abuser of the royal couple. Enid Welsford's analysis of fertility rites reveals that such rites frequently employ a grotesque fool "as a scapegoat, a kind of living mascot."[12] On the basis of her argument, it becomes clear that in his very first appearance on stage Hamlet's basic archetypical position is that of the grotesque fool.

The consequences of this implicit ritual structure also illuminate Hamlet's misogynous remarks in his first soliloquy (I.2.129-59). Welsford's examples from Marcolf to the Italian Bertoldo demonstrate that hatred of women was a frequent characteristic of fools.[13] The fool, as an outcast, stands outside the conventions of normal male-female relationships. Willeford in the chapter "The Fool and the Women" argues that

> the fool's self-sufficiency and solitariness are among the qualities that set him most apart from us, implicated as we are in networks of mutual dependency, including those of families. Yet the fool's relation to his mother...is fundamental to his show.[14]

The fundamental link is breached between Hamlet and Gertrude by the Queen's re-marriage, aggravating Hamlet's existing feelings of solitude and

marginalisation. In this way Hamlet's personal application of the proverb 'Women are frail' gains double significance: on an explicit level of the play, it originates in the Prince's melancholy and his attachment to his dead father; on an intrinsic level, it is a platitude uttered by a character whose dramatic position is close to that of a fool.

While the elements of the ancient fertility rite are palpable in the first court-scene, the other line of the plot in Act I creates a context which undermines the substantially comic ritual. The appearance of the Ghost poses several dilemmas. The confusion begins in the first scene: who is the King of Denmark? Why does the Old King, "buried Denmark," (I.1.46) return? Why is his apparition reported to the son, but not to the New King, Claudius? How can Claudius thus claim that he is "the Dane" (I.2.44)? All these questions converge in Scene 5, when we learn that the agon between the Old and the New Kings was unethical. The Old King's death was caused by "most foul, strange, and unnatural" murder (I.5.28). The Ghost reveals that the New King is not a legal ruler and not a morally acceptable husband. It is ethical transgression that disqualifies Claudius as both a New King and a husband. It is ethical transgression that builds tragedy on the foundation of comedy.

"O my prophetic soul!" (I.5.41) exclaims Hamlet; this revelation is a significant turning point in the course of the play. The disclosed

information about the murder revalues what has happened so far; among other things, it transforms the meaning of Hamlet's role. The essence of this transformation can be grasped with the aid of Henri Bergson's dichotomy of "gesture" and "action." In the essay "Laughter," he writes:

> By gestures we here mean the attitudes, the movements and even the language by which a mental state expresses itself outwardly without any aim or profit, from no other cause than a kind of inner itching. Gesture, thus defined, is profoundly different from action. Action is intentional or, at any rate, conscious; gesture slips out unawares, it is automatic....Thus, as soon as our attention is fixed on gesture and not on action, we are in the realm of comedy.[15]

Hamlet's excessive manifestation of his melancholy is counterpointed by the court's general attitude. Expressions, such as "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of the world!" (I.2.133-4), are exaggerated in the given context. Hamlet's mental state, indeed, "expresses itself outwardly without any aim or profit, from no other cause than a kind of inner itching." Prior to Act I, Scene 5, therefore, Hamlet's character is delineated in his gestures rather than in his actions. As we shall see in the plays discussed in the following chapters, representation in gestures rather than in actions is a clear-cut characteristic of fools. Fools do not take part in the mainstream of events; they preserve their role as outsiders. They do not act; they react to what is happening in the play. They comment on what they see and their comments are frequently unconscious and

automatic. Their attitudes are composed of gestures, not of actions.

In Hamlet's case, the Ghost's news about the murder shifts this perspective, which is a subtle means of creating dramatic irony. The disclosed secret, in retrospect, justifies Hamlet's behaviour, revaluing it from unconscious expression of a "kind of inner itching" into potentially conscious criticism. The revelation transforms Hamlet's "gestures" into the sphere of "actions," his role as a fool into that of a hero. Moreover, this is when the Ghost's secret transposes "the realm of comedy" into that of tragedy.

The most important organizing elements at the opening of the play are the instructions given by the dominant characters in which they charge the less powerful ones with various roles. The actors on the stage are commissioned to play actors in given situations. The play-within-a-play quality of Hamlet is underlined by Jan Kott when he remarks of Hamlet, Laertes, and Ophelia, "[t]hey are actors in a drama they do not understand, in which they have become involved," and he concludes, "Hamlet is a drama of imposed situations, and here lies the key to modern interpretations of the play."[16] Peter Ure applies this point more generally:

> a character in a Shakespeare play sometimes resembles an actor because he has to choose or refuse a part, learn it, rehearse it, try to understand it, and finally perform it (or perhaps refuse to perform it) well or ill or with one of the many gradations in between.[17]

Hamlet's commission is to revenge his father's murder. His imposed role is that of the avenger. Hamlet must first decide whether to perform or not to perform his assigned role; he chooses to perform it and then must choose how. This choice is the central issue of the play in which he is acting as well as in the play in which the actor who is performing Hamlet is playing. Compared to the commands issued by Claudius and Polonius, the Ghost's guidelines for the task are extremely unprofessional and somewhat slack:

> Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
> A couch for luxury and damned incest.
> But howsoever thou pursuest this act,
> Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
> Against thy mother aught.
>
> (I.5.82-6)

As a stage manager, the Ghost fails to provide directions specific enough for Hamlet who, on the basis of his performance in Act I, Scene 2, is a genuine but reluctant actor. His answer to his mother is an indication of his yearning to find appropriate articulation for his mournful feelings (I.2.76-86). He therein expresses his contempt for the characteristic "show-business" nature of the court when he claims, "For they are actions that a man might play; / But I have that within which passeth show" (I.2.84-5). In the "transferring" Scene 5, however, Hamlet is forced to aquire some form of acting in order to be able to fulfil his task. As a device to achieve his aim, as a role within a role, he opts for "feigned madness."

Hamlet decides "[t]o put an antic disposition on" (I.5.173), to "assume a wild fantastic manner of thought and behaviour."[18] The expression "antic disposition" is a prominent reflection of the double theatrical nature of the play, since, as C. T. Onions's Glossary elucidates, antic as an adjective means "[f]antastic, grotesque, ludicrous," while as a noun it refers to a "[b]uffoon, burlesque performer, jester."[19] G. R. Hibbard's annotation adds that "the part Hamlet will go on to play in his dealing with his opponents will have much in common with that of the witty clown."[20] This aspect is emphasised by Harold Jenkins's remark that the word antic was "particularly used of an actor with a false head or grotesque mask."[21] From a wider perspective, therefore, Hamlet's roles truly include "the frustrated scholar, the unwilling courtier, the mourner..., the lover,"[22] etc., but from the particular point of view of the play-within-a-play, his part is that of the avenger who pretends to be a clown. The roles of scholar, courtier, mourner, and lover are the consequence of the opening situation of the drama, in which the bereaved Prince arrives at court. The role of the avenger results from the actions of the play. The part of the clown adds a third layer, since this is not an imposed task but the outcome of Hamlet's decision. Borrowing Robert Weimann's distinction which he offered in his essay "Mimesis in Hamlet," the feigned madness signifies not only "an object of representation," such as the roles of the scholar, courtier, lover,

and even that of the avenger, "but also...a (nonclassical) mode of representing."[23] The role of the clown is not a static characteristic but a dynamic device of action.

Several reasons can be found to explain why this role has been assigned to the Prince. The analysis will proceed from external factors, which are independent from the world of the play, and will move towards internal elements, which are direct results of this world. To begin with, the sources of the play will be examined.

I.1. The motif of pretended lunacy appears in the first substantial source of the Hamlet-legend, in Books III and IV of Saxo Grammaticus's Danorum Regum Heroumque Historiae..., commonly referred to as Historiae Daniae (Paris, 1514).[24] Here the hero, Amleth,

> ...chose to feign dulness, and pretend an utter lack of wits. This cunning course not only concealed his intelligence but ensured his safety. Every day he remained in his mother's house utterly listless and unclean, flinging himself on the ground, and bespattering his person with foul and filthy dirt. His discoloured face and visage smutched with slime devoted foolish and grotesque madness.[25]

The name Amleth derives from the Old Norse Amlodi, which occurs as early as in Snaebjorn's lines in Snorri Sturlason's 13th century "famous hand-book of the Art of Poetry, known as The Prose Edda."[26] The name, according to Israel Gollancz, means "mad fool,"[27] and, as Harry Levin argues, "more especially, a Jutish trickster who feigns stupidity."[28]

Amleth is described as a raging and cruel idiot who occasionally impresses his companions with his sharp witticisms. One of his chief traits is that he always tells the truth but wraps it in his cryptic manner of speaking. In the episodes taking place in England, his perspicacity provides him with mysterious and supernatural attributes. As his name signifies and his characteristics prove, he is a representative of the savage ancient trickster in Historiae Daniae.

The characterisation of Amleth in the fifth volume of Belleforest's Histoires tragiques (Paris, 1570) essentially follows that of Saxo. With reference to the examples of Lucius Brutus and the Biblical King David, Hamblet, as he is called in the first existing English translation, The Hystorie of Hamblet (1608),[29] is depicted "counterfeiting the mad man with such craft and subtill practices, that hee made shewe as if hee had utterly lost his wittes."[30] Although he is more heroic than his predecessor and, for the first time, he is portrayed as melancholy, Belleforest's Hamblet originates in the trickster-tradition, just as Saxo's Amleth did. It is Belleforest's moralising tone of writing that softens the crudity of Hamlet's deeds:

> ...for that is rightly to playe and counterfeite the foole, when a man is constrained to dissemble and kisse his hand, whome in hearte hee could wishe an hundred foote depth under the earth, so hee might never see him more, if it were not a thing wholly to bee disliked in a christian, who by no meanes ought to have a bitter gall, or desires infected with revenge.[31]

The plot's brutality, however, penetrates the narrator's eulogy, and the final result is "the predominance of drastic entertainment,"[32] using Karl Kerenyi's expression. Hamlet's predecessor in both of Shakespeare's most important historical sources is a trickster character, a popular literary figure in the late Elizabethan period.[33] Saxo's Amleth and Belleforest's Hamblet contribute a crucial element to Shakespeare's protagonist by supplying his

feigned madness with archaic dimensions. An examination of the background of Hamlet's chosen role suggests that in these sources, "fool and trickster are irrevocably linked to one another."[34]

As Leo Salingar and, more recently, James Taylor argue, Hamlet's madness originates in "the conventions of satire."[35] Early modern plays such as Histriomastix (1599), Satiromastix (1601), and The Malcontent (1604) are usually referred to as representatives of the satire-tradition which influenced other dramatic works of the turn of the sixteenth century. Although the text of Ur-Hamlet, the next link in the chain of Hamlet's sources, does not survive, it is probable that a crucial element of this play was the revenger's disguise as a fool or madman. A possible result of both the Hamlet-story and the literary vogue of satire was the frequent use in certain plays of the period of foolery as a camouflage for the revenge-character. Examples include Marston's Antonio in Antonio's Revenge (1600), and Tourneur's or, more possibly according to more recent scholarship, Middleton's, Vindice in The Revenger's Tragedy (1605), who decides to "put on that knave for once" (1.1.93).[36] The parallels offered by Kyd's Hieronimo in The Spanish Tragedy (1587) are more intriguing since this play is much earlier than Hamlet or the other two examples. Hieronimo, appearing as an entertainer in the Spanish court in both I.4. and IV.1., also makes up his mind to feign foolery:

> Thus therefore will I rest me in unrest,
> Dissembling quiet in unquietness,
> Not seeming that I know their villainies,
> That my simplicity may make them think
> That ignorantly I will let them slip...
>
> (III.13.29-33)[37]

Elizabethan revenge tragedy imitated Seneca, whose avenger completes his task with the aid of some kind of trickery; it found a theatrically resourceful outlet in the disguise of pretended lunacy. The dramatic irony created when the characters in the play do not know about the assumed nature of the lunacy while the audience does, "causes much mirth," indeed. Moreover, as Jean Macintyre notes,

> ...the role of avenger seems to have struck Shakespeare as inherently comic. Shylock, Don John, Oliver, Duke Frederick, and Malvolio are all characters with a grievance in search of revenge, and they all become the butts of comic punishment; the more extreme the vengefulness, the more complete the deflation. Thus the revenge subject may have also prompted Shakespeare's use of comic form.[38]

Shakespeare characteristically places basically comic structures and characters in a tragic environment, and vice versa: elements of tragedies are used in the comedies. As Macintyre observes, the grim revenger is endowed with comic qualities. The union of the avenger and the comic pretender in one character, either invented or only reinforced by the dramatic sources of Shakespeare's Hamlet, produces a determining, chiefly comical, effect.

David Wiles in his book Shakespeare's Clown offers another reason for Hamlet's adoption of the comic role of a fool. He notes that "when Shakespeare fails to bring on a clown amongst the 'tragedians of the city' in Hamlet, he deliberately reminds the Globe audience that the real tragedians who play before them have lost the services of Kemp."[39] Wiles's point is that by the time Hamlet was performed, Will Kemp, Shakespeare's "own clown and jig maker" had already sold his share in the Globe.[40] He started to work with Worcester's Men and his place was not yet fully taken by Robert Armin, who would establish a new style of clowning in Shakespeare's company. Kemp's retirement from the Chamberlain's Men created "a significant moment in theatre history when Burbage united within Hamlet the figures of clown and tragic hero."[41]

Before examining the manifold implications of the combination of "avenger" and "comic pretender" or "clown" and "tragic hero," it is necessary to look at the internal elements of the world of the play which cause Hamlet to assume the role of pretended madness. As has been suggested earlier in this chapter, an undercurrent of the ancient fertility rite prevails in the first court-scene, in which Hamlet's implicit role is that of the grotesque fool. This rite is, however, undermined by the apparition of the Ghost of the Old King. His disclosure of the story of his murder revalues the dramatic situation and thrusts Hamlet's dramatic position into a different context.

After the expository opening of the play, a curious status quo appears:

> the problem of the center upon which the movement of the play is based may be seen in part in the absence of the fool. Just as the kingdom lacks an adequate king, so it lacks anyone in whom folly assumes a redeeming form: the hero is not really abetted by his folly, and there is no helpful jester. The ambiguity in the person of the king is reflected in Hamlet's fluctuation between the possibilities of heroism and those of folly.[42]

The vacuum, "the absence of the fool," is filled by Hamlet's chosen role. Refining Willeford's argument above, it is logical to claim that Hamlet's "fluctuation" between the roles of fool and hero occurs on two different planes of the play. In light of what the Ghost reveals, if what he says is true, Hamlet's implicit role as the grotesque fool is turned into that of the hero. When Hamlet decides "[t]o put an antic disposition on," he retains the mask of the fool: he makes the role explicit in order to fulfil his "real" and implicit role as the hero. Due to this kind of "mingled" mimesis, Hamlet's character gains its multiplicity: Hamlet is a character who is played by an actor; this character is commissioned to play a revenger, a hero; the hero decides to play a madman, which is articulated primarily in his jesting with the members of the Danish court.

On the other hand, Hamlet's clown-mask bears multiple implications itself. The connotations of this role make it ambivalent in its own right. In the Elizabethan theatre, Hamlet's role of madness is "associated with the

element of clowning, punning, and 'impertinency,' the tradition of topsy-turvydom and the 'mad' nonsensical Vice,"[43] as Weimann remarks. In addition, the tracts in A. V. Judges's collection The Elizabethan Underworld suggest that Shakespeare's audience may have considered pretended madness chiefly a device of criminals.[44] As Thomas Harman describes them in his Caveat for Common Cursitors (1566),

> [t]hese abram-men be those that feign themselves to have been mad, and have been kept either in Bethlem or in some other prison a good time, and not one amongst twenty that ever came in prison for any such cause....Some of these be merry and very pleasant; they will dance and sing. Some others be as cold and reasonable to talk withal. These beg money.[45]

The abram or abraham men were possibly named after the Abraham Ward of Bethlehem Hospital,[46] and Judges notes that "there is reason to believe that most of these wandering mad folk were impostors."[47] After the enactment of The Poor Law in 1586, the strolling abraham men were obviously considered criminals not only in moral but in legal terms. Dekker in O Per Se O (1612) points out that "[t]he abram cove is a lusty strong rogue," and they "are more terrible to women and children than the name of Raw-head and Bloody-bones, Robin Goodfellow, or any other hobgoblin."[48] Dekker's observation clearly echoes both Ophelia's disturbed reaction to Hamlet's madness ("My lord, I do not know, / But truly I do fear it" (II.1.86-7)) and the beginning of Hamlet's self-berating soliloquy at the end of Act II

("O what a rogue and peasant slave am I..." (II.2.552)).

Behind Hamlet's decision "[t]o put an antic disposition on" (I.5.173) there is a synthesis of several traditions. In Hamlet, Shakespeare combines early modern theatrical conventions and anxieties about madness with the prince/trickster figure of the source texts he employed. He creates a controversial character: a Prince who pretends to be a fool.

I.2. The world of "topsy-turvydom" caused by the Prince playing the fool is exposed in Hamlet's encounters with the members of the Danish court, who are perplexed by "Hamlet's lunacy" (II.2.49). Polonius's misinterpretation of the situation ("This is the very ecstasy of love" (II.1.103)) is a logical outcome of his basically comic character. Polonius is a member of the stock cast of ancient Roman comedy: a senile senex.[49] Both his dramatic position (a father of a young and beautiful girl) and his personal qualities (primarily his verbosity and absent-mindedness: "what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to / say something" (II.1.50-1)) furnish his part with farcical characteristics. As Susan Snyder observes, "his spiritual home is comedy."[50] His comic dimensions prompt comic decoding for Hamlet's disposition. Hamlet is mad; the "very cause" (II.2.49) of his madness is love; the possible solution is thus marriage, the general happy ending of comedy. Polonius's profound misunderstanding of the situation, complete with complacency, is presented with destroying irony:

> POLONIUS:
> Hath there been such a time--I'd fain know that--
> That I have positively said 'Tis so'
> When it proved otherwise?
> KING CLAUDIUS: Not that I know.
> (II.2.155-7)

The play's comic undercurrent surfaces in the character of Polonius as it does in that of Hamlet. The difference is that the

presentation of Polonius lacks the deeper and more sombre dimensions which appear in the Prince. In Hamlet's case foolery is a device, a mask; Polonius is genuinely foolish. Hamlet is "an artificial fool pretending to be a natural,"[51] as Levin observes; Polonius is a natural per se. Snyder in her analysis uses the dichotomy eiron and alazon in order to elucidate the relationship between these two characters. In general, she argues, "[t]he central contrast is between eiron, the ironist who seems less than he is, and alazon, the imposter who pretends to be more than he is. At the heart of comedy is their contest...."[52] It is logical to conclude, as she does, that Hamlet is an eiron-type character in relation to Polonius, who is an alazon. The case is, however, more complex, as becomes clear in their first duologue:

> POLONIUS:
> ...How does my good Lord Hamlet?
> HAMLET:
> Well, God-'a'-mercy.
> POLONIUS:
> Do you know me, my lord?
> HAMLET:
> Excellent, excellent well. You're a fishmonger.
> POLONIUS:
> Not I, my lord.
>
> (II.2.173-7)

Polonius exaggerates his inferiority by addressing Hamlet as "my lord" in each of his turns of speech. His servile attitude accords with the role of the

eiron, who is more shrewd than his opponent, rather than with that of the alazon. His wordy asides describing Hamlet's mental state make his mock-eiron role more evident--and more ridiculous. On the other hand, his speech-acts, such as question and disagreement, linguistically deny his excessive subordination to the Prince; they make him seem more powerful in the given context than, on the basis of his position and attitude, he is. In the course of the scene, he is gradually transformed into a straight-man for Hamlet's jesting, the typical fate of alazons in their encounters with eirons. Polonius's interrogations are fielded by Hamlet's witty and chiefly sarcastic responses. Making use of an old comic tradition, questions and answers are the most essential structuring components of their discourse.

While Polonius can be understood as a mock-eiron, Hamlet's part is that of a mock-alazon: that of the foolish Prince. This "casting" is reinforced by Hamlet's greeting "God-'a'-Mercy," which, as both Hibbard and Jenkins remark in their annotations, is "a polite formula used in addressing an inferior in rank."[53] During their duologue, Hamlet rigidly insists on his social superiority over the old lord and drives Polonius into embarrassing politeness; Hamlet's behaviour here is especially significant if we compare it to his generous attitude to Horatio, Marcellus, and even, in earlier scenes, to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. It is the knowledge that Hamlet's lunacy is pretended that reverses the roles and uncovers the alazon-Polonius

behind the mock-eiron and the eiron-Hamlet behind the mock-alazon. The surface situation--an encounter between a patronizing nobleman and his lord who has lost his wits--gains modified and deeper meaning when it reveals the nobleman's foolishness and the lord's devastating shrewdness. Hamlet's equivocal replies, meaningless to Polonius but meaningful to the audience, are genuine sources of fun in Act II, Scene 2, as well as throughout the play. "In this particular dialogue," Margaret W. Ferguson argues, "Hamlet disjoins words from their conventional meanings both rhetorically and thematically; in so doing he breaks the social contract necessary to ordinary human discourse."[54] As the Prince pretends madness, the common linguistic system between addressor-Hamlet and addressee-Polonius is suspended by what Ferguson calls Hamlet's "perverse" and "ungrammatical"[55] replies. In a wider context, however, the common linguistic system between addressor-Hamlet and addressee-audience is naturally sustained. This ensures that the audience does not find Hamlet genuinely mad, that Hamlet's equivocal expressions can work at all, and that these frequently absurd utterances of his are found amusing.

The oscillation between Hamlet's mock-alazon and real-eiron roles sheds light upon the odd nature of Hamlet's foolery. Fools are inferior characters in their societies; they have very little or no absolute power. Through their verbal talent, by the means of manipulation and persuasion,

nevertheless, they manage to gain some temporary relative power in encounters with their superiors. At the opening of the play Claudius makes clear that Hamlet's absolute power in Elsinore is second only to the King's; Claudius calls the Prince "[o]ur chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son" (I.2.117). This does not mean, however, that Hamlet's power could be matched to Claudius's; Hamlet's power is significant only in his encounters with the courtiers of Elsinore. When Hamlet makes up his mind to play the role of a fool, the absolute power Claudius granted him is necessarily diminished by the decision. From the perspective of the Danish courtiers, he becomes an alazon, a Prince who, due to his mental state, is unable to fulfil his social role. His chosen mask contravenes his social position. In other respects, however, with the aid of the fool-role, he procures extra-ordinary relative power in his confrontations with the members of the court. The clearest example of the power granted by his fool-role is found in The Mousetrap scene, in which, by his jesting, he becomes the most dominant character in the court. Even though the role of the fool is effective for Hamlet in this instance, he still has doubts about its suitability for him.

That the Prince finds his fool-status ignominious is demonstrated at the end of Act II, Scene 2 in his self-analytical and self-abusing soliloquy: "Yet I, / A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak / like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause" (II.2.568-70). "John-a-dreams," as the Oxford

English Dictionary explains, is "a dreamy fellow; one occupied in idle meditation."[56] Furthermore, the expression must have had some connotations referring to natural fools. Welsford, discussing the visits of English theatrical companies to Germany in the middle of the sixteenth century, makes the point that "the most important member of a troupe was always the funny man or clown, who came to be known in Germany as 'The English Fool,' or 'The English John'."[57] Moreover, Robert Armin, the clown-actor who, as noted above, succeeded Will Kemp in Shakespeare's company, portrayed "Blue John of Christ's Hospital"[58] in the last story of his Nest of Ninnies (c. 1608-9). Blue John appears in Armin's play The Two Maids of More-clacke (1606) as well; he is presented as a boorish natural fool, the stooge of the artificial fool, Tutch.

The name John-a-dreams in its primary meaning stood for "a dreamy fellow" but its connotations signified a simpleton. That Hamlet finds his role and his situation debasing is demonstrated by the first line of his soliloquy "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" (II.2.552), which sounds even more berating in the first quarto edition of Hamlet (1603): "...what a dunghill idiote slaue am I?" ($E4^{v}$). Hamlet's derogatory comments, therefore, indicate that the role of the fool is not acceptable to him unless it can be turned to plausible advantage in order to achieve his final aim. It can be logically acceptable only if it turns out to be a device propelling

further actions towards the fulfilment of the Ghost's commands.

One of the major consequences of Hamlet's mask is that all his actions toward revenge become indirect. All his moves are necessarily theatrical, or more precisely, in a more global context, they are "theatrical" theatrical actions. They provide a performance within the performance. This transposition also operates in Hamlet's dealings with Ophelia in Act III, Scene 1. Hamlet puts on his mad-prince-mask and in so doing he again violates the mutual communication system he shares with Ophelia. The markers that signal Hamlet's suspension of the common code in their discourse include repetitions ("I humbly thank you, well, well, well" (III.1.94)) and equivocal utterances ("Ha, ha? Are you honest?" (III.1.105)). When Hamlet breaks the rules of elementary politeness by instructing Ophelia "[g]et thee to a nunnery" (III.1.123), it becomes clear that the role of feigned madness has gradually become more and more radical, transgressing not only linguistic but social and moral boundaries as well. Ophelia's painful reaction to Hamlet's transformation proves that all his earlier static characteristics have been discarded and that the acquired role has gained total ascendancy in Hamlet's character:

> O, what a noble mind is here overthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,...
> The observed of all observers, quite, quite, down!
> (III.1.153-4;157)

It is a logical outcome of the double theatrical quality of Hamlet's character that a play, a theatrical event, is the centre of his plot against Claudius: "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King" (II.2.606-7). As no professional jester is employed in the court of Denmark, no clown appears in The Murder of Gonzago. Wiles argues that "Hamlet casts himself as the fool of both 'The Mousetrap' and Hamlet."[59] Taking Wiles's suggestion into consideration, it is particularly interesting that Hamlet advises the First Player to "let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them" (III.2.38-9). His main point is that clowns should not improvise; they should closely follow their own part. The instruction becomes sharply ironical because Hamlet, as the clown of the play-within-the-play, as the clown of the second part of Hamlet, and even in his role of revenger, plays extempore.

I.3. The climax of fool-Hamlet's performance is the play-within-the-play and, as Fergusson argues, "the presentation of the play is the peripety."[60] This is the scene where Hamlet achieves momentary accumulative dominance over the whole Danish court and it simultaneously reveals all the advantages and all the limitations of the fool-role. Fergusson points out that it is "both rite and entertainment, and shows the Prince as at once clown and ritual head of the state."[61]

The beginning of the entertainment is a play-miniature between clown-Hamlet and the other characters. Repeating the actions of the "play-proper," Hamlet first jests with Claudius, then he makes a fool of Polonius, asks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern a question and quibbles indecently with Ophelia (III.2.90-107). Hamlet makes them all believe that he is nothing but their "only jig-maker" (III.2.119). The scene is an emblem of the whole play and it contains two separate lines of the plot: behind the surface entertainment of comedy there is the grim hidden line of the trap for Claudius. Bergson, defining equivocal dramatic situations, argues: "[a] situation is invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted as two entirely different meanings at the same time."[62] "The entertainment" and "the rite" are the "two independent series of events" in The Mousetrap scene, and Hamlet is the chief organiser of both of them. As

he turns himself into a commentator, his dramatic point of view merges with that of the audience of Hamlet. When the audience's attention is focused on the content of the play-within-the-play (the line of entertainment), Hamlet makes us conscious that the reaction of the audience-within-the-play (the line of rite) is equally important.

The inner play begins with a dumb show. Nigel Alexander in his book Poison, Play, and Duel calls attention to this element, observing: "[t]he dumb show is used as a recurring oracular forecast of a developing pattern of disaster."[63] It is an organising constituent of the whole play from the beginning, from the appearance of the Ghost through Ophelia's description of Hamlet's odd behaviour. It returns in other scenes (e.g. the silently praying Claudius and the reappearance of the Ghost) and also becomes significant in the graveyard-scene, in which Yorick's mute skull prophesies the play's sombre conclusion. The dumb show is the essence of the inner play, just as the play-within-the-play scene is the essence of the whole Hamlet.

Hamlet plays the fool at his best and wildest and in this way he performs his hero-role the most satisfactorily. This juxtaposition of the roles of fool and hero is the most important element of the whole scene and this is the only scene in which this juxtaposition is completely successful. The "game" here between Hamlet and Claudius follows a characteristic

pattern of fool-master discourse. Clara Calvo in a chapter of her dissertation "Power Relations and Fool-Master Discourse in Shakespeare"[64] analyses similar discourse games and her conclusions are applicable to the encounter between Hamlet and Claudius. She makes use of a special concept of discourse stylistics, "face," which Erving Goffman defines as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes."[65] Both natural and artificial fools "threaten" the face, the "public self-image,"[66] of their masters and of all others engaged in interactions with them. Hiding behind his clown-mask, Hamlet also vents his "face-threats" on the members of the Danish court. His face-threatening remarks against Polonius are indirect in the beginning ("You're a fishmonger" (II.2.176)) and they become more and more blatant in the course of the play (he later calls the old lord a "calf" (III.2.101)). His face-threatening strategy is more explicit and more devastating in his conversations with Ophelia in Act III, Scenes 1 and 2.

The play-within-the-play is a complex and concealed face-threat aimed against Claudius. Its chief source is a common phenomenon in fool-master relationship, mutual knowledge. Calvo makes the following point about this device:

> Mutual knowledge, as opposed to shared knowledge, is that

> knowledge which speaker and addressee have in common and which they both know they possess. Shared knowledge is simply knowledge shared by speaker and addressee without explicitly knowing that they share it.[67]

The most significant consequence of The Mousetrap scene is that it turns shared knowledge into mutual. The revelation is, therefore, surprisingly manifold, following the rules of logical permutation. Applying Calvo's general conclusions on fool-master discourse, where mutual knowledge is a device of face-threats, we can argue that at least three pairs of presuppositions hold at the end of the play-within-the-play:

a) Claudius knows that Hamlet can threaten Claudius's face; Hamlet knows that Hamlet can threaten Claudius's face.

b) Claudius knows that Hamlet knows that Hamlet can threaten Claudius's face; Hamlet knows that Claudius knows that Hamlet can threaten Claudius's face.

c) Claudius knows that Hamlet knows that Claudius knows that Hamlet can threaten Claudius's face; Hamlet knows that Claudius knows that Hamlet knows that Hamlet can threaten Claudius's face.

If the "purpose of playing" is "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature" (III.2.22), the purpose of the play-within-the-play, the epitome of Hamlet, is to hold a mirror up to Claudius. Hamlet, "[t]he glass of fashion" (III.1.156), as Ophelia calls him, creates an endless series of reflections.

This system of presuppositions constitutes "the basis on which the ritual which Goffman has called 'the aggressive use of face-work' appears to rest."[68] Having exploited the possibilities offered by this "face-work," Hamlet manages to obtain temporary power over the King.

Attaching a farcical epilogue to The Murder of Gonzago, Hamlet stays "in character" and he continues clowning as he celebrates his triumph with jubilant singing and self-praising. When he congratulates himself on his great theatrical performance, he claims victory in both lines of the play-within-the-play. From the perspective of the "rite," he has proven Claudius's guilt and so can "take the Ghost's word for a thousand pound" (III.2.274). In respect of the "entertainment," following a prevalent trick of fools, fool-Hamlet has demonstrated that it is not he but the King who is the real fool:

> HAMLET:
> ...This realm dismantled was
> Of Jove himself, and now reigns here
> A very, very--pajock.
> HORATIO:
> You might have rhymed.
> (III.2.270-3)

"The word Horatio expects to hear is, of course, ass," as Hibbard comments. The nonce-word in the forms of paiock in the second quarto of Hamlet (1604/5) and Paiocke in the First Folio (1623) might have stood for a

nonsense word, or may be a misprint of the word paycock, a symbol of earthly vanity and pomposity. Hibbard's suggestion, moreover, that "pajock" is perhaps a distorted version of a word meaning '"clown' or something very like it"[69] reinforces what Hamlet's argument indicates: Hamlet, as the clown of The Mousetrap and the fool of the Danish court, has made a fool of King Claudius. It is also a consequence of this second triumph that, in the closet scene, Hamlet refers to Claudius as "a vice of kings" and "[a] king of shreds and patches" (III.4.88;92). The two expressions imply that Claudius is nothing but a fool of kings and a king of fools.

I.4. Hamlet continues to preserve his clown-mask in his post-Mousetrap encounter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The sober and mediocre courtiers, who are, as they say, "[h]appy in that we are not over-happy" (II.2.230), face another unsolvable riddle in Hamlet's overjoyed behaviour, which seems so disharmonious with the grim sequel of the play-within-the-play. Using excessive politeness, a device which Polonius has tried to use against the Prince, Hamlet rejects fraternity with them. His "recorder-trick" makes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's efforts utterly ridiculous and emphasises their most significant characteristic: their incompetence.

The foolishness of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, like that of Polonius, is articulated through confrontations with Hamlet. While the senex Polonius wrongly believes that love is the cause of Hamlet's "transformation," Rosencrantz and Guildenstern must be satisfied with Hamlet's conventional explanation for his odd attitude towards his friends: "I lack advancement" (III.2.327). Hamlet's answer is misleading to the courtiers but it implies that the Prince is aware of what motivates the parasites' behaviour. Rosencrantz's repeated use of the word "ambition" in his first encounter with Hamlet (II.2.223ff) demonstrates that the courtiers, like Polonius, prefer a simple explanation for Hamlet's behaviour.

As a result of their encounters with Hamlet, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern all become degraded to the level of fools. Polonius is,

however, a comic type, a senex; his bumbling characteristics delineate him as an old fool. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have no identity as individuals; in their doubled personality they represent "common sense" in the court of Denmark. Their chief effort is to behave logically according to the rules of the world of Hamlet but, from an external point of view, their dithering proves to be ridiculously illogical. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do not understand Hamlet's machinations; Polonius does not understand and misinterprets them. If Polonius's "spiritual home" is farcical comedy, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's "spiritual home" is absurd comedy, as Tom Stoppard's play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead strikingly underlines.

Hamlet, as an artificial fool who plays a natural, proves that Polonius is an old alazon, a natural per se:

> HAMLET:
> Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?
> POLONIUS:
> By th' mass, and 'tis: like a camel, indeed.
> HAMLET:
> Methinks it is like a weasel.
> POLONIUS:
> It is backed like a weasel.
> HAMLET:
> Or like a whale.
> POLONIUS:
> Very like a whale.
>
> (III.2.364-70)

Hamlet has demonstrated that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have become fools, not because of their "nature" but because of their dramatic situation and their impotence: "Call me what instrument / You will, though you can fret me, you cannot play / Upon me" (III.2.358-60), he chides them. They are natural simpletons made so by their circumstances. The Prince has made a fool of Claudius as well, even if only temporarily. Hamlet in his fool-role, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern all function in their fool-status as natural fools. The realpolitik world of Elsinore would not tolerate a professional and artificial jester: Yorick is dead and he has no successors in his job. Fools can have both assertive and subversive characteristics in the power-structure of their environment; in the Danish court, however, where the King's power is illegitimate, the artificial fool's role would necessarily be subversive. The Mousetrap demonstrates to Claudius that Hamlet is not naturally mad; Claudius realises that, behind Hamlet's clown mask, there is genuine danger threatening his royal position.

The Prince entangles himself in some kind of "aggressive use of face-work" with almost all important members of the Danish court. While his face-threats are basically unilateral towards Gertrude, Ophelia, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, characters who have not been able to fight back and harm Hamlet's "face," Claudius opens a bilateral "face-work." In order to save his own "face" Claudius publicly announces that Hamlet is

genuinely mad. Before The Mousetrap scene, he talks about Hamlet's "confusion" as something the Prince "puts on" (III.1.2.); after the scene he remarks, "I like him not, nor stands it safe with us / To let his madness range" (III.3.1-2). He deprives Hamlet of the absolute power originating in his Prince-status by declaring that Hamlet is perilously mad. The King makes a command of his earlier intention: "he to England shall along with you" (III.3.4). Hamlet's playing the fool with the members of the court forced an inverted relationship on them as the foolish Prince interacted with the courtiers. Hamlet's acting as a fool with King Claudius is a subversive role, which Claudius cannot condone: he expels the Prince. Hamlet's confinement on the sea is the exclusion of the disturbing subversive element from Elsinore.

In addition to threatening the established ord Denmark, Hamlet's fool-role undermines his hero-role as well. The Prince is unable to overcome the chosen disguise of the "antic disposition;" he is not capable of taking off the clown-mask. As Snyder argues, "Hamlet is a trapped eiron."[70] His protesting "It is not madness / That I have uttered" (III.4.132-3) does not sound convincing to Gertrude, who has not seen the Ghost, nor does it convince the audience shocked by Hamlet's excessively harsh treatment of his mother. Hamlet's fool-role, which has proven beneficial in the beginning, which has provided him "with the sought-for position of a

punctum indifferens in the midst of action,"[71] which has vigorously survived after the play-within-the-play scene, has become disadvantageous in the play's second half. The hero-role is suppressed and paralysed by the overdominant fool-role. The accidental slaughter of Polonius presents Hamlet's implicit role as a hero in a devastatingly satirical manner.

The voyage to England is the result of and the metaphor for the final futility of the actions motivated by Hamlet's fool-role. Although the disappearance of the protagonist Prince may seem an abrupt shift in the course of the play, it is a logical consequence of the play's actions. Various transpositions make the change caused by Hamlet's banishment smooth and dramatically acceptable. The Prince's grotesque philosophising "how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar" (IV.3.30-1) returns in the grave-digger's scene, in which Hamlet speculates in a noticeably similar, although more abstract and classical, manner:

> Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?
>
> (V.1.204-7)

More strikingly, Hamlet's "antic disposition" is transposed in an uncontrollable form in Ophelia's insanity. Mad Ophelia's death is the metaphorical articulation of the end of Hamlet's "madness" as well.

I.5. "Come, for England!" (IV.3.54-5) exclaims Hamlet, bidding farewell to one "o' th' worst" of "many confines, wards, and dungeons" (II.2.248-9), to Denmark, in order to find himself in more rigorous confinement, on board a "barque." The mad Prince is banished from the Danish court and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the guards of his exclusion. Tweedledum and Tweedledee are entrusted to take care of John-a-dreams as the Stultifera Navis sets sail in Act 4.

The voyage to England on a ship of fools serves manifold functions in Hamlet. First, the Stultifera Navis serves as a metaphor for the failure of Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, and, more generally, for the impasse of the actions of the play. The journey is a final submissive act in a stalemate situation.

Secondly, it opens new perspectives from the dense world of Denmark. Hamlet's remark "Denmark's a prison" (II.2.246) calls attention to the limited dramatic world of Hamlet. The protagonist's disappearance, then, opens this closed system and the tension dissolves temporarily. The sea provides a different sphere; the journey, therefore, creates an illusion that a different and open system exists outside the Danish court.

Thirdly, the image of Stultifera Navis stands for itself. It was a popular and powerful 'leitmotif' of Renaissance art and significant works of fine art and literature, like Hieronymus Bosch's The Ship of Fools (1490-

1500) and Sebastian Brant's Narrenschiff (1494), chose it as their theme. In Madness and Civilization, Michel Foucault shows how the "otherness" of "poor vagabonds," "criminals," and "deranged minds" fascinated Renaissance people and he illustrates the ways in which, "from the fifteenth century on, the face of madness has haunted the imagination of Western man."[72] Foucault argues that, after leprosy disappeared, the structure of exclusion remained. In a discussion of these "means of the abandonment of the sick" he offers some genuine associations with that of the ship of fools as well:

> ...to hand a madman over to sailors was to be permanently sure he would not be prowling beneath the city walls; it made sure that he would go far away; it made him a prisoner of his own departure. But water adds to this dark mass of its own values; it carries off, but it does more: it purifies....It is for the other world that the madman sets sail in his fools' boat; it is from the other world that he comes when he disembarks.[73]

The "barque" to England carries off folly from Elsinore, and it also purifies its passengers. The fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the faceless Tweedledum and Tweedledee of Hamlet, is death; the fate of Hamlet is maturity. The sea-voyage to England is not an ad hoc plot device in the play to mend a failure of the playwright but a natural (dis)solution of the impasse of the dramatic situation. It is a broadening shift of the overall point of view and, with its "barque," it provides a telling and richly associative metaphor, which puzzled the mind of the Renaissance Man.

"The madman's voyage," as Foucault points out, "is at once a vigorous division and an absolute Passage."[74] On the one hand, it divides off the "healthy" majority from the "sick" minority: it eliminates the disturbing phenomenon of the "different." On the other hand, for the passengers, it serves as an exit from the world of their degradation, of their madness, into the unknown "other" world. The madman's voyage "purifies:" with the aid of division, it purifies the normal of the abnormal; with the aid of passage, it forces the madmen to confront their own selves and purifies the abnormal of their abnormality. Hamlet's voyage has this double function: it serves both as a division and as a passage. The Prince who returns to Denmark is represented in different ways from the Hamlet who sets sail in Act IV. He is more experienced and gradually relinquishes the attributes which were forced on him by his fool-role. He ceases to speak in soliloquies, signalling the change in his dramatic position; he is not an outsider in the Danish court, he makes efforts to assume his full-fledged Prince-role when he declares himself "Hamlet the Dane" (V.1.253-4). He no longer exists as a link between the world of the play and the auditorium of the theatre; he ceases to be a punctum indifferens any more.

The presence of a world on the other side of the sea implies that the "other world" separate from the microcosm of the play refers to an afterlife. This is another "other world," making distinction between itself and that of

the Ghost. As an element of the confinement of the fools, the "other world" decisively alludes to the fact that folly and madness are organically attached to the ultimate transcendent, to Death. As Salingar claims, "The supreme 'antic' is Death itself."[75]

The voyage to England is the outcome of King Claudius's plotting against Hamlet. It is Hamlet's encounters with Death that trigger the considerable changes in his character. First, there is the experience of killing a human being when he slaughters Polonius; then he meets his own death twice. Before the test presented by the pirates, Hamlet must manage to escape from the King's trap by rewriting Claudius's royal order and sending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to the gallows as his substitutes. Substitution is the chief dramatic device that purifies the play from the various and modulated forms of madness and folly. Hamlet causes the death of all the characters who are infected with foolishness or insanity, and in the deaths of Ophelia, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, Hamlet's fool-part dies as well. The barque takes Hamlet to the land of hereafter, "The undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveller returns" (III.1.81-2), and it is the other world from which Hamlet arrives again. In a reappearance similar to that of the Ghost of Hamlet's father at the beginning of the play, the Prince sends letters as messengers to anticipate his arrival. The deliverers are some mysterious sailors; the

message first reaches a courtier, Horatio, then is passed on to the King, Claudius. Claudius's stunned reaction is parallel to Hamlet's incredulity when he learns of his father's Ghost: "What should this mean? Are all the rest come back? / Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?" (IV.7.48-9). For Claudius, Hamlet returns not only metaphorically but physically from his death. It is significant, therefore, that the first location in which Hamlet appears in Denmark is a graveyard.

I.6. The first part of Act V, Scene 1 provides all of the three chief kinds of comic duologues which appear in Shakespeare's plays and which are aptly analysed in Robert Wilcher's article "The Art of the Comic Duologue in Three Plays by Shakespeare."[76] First, there is the two clowns' set-piece, "in which the lead clown and the stooge share the same low social class."[77] Although this type of double-act usually "interrupts the progress of the plot and is clearly designed to display the talents of the company's clowns in an interlude of low comedy,"[78] the grave-diggers' philosophising about suicide and the "three branches" of "an act" (V.1.11) is organically embedded in the mainstream of the play; it bluntly mocks Hamlet's soliloquy of Act III, Scene 1 both in its theme and in its rhetoric.

Secondly, there is the duologue between Hamlet and Horatio. Both characters are from the main plot of the play and both of them sustain a high social status. Their double-act creates a framework for Hamlet's encounter with the First Clown. As the skulls are thrown out of the ground in a strange danse macabre, Hamlet becomes bewitched by the tangible appearance of death. Hamlet's extreme reaction is counterpointed by Horatio's calmness and indifference; Hamlet's friend's role is that of the reluctant straight-man, as his laconic replies to Hamlet's reasoning demonstrate: "It might, my lord" (V.1.80); "Ay, my lord" (V.1.85); "Even so, my lord" (V.1.133-4).

The battle of wits between Hamlet and the Grave-digger serves as a fitting example for the third type of comic duologue, "in which a character of high status consents to play straight-man to a socially inferior comedian."[79] When Hamlet exclaims, "[h]ow absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us" (V.1.133-4), there is a crucial change in the course of the play. Hamlet's own device, his own manner of conversing, is turned against him and, for the very first time in Hamlet, he is forced to accept the role of the stooge. As R. S. White observes, "it is only when these two characters meet by the graveside that Hamlet finds a true equal, one who employs humour with the same sardonic detachment."[80] It is only the Grave-digger, the earthly envoy of Death, who manages to outwit the Prince. The Grave-digger's dominating witticisms, in the form of irreverent and implicit criticism, function as a final treatment to cure Hamlet's "antic disposition."

The Grave-digger describes England as a land populated with lunatics like young Hamlet: "There the men are as mad as he" (V.1.150-1). On the other hand, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England" (IV.6.26-7) where they meet their deaths. Not "age" but Hamlet's craft "hath shipped" them "intil the land" (V.1.73), borrowing the words of the Clown's song. (The second verse of his ditty again shows that the metaphor of "shipping" stands for transgressing the boundary of human

experience and encountering the final transcendent, death.) England, the symbol of the outside world in opposition to the inner one, that of the Danish court, is therefore depicted as the land of death and madness. When it becomes obvious that the escape from Elsinore is nothing less than exceeding human existence, Yorick's skull pops out of the grave. The climactic appearance of Yorick's memento mori replicates the ending of the dance of death, traditionally concluded by a fool figure. The appearance of Yorick's skull is a further metaphor for the unequal relationship between Death and Folly, master and servant.

As Martin Walsh notes, "Yorick, the King's jester, seems to be two creatures here."[81] For the Grave-digger he was a "whoreson mad fellow" (V.1.171) and "a mad rogue" (V.1.174), who played practical jokes on his company. On the other hand, Hamlet recalls him as "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy" (V.1.180-1), who used to give the child Prince piggyback rides. These two aspects also appear in Hamlet's character, who is "a mad rogue" for the members of Claudius's court and who is a caring and sensitive young man for his friend Horatio, and possibly for the audience, too. The Ghost, appearing from the otherworld, is the messenger of the King; the skull, the remain of the dead clown, is the messenger of the Fool. Elisabeth Maslen makes the point that

> the Ghost and Yorick act as structural poles in the play. The

> Ghost goaded Hamlet with 'thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls'...; the memento mori of Yorick the Fool brings him, almost literally, down to earth again.[82]

Hamlet unites both characters in his own persona and their fatal appearances anticipate Hamlet's own fate as well.

Shakespeare creates an extremely powerful metaphor here: "Yorick's bones have been broken apart and spread to make a last resting place for Ophelia."[83] Yorick, the representative of folly, meets Ophelia, the representative of madness, in the grave. By burying Madness with Folly, both characteristics are erased from the world of Elsinore. The encounter of Yorick and Ophelia in their death is the tragic equivalent of that of the Fool and the Lady, a relationship which Shakespeare found fascinating as the examples of Rosalind and Touchstone, Olivia and Feste, the Countess of Roussillion and Lavatch demonstrate. Yorick's role is that of a surrogate-husband in Ophelia's grave. Because Hamlet has neglected and abandoned his role as Ophelia's lover in order to play the fool, Yorick replaces Hamlet in the grave. The Fool assumes the role of lover-Hamlet, reversing lover-Hamlet's assumption of the role of fool.

Although Hamlet's use of Yorick's skull as a stage property is apparently a unique innovation of Shakespeare's, Roland Frye remarks that "Shakespeare was not creating de novo."[84] Frye uses examples from Rogier van der Weyden's triptych for Jean de Braque (c. 1450) through Holbein's

The Ambassadors (1533) to Frans Hals's A Young Man with a Skull (1641) to demonstrate that the image of a young man contemplating a skull was an artistic cliche of the Renaissance.[85] Frye argues that "the skull was a memento mori symbol,"[86] which is exactly what its role is in Hamlet as well. Encountering a fool's skull, Prince Hamlet provides a motif to which Welsford offers some interesting parallel examples. The Vision of MacConglinne, an Irish story from the twelfth century, describes MacRustaing, "who lay buried at Ross Ech, and of whom it was reported that no woman could look at his grave without breaking into a loud foolish laugh or behaving in an even more unseemly manner."[87] The source of Welsford's comments is a footnote of Kuno Meyer's in which he makes the point that "[i]t would seem...that MacRustaing was a famous jester in his time."[88] Welsford, following Meyer, refers to a story from Speculum Regale by a Norwegian author from the thirteenth century who depicts a "clownish Irishman called Klefsan, whose skull, having been dug up and set upon a rock, upset the gravity of even the most melancholy person who looked at it."[89] Albeit no direct links between MacRustaing, Klefsan and Shakespeare's Yorick seem to survive, the stories of the two Irish clowns are possibly of more importance than mere curiosity. The former underlines the mysterious relationship between the Fool and women; the latter proves that the Fool is able to outwit even his most almighty master, Death. This

second conclusion prevails in the epitaph of Richard Tarleton, the clown of the Queen's Men:

> Here within this sullen earth
> Lies Dick Tarlton, lord of mirth,
> Who in his grave--still laughing--gapes,
> Sith all clowns since have been his apes.[90]

In Hamlet, however, we do not sense the glory of the Fool's victory over Death. Prince Hamlet, after a strikingly equivocal speech addressed to what used to be Yorick's face beginning, "Now get you to my lady's chamber..." (V.1.188) throws down the skull with disgust. It is significant that at this point of the play Hamlet is no longer aware of the irony of his statements: he does not yet know that Yorick's grave is indeed his "lady's chamber." His point of view ceases to merge with that of the audience; by the end of the play he has fully acquired the princely attributes. As Maslen remarks, "[a]fter confronting Yorick, Hamlet re-enters the world of men, for better or worse."[91] Hamlet's conclusion of the grave-diggers scene is summarized in his four-line verse:

> Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
> O, that the earth which kept the world in awe
> Should patch a wall t'expell the winter's flaw!
> (V.1.208-11)

The short poem is the counterpoint of the ditty that Hamlet recites after the

play-within-the-play. The earlier poem serves as the sign of the peak of Hamlet's Fool-role; the latter proves to be his farewell to the role. The revelation that Death is the Great Leveller of human beings and their efforts leads directly to the crucial points that Hamlet makes at the end of the play: "His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy" (V.2.185) and "It is but foolery....The readiness is all" (V.2.161;168).

The dialogue between Hamlet and Osric offers another parallel with previous scenes and reveals the changes of the Prince's character in the course of the play. In his court position and in his attitude Osric closely resembles Polonius. The way in which Hamlet makes a fool of him clearly echoes his duologue with the old lord in Act III, Scene 2. The obvious difference lies in the lack of Hamlet's clown-mask: the Prince, relying on his higher social status, ridicules the grandiloquent courtier on the basis of common sense. Hamlet's asides are not addressed to the audience any longer as in Act III, Scene 2: "They fool me to the top of my bent" (III.2.372); he now shares his contemptuous opinion with Horatio: "'Tis a chuff, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt" (V.2.89-90). Both the Grave-digger scene and the encounter with Osric prove that Hamlet in the end disposes of his fool-role and restores his dramatic position as the Prince of Denmark. His final answer to the earlier question "To be or not to be" is "But let it be" (V.2.290).

By the last scene, the elements belonging to the reign of comedy have been eliminated from the world of Hamlet. Although they finally disappear, these elements exist in the earlier scenes of the play and they deserve proper attention from readers, performers and spectators. By mingling features of comedy and tragedy, Hamlet is relevant and poignant for a twentieth century audience. Walter Kaiser remarks that "the greatest works of art (as Socrates seems to suggest at the end of the Symposium) incorporate both the comic and the tragic visions but inhabit a higher sphere than either."[92] This opinion is especially valid for the dramatic works of Shakespeare's time whose authors, ignoring or ignorant of the straitjacket of Aristotelian poetics, had loose and widely absorbent concepts of dramatic genres.

At the beginning of the chapter "Hamlet as a comedy," Maurice Charney observes that "Hamlet as comedy is an essential aspect of Hamlet as tragedy."[93] The line of comedy prevails through the context of tragedy and the character of the Prince serves as a link between the two. While Claudius infects the world of Elsinore with immorality, Hamlet contaminates the members of the Danish court with folly and madness. With the aid of his "aggressive face-work," Hamlet creates a counter-court of fools, of which, even if only momentarily, Claudius becomes a member after the play-within-the-play scene.

Gaining allegiance is a central issue in the play. The divided allegiance of human efforts represented by obedience to the orders and commissions given by the two kings, by Claudius and Old Hamlet, becomes levelled in the allegiance to death that unites the court in the end. In the power struggle of dominant and dominated, master and servant, Hero and Fool, Death is the final arbiter.

CHAPTER II

'FESTIVE MADNESS' IN ILLYRIA: CARNIVAL, ROLE-PLAYING, AND RENAISSANCE ENTERTAINMENT IN TWELFTH NIGHT

In The Shakespearian Tempest, G. Wilson Knight identifies six of Shakespeare's plays "where the sea, in calm or tempest, is important in imagery or action."[1] All six of the plays Knight analyses are comedies and Twelfth Night is one of them. Northrop Frye, partly following Knight, calls The Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night, Pericles, and The Tempest "'sea' comedies" (Anatomy of Criticism)[2] or "tempest comedies" (A Natural Perspective)[3]. Although it may be exaggerating to claim that Hamlet is a "sea tragedy," it is clear, on the basis of the previous chapter, that a crucial metaphor of the play is the sea as a parallel and open world compared to the claustrophobic Denmark. In both Hamlet and Twelfth Night the chaotic and perilous sea provides an element of experience, purification, and death. Alexander Leggatt's remark on Twelfth Night is relevant to Hamlet as well: "Here as throughout Shakespeare, the sea suggests both destruction and new life."[4]

In Hamlet, the sea-voyage leads out of the environment of normal

human existence in the same way as Illyria, the terminus of the sea-voyage in Twelfth Night, is beyond everyday reality. The limited and dense dramatic world of Hamlet extrudes into the natural world of the sea, while in contrast, in Twelfth Night, the natural world intrudes into the artificial Illyria, sending Viola and Sebastian as its envoys. The sea is a liberating phenomenon in Hamlet; it eases tension. In Twelfth Night it is a threatening and avaricious element and it provides a primary source of conflict.

In both Hamlet and Twelfth Night, the sea gains significance as a different or "other" world separate from the locality of the actions in the plays. A similar bipolar arrangement of the plays' worlds appears in comedies such as A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, or As You Like It in a most conspicuous way. Elaborating on this dichotomous structuring principle, Frye distinguishes in these plays the "normal world" of "experience" from a "second," a more stylised, a more refined ("green," "dream," or "pastoral") world.[5] Discussing the "'sea' comedies," he argues,

> ...as the forest in Shakespeare is the usual symbol for the dream world in conflict with and imposing its form on experience, so the usual symbol for the lower or chaotic world is the sea, from which the cast, or an important part of it, is saved.[6]

In the "tempest comedies," "the lower world of confusion" is represented by

the sea which is subordinate to the "second world," "the upper world of order," which turns out to be the centre of the plays' plots. It is especially true for Twelfth Night and The Tempest, in which "the entire action takes place in the second world."[7]

The highly stylised "second world" in Twelfth Night is, of course, Illyria. As a distinct and self-validating microcosm of the play, it possesses its own peculiarities and unique matters of interest but the presence of the sea remains palpable on various levels of the play. The appearance of Viola and Sebastian completely changes the pace of everyday life in Illyria: on a structural level, these two characters cast out of the sea disturb the equilibrium of the given world. On the other hand, the play's imagery constantly interweaves symbols and metaphors of the sea with tropes characteristic of Illyria. Orsino, for instance, in his first soliloquy juxtaposes the images of love--his most clearly defining thematic motif--with those of the sea:

> O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou
> That, notwithstanding thy capacity
> Receiveth as the sea, naught enters there,
> Of what validity and pitch so e'er,
> But falls into abatement and low price
> Even in a minute!
>
> (I.1.9-14)[8]

Love, like the sea, is a dangerously levelling and destroying element for

Orsino and this concept of his recurs in later scenes. From a third point of view, the play's language is frequently flavoured with nautical jokes and expressions. One of the aptest examples is the brief encounter between Maria and Viola:

> MARIA:
> Will you hoist sail, sir? Here lies your way.
> VIOLA:
> No, good swabber, I am to hull here a little longer.
> (I.5.194-5)

Visual or aural reminders of the presence of the sea have proven to be essential in theatrical productions of the play. In John Barton's production (Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1969) the sound of the sea was a crucial recurring element. As Karen Greif notes about the production, "...throughout the performance the distant sound of gulls and the restless sea reminded the audience of a reality circumscribing the Illyrian dreamworld."[9] More recently, in Griff Rhys Jones's production (RST, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1991) the members of Orsino's court were dressed in naval uniforms. Although the presence of the ordinary or natural world, that of the sea, remains indirect, a basic dichotomous structure of the worlds of Shakespearian comedy has been maintained in Twelfth Night.

While the play's main plot unfolds in two distinct locations--Orsino's

court and Olivia's household--Illyria itself offers some significant perspectives on Twelfth Night. Illyria is mentioned in Plautus's Menaechmi and Riche's Brusanus (published in 1592), whence Shakespeare may have taken the idea to locate the action of the play in Illyria. The shift in the setting is an innovation of Shakespeare's since the possible direct sources of Twelfth Night are not set there: Gl'Ingannati (1531, published in 1537), an Italian play of the Academy of Intronati, is located in Modena; Riche's story "Apolonius and Silla" in Riches Farewell to Militarie Profession (1581) is set in Turkey.[10]

Viola's first question "What country, friends, is this?" (I.2.1) has received various answers from the play's critics. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, linking Twelfth Night to As You Like It, remarks, "Arden, with its greenwood sunshine, has faded into Illyria, perilously near fading into Elysium. The mirth abides; but it reaches us from a distance, its dramatis personae move in the beams of a lunar rainbow."[11] Illyria, a name punning on the nouns illusion, Elysium, and delirium, promises to be a fairy-land where emotions are exaggerated and human characteristics are grossly magnified. As A. P. Riemer notes, "Illyria, her people and her society are insubstantial fantasies: this is Shakespeare's most evocative creation of a cloud-cuckoo-land."[12] Geoffrey H. Hartman argues that "the suggestive name of Illyria...is compounded, to the sensitive ear out of Ill and

liar/lyre."[13] His etymology provides some allusions to the play's crucial problems of identity and disguise, yet it reveals that Hartman finds this world disconcerting and disturbing. L. G. Salingar makes the point that "there is nothing specially Arcadian or Ruritanian about 'Illyria' in TN, and no strong local color, as there is for Modena in Gl'Ingannati, or for Venice in Shakespeare's other plays."[14] On the other hand, Leslie Hotson observes that Shakespeare's contemporaries associated Illyria with "wild riot and drunkenness, and the lawless profession of piracy."[15] Supporting his argument with examples from Nashe, Fleming, and Shakespeare, Hotson points out that Illyria signified something "robustious" for the Elizabethan audience. Even if, therefore, Illyria, the "Greek and Roman name for the dist[rict] on the E[astern] shore and inland of the Adriatic Sea"[16] has no more geographical interest than Vienna in Measure for Measure or Bohemia in The Winter's Tale, we can argue that it refers to a Janus-faced location. The fine-sounding name conjures a kind of "cloud-cuckoo-land" of illusions, while, from another point of view, it can be associated with licentious lawlessness.

The double nature of Illyria is manifestly represented by the two localities of the plot. The artificial and narcissistic microcosm of Orsino's court is counterpoised by the "robustious" topsy-turvydom raising its head in Olivia's household. Several critics observe that the characters in the

subplot unfolding in Olivia's household are "very English"[17] in contrast with the exotic Mediterranean romantics inhabiting Orsino's environment. On the level of the thematic structure of the play, "the sub-plot action reproduces the main action like a comic mirror-image, and the two of them are joined to form a single symmetrical pattern of errors in criss-cross."[18] The romantic love-plot is opposed to the coarse flesh-and-blood misbehaviour of Sir Toby Belch and his companions.

Life in Illyria is out of tune at both ends of its bipolar arrangement. In Orsino's exclusively male court a highly refined and artificial milieu dominates, while Olivia is surrounded by the representatives of a rather down-to-earth, occasionally even vulgar, festive mood. In Hamlet the dichotomy of high seriousness and comic overtones, that of the hero and the fool, exists chiefly in a single character in a tragic environment. In Twelfth Night a similar duality is represented using a different technique: the dichotomy is marked by the arrangement of the main action and the sub-plot, by the separation of the localities of the play's action. Leggatt points out, "[t]he difference between the two plots is finally not just a matter of dramatic idiom or technique, but a basic difference of vision."[19] Two distinctly different dramatic perspectives function throughout Twelfth Night, gaining dominance over each other or fading away at different phases of the play.

Two characters create cohesive links between the two different perspectives. Viola, as a catalyst-character in Twelfth Night, takes advantage of her disguise. She appears as a woman to some, as a man to others, and as something else entirely to the Captain: "Thou shall present me as an eunuch to him" (I.2.52). On a lower social level, Feste serves as a bridge between the two households and the two plots. His fool-status is a kind of disguise, too; he is an artificial jester who hides his penetrating perspicacity behind the fool-mask. Viola and Feste embody the unique texture of appearance and reality in Twelfth Night.

"The plot is a pretext. The theme of the play is disguise,"[20] summarises Jan Kott. Kott argues that Viola's disguise is crucial in Twelfth Night but his cited observation opens other important aspects on the play. Greif notes, "[r]ole-playing, whether it be a deliberate choice like Viola's disguise or the foolish self-delusions that Orsino, Olivia, and Malvolio all practice upon themselves, leads to a general confusion of identity within Illyria."[21] All characters of the sub-plot also put on some kind of disguise, consciously or unconsciously. Feste as an artificial fool is forced to act as if he were witless. His situation, characteristic of artificial fools, is aptly described by Willeford: "In moments when the nonfool might say with conviction, 'I am I,' the fool would say in effect--with a nonfool translating for him--'I am as though the same as myself.'"[22] The

consciousness that the fool is aware that he is playing a role provides him with a certain relative power over other characters in the play, over those who think they are "nonfools." In addition, Feste dresses up as a curate, creating an especially complicated pattern of illusion and reality. Sir Toby and his company pretend that they believe Malvolio is mad indeed. Furthermore, Sir Toby appears as a "pander" as much as Sir Andrew as a wooer. Greif summarises: "[r]ole-playing, deceptions, disguises, and comic manipulations provide the fabric of the entire action."[23] Terence Eagleton comes to similar conclusions when he notes, "[t]hroughout the play, roles adopted as concious illusions backfire and begin to control reality itself, to a point where the frontier of reality and illusion is dangerously obscured."[24] Eagleton differentiates "consistent" and "inconsistent" role-playing in Twelfth Night; he argues:

> Consistent role-playing allows conjunction and communication, a reciprocal confirmation of identity and thus of sanity; inconsistent role-playing creates insanity, unreality, as the general confusion of identities at the end of the play suggests.[25]

The series of "inconsistent role-playing" creates the feeling in the audience that a kind of theatrical "madness" is dominant in Illyria. The comical overtones of the overall ascendancy of madness are emphasised by M. C. Bradbrook when she suggests that "It would be possible to take The

Hospital of Incurable Fools (1600), translated from the Italian of Tomas Garzoni, and assign every one of the characters in Twelfth Night to one or other of the thirty different wards for different sorts of fool...."[26] On the basis of Bradbrook's argument it is logical to infer that at the centre of Twelfth Night there is a dominant pattern of "the feast of fools." The madness prominent in the play is "festive madness," borrowing the term from Mikhail Bakhtin. He describes "festive madness" as "a gay parody of official reason, of the narrow seriousness of official 'truth.'"[27] Kott's statement "[t]he disguise is a masquerade"[28], therefore, laconically announces that the dramatic devices of disguise, role-playing, and other means of deception serve as technical signifiers of a suffusing festive mood.

Twelfth Night, the feast of Epiphany is the last night of Christmas celebrations and, as Geoffrey Bullough comments, it "was traditionally a time of Misrule, a Saturnalia when Jack was as good as his master and things went topsy-turvy."[29] Although David Daniell argues strongly that the play "is clearly not set at Twelfth Night,"[30] the title emphasises the festive and carnivalesque features of the play. As many critics have noted, the subplot unfolding in Olivia's household constitutes a Feast of Fools or Misrule, with a spirit of Saturnalian celebrations.[31]

The upside-down world characteristic of Saturnalian or carnivalesque celebrations is colourfully described in Sir Thomas Chaloner's

"Englisshed" version of Erasmus's Praise of Folly,

> ...it is not vnknowen, how all humaine thynges lyke the Silenes or duble images of Alcibiades, haue two faces muche vnlyke and dissemblable, that what outwardly seemed death, yet lokyng within ye shulde fynde it lyfe: and on the other side what semed life, to be death: what fayre, to be foule: what riche, beggerly: what cunnyng, rude: what stronge, feable: what noble, vile: what gladsome, sadde: what happie, vnlucky: what friendly, vnfriendly: what healthsome, noysome.[32]

From the most basic linguistic level of the dialogues through the arrangement of the localities and the structure of the plots to the overall philosophical and ideological point of view of Twelfth Night, the most significant phenomenon of the play is a mode of irony: coincidentia oppositorum. This concept, used by the 15th century German philosopher Nicholas of Cusa as "the least imperfect definition of God,"[33] permeated Renaissance philosophy. It appears as a primary structuring and regulating principle in thought and perception and it also filters through the various forms of arts. The concept coincidentia oppositorum is frequently elaborated on in Erasmus's works and is central in his Moriae encomium. In certain ways, coincidentia oppositorum comprises the core of Shakespeare's comedies, including Twelfth Night. As Walter Kaiser notes, "[w]hether those opposites are jest and earnest, praise and censure, or wisdom and folly, it is the coincidentia--the synthesis, the equipoise, the concord--which produces the quality of irony."[34] The dynamism of this principle invites

dramatic presentation and this dynamic view is articulated in Twelfth Night. It is crucial to the understanding of the relevance of the topsy-turvydom described above by Erasmus's Stultitia.

While discussing fools and folly in the play and focusing primarily on Feste, Sir Toby, and their company, it is particularly important to bear in mind the consequences of the ironical view based on coincidentia oppositorum.

II.1. Although the "holiday-sentiment" is characteristic of all of Illyria, the Saturnalia is celebrated mainly in Olivia's household. The central character of the revels is Sir Toby Belch, who displays some features of the Lord of Misrule himself. His name, as those of other characters in Illyria, illustrates his dramatic role and personal attributes. His first name recalls the Biblical Tobit, who is advised to "eat, drink, and be merry." Of his surname, Terence Hawkes remarks that it "reinforces the Bakhtinian principle that Carnival asserts the lower aspects of the body (the belly) above the higher ones (the head)."[35] Sir Toby Belch's opening lines set the tone for his whole character and reveal the nature of the play's subplot as well:

> SIR TOBY BELCH:
> What a plague means my niece to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life.
> (I.3.1-2)

Sir Toby's appearance contrasts sharply with the sombre expectations Valentine's description of Olivia's seven-year mourning creates for the audience. Olivia's excessive and obstinate insistence on the established civilized rules of keeping "A brother's dead love...fresh / And lasting in her sad remembrance" (I.1.30-1) is counterpoised by an equally excessive and obstinate suspension of those moral obligations. Enjoying life is Sir Toby's chief principle, underlining the bodily aspects of existence. Rejecting the

"unnatural" dominance of a civilized world, he opts to be uncivil and emphasises the natural, animal-like, side of life. Into the sombre and tragic environment of Olivia's household, he introduces the perspectives of grotesque comedy.

Sir Toby and his companions embody a distinct regulatory viewpoint which Bakhtin calls "grotesque realism." Bakhtin argues that grotesque realism originates in the culture of folk humour; it is based on "the material bodily principle" and he notes that "the bodily element is deeply positive."[36] Defining the concept of grotesque realism, Bakhtin indirectly refers to the dichotomous philosophical approach, originating in coincidentia oppositorum, of the Renaissance Mind:

> The essence of the grotesque is precisely to present a contradictory and double-faced fullness of life. Negation and destruction (death of the old) are included as an essential phase, inseparable from affirmation, from the birth of something new and better.[37]

Bakhtin investigates the phenomena of grotesque realism in the context of Renaissance culture and thus is able to demonstrate the shift that appears in later centuries in the evaluation of "the material bodily principle." While Bakhtin is keen to suggest that the exaggeration of "all that is bodily...has a positive, assertive character,"[38] modern critics find it repulsive, unsound, and thoroughly negative. The gradual divergence in the reception of

elements that articulate this bodily principle is clearly manifested in the modern interpretations of Sir Toby Belch's character.

Bill Alexander, the director of Twelfth Night at the RST in 1987, observes that the modern rejection of Olivia's cousin originates in the abyss between the scale of values of Elizabethan and modern English society. He claims that "Sir Toby represents a classic, red-necked, cock-fighting, bear-baiting, stone-throwing Elizabethan," and remarks that he hates the "sense of a jolly Sir Toby."[39] In Bill Alexander's production, Sir Toby appears as a sadistic rogue exploiting the masochistic Sir Andrew. Alexander's interpretation strikingly measures the gap alienating the modern and Elizabethan audiences. As Bakhtin notes, the peculiar aesthetic concept manifested in grotesque realism "differs sharply from the aesthetic concept of the following ages."[40] The interpretation of Sir Toby's part, therefore, is determined by two dualities. From an external point of view, his evaluation is poised between the different approaches of the Renaissance and the modern audience to grotesque realism. Within the play, he represents the suspension of everyday order and morality in contrast to the characters who appear in the main plot, those who try to yield to the established moral and social rules.

In forming the character of Sir Toby Belch, Shakespeare draws on traditions originating in classical mythology. Among the popular figures of

Greek and Roman antiquity, characters such as Dionysos (Bacchus) and Heracles (Hercules) offer the most significant parallels. The former, the god of wine and revelling, is echoed in Sir Toby's debauchery. The latter, the hero of the twelve immense labours, is a precedent for Sir Toby's mix of elements of "heroism" and comedy. Bakhtin, discussing the prehistory of novelistic discourse, observes:

> Hercules the monstrous glutton, the playboy, the drunk and scrapper, but especially Hercules the madman--such were the motifs that lent a comic aspect to his image. In this comic aspect, heroism and strength are retained, but they are combined with laughter and with images from the material life of the body.[41]

The balance of heroic and comic aspects is upset in the character of Sir Toby Belch; the potentially heroic traits of the knight Sir Toby are subordinated to the farcical in the comic environment.

The comic environment is determined by the Saturnalian atmosphere of the play's subplot. Welsford, on the basis of Lucian's Saturnalia, gives a compact description of the merry festival, the "Liberties of December:" "when the winter darkness was lightened by the restoration of the golden reign of Saturn, and for a short while masters and slaves changed places, laws lost their force, and a mock-king ruled over a topsy-turvy world."[42] Like that of its ancestor Saturnalia, Carnival's distinguishing feature was the suspension of everyday order. "During

carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom," Bakhtin notes and adds, "[w]hile carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it:"[43]

> The feast was a temporary suspension of the entire official system with all its prohibitions and hierarchic barriers. For a short time life came out of its usual, legalized and consecrated furrows and entered the sphere of utopian freedom. The very brevity of this freedom increased its fantastic nature and utopian radicalism, born in the festive atmosphere of images.[44]

It is the overpowering and omnipresent principle of Carnival that explains Sir Toby's paradoxical remark, "care's an enemy to life." In the middle of the Carnival, Sir Toby fulfils the role of the Lord of Misrule; he is the chief representative of the Carnival principle:

> MARIA:
> Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order.
> SIR TOBY:
> Confine? I'll confine myself no finer than I am.
> (I.3.7-9)

With a "tipsy quibble,"[45] Sir Toby rejects Maria's advice to adjust himself to the imposed rules of the given order. The limitlessness, granted by his dramatic status as the centre of topsy-turvydom, is physically articulated in his appearance, in his bodily characteristics.

In the Shakespearian canon, the prototype of the roguish knight who

appears on the stage as a Lord of Misrule is, of course, Falstaff. Both Sir John and Sir Toby incorporate disorder and malfunction by their appearance, by their fatness. They are direct successors of the Carnival Kings. David Wiles points out, "Carnival is always portrayed as a fat man." Wiles illustrates his statement using John Taylor's Jack-a-Lent (1617), in which Taylor describes Carnival, a personification of Shrove-tide, as a "waddling,...fat, gross, bursten gutted groom,"[46] who is usually accompanied by the thin Jack-a-Lent. Falstaff and Belch originate directly from the traditions of folk festival celebrations, appearing on the stage as the descendants of the morality play character Gluttony.

Carnival is deeply rooted in folk culture. Bakhtin observes, "Carnival, with its complex system of images was the fullest and purest expression of the culture of folk humor."[47] Bakhtin finds three distinct forms of the manifestations of this folk culture: ritual spectacles, "carnival pageants, comic shows of the market place"; comic verbal compositions, "parodies both oral and written"; and various genres of billingsgate, "curses, oaths, popular blazons."[48] It is striking to realise that both the Falstaff-plays and Twelfth Night offer a great abundance of dramatic adaptations of these sorts. In Twelfth Night, for instance, the prison scene (Act IV, Scene 2) serves as a "ritual spectacle," while Sir Andrew's written challenge against Cesario/Viola (Act III, Scene 4) is both a parody and a

kind of clumsy billingsgate.

Focusing on the close links between Carnival and folk culture, it is curious that two knights, two aristocrats, become Lords of Misrule. Their social status becomes dubious and amorphous; first they seem more mobile in society than other characters but their mobility eventually becomes more and more restricted. Their direct link to the characters of the main plot is contravened by their clown-like dramatic traits. Falstaff is allowed to assist with Prince Hal's education but not with King Henry V's rule. Toby's authority operates only below-stairs; his younger niece rules the house.

Henri Bergson defines three major principles of comedy: repetition, inversion, and reciprocal interference. In the case of Sir John and Sir Toby, the inversion in their social and dramatic positions is the main source of their comic characteristics. Barbara A. Babcock discusses "symbolic inversion," pointing out that it is "central to the literary notions of irony, parody, and paradox."[49] She defines the phenomenon "symbolic inversion" as:

> any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms, be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, or social and political.[50]

Both Sir John and Sir Toby "invert," "contradict," and "abrogate" the "commonly held cultural codes, values and norms," creating comic effects in

an otherwise serious environment. As a device of the plays' structuring principle coincidentia oppositorum, symbolic inversion is the dominant method of delineating the characters of Falstaff and Belch.

In all the Shakespearian comedies, symbolic inversion is critical to the structure of the plays. It appears in motifs such as disguise, substitution, and confusion of identity. Symbolic inversion dominates Twelfth Night and explains the importance of the play's subplot. Hartman points out that "Twelfth Night gives an extraordinary amount of theatrical time to Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and to clowning generally."[51] The festive world of Sir Toby and his company creates a parallel and alternative system in the play. In this alternative system, the relationship between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew is particularly revealing. As Salingar notes of these two characters, "[t]hey are contrasted as shrewd and fatuous, parasite and gull, Carnival and Lent; but they are both, in their differing ways, 'sots', and both gentlemen."[52] They are complementary characters in accordance with the traditions of the topsy-turvy world represented in the subplot. They are similar in their social and dramatic positions: they are aristocrats and they appear as fools to the audience of Twelfth Night. They, like Falstaff and Slender, emerge from the folk tradition in which the plump Carnival escorts the thin Lent. They manifest the well-established dramatic couple of the shrewd parasite and the

simpleton dupe. And they represent another literary tradition, the pairing of a knave and a fool. While Maria is concerned about Sir Toby Belch's roguish behaviour--"That quaffing and drinking will undo you" (I.3.13)--she does not hesitate to point out that Sir Andrew Aguecheek is a "foolish knight" (I.3.14), "a very fool" (I.3.22). Sir Toby appears in Maria's presentation as licentious; Sir Andrew is introduced as a natural fool.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek's surname refers to a bodily disfunction in the same way as Sir Toby's. Belch implies excess and fatness; Aguecheek lack and leanness. The names confirm that the two characters complete each other and that they are mutually dependent. Sir Toby's remark about his companion is a source of irony:

> SIR TOBY:
> He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria.
> MARIA:
> What's that to th' purpose?
> SIR TOBY:
> Why, he has three thousand ducats a year.
> (I.3.18-20)

As Onions's Glossary demonstrates, the word "tall," in addition to its modern meaning of "great height," meant "Comely, fair, fine, handsome" as well as "Good at arms, strong in fight, valiant" to the Elizabethans.[53] First, therefore, Sir Toby's remark is punning due to the polysemy of the word "tall." Furthermore, if Sir Andrew is as tall, that is valiant and handsome,

as "any's in Illyria," Sir Toby's statement casts critical and ironical light on all the inhabitants of Illyria. From a third point of view, it is revealing that the sign of being "tall" in Illyria is "three thousand ducats a year." For Sir Toby, as for Feste, money is the chief motivation driving his activities.

In their first scene it becomes obvious that Sir Andrew is lost in Illyria's social environment and Sir Toby, taking advantage of Aguecheek's ineptitude, manipulates the foolish knight in order to support his own debauchery. Sir Andrew's insecurity is clearly delineated by his questions "What's that?" (I.3.47); "Is that the meaning...?" (I.3.55); "What's your metaphor?" (I.3.69). Aguecheek is a committed romantic trapped in the holiday-world of Illyria and all his efforts to break out of it are blocked by the Lord of Misrule, by Sir Toby Belch. The last part of their final duologue at the end of Act I, Scene 3, illustrates the conspicuous difference between the play's two aristocratic revellers:

> SIR TOBY:
> What shall we do elsewere we not born under Taurus?
> SIR ANDREW:
> Taurus? That's sides and heart.
> SIR TOBY:
> No, sir, it is legs and thighs...
>
> (I.3.13-25)

In the Zodiac, Taurus governs neck and throat, so both Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are wrong in their statements. Sir Andrew is rejected by Sir Toby

and his incorrect statement is replaced with Sir Toby's equally wrong one.

As J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik remark, "It is characteristic of Sir Andrew to err involuntarily and of Sir Toby to do so perversely."[54] Several of Sir Toby's arguments characterise him as a kind of artificial fool who exposes Sir Andrew as a natural. One of the most ironic examples of Sir Toby's fool-like choplogic illustrates that his dramatic position, in relation to Sir Andrew, is frequently poised strikingly close to that of the play's professional artificial fool, Feste:

> SIR TOBY:
> Approach, Sir Andrew. Not to be abed after midnight is to be up betimes, and diliculo surgere, thou knowest.
> SIR ANDREW:
> Nay, by my troth, I know not; but I know to be up late is to be up late.
> SIR TOBY:
> A false conclusion. I hate it as an unfilled can. To be up after midnight and to go to bed then is early; so that to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed betimes.
>
> (II.3.1-9)

Sir Andrew's desperate insistence on common sense and everyday reality is destroyed by Sir Toby's silly syllogisms. The Lord of Misrule of Twelfth Night does not tolerate elements of normal and sober thinking; he hates an "unfilled can," a metaphor of the end of celebrations and holidays. Sir Andrew, with his feeble efforts to adhere to normal social rules, is futile and inept. Malvolio, similarly, first voluntarily and later involuntarily, is

excluded because of his obstinate determination to maintain order in an upside-down world. Sir Andrew's role in his relationship with Sir Toby is analogous to Malvolio's in the general structure of the play.

In A Natural Perspective, Frye analyses a curious couple appearing in comedies, the clown and the idiotes. He points out that these characters "remain isolated from the action, spectators of it, and identifiably with the spectator aspect of ourselves"; and argues that the clown "preserves a curious aloofness from the comic action."[55] The clown is linked by "antagonism" with the role of the idiotes, "in which a character personifies a withdrawal from the comic society in a more concentrated way."[56] It is obvious, as Frye argues, that "[i]n Twelfth Night the clown is Feste and the idiotes Malvolio."[57] On the other hand, focusing only on the relationship of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, it is clear that these two characters frequently bear a certain resemblance to a clown and an idiotes. Like Malvolio, Sir Andrew becomes vulnerable because he aspires to marry Olivia. He tries to withdraw from the licentious world of Illyria ("No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer" (III.2.1.)) but Sir Toby mocks and bullies him until he gives in and stays. Both Sir Andrew and Malvolio are finally rejected and their disappointment reaches a disastrous level at the end of the play. While Malvolio is the idiotes and the scapegoat in almost all his relationships in the play, Sir Andrew appears as an idiotes and a scapegoat chiefly in his

relationship with Sir Toby Belch. In consequence, Sir Toby, in connection with Sir Andrew, presents numerous parallels with a clown. While Sir Toby squeezes money out of Sir Andrew, Feste manages to make all the chief characters of the play pay for his services. As Sir Toby becomes a clown from a particular perspective, his dramatic position highlights the role of the play's professional fool, Feste.

Michael Billington argues that a quartet of RSC directors he interviewed agrees that "Sir Toby is the motor that drives the plot and Feste the character who determines the mood."[58] Eagleton emphasises the significance of the contrapuntal positions of Belch and the Clown. He suggests that "[t]he Clown is in some senses the opposite of Belch, in some ways a parallel figure: they are positively related as polarities."[59] Belch's "bodily fullness" is contrasted with the Clown who is "roleless, a negative, disembodied presence." Belch's freedom is signified "in terms of a freedom to be himself," while the Clown is "all-licensed and thus a limitless nothing, a merely linguistic mode of existence, fast talking but inactive."[60] Eagleton's suggestion regarding the polarities of Belch and the Clown is easy to accept; his description of the Clown, however, requires some refinement.

II.2. Feste, like Sir Toby, is introduced in a duologue with Olivia's gentlewoman, Maria. She chides Toby and Feste equally for their licentious behaviour, which in Feste's case denotes truancy. The first sentence in the scene reveals the fool's characteristic "curious aloofness;" Maria's "tell me where thou hast been" (I.5.1) casts light on Feste's mysterious and elusive attributes. As C. L. Barber argues,

> We can notice here that the fool in Twelfth Night has been over the garden wall into some such world as the Vienna of Measure for Measure. He never tells where he has been, gives no details. But he has an air of knowing more of life than anyone else--too much, in fact.[61]

Feste's knowledge is relevant in small practical matters as well as in his well-structured philosophising.

The Clown's all-licensed existence is questioned by the threatening alternatives of being "hanged" or "turned away...for being so long absent" (I.5.15-16). With the aid of the devices of discourse stylistics, Clara Calvo demonstrates in her dissertation that

> contrary to much current critical opinion, the fools in Shakespeare are not licensed jesters who enjoy unlimited freedom of speech. Feste, Lavatch and Lear's Fool need to resort to complex linguistic strategies if they want to make their criticisms and, at the same time, avoid being punished.[62]

Barbara Swain underlines a fool's derogatory social position, pointing out

that "[w]hatever the privileges of the fool, his position must have been deeply humiliating to any jester who had ambition for worldly respect."[63] That Feste has ambition for "worldly respect" is clearly demonstrated in his conflict with Malvolio; in the prison scene (Act IV, Scene 2), the Clown ceases to be "roleless"; his performance in the role of Sir Topas is the play's crucial sequence.

Behind Feste's "limitless nothingness" there is a paradox pointing towards the already-discussed structuring principle of coincidentia oppositorum. Expressing his manifesto, "Better a witty fool than a foolish wit" (I.5.32-3), Feste defines his dramatic role as that of a wise fool. Kaiser observes:

> The function of the professional fool, in imitation of the natural fool, is to create laughter....The function of the wise man, on the other hand, is to teach us the truth. Out of the paradoxical concepts of Kempis and Cusanus, the Renaissance developed the oxymoronic concept of the wise fool, who embodies the paradoxes and capitalizes upon the equivocation in the word wit.[64]

According to Kaiser, it is Erasmus who is primarily responsible for the "first modern, and most influential, appearance"[65] of the wise fool, above all, in the figure of Stultitia in Moriae encomium.

As a successor of Erasmus's Stultitia, Feste's chief device is quibbling; as a "corrupter of words" (III.1.35), he is a masterful exploiter of language.

As Sir Toby does, he upsets the mournful atmosphere in Olivia's household; his presence and his irreverent jests contravene the rules of a civilized everyday order:

> OLIVIA (to attendants):
> Take the fool away.
> FESTE:
> Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.
> (I.5.35-6)

Feste's most characteristic linguistic and social game is to argue that it is not he but those with whom he interacts who are the real fools. Calvo remarks, "[e]xposing their audience to the polysemy of the word fool is the eternal, ineluctable fate of artificial fools."[66] As Eagleton elucidates, "the Clown creates paradox by using the word [fool] in two senses, as professional occupation and character-judgement."[67] Feste delivers his "character-judgements" on Olivia, Malvolio, and Sir Toby or whomever he encounters in the course of the play. The dramatic significance of his first appearance in Twelfth Night is that his interpersonal and hierarchical position is exposed to the audience.

Analysing the fool-mistress duologue in the play, Calvo demonstrates that the terms of the relationship between Feste and Olivia are, "to a certain extent, negotiable." On the basis of their first duologue (Act I, Scene 5), it is obvious that "following a successful negotiation, Feste and Olivia

may appear to have, momentarily, a rather intimate, quasi-symmetrical relationship."[68] Two of Calvo's conclusions are particularly interesting. The first is that the fool-mistress relationship is close to a courting relationship: "Feste needs to woo Olivia in order to obtain permission to amuse her (so he can exercise his role of household jester); he also has to woo her to obtain her consent not to exert her authority."[69] This dependence on Olivia's consent and the informality of their relationship provides textual support for those productions of Twelfth Night in which the fool appears to be in love with Olivia.[70] Hartman, however, points out that behind the "striving to please every day"-attitude there hides the fate of not only the lover but that of the courtier and of the actor as well.[71] Hartman's observation emphasises that the three characters of lover, courtier, and actor are united in the role of Feste: the first appears as a potential emotional or psychological attribute; the second signals the fool's subordinate social situation; the third--exceeding the play's framework--provides Feste with the consciousness of the theatricality of his role: he is aware that he plays a role.

Calvo's second conclusion concentrates on the fact that Feste and others in Olivia's court are subordinated to a lady. Calvo demonstrates that "fool-mistress duologues serve a purpose in the dramatic fabric of the play: they construct authority for a woman, whom [sic] by reason of her gender is

not entitled to it."[72] In particular, the second duologue between Olivia and Feste (V.1) "constitutes a failure to negotiate social roles successfully and has to end, therefore, with a display of authority on Olivia's part which imposes the mistress-servant relationship by force."[73] Susan Snyder suggests that in the Elizabethan period, "one can see the beginning of a comic tradition of the aware, aggressive woman which is not confined to Shakespeare." Snyder finds two basic roots of this phenomenon: the rites of spring with their traditions such as the figure of May queen and the fact that "courtship, the standard situation of romantic comedy, was one of the few situations in which women could, in literary tradition and sometimes in fact, exercise power over men."[74] Olivia possesses the greatest absolute power in her household; all its members, therefore, are, in varying degrees, subordinated to her power. This power-structure provides the context in which Feste's interactions with other characters in the household ought to be interpreted. This is the context which determines Feste's conflict with Malvolio.

Malvolio's lines reveal his animosity towards the fool:

> I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal. I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more wit than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already. Unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest I take these wise men that crow so at these set kind of fools no better than the fools' zanies.
>
> (I.5.79-85)

Malvolio attempts to convince Olivia that Feste is a "barren" entertainer, a fool who is not funny any longer. Malvolio's aspersions call attention to the amorphous and elusive nature of Feste's character. Frankie Rubinstein defines the word "rascal" as "[a] castrated or impotent man." She bases her reference on sources such as Francis Grose's Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (1971), where "rascal" is referred to as "[o]riginally meaning a lean shabby deer, at the time of changing horns, penis & c., whence...is conceived to signify a man without genitals...."[75] Although there is a reference in the text to Feste's "leman" (II.3.24), she never appears on the stage. Willeford's general description of fools, therefore, proves to be relevant to Feste as well, arguing that the fool "is outside the rush of weddings, outside the personal encounter between man and woman. His sexuality, like everything about him, assumes forms expressive of his indeterminate status on the border between cosmos and chaos."[76] This indeterminacy is underlined by Terry Hands, the director of Twelfth Night at the RST in 1979: "...all the best Festes, for me, have been sexless in the right sense--I mean, not sexual participants in the play, as opposed to everybody else; and played by actors with that young-old quality."[77] It is significant in Twelfth Night that the two characters who manage to create a bridge between the two plots both have an "indeterminate" sexual status. Although different from Feste's "barrenness," Viola's sexual identity also remains uncertain until the very

end of the play.

Malvolio's criticism of the fool is double-edged. The steward argues that the fool is incapable of performing either professionally or sexually. It is common in criticism of Twelfth Night to analyse Malvolio, as Maria does at II.3.135, as an archetype of the Puritan character, although Quiller-Couch remarks that "Malvolio, of course, is not a 'Puritan' in any historical sense, but a Puritan only as an incarnation of the abstract Puritan's besetting foible--that of self-righteousness, of making himself a judge of others."[78] Taking Quiller-Couch's remark into consideration, it is still tempting to argue that the Olivia-Feste-Malvolio triangle presents a model relevant to Elizabethan society. Malvolio addresses his criticism of Feste to Olivia, in order to enhance his own position in the household. Feste and Malvolio are not direct enemies in Illyria; they are attempting to achieve more favourable positions in Olivia's grace. The clown and the steward are unable to overstep each other within the existing power structure; they have to find indirect ways to gain dominance. Malvolio's weapon is blatant intrigue against Feste; Feste's device is provided by his profession and his revenge appears in a play-within-the-play scene.

George Meredith argues in his Essay on Comedy,

> We have in this world men whom Rabelais would call 'agelasts'; that is to say, non laughers--men who are in that respect as dead bodies, which, if you prick them, do not bleed....It is but

> one step from being agelastic to misogelastic, and...the laughter-hater soon learns to dignify his dislike as an objection in morality.[79]

Malvolio is introduced as a typical "laughter-hater" in Twelfth Night; his attitude is entirely inharmonious and contradictory to the play's "festive mood," with its dominant "holiday laughter."

The third source of conflict between Malvolio and Feste originates in Feste's professional obligation to entertain the audiences of both Illyria and the theatre. The fool as a professional jester unites all the characters in Twelfth Night as his audience, but Malvolio, as Leggatt notes, "is the sort of audience every comedian dreads," for "he refuses to co-operate."[80] The plot against Malvolio, therefore, suspends him as an "audience" and forces him to participate in a play-within-a-play. Malvolio, who detests "holiday laughter" and is an enemy of the Carnival, is "cured" by carnivalesque devices. As Hawkes observes, "his punishment requires him to be 'carnivalized' and to take part in that dressing-up."[81] Finally, Malvolio is made redundant in the household's power-structure. When Olivia calls him a "poor fool" (V.1.366), it becomes obvious that he has failed to achieve a more favourable position in the household; on the contrary, he is treated as one of the holiday-makers.

While Feste is clearly in a subordinate position to his Lady and appears in certain ways as a rival of Malvolio, it is striking that he is

presented as an equal of Sir Toby and his company. When Olivia asks Feste to "look after" Sir Toby, Feste's sharp remark is revealing about his relationship to the knight: "the fool shall look to the madman" (I.5.132-3). This levelling of social ranks during the festivities is dominant in the revelling scene of Act II.

> FESTE:
> How now, my hearts. Did you never see the picture of 'we three'?
> SIR TOBY:
> Welcome, ass.
>
> (II.3.15-17)

Elizabeth Freund notes,

> Feste's jest identifies the company as consisting of two more fools who, as in the picture of "We three," are conned into reading the representation ("fool" or "ass") as a reflection of themselves. Toby catches and responds to the allusion by genially embracing the fraternity of foolery or asshood.[82]

Feste's common verbal strategy of emphasising that the fool's partners in the dialogue are equally foolish does not meet much resistance here. On the contrary, Sir Toby's song "Three merry men be we" (II.3.72-3) reinforces Feste's position as equal in the merry company. Rubinstein suggests that Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Feste create "a travesty of the three wise men,"[83] and Wiles remarks that "[t]he trio of bullying drunk, simpleton and freak" appearing in The Tempest can be seen historically as a reworking of the

comic trio in Twelfth Night."[84] In the course of the play, however, Feste becomes withdrawn from the trio and Fabian takes his place. The fool regains his unique status, his aloofness.

II.3. Analysing medieval festivities, Bakhtin draws a distinction between risus paschalis "Easter season laughter" and risus natalis "Christmas laughter." His comments are especially relevant to Twelfth Night when he declares: "While paschal gaiety mostly featured amusing tales and anecdotes, Christmas laughter was expressed in gay songs."[85] The spirit of Christmas laughter is conjured in Illyria by Orsino in one way and by Sir Toby and Sir Andrew in another. Feste is the chief deliverer of the songs, but these songs are surprisingly melancholy: their key lines--"Youth's a stuff will not endure" (II.3.51) and "Come away, come away death" (II.4.50)--remind the listeners of death. Bakhtin observes that in the sound of Christmas laughter, "[t]he theme of birth of the new was organically linked with the theme of death of the old...."[86] In the middle of festive celebrations in Illyria, Feste embodies the consciousness of death. He represents a wholesome view of life and death, a unity which is neatly summarised in Leonardo da Vinci's famous aphorism: "When man awaits the new spring, the new year, with joyful impatience, he does not suspect that he is eagerly awaiting his own death."[87] In Twelfth Night, Feste represents this point of view, fulfilling the curious role of a memento mori character dressed in the fool's motley. The mixture of a comical character as a chief reminder of the invincible death seems antagonistic for a modern audience. Bakhtin, however, concentrating on the context of the Renaissance, declares, "the

image of death in medieval and Renaissance grotesque...is a more or less funny monstrosity."[88] The fact that modern audiences do not usually find death as a "funny monstrosity" explains why modern spectators find Feste a melancholy, inert, and bitter fool. As in the interpretation of Sir Toby's character, it is the gap in the appreciation of the Renaissance and the modern audiences that makes modern interpretations of Feste problematic.

The mixture of mirth and the consciousness of the omnipresence of death must have been a natural truism for stage fools such as Robert Armin, who possibly played Feste for the first time in Shakespeare's company. Gareth Lloyd Evans underlines, "the realisation of the Fool figures on the Elizabethan stage was entrusted to a man who had a unique knowledge of real Fools."[89] The gradual disappearance of professional fools from seventeenth century English society, however, resulted in fools becoming less and less popular on the stage too. Bradbrook remarks, "[s]uch fools were out of fashion," and they were dismissed in the middle of the seventeenth century "as part of Shakespeare's uneducated simplicity."[90] Feste's part, therefore, became more and more insignificant in the course of centuries; his lines were severely cut. Greif points out, "Feste usually went to whichever actor could muster a decent singing voice and take obligatory pratfalls," and she remarks, "[n]ot until this century has the fool moved from the periphery of drama into its very heart."[91] Harley Granville-

Barker's production (Savoy Theatre, 1912) is the first in the series of modern interpretations which underline Feste's "bittersweet undertones." The director

> broke with tradition by treating Feste (Hayden Coffin) not as the conventional hop-skip-and-jump youthful jester but as a sad, mature man through whom ran what the director himself called 'that vein of irony which is so often the mark of one of life's self-acknowledged failures.'[92]

The modern reinterpretation of the unity of new life and the death of the old, characteristic of Christmas laughter, has concluded in a mature, wry, and ironical presentation of the fool of Twelfth Night. Feste has appeared as enigmatic and controversial on the modern stage.

II.4. In the modern understanding of Feste's character, special attention has been devoted to two scenes in the play: the fool's duologue with Viola (Act III, Scene 1) and the play-within-the-play or prison-scene (Act IV, Scene 2). Both are revelatory about the fool although they represent two extremes in the play's structure. The first is not an organic part of the plot; it unfolds some prevalent characteristics of Twelfth Night but does not propel further action. It provides an example of Feste's "aloofness," for his distance from the mainstream of the play. The second is central in the plotting against Malvolio. The fool--against the traditions of his role--disposes of his outsider-position, ceasing to be a link between the play's world and the auditorium. He appears as the chief character in Malvolio's "chastisement." After the efforts to delineate the context of the fool's character both inside and outside Twelfth Night, the conclusions of these two scenes are revealing in the analysis of Feste's idiosyncrasies as much as in that of the whole play.

The scene between Viola and Feste is separated from the two primary locations of the play; it happens somewhere between Orsino's court and Olivia's household. Feste appears in his full fool-regalia with his tabor and pipe, and Viola enters wearing her disguise. Both are pretending: Viola plays a man, and Feste "is wise enough to play the fool" (III.1.59). The concealment of the identities of the participants creates a unique

play-within-a-play scene.

The duologue's chief rhetorical device is a mode of inversion: antistrophe, "the turning of an opponent's argument against itself."[93] The virtuoso technique of the verbal duel is a striking peculiarity of the scene. Hartman observes, "[t]he speed and stenography...of Shakespeare's wordplay in the comic scenes undoes the hegemony of any single order of discourse, and compels us to realize the radically social and mobile nature of the language exchange."[94] Feste is meticulously keen on keeping the rules of elementary politeness on the surface of the duologue; he calls Viola "sir" throughout the scene. On the other hand, turning Viola's argument inside out, he manages to maintain a socially equal position with Viola in the conversation:

> FESTE:...A sentence is but a cheverel glove to a good wit, how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward.
> VIOLA: Nay, that's certain. They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.
> FESTE: I would therefore my sister had no name, sir.
> VIOLA: Why, man?
> FESTE: Why, sir, her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed, words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them.
> VIOLA: Thy reason, man?
> FESTE: Troth, sir, I can yield you none without words, and words are grown so false I am loath to prove reason with them.
>
> (III.1.11-24)

Revealing their distrust in words, the vehicles of the play itself, Viola and

Feste provide a special self-referential aspect of the play. Eagleton comments,

> Reason--reality--can be expressed only in language and yet is falsified by language; without language there can be no reason yet with language there can be none either--to speak or keep silent is equally illusory. The Clown is aware that language and experience are so intertwined that to manipulate words is to distort reality....[95]

Beyond Eagleton's philosophical remark there is an additional twist concerning the passage quoted above; reality in the play is theatrical reality: from an external point of view it is illusion itself.

The duologue, separated from the play's chief localities, points out of the world of Illyria, creating an almost alienating consciousness in the audience. Hawkes emphasises,

> Like A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night has a notable dimension of self-reference. It constantly draws attention to its own 'playing' mode, invoking in the process multiple levels of irony, which undermine the standard presupposition on which the polarities of fiction and truth, appearance and reality rest.[96]

Investigating language which distorts while it creates reality is a widely elaborated problem of linguistics and Feste's argument is surprisingly poignant from this point of view. The source of irony is that Feste himself is given existence inside a created, that is, distorted reality; he is a

character within a play. His awareness that language distorts reality while creating reality distinguishes Feste from the other characters and provides him with the position of an observer of as well as a participant in the action. As Freund notes,

> Feste's verbal conduct in particular exhibits an exuberant awareness of the topsy-turvyness of language. More than any other figure, the Lady Olivia's fool may be seen to embody a self-obliterating, self-authorizing linguistic 'inwit' in defiance of a treacherous Logos.[97]

Quibbling about his sister's name, Feste makes a seemingly absurd observation, negating the widely acknowledged assumption that in language the relationship between the signifier (the sister's name) and the signified (the sister) is arbitrary. Putting aside those psychological tests which attempt to demonstrate that one's name in certain ways determines one's character, it is worth considering that the characters in Twelfth Night all have been assigned names which are revealing about their bearers. Elisabeth M. Yearling observes, "[c]haracter and theme emerge from the nature of the words and the way they are combined. Here we are a little closer to the Platonic theory of names."[98] Feste's complaints about the unreliability of words point towards a surprisingly modern problem of language-philosophy if they are examined outside the play's context. From an internal aspect, they create a Pirandellian effect: they can be interpreted

as a character's communication with the author. This self-referential, ironical phenomenon is summarised by Feste when he claims that "...words are very rascals...I am loath to prove reason with them." Feste's widely noted ability to exceed the boundaries of Illyria emanates from his consciousness that language is an imperfect device for describing reality. In addition to displaying the stock attributes of fools--socially levelling verbal strategies, topsy-turvydom of language, universality of folly, anti-marriage-attitude--Feste gains a dramatic position which is strikingly close to the point of view of the playwright and the audience.

Another mode of irony is prevalent in the prison scene in which Feste ceases to comment on the events of the play; leaping into the centre of the action, he opens a play-within-a-play. In the mask of Sir Topas, he "exposes four levels of illusion," as Eagleton observes:

> He is a Clown (and thus...a kind of illusion) disguised in the illusion of a curate, a role itself often illusory ('I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown'), visiting Malvolio in a prison whose darkness--itself nothingness--renders the disguise superfluous, doubly unreal.[99]

In addition to this complex presentation of illusion, which creates multi-layered ironical effects, there exists another level of illusion. It is clear to the audiences both inside and outside the play that Malvolio is not really mad; he is forced into the role of insanity. His unconscious

participation in the play-within-a-play is the source and chief condition of the success of the scene.

Like Hamlet, Twelfth Night also portrays a madman who--as both the audience and some characters in the play know--is not mad at all. Both plays present some kind of "treatment" of the supposed lunacy and the difference between the cures in the two plays confirms Michel Foucault's observation in Madness and Civilization that "confinement has succeeded embarkation."[100] In order to "avoid scandal" madmen were isolated from society; they were locked up in semi-judicial institutions, in "hospitals." Describing twenty "hospitals" in London in his Survey (1598), John Stow refers to Bridewell, for instance, as "an Hospitall (or house of correction)."[101] The "cruelty" of Malvolio's treatment, therefore, was nothing but a logical and widely acknowledged procedure for tackling madness in Renaissance society. Foucault finds two primary reasons for the Renaissance insistence on confinement: "the animality" appearing in a madman and "the immorality of the unreasonable."[102] Olivia attempts to chastise "the immorality" of Malvolio's madness in the most harmless way by asking some of her servants to "have a special care of him" (III.4.60-1). The "animality" of a madman is emphasised by Sir Toby's suggestion: "we'll have him in a dark room and bound" (III.4.133). The fact that even in the eighteenth century a madman was not considered to be a sick human being

but a creature closer to animality, that he was only treated by discipline and brutalizing, and that he was locked into menagerie-like institutions, provides a context for the full understanding of Malvolio's "treatment" in Twelfth Night.

Malvolio's madness is described in terms of animal-imagery, and is specifically associated with bear-baiting. By this point in the play several references have been made to this popular Elizabethan entertainment. Sir Andrew admits that he has "bestowed" too much time "in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting" (I.3.90-1); Olivia uses bear-baiting terminology when talking to Viola/Cesario: "Have you not set mine honour at the stake / And baited it with all th' unmuzzled thoughts / That tyrannous heart can think?" (III.1.118-9). Fabian complains of Malvolio that the steward brought him "out o'favour" with Olivia "about a bear-baiting here" (II.5.6-7) and Sir Toby's answer anticipates the prison scene: "To anger him we'll have the bear again, and we will fool him black and blue" (II.5.8-9). Malvolio's supposed madness degrades him to the level of animality and the prison-scene draws on bear baiting not only metaphorically but, in some ways, physically as well. As Ralph Berry observes, "[i]t is a bear-baiting. The audience becomes spectators, Malvolio the bear," and Hartman remarks, "Malvolio is gulled once more, baited like a bear--the sport he objected to."[103]

In a thought-provoking study, Stephen Dickey argues: "For Shakespeare's contemporaries, bear-baiting and theater were culturally isomorphic events."[104] In the prison scene the "culturally isomorphic events" are amalgamated and create a totality of Renaissance entertainment. On the one hand, there is the play-within-the-play in which Feste casts the parts and appears as both a stage-manager and an actor:

> MALVOLIO:
> Who calls there?
> FESTE:
> Sir Topas the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.
> (IV.2.21-23)

On the other hand, the theatrical event conjures up bear-baiting, as Berry notes, "[i]t is theatre as blood sport, theatre that celebrates its own dark origins."[105] The question of how a cruel blood sport becomes an element of a comedy, a "festive" comedy at that, is answered by Dickey when he observes: "the experience of the audience attending this 'pleasant sport' was essentially festive and comical" and "...were an Elizabethan audience to specify what genre of spectacle it was seeing at the Bear Garden, the answer might well be 'a comedy.'"[106] Dickey's argument casts light on the aesthetic truism: the real criterion for the scene to be "comic" and of the play to qualify as a comedy is the response of the audience. The prison scene is comic if the audience considers it to be so.

The crucial role of the audience in a comedy is underlined by Hawkes, who calls comedy "an art of the audience" when he suggests that "the audience's participation finally constitutes the comedy." Referring to Bakhtin's work, Hawkes remarks that comedy, similarly to Carnival, is not "a given spectacle which we passively watch, but a 'second life' which we construct, by actively taking part in it."[107] A Renaissance audience, used to "grotesque realism," possibly found Malvolio's baiting comical--at least in the way in which they found bear-baiting "pleasant" and "comical." The case of modern audiences is different. Berry closes his study with the judgement: "I surmise that the ultimate effect of Twelfth Night is to make the audience ashamed of itself."[108] Cedric Watts's opinion is similar to Berry's; he declares: "Audiences which enjoy the baiting of Malvolio are not only rather hard-hearted; they are also endorsing the rather snobbish notion that a person who has to work for his living is fair game for idle gentry like Sir Toby and Sir Andrew."[109] Both Berry's and Watts' arguments make it obvious that Twelfth Night is a different play at the end of the twentieth century than it was in Shakespeare's time. Different audiences create different comedies of Twelfth Night.

The reaction of the inner audience of the play-within-the-play is more consistent and easier to trace. Sir Toby's frequently quoted lines are especialy revealing, pointing towards the ending of Twelfth Night:

> I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered, I would he were, for I am now so far in offence with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot.
>
> (IV.2.67-71)

Sir Toby's resentment over "this sport" signals that he is aware that he has to sober up; the Carnival is about to end.

II.5. The final scene presents order gaining dominance over the topsy-turvydom of Illyria. The confusions of identity are solved; the Lord of Misrule and his company are dismissed or forced to adjust to the new order. The adjustment is apparently a painful process for the revellers; it is symbolic that both Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are physically hurt by Sebastian, the new lord of the household. In addition to Sir Toby's laconic "That's all one" (V.1.194) echoed by Feste in the penultimate line of the play, there are other indications that the licentious entertainment--both the debauchery of the subplot and the play itself--is over. Sir Toby gets married, finding a presentable position in the new status quo. He also passes judgement over himself when he declares, "I hate a drunken rogue" (V.1.199). Dismissing Sir Andrew, calling him "an ass-head, and a cox comb, and a knave" (V.1.203-4), he finally demonstrates his recognition that a new era will prevail in Illyria.

The reward for Sir Toby's transformation is Olivia's reconciliation with him, indicated by her words: "Get him to bed, and let his hurt be looked to" (V.1.205). Eventually a momentous stage direction follows: "Exeunt Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Feste, and Fabian." This mass exit marks the end of the Carnival in Illyria; this is the signal that the carnivalesque features are finally erased from the world of Twelfth Night. Although Feste and Fabian later return to the stage, the clown's jests are rejected by Olivia;

Fabian, the great survivor and the wild-card of the play, turns into a respectable character, explaining how the revellers "Set this device against Malvolio here / Upon some stubborn and uncourteous parts..." (V.1.357-8). As Hamlet, Twelfth Night also ends with the final rejection of fools and folly; an overall sobriety dominates the closing minutes of the play. In Hamlet, a tragic end is difficult to imagine with Prince Hamlet continuing to play the role of an alazon. In Twelfth Night, the disappearance or transformation of the representatives of Carnival points towards more general conclusions. Leggatt observes, "in Twelfth Night two different plays seem to be ending simultaneously on the same stage....Shakespearian comedy as we have known it breaks apart: the device of opposing visions finally destroys the art it serves."[110] In a step towards a classical scale of values, the perspective of "grotesque realism" is erased as inappropriate and inharmonious at the end of the play.

Once again, at the play's end, the audience encounters Feste the clown. About Feste's song Watts severely remarks, "though the wording is so idiotically obscene as to make commentators attempt painful mental acrobatics, the refrain 'For the rain it raineth every day' is equally pessimistic."[111] Behind the pessimistic overtones Graham Holderness senses "a melancholy little reflection on the intrinsic unhappiness of endings" and he adds, "It [Feste's song] may begin apparently as Feste's autobiography,

but it ends with the singer resolving from character into an actor, a professional performer who declares the stage illusion has come to an end: 'our play is done.'"[112] An equivocation, however, is hidden in the line cited by Holderness. Which play does Feste mean "is done?" A double perspective makes a brief reappearance: the actor playing Feste announces that Twelfth Night is about to end. Or, from a more intrinsic point of view, the character who plays the fool and plays the part of a priest within the play announces that the play-within-a-play is over; the foolery, this scapegoat of civil order, has been expelled, civil rule has taken over Illyria.

The last line of Feste's song, however, is in contrast with the overtones of melancholy. His "we'll strive to please you every day" (V.1.404) articulates the manifesto of a professional entertainer--be it in the capacity of an actor facing his audience in the theatre or that of a run-of-the-mill jester addressing the inhabitants of Illyria.

CHAPTER III

"FOOLS ON BOTH SIDES":

PANDARUS AND THERSITES IN TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Troilus and Cressida is one of the most elusive of Shakespeare's plays. Critical efforts to pin-point the genre have led to diverse but frustrating results. Kenneth Muir remarks in his edition that "[t]he play has been called a history (Q), a comedy (Q), a tragedy (F), a comical satire (Campbell), a tragical satire (Muir), a problem play (Tillyard), and a 'hybrid and hundred-faced and hydra-headed prodigy' (Swinburne)."[1] The title-page of the 1609 Quarto edition refers to the play as a "Historie," but the Epistle to the Reader attached to the second issue of this Quarto edition places it among Shakespeare's "Commedies." Gary Taylor points out that "Jaggard always intended it to stand among the Folio Tragedies" but he adds, linking the play to Hamlet, that "Troilus contains a great deal of comedy, and even theatrical parody."[2]

Oscar James Campbell, in his crucial study Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, discusses the play as Shakespeare's "thorough experiment" with "comicall satyre," a dramatic genre invented by Ben Jonson.[3] Several critics have expressed their disagreement with

Campbell's view; as Peter Ure laconically remarks, the play's "classification was long disputed, though we now call it a 'tragical satire.'"[4] Within the Shakespeare canon, since Dowden's Shakspeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art (1875), it has been a tradition to group Troilus and Cressida with All's Well that Ends Well and Measure for Measure. F. S. Boas labelled these plays as "problem plays" (1896), W. W. Lawrence as "problem comedies" (1930), and R. A. Foakes, returning to Dowden, as "dark comedies" (1971). Richard Hillman's recent effort shifts the whole task of classifying Troilus and Cressida towards the nonsensical; he remarks in brackets: "(comitragedy, perhaps?)."[5] Echoing W. W. Greg, who called Troilus "a play of puzzles," Rosalie L. Colie frankly admits, "I cannot, for instance, identify the genre, intrinsic or extrinsic, of Troilus and Cressida, and I remain puzzled by my own puzzlement in this case."[6]

John Barton, who directed the play several times (1956, 1960, 1968, 1976), observes, "It is also comical, heroical, tragical, romantic--as a whole, it is a mixture of all these things. There is no play which I would less willingly tie down with a label."[7] Mingling elements of tragedy and comedy, satire and parody, Troilus and Cressida appears as a disturbing, provocative but poignant and astonishingly modern play.

It was an extremely unpopular play in past centuries while it is highly praised today. After the probable performance of a version at the

Globe Theatre in Shakespeare's time, "there is no record of a revival in England until the present century."[8] Apart from four productions in the eighteenth century based on Dryden's severe adaptation (1679), Troilus and Cressida was not performed on the English stage until 1907. On the other hand, modern critics and producers discuss the play with great enthusiasm. R. A. Yoder declares, "[o]f all Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida is our play."[9] Vivian Thomas remarks that "there is nothing like Troilus and Cressida anywhere in Shakespeare or indeed in English drama;" he finds the play "breathtakingly original."[10] Northrop Frye calls it "Shakespeare's most ironic play,"[11] and his remark elucidates one of the chief elements responsible for the play's originality: its overwhelming and devastating ironic technique.

One of the pivotal reasons why recent critics find Troilus and Cressida "amazing and modern"[12] is the irreverent and dishonouring treatment of the ancient heroic epic of the fall of Troy. The way in which Shakespeare transforms the ancient myth, which "fathered all literature," into an iconoclastic travesty makes the play reminiscent of twentieth century playwrights from Brecht to Beckett. From a synchronic point of view, Colie's remarks are valid,

> Shakespeare has attacked literature itself at its very source, turning upside down the Homeric values,...digesting them to trivial hypocrisies designed to cover appetite...he also

> undermines the greatest of English poets among his own predecessors...[13]

From a diachronic perspective, however, Shakespeare's approach to his raw material, to his sources, follows the practice of his age; his approach is not extravagantly uncompliant in the context of the Renaissance. Leslie A. Fiedler notes,

> authors of the Renaissance believed stories had to come from <u>someplace</u>,...All that mattered was that the plot smack somehow of the 'marvellous,' yet that it be neither 'sacred' nor unfamiliar, neither fixed in the credo of the Established Church nor utterly alien to the audience. The subject matter had, in short, to seem <u>found</u> rather than invented; already, as it were, in the public domain; the realm of the commonplace, the cliche, the stereotype.[14]

Exploiting the potential of the <u>found</u> subject matter, capitalizing on the shared background knowledge of the audience, operating with literary commonplaces, cliches, and stereotypes are common features in all genres of Renaissance literature. It is the approach, the method of the narrative, that can offer ground for originality. To achieve this originality in the retelling of well-known old stories with well-known characters, ironic representation functions as an appropriate device. The travesty embodied in <u>Troilus and Cressida</u> presents a stunning perspective on the Homeric epic for the modern recipient of the play; but this technique is also deeply rooted in the literary fashions of the beginning of the seventeenth century. As noted in

the previous chapters, the literary vogue of satire, channelled into dramatic works, must also have influenced Shakespeare's art. Parody was a prevalent dramatic approach in the period. Jonathan Dollimore, in an essay discussing the connections between Marston's "Antonio" plays and Troilus and Cressida, notes,

> Parody was a complex dramatic process for the Elizabethans, not merely a source of comic effect. By the time of the appearance of these plays stoical endurance had been memorably embodied in such figures as Kyd's Hieronimo and Shakespeare's Titus. A philosophical attitude had become a stage convention. Marston, through parody, undermines the convention and, therefore, discredits the attitude.[15]

Dollimore's description of the mechanism of parody is relevant to Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida as well. In his play, Shakespeare undermines dominant conventions and discredits widely accepted attitudes, creating, thereby, new conventions and new attitudes. By destroying Homeric values, he creates a new and different scale of values. In breaking down the framework of conventional dramatic genres, he creates a new and different dramatic genre which did not seem to survive his period. In the twentieth century, however, this form appeared as a revelation to modern drama.

Examining Troilus and Cressida in the context of Shakespeare's other plays (here primarily Hamlet and Twelfth Night) numerous structural,

thematic, and modal elements reassert themselves. These elements, however, are transformed and distorted, thus creating a radically unconventional play in the Shakespearian canon. One of the several analogous examples linking the three plays is the sea as a crucial background element. In both Hamlet and Twelfth Night the sea gains significance as a different or "other world" separate from the locality of the actions in the plays. The sea also appears in the background of Troilus and Cressida. The Prologue informs us that "Sixty-and-nine....deep-drawing barques do...disgorge / Their warlike freightage"[16] (5;12-13). The basic conflict, the war between the Trojans and the Greeks, is instigated by the Greeks' arrival by sea. Shakespeare inherited the myth of sixty-nine ships full of Greek heroes and transformed it into that of sixty-nine ships full of fools--at least as evaluated by Thersites: "Agamemnon is a fool, Achilles is a fool, Thersites is a fool, and as foresaid Patroclus is a fool" (II.3.58-9).

A bipolar division of the localities of the plays is conspicuous in both Twelfth Night and Troilus and Cressida. In the former play, a refined and artificial milieu dominates Orsino's court, while Olivia is surrounded by the representatives of a down-to-earth environment. Troilus and Cressida follows a dichotomy of setting as well; the artificial world of Troy is placed in contrast to the vulgar realism of the Greek camp.

In addition to the bipolar arrangement of the play's localities, the plot

of Troilus and Cressida is also arranged in a dichotomy. The play's title emphasizes the significance of the love-plot, yet the war-plot does not serve as a mere background to Troilus and Cressida's hapless affair. In his edition, Kenneth Palmer points out that "the 'love' plot occupies exactly 33 per cent of the play."[17] Before arguing about the disproportionate representation of the two plots, it is worth considering how much they are interwoven, how dynamic the relationship is between the two. It is an ancient literary tradition to describe love as a war between the sexes and its traces are also evident in Troilus and Cressida. Alternately, the war-plot is deeply influenced by motivations of love: the war broke out because of a love-plot; the fight is influenced by Achilles's loves; Troilus's attitude to the war is changed by the disastrous end to his love story. Commenting on the complex relationship between the plots, Colie remarks,

> Throughout the play, the war-theme and the love-theme, the events of the war-plot and the events of the love-plot, fold over each other, in an overlapping that manages to cut off our expectations of both: instead of supporting one another, they subtract from each other's dramatic force and interest.[18]

Borrowing the term from Harry Levin, Richard Levin introduces the concept of "overplot," "a kind of 'unmoved mover' that generates the activity of the drama and serves as a fixed point of reference for it," and he draws the following model to illustrate the scheme of action in Troilus and Cressida:

Overplot
Paris (Troy) : Helen (love/honor) : Menelaus (Greece)
War plot
Hector : honor : Achilles
Love plot
Troilus : Cressida (love) : Diomedes[19]

In Troilus and Cressida, the problems of love are addressed as problems of war/honour and vice-versa: the questions of war are discussed as issues integrally connected with love. In this dynamic structure of plots, R. A. Foakes introduces a third factor; he identifies three "strands" of Troilus and Cressida: "heroic action;" "love-action;" and "comic undercurrent;"[20] the last chiefly represented by Thersites and Pandarus.

III.1. Troilus's bitter but insightful remark about the warring sides--"Fools on both sides" (I.1.90)--is indicative of the degrading technique dominant in Troilus and Cressida. As Kott observes, in the play "[h]eroes imitate clowns, and they are clowns."[21] Behind the general foolery attributed to almost all of the characters in the play, the roles of Pandarus and Thersites are of particular significance. Kott notes, "[i]n this tragicomedy there are two parts for clowns: the sweet clown Pandarus in Troy, and the bitter clown Thersites in the Greek camp."[22] Pandarus in Troy plays the part of an observer and voyeur of the love-plot, Thersites in the Greek camp is the observer and voyeur of the war-plot. "In many ways," as Foakes suggests, "they are complementary to one another; both are outsiders in their society, whose occupation is to observe the 'pretty encounters' of others in love and war."[23] Both are inactive in the sense that they do not participate directly in the play's most determining activity: the war. Their aloofness is a common identifying feature of fool-characters.

Campbell notes, "Thersites and Pandarus are buffoons--original variations of the type which Carlo Buffone represented....They serve as equivalents of the louts and clowns of other kinds of comedies."[24] They have similar functions in their respective microcosms. On the other hand, their differences represent the differences existing between their environments just as the differences between their environments determine the

characteristics of Pandarus and Thersites. In the effeminate and stylized world of Troy, Pandarus appears as an effeminate alazon whose obsession it is to bring Troilus and Cressida together. As he is represented as a raisonneur, a commentator on the events of Troy, his point of view serves as a lens through which the audience views the Trojan microcosm of the play. In the dull and simplistic world of the Greek camp, Thersites appears as an over-simplifying eiron whose obsession it is to denigrate each person with whom he has contact. Since he is also depicted as a raisonneur of the events in the Greek camp, as in the case of Pandarus, Thersites's perspective determines the audience's opinion on the Greek microcosm of the play. Pandarus the alazon and Thersites the eiron are two different characters with similar dramatic functions in the two disparate microcosms of Troilus and Cressida.

III.2. The title-page of the second issue of the 1609 Quarto edition calls attention to the significance of Pandarus's role in the play:

> The
> Famous Historie of
> Troylus and Cresseid.
> Excellently expressing the beginning
> of their loues, with the conceited wooing
> of Pandarus Prince of Litia

Apart from revealing that the love-plot was more relevant to the seventeenth century audience than the war-plot, the title-page emphasises the popularity of Pandarus as a go-between.

In the Homeric epic, Pandarus appears as a rather insignificant character; son of Lycaon, he is an archer, favoured by Apollo. As Palmer observes, "he is treacherous and rash, but wholly unconnected with any love relationship."[25] It is Boccaccio's Il Filostrato, the immediate source of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, where Pandaro, the predecessor of Pandarus, is introduced, "providing the potential for a great deal of the comic irony found in Chaucer and Shakespeare."[26] Comparing Chaucer's Pandare to Shakespeare's Pandarus, critics argue that Pandare is "much younger" than his Shakespearian descendant.[27] Palmer notes,

> Chaucer's Pandarus...is always thought of as relatively young, and a fit companion for Troilus in point of age (though he might well be senior). In this, Chaucer follows Boccaccio. But Shakespeare goes out of his way to make his Pandarus verge

> upon senility. He does not merely watch over the lovers as if they were children: his language is that of an elderly man, full of rhetorical questions, repetition of phrases, wordy anecdote--all the characteristics, indeed, of a semi-literate gossip.[28]

Palmer's description seems precise if taking into consideration that, in his wordy arguments and alazon-role, Pandarus's attributes are similar to those of Polonius. On the other hand, there are no concrete textual references to Pandarus's age and his agelessness is harmonious with his fool-role. As noted in the previous chapters, the aloofness of fool-characters is frequently demonstrated by their unstated age.

Another common feature of fools is their exclusion from the play's sexual encounters. Despite all his efforts to bring Troilus and Cressida together, Pandarus still gives off a sense of futility and impotence. Barbara Everett notes, "[t]ouching and funny and brilliantly disgusting, Pandarus is the only purely camp creation in Shakespeare, ...for he is compounded of trans-sexual intonations and business-like oeillades."[29] Pandarus is different from the other men of Troy; he does not fight in the war. He is effeminate and, due to his age or his disability, physically inept in his war-focused environment. His observer-role and fool-characteristics are underlined by his "otherness."

In Act I, Scene 1, he appears as a verbose and ridiculous but seemingly reluctant go-between, "a mere broker of sexual stock,"[30] as A. P.

Rossiter calls him: "I have had my labour for my travail....Gone between and between, but small thanks for my labour" (I.1.70-2). Scene 1 provides a stunning opening to the play; Pandarus's pseudo-submissive remark foreshadows his subdued epilogue in much the same way as Troilus's lethargic summary of the causes of the war anticipates the play's final conclusion:

> Fools on both sides. Helen must needs be fair
> When with your blood you daily paint her thus.
> I cannot fight upon this argument.
> It is too starved a subject for my sword.
>
> (I.1.90-3)

Scene 1 serves as a stark ray of truth which is later blurred in the course of the play until it once again emerges at the end. The perspicacity of both Troilus and Pandarus at the opening creates a consciousness which is not dependent on the events of Shakespeare's play; it opens an external ironic perspective. The contradiction between Troilus and Pandarus's perspicacity and their activity in the play is explained by Everett:

> What is peculiar about Troilus and Cressida is the degree to which the expressive self-containment of the old stories has been replaced by this activity of a quasi-modern "consciousness": the way in which this expectancy in us has to constitute narrative. Troilus and Cressida is a play because we know it is a play...we know, and the characters know that we know, that the Greeks did not really have to worry why they were not winning the war, because they were going to win the war; and the Trojans did not have to debate whether to send

Helen back, because Helen had come to stay.[31]

Everett here describes two kinds of consciousness, two sides of the same phenomenon. In addition to the audience's "expectancy...constituting narrative" on the basis of their prior knowledge of the story, there is a latent consciousness depicted in the characters: they seem to know what we know of the "old stories." The consciousness of this shared knowledge results in overwhelming irony in Pandarus's thrice-repeated "I'll not meddle nor make no farther" (I.1.13-14); "Faith, I'll not meddle in it" (I.1.66); "For my part, I'll meddle nor make no more i' th' matter" (I.1.82-3) and, most devastatingly in Act III, when he declares, "Let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers-between / panders" (III.2.198-200).

As the cited sub-title of the 1609 Quarto edition prompts, Pandarus appears at the centre of events in the beginning of the play. He is exuberantly talkative, which is counterpoised with the general boredom prevalent in Troy, where the most exciting news in the first scene is that "Hector was stirring early" (I.2.49). As compensation that he does not (cannot) act physically, he acts with words, of which he is a master. As a compulsive talker, he proves to be a prototype of characters appearing in Shakespeare's other two problem plays: Parolles in All's Well that Ends Well and Lucio in Measure for Measure. Inside the structure of Troilus and

Cressida, Pandarus's function in Troy, as that of a gregarious plotter and master of words, is close to that of Ulysses in the Greek camp.

Pandarus's strategy is based on relativism; his main device is comparison. He argues that Cressida is more beautiful than Helen: "Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair as Helen. An she were not kin to me, she would be as fair o' Friday as Helen is o' Sunday" (I.1.74-6). And he further suggests that Troilus is greater than both Hector and Achilles. Pandarus's opinion is biased and sounds facetious but, due to the denigrating irony with which the heroic characters are treated in Troilus and Cressida, it bears the touch of a satirical truth in the context of the whole play. When Pandarus compares Hector to Troilus, stating, "Troilus is the better man of the two" (I.2.58-9), when he snaps, "Achilles? A drayman, a porter, a very camel" (I.2.245), he is surprisingly close to the truth depicted in Shakespeare's play. He seems to be gifted with insight, with a consciousness which raises his character over the ordinary plane of the play's action.

On the other end of his double-edged part, Pandarus appears as an active participant in the plot: he seems to be a catalyst in the love affair of Troilus and Cressida. In the context of the previous chapters, it is striking that the triangle of Pandarus, Troilus, and Cressida in Troilus and Cressida is reminiscent of the triangle of Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and

Olivia in Twelfth Night. Sir Toby beguiles Sir Andrew with promises that he will help to gain his niece's hand and that is what Pandarus does to Troilus as well. Although it is obvious that Sir Toby never speaks up for Sir Andrew in the presence of Olivia, the parallel between the triangles in Twelfth Night and Troilus and Cressida still casts light on both Troilus and Pandarus. In the perspective of Sir Andrew's character, Troilus proves to be a "knave" and a "gull" himself. Although he gains Cressida, his final frustration at the end of the play is similar to Sir Andrew's at the end of Twelfth Night. While Sir Toby appears as a bawd for Sir Andrew, Pandarus is equally presented as a go-between, making "profit" by the fact that Cressida is his niece. Another significant parallel is suggested by Palmer's argument:

> Grant...the theory (which Greg proposed) of a Christmas performance, and Pandarus becomes...a Lord of Misrule, whose reign would end with Twelfth Night. Pandarus...,like Misrule, represents the delights of the flesh, and like Misrule, he is abdicating from his function. In two months,...Pandarus will make his will, and die. Two months from Epiphany (6 January) brings us to the beginning of March, and (in certain years) to Ash Wednesday.[32]

Both Sir Toby and Pandarus celebrate the reign of "flesh;" both are identified by their excessive and narcissistic drive to enjoy themselves in their environments. Yet both have to sober up in the end; the conclusions of both Twelfth Night and Troilus and Cressida provide bitter consequences

for their respective Lords of Misrule.

Hillman observes about Pandarus that "sexuality is his natural medium--he virtually swims within it."[33] Pandarus's "natural medium" is love, as his song reveals in his encounter with Helen and Paris: "Love, love, nothing but love, still love, still more!" (III.1.111). But in the semantics of Troilus and Cressida, the word "love" stands for sensuality; thereby, its meaning is reduced to "sex." This semantic peculiarity of the play becomes clear to the audience who are privy to Pandarus's obscene puns; but it is concealed from the young couple of Troilus and Cressida, who interpret "love" as a more complex phenomenon. By the end of the play then both Troilus and Cressida have to pay for their semantic insensitivity.

If Pandarus's natural element is sexuality, then his approach to it is cold and brutally objective. C. C. Barfoot notes, "Pandarus, as broker and middleman, has the vocabulary of the salesroom at the tip of his tongue, and the first two scenes of the play show him preparing and practicing his sales pitch."[34] In his indirect recommendation of Cressida to Troilus ("But, for my part, she is my kinswoman; I would not, as they term it, 'praise' her. But I would somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did" (I.1.43-6)), and his direct praise of Troilus to Cressida ("No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus" (I.2.76)), Pandarus indeed reminds us of a salesman busy advertising his goods and negotiating deals. As Everett observes,

Pandarus's words are "the poetry of a grocer-like principle of Commodity."[35] Being an expert on the laws of the market, he is aware that the value of commodities is always relative. In praising his goods, he follows the practice of the marketplace: he compares his own goods to others'--Cressida to Helen and Cassandra; Troilus to Hector and Achilles. He boosts the confidence of the customer by pointing out the popularity of his own goods: about Cressida he remarks, "She's a fool to stay behind her father. Let her to the Greeks..." (I.1.80-1); about Troilus he states, "I think Helen loves him better than Paris" (I.2.103-4). Pandarus the bawd, the salesman of human love, embodies the play's evaluating perspective as depicted in the Trojan microcosm. He proves that in Troilus and Cressida there is no scale of absolute values. All potential values that could possibly be attached to any character of the play fluctuate according to the constantly changing point of view. Aeneas, "one of the flowers of Troy" (I.2.183), "shrewd" Antenor, "brave" Hector, "gallant" Paris, "admirable" Troilus are--from a different perspective--nothing but "Asses, fools, dolts. Chaff and bran, chaff and bran. Porridge after meat" (I.2.238-9). The lack of absolute values inevitably leads to a chaotic and egotistic social constellation--as Troy is portrayed through the lens of Pandarus's character.

Although, because of his perspicacity and verbal ability, Pandarus, a hopeless "engineer of human souls," could gain extraordinary dominance in

the play's power structure, he is not exempt from the effects of the play's general ironic approach. It is piquant that both Troilus and--more conspicuously--Cressida see through Pandarus's machinations. Cressida remarks of Pandarus that he is "...a bawd. / Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice / He offers in another's enterprise" (I.2.276-8).

Everett opens her study on the play with the sentence "Troilus and Cressida has no story, or is as near to having none as a Renaissance play can be."[36] Shakespeare's narrative about the siege of Troy is indirect; he discusses the war by describing a truce. The war-theme is relegated to the background; the abnormality of the war is presented as a pseudo-normality of everyday life. The mythological heroes are presented out of their element; extraordinary characters are forced into down-to-earth, banal situations.

The central issue in the play is a series of negotiations; the central characters are mediators and agents. The central character in the Greek camp is Ulysses, a manipulator between the factions; the central character in Troy and in the love-plot is Pandarus, a manipulator between Troilus and Cressida. It is, however, characteristic of Troilus and Cressida that the attempts of both Ulysses and Pandarus are completely futile and superfluous. As Thersites notes with surprising insight, "the policy of those crafty swearing rascals...is proved not worth a blackberry" (V.4.8-11). At

long last, "Great Achilles / Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance" not as the result of Ulysses's machinations but because "Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood" (V.5.30-2). Troilus lovingly submits to Cressida's amorous request--"Stop my mouth" (III.2.130)--not because but in spite of Pandarus's "going-between."

As the play presents inaction as action, Act III, Scene 1 gains particular significance since it embodies inaction in the form of gestures. Words lose their referential function, their "meaning," as it were; they stand hollow and superfluous. The encounter between Pandarus, Paris, and Helen is suffocating in its exaggerated politeness and social mannerism:

> PANDARUS:
> Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company. Fair desires in all fair measure fairly guide them--especially to you, fair Queen. Fair thoughts be your fair pillow.
> HELEN:
> Dear lord, you are full of fair words.
>
> (III.1.43-7)

Muir in his edition takes pains to trace that "in the...dialogue the word 'fair' is used eleven times, 'sweet' fifteen times."[37] The inflation of words logically leads to the inflation of characters. Barfoot emphasizes,

> One conventional way of pinning a price tag on a person is particularly evident throughout Troilus and Cressida in the excessive use of attributive honorifics: "fair," "true," "brave," "valiant," "gallant," "great," "good," "worthy," "heroic," and, a favorite complimentary epithet in this distinctly sour play,

more full of gall than honey, "sweet."[38]

Behind this "excessive use of honorifics" there is the mockery of the heroic style of the Homeric epic. The identifying "epitheton ornans" of the Iliad is turned into a hollow and irrelevant "price tag."

At the peak of the scene, Pandarus's bawdy "love-song," which is warmly appreciated by Helen and Paris, debases love on the level of idiocy:

> ...These lovers cry 'O! O!', they die.
> Yet that which seems the wound to kill
> Doth turn 'O! O!' to 'ha ha he!'
> So dying love lives still.
> 'O! O!' a while, but 'ha ha ha!'
> 'O! O! groans out for 'ha ha ha!'--
> Heigh-ho.
>
> (III.1.117-23)

The conclusions of the scene cast revealing light both on the couple of Paris and Helen and on Pandarus. It ridicules Trojan social life; it questions Trojan social values. Ralph Berry remarks,

> Helen as Immaculate Womanhood is an ideal demolished by her corporal presence. Act III, scene i (the only scene in which Helen appears), with its remorseless cafe-chatter, is itself a refutation of the Trojan war aims. And, of course, the Greek.[39]

On the basis of this scene, Diomedes's bitter sentences of the uselessness of the "casus belli" Helen are revealing: "For every false drop in her bawdy veins / A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple / Of her contaminated

carrion weight / A Trojan hath been slain" (IV.1.71-4).

Pandarus's pompous style is surprisingly praised by Helen and Paris. His mannerism and meaningless expressions result in an instable language --an appropriate device to grasp the instable play-world of Troy. Juliet Dusinberre notes on the instability of language in Troilus and Cressida: "The word is no longer the signifier of the thing, but the evasion of its reality."[40] Escapism saturates the Trojan microcosm of the play as a logical outcome of the determinateness of the plot. Escapism is expressed in the euphemism prevalent in the language; escapism is articulated in the actions of the characters. This escapism creates a series of indirect situations: the characters of an already distorted reality of a play ignore and reject this reality and escape into an additional "pseudo-reality." Perspectives sliding between the three layers of reality represented in and around the play (the reality of the recipient, the reality in the play, and the "pseudo-reality" in the play) present a complex system of irony.

The citation from Act III, Scene 2 has a significant role in the complexity of irony:

> PANDARUS:
> ...Let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women
> Cressids, and all brokers-between panders. Say 'Amen'.
> TROILUS:
> Amen.
> CRESSIDA:
> Amen.

PANDARUS:
Amen....

(III.2.198-203)

In her study on the rhetoric of citation in Troilus and Cressida, Elizabeth Freund argues about this sequence of the play:

> What more perfect instance of self-possession, one might think, than the coincidence of name and referent in the sign? But Pandarus's own identity is effaced and reconstituted in the infinite reiterations of his role. Perhaps the craftiest illusion of identity is the case of the eponymous subject, placing both subject and language in a mise-en-abime of verbal mediation: pandar is a pandar is a pandar...[41]

The magic circle of Pandarus's entertainment, however, is broken by the intrusion of "play-reality" into his "sweet" and "fair" "pseudo-reality." "No remedy" (IV.5.54.); Cressida must go to the Greeks; Pandarus's "dream-world" is shattered: "Where are my tears? Rain, to lay this wind, / Or my heart will be blown up by the root!" (IV.4.52-3). These are his last words in Troy and he does not appear on the stage until the very end of the play.

Concerning Pandarus's last appearance, the editors of the Oxford Shakespeare remark that the 1623 Folio "includes the epilogue spoken by Pandarus..., but certain features of the text suggest that it does so by accident, and that the epilogue had been marked for omission."[42] Accordingly, this edition does not consider the epilogue--and the preceding short dialogue between Troilus and Pandarus--an organic part of the play

and prints it as an "Additional Passage."

It is evident that the Pandarus of the epilogue is different from the one of the previous scenes of the play. He keeps his characteristic mannerism but he is presented as seriously ill. His diseases are the physical illustrations of his dubious morality--a characteristic in the play which is highlighted by Thersites, too. Troilus's final rejection--"Hence, broker-lackey! Ignomy and shame / Pursue thy life, and live aye with thy name!"[43]--finally defines the elusive character of Pandarus. Due to the changes in the given social environment, the entertainer and jester of Troy becomes an outcast. In the end, he takes on a characteristic role of grotesque fools: he appears as a scapegoat for his community.

In the last lines of Troilus and Cressida, Pandarus appears as a malicious optimist: "Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases, / And at that time bequeath you my diseases."[44] Pandarus is conscious of his mortality but also knows that his diseases are immortal. The diseases, however, are immortal only if there exist mortals to catch them. The immortality of diseases, therefore, indicates the immortality of people. This malicious optimism reveals clearly the character of Pandarus and lends a bitter yet comical ending to the whole play. It appears logical, furthermore, that the editors of the 1623 Folio, who printed the play among Shakespeare's tragedies, may not have considered a mundane and laughable

closing scene as an appropriate ending of Troilus and Cressida.

III.3. Pandarus's malicious optimism stresses the extent to which he resembles--and yet how different he is from--the malicious pessimist of the play: Thersites. As discussed in the previous chapter, Michel Foucault, in his Madness and Civilization, finds two primary reasons for Renaissance animosity toward madness: "the immorality of the unreasonable" and "the animality" appearing in a madman.[45] Troilus rejects Pandarus on the grounds of morality. Thersites is an outcast in the Greek camp not only because of his immorality but also his "animality." Before he physically appears on the stage, Thersites is already introduced as "rank" (I.3.72) and as "A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint" (I.3.193). In his first scene, Ajax calls him--in addition to numerous other things--"Dog" (II.1.7), "bitch-wolf's son" (II.1.10), "porcupine" (II.1.27), and "whoreson cur" (II.1.41). Discussing Thersites's animality, Muir turns to Audrey Yoder's study Animal Analogy in Shakespeare's Character Portrayal in which she notes,

> there is little doubt that satire implemented by animal characterization does play a great part in the depreciation of such characters as Achilles, Ajax, Patroclus, Menelaus, and Thersites, who receive the greatest amount of such characterization.[46]

In addition to creating satirical effects, the animal imagery dominant in the presentation of the majority of the Greek camp provides a sense of

irrationality, a sort of folly. The character of Thersites is central to this effect; his distinguished position is due to his transitory status in his environment. It is striking how animal imagery attached to the character of Thersites infiltrates even critical texts discussing Troilus and Cressida. A. P. Rossiter argues that Thersites is "like a moral vulture, feeding his mind's eye on carrion" and Willard Farnham remarks that Thersites is "so low in predatory instincts that he is only a jackal."[47] Due to this animality, Thersites is represented and interpreted as subhuman; his aloofness and different perspective result from his subhumanity.

His physical unpleasantness--palpably separating him from the rest of the "merry Greeks"--appears in the oldest source of Troilus and Cressida. Shakespeare's Thersites closely follows the one appearing in Chapman's translation of Seven Books of Homer's Iliad:

> ...The filthiest Greek that came to Troy,
> he had a goggle eye;
> Starcke-lame he was of eyther foote;
> his shoulders were contract to his breast
> and crookt withall;
> his head was sharpe compact
> And here and there it had a hayre.[48]

Thersites's repulsive appearance connected with the unattractive content of his speeches is counterpoised with Pandarus's nauseous charm. Apart from the structural similarities I referred to above, there are concrete textual

links between the two characters although they never appear in the same scene in the play. Pandarus's "Amen" in the citation above echoes Thersites's "I have said my prayers, and devil Envy say 'Amen'" (II.3.20) in the same way as Pandarus's favourite adjective "sweet" is picked up by Thersites "Sweet draught! 'Sweet', quoth a? Sweet sink, sweet sewer" (V.1.72-3). On the other hand, the most obvious difference between Pandarus and Thersites is in their valuative points of view. While Pandarus's sense of reality is distorted by his seeing everything positively, Thersites's sense of reality is simplified by his never ceasing to rail and to inveigh. As Jane Adamson observes, "[l]ike Iago, Thersites is 'nothing if not critical', and therein lies both the force and the limit of his outlook."[49] Pandarus's pseudo-reality appears as a naive "dream-world;" Thersites's escapism is manifested in his negative and valueless pseudo-world.

When he first appears on stage, Thersites's position in the Greek camp is represented as controversial. He is placed into a master-servant relationship with Ajax; he appears as Ajax's batman. But he also makes the remark, "I serve here voluntary" (II.1.96). Achilles (II.1.84; III.3.228) and Ulysses (II.3.90) call him "a fool" and treat him as a licensed jester. Ajax, however, physically punishes him, thus contradicting Thersites's fool-status and degrading himself on the level of fools.

In Thersites's amorphous dramatic position there is one constant and

persistent element: his denigrating criticism towards any character he encounters. As a telling introduction, in his very first lines he vents invectives on the Greeks' commander: "Agamemnon--how if he had boils, full, all over, generally?...And those boils did run? Say so, did not the General run then?...Then there would come some matter from him. I see none now" (II.1.2-9). He also bitterly disparages Ajax, Achilles, and Patroclus. Before Thersites's criticism begins to seem hopelessly monotonous and tedious, there is the revelation that some of his arguments are justifiable in the unique world of Troilus and Cressida. As Muir notes, "[h]owever much we discount Thersites's railings, some of the mud he throws is bound to stick."[50] Immediately after the Greek council scene which reveals Ulysses's and Nestor's stratagem concerning "rank Achilles" (I.3.312) and "blockish Ajax" (I.3.368), Thersites makes the remark, "...Ulysses and old Nestor...yoke you like draught-oxen, and make you plough up the wars" (II.1.105-8). These occasional insightful observations lend particular significance to Thersites's character. These observations may lead to the conclusion that Thersites represents a certain objective evaluating point of view and that Thersites's perspective merges with that of the playwright. John Bayley argues that Thersites "seems at times virtually to 'speak for' the play in a Brechtian sense."[51] Several theatrical productions, such as John Barton's at the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon in

1968, emphasized Thersites's importance as an objective observer of the play, "as though Thersites were Shakespeare's chief spokesman, whose satirical invective provided an objective account of the other characters."[52] On the other hand, Simon Russell Beale, who played the part of Thersites in one of the most well-received recent theatrical interpretations of Troilus and Cressida (Sam Mendes's production at the RSC, 1990) warns of the dangers of relying on Thersites as a choric representative of the playwright's opinion. In his essay "Thersites in Troilus and Cressida"--to be published in the forthcoming Players in Shakespeare 3--Beale makes the point,

> ...it is the responsibility of the actor playing him to make sure that Thersites's views do not imperceptibly come to appear as those of Shakespeare. He must not become the voice of the playwright....If he is trusted without question, then the play becomes complacently reductive.[53]

This controversy in the approaches to Thersites's character highlights the contradictory nature of the part. Thersites's incisive discernment--similarly to that of Pandarus and Troilus at the beginning of the play--is not the outcome of a coherent attitude but the result of the play's overpowering ironic technique, which is also demonstrated in Thersites's farewell to Ajax, Achilles, and Patroclus in Act II, Scene 2: "I will keep where there is wit stirring, and leave the faction of fools" (II.1.119-20). Here Thersites makes

use of a stereotypical gag of fools. Similarly to some of the interaction games of the Prince of Denmark in Hamlet or those of Feste in Twelfth Night, Thersites reveals that not he but his companions are the "real" fools. The most noticeable difference is that, while characters in Hamlet become fools primarily through the perspective of Hamlet's "antic disposition" and Feste in Twelfth Night proves that others are fools in certain situations with the aid of his verbal strategies, Thersites proves to be right due to the general antiheroic and demystifying treatment of the antic heroes in Troilus and Cressida. Thersites is a perpetual reminder of the truth of Troilus's already cited observation "Fools on both sides" (I.1.90).

Originating from his separation from the mainstream of events and his unhinged position in the play, Thersites is the only character in the Greek camp who is provided with soliloquies. His first monologue reveals his paramountly abusive criticism towards his fellow Greeks. His main argument is that the Greek heroes are ignorant who "will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider without drawing their massy irons and cutting the web" (II.2.14-16). Thersites's castigation targets "[t]he common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance" (II.3.26-7) dominant among the Greeks, thus also establishing his position as controversial in the structure of Troilus and Cressida. His viewpoint is that of an intellectual who detests the values of his military environment.

It is paradoxical how the vile content of Thersites's words are wrapped in highly sophisticated diatribes of logical argument. Apart from Ulysses, none of the Greeks can compete with his virtuoso rhetoric. His verbal power is clearly manifested in his linguistic games such as the one he launches on Achilles and--chiefly--Patroclus: "Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles; Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool; and Patroclus is a fool positive" (II.3.61-64). Playing with the distinction between "relative" and "absolute" fools, he devastatingly ridicules Patroclus. His verbal ability makes him similar to Feste, the fool of Twelfth Night.

In certain respects, Thersites is Feste's satirically distorted descendant. Both are outsiders in the worlds of their respective plays; they are considered jesters, somewhat privileged entertainers. Both Feste and Thersites have a strange attitude towards language. Feste points out the devaluation of words; Thersites speaks an ultimately devalued language. Feste's bitter conclusion that "...words are grown so false I am loath to prove reason with them" (III.1.23-4) returns in Thersites's vituperation "Here is such patchery, such juggling and such knavery. All the argument is a whore and a cuckold" (II.3.70-1).

Similarly to Feste, Thersites is also a talented performer. Creating a play-within-a-play scene, he mocks Ajax by "putting on his presence"

(III.3.261). Thersites's condemnation attacks Ajax's linguistic disability, he calls Ajax a "languageless...monster" (III.3.256) who "wears his tongue in's arms" (III.3.261). Thersites's mockery is particularly powerful and ironic as he--one of the most articulate characters in the play--decides to present Ajax's inarticulateness:

> PATROCLUS: Jove bless great Ajax!
> THERSITES: H'm.
> PATROCLUS: I come from the worthy Achilles--
> THERSITES: Ha?
> PATROCLUS: Who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his tent--
> THERSITES: H'm!
>
> (III.3.270-76)

Mocking Ajax in front of the "audience" of Achilles and Patroclus, Thersites appears as if he were on a common evaluating platform with the latter two characters. As soon as Achilles and Patroclus leave, however, Thersites at once rejects any common viewpoint connecting him to them: "I had rather be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance" (III.3.301-2). Thersites's last sentence in the scene reveals a striking self-esteem, a surprising attribute for a character whose chief characteristic is his universal questioning and negation of any values existing in his environment.

Thersites is a puzzlingly ambivalent character; the repulsive essence of his arguments is counterpoised with the brilliance of his rhetoric and the comic dramatic situations in which he appears. Muir notes,

> Thersites is a Fool, licensed to be scathing about everyone and everything. Whenever he appears he provokes laughter as well as disgust by the colourful violence of his invective--which Shakespeare must have enjoyed writing.[54]

From this particular point of view, Thersites personifies a general trait of the whole play. Everett suggests, "[a] great deal of Troilus and Cressida can make one laugh hysterically--especially in performance--but never without a kind of kick-back of sadness, even of guilt: as though someone were walking over one's grave."[55] The laughter provoked by Thersites originates from embarrassment and absurdity rather than from joy.

After a short disappearance from the stage, Thersites becomes a decisive character in the last scenes of the play. He becomes omnipresent; his criticism turns even more severe than previously. His bitter rebuke against Patroclus is a recurring pattern in the play and returns in Act V, Scene 1, as well:

> THERSITES:
> ...Thou art thought to be Achilles' male varlet.
> PATROCLUS:
> 'Male varlet', you rogue? What's that?
> THERSITES:
> Why, his masculine whore. Now the rotten diseases of the south, guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs, loads o'gravel i'th'back, lethargies, cold palsies, and the like, take and take again such preposterous discoveries!
>
> (V.1.15-21)

About this scene Beale observes, "[t]he mistake that Patroclus makes is to

play a game with rules laid down by Thersites and, of course, he loses."[56] Due to his verbal superiority, Thersites becomes more and more self-confident by the end of the play.

In the centre of Thersites's vituperation there are images of diseases which allude to the social corruption and disorders prevalent in the Greek camp. As T. McAlindon argues, the rhetoric phenomenon of tapinosis is dominant in the speeches of some of the characters of Troilus and Cressida and in those of Thersites, as well: "[i]ts effect is to introduce images and ideas which work counter to the speaker's usually panegyric intention...."[57] As to Thersites, the contrast between the panegyric rhetoric and the calamitous content, that is, between style and meaning, is crucial to the character. It is revealing that his perfect rhetoric pieces are presented to derogatory ends. After demolishing the antique heroic myth, universally respected heroic characters, the widely acknowledged Homeric style and its later classical descendants, a totality of the ironic technique is evident in the devaluation of language, and in the hollow rhetoric of the play.

Having enumerated diseases in order to depict moral disorder, Thersites turns to the enumeration of animals in order to ridicule human folly:

> To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would not care; but to be Menelaus!--I would conspire against destiny....for I care not to

be the louse of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus!
(V.1.57-62)

Thersites, who is presented as a satirical character through animal-imagery, provides an ironic twist by acknowledging his negative image so as to underline Menelaus's even more derogatory position in the play. Thersites again explicates his high self-appreciation. Denigrating Menelaus, he indicatively applies a Renaissance system of values according to which one of the most humiliating and preposterous human situations is that of a cuckold.

It is striking that Thersites's most vitriolic criticism attacks a particular immorality, lechery: "...war and lechery confound all!" (II.3.74); "Nothing but lechery! Nothing but lechery! All incontinent varlets!" (V.1.94-5); "Lechery, lechery, still wars and lechery! Nothing else holds fashion" (V.3.196-7). Farnham expounds on a general opinion about Thersites declaring, "[w]ith the creation of the sinister Thersites in Troilus and Cressida Shakespeare gives to an attendant fool a quality of diabolic malice such as he has not given before to either clown nor fool."[58] Thersites's acid contempt towards lechery--and other immoral phenomena in Troilus and Cressida--however, contradicts this view. A representative of evil is rarely depicted as idle or aimless and as paralysed, helpless, and inefficient as Thersites is. The source of Thersites's perverted pleasure does

not arise from the satisfaction that the moral standpoint of the characters in his environment is ambiguous and prone to criticism but from the content that he proves to be right in his ultimately derogatory judgment about the characters.

In his contemptuous introduction to the intricately spied tete-a-tete between Diomedes and Cressida, Thersites's strategy appears most discernable. He claims that "Diomed's a false-hearted rogue, a most unjust knave" (V.1.85-6) and talks of Cressida as "a Trojan drab" (V.1.93). During the dialogue between Diomedes and Cressida, Thersites then acknowledges --in his vile way--that his original negative opinion concerning the two characters is justifiable. This justification of his negative expectations is the key to Thersites's deviant attitude in Troilus and Cressida.

Discussing Act V, Scene 2, Muir argues that "[t]his is the most complex scene in all Shakespeare's works, and one which demands to the full the exercise of multi-consciousness."[59] On a basic level of the scene, in the centre of attention, there is Diomedes's encounter with Cressida. Without giving any reason or justification and thus prompting that it is normal and accustomed behaviour in the Greek camp, Ulysses helps Troilus eavesdrop on the conversation. On a third level, the scene is emblematic as to Thersites's dramatic position in the play. Creating a "meta-scene" within the scene, Thersites peeks on both the couple and the eavesdroppers.

Thersites merely reflects on the happenings of the scene as the assertion of his negative prophecies: "How the devil Luxury with his fat rump and potato finger tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry." (V.2.55-7). Although Troilus expresses his foreboding before the scene ("...sweet love is food for fortune's tooth" (IV.7.177)), he is still obviously shocked by what he is exposed to. It is a gruesome characteristic of Troilus and Cressida that of the possibilities offered in the plot always the negative ones are fulfilled. In general terms, the play as a whole can be interpreted as a series of self-fulfilling negative prophecies. This characteristic supports the argument that Troilus and Cressida, similarly to modern absurd drama, is an intellectual game which investigates the alternatives provided by the conflicts of the plot and selects those which point towards deterioration of the values represented by the characters and, in this way, also that of the characters. In the light of this argument, Thersites, therefore, does not appear in the play as an embodiment of "diabolic malice" or "the voice of the playwright" but as the indicator and representative of an overwhelming and annihilating intellectual procedure. The absurdity of Thersites highlights the absurdity of the whole play.

At the end of the scene, Troilus--not believing what he has seen and heard--suggests, "Rather think this not Cressid" (V.2.135) and, "This, she? No, this is Diomed's Cressida" (V.2.140). Thersites scornfully asks, "Will a

swagger himself out on's own eyes?" (V.2.138-9), thus emphasising the difference between the dramatic contexts of the two characters. Troilus's dramatic context is narrower; it makes him prone to irony: the affair between Diomedes and Cressida is an illogical event, an inexplicable and irrational phenomenon to him. Thersites, who functions as a kind of catalyst between the play and the audience, has a wider dramatic context; he approaches the scene as a bitter but logical outcome of the events of the play. Troilus is presented as the object, Thersites as the vehicle, of irony.

"Now they are clapper-clawing one another. I'll go look on" (V.4.1-2). In his own way, Thersites announces that the fighting has begun and he declares the extent of his participation: he does not fight himself; he only "looks on." His aversion to the battle echoes that of Falstaff in Henry IV. The difference between the two characters, however, is significant. While Falstaff is comical in evading the challenges, Thersites is satirical in his voyeurism and in his rejection of the battle. In his last sentences, turning down Margarelon's challenge, Thersites makes a speech which reveals his complete awareness of his external position in the Greek camp:

> THERSITES:
> What art thou?
> MARGARELON:
> A bastard son of Priam's.
> THERSITES:
> I am a bastard, too. I love bastards. I am bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valour, in

everything illegitimate.

(V.8.6-10)

His "illegitimacy," his outsider position, is most manifest in the last scenes of Troilus and Cressida.

Linking Thersites's character to that of Apemantus in Timon of Athens, Barfoot argues that these two are "Shakespeare's true cynics," who are close to "the philosophical origins of cynicism, where the cynic is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as 'one who sarcastically doubts human sincerity and merit.'"[60] Thersites's cynicism coalesces with his intellectual puissance, thus generating his powerful but esoteric stance in his environment. His detachment from the morality of his microcosm is frequently interpreted as proof of his immorality. Coleridge, for instance, argues that Thersites provides "the admirable portrait of intellectual power deserted by all grace, all moral principle, all not momentary purpose."[61] Examining the character from an external point of view, in isolation from the play's context, Coleridge's argument is obviously convincing. From an internal point of view, in the context of the microcosm presented in Troilus and Cressida, however, the valuation of Thersites's character is distinctly different.

Dusinberre makes a pivotal observation, pointing out that

...one of the radical differences between the Iliad and Troilus

> and Cressida lies in Shakespeare's discarding of deities. In Homer the Trojan war is waged as much in heaven as in Troy. In Shakespeare the gods are names but not numina. Men and women have deposed them, so that Helen is more beautiful than Apollo and Agamemnon a 'god in office'. Compared with other plays set in the pagan world--King Lear, Cymbeline, even The Winter's Tale--Troilus and Cressida lacks a religious dimension.[62]

Dusinberre, pondering on the definition of beauty in the light of Troilus and Cressida, draws the conclusion: "The lack of a religious dimension in the play has turned the worship of beauty as Plato concieved it into idolatry of its material forms."[63] Expanding Dusinberre's argument, it is enticing to suggest that the gulf between the basic principles of either a classical or Judeo-Christian morality and those manifested in the play creates a revealing framework for the interpretation of Thersites's character. In a world in which beauty is equal to "its material forms," heroism to the slaughter of the defenceless Hector, the "casus belli" to "a whore and a cuckold" (II.3.68), the venerable wits of the Greek camps to--as Ulysses professes--"merchants" (I.3.354), the social position of Thersites as an "intellectual" is predestined, his role is ultimately limited. Beale observes that Thersites's "cynicism could be the result of a distorted romanticism and, like all cynics, the delight he feels in being proved right is tempered with a numbing disappointment in the behaviour of his fellow human beings."[64] The dialectic of the repulsive vituperator and the disgusted critic

of a morally dubious microcosm makes Thersites's character challenging for the performer and perturbing for the audience.

III.4. Realizing the common dramatic basis of the two "commentators" and "voyeurs" of the play, Palmer links Thersites to Pandarus by also pointing out a crucial difference between the two characters,

> Pandarus seems to have no great critical capacity at all, but only the ability to involve himself in a situation sufficiently to debase it. Thersites debases whatever he meets and contemplates, but does so by vituperation and dissociation. Pandarus is a romantic gone rotten. Thersites is a romantic gone sour.[65]

Palmer interprets the two characters as two extremes of the same phenomenon. The roots of the two characters are the same; both Thersites and Pandarus can be seen as distorted romantics and idealists existing and failing in a war-focused and material environment. The difference between them originates from the way in which they are able to adapt themselves to the demands of their down-to-earth material world. Pandarus refuses to open his eyes to the play's reality; Thersites cannot help exaggerating his criticism towards this reality. It is significant that Thersites's strategy--although his is generally less appealing--proves to be more successful concerning (physical) survival.

Seeing Pandarus and Thersites as two romantics, on the other hand, does not preempt certain romantic overtones. Finding motivations (almost excuses) for a "rotten" and a "sour" romantic is a clearly romantic analysis which is not reinforced by the play as a whole. Barfoot remarks that

Thersites's "voice within the play serves admirably to help us modify our more radical doubts, just as Pandarus's exploitation of cynicism prompts us to question the harsher skepticism that the play engenders and inspires."[66] Since Troilus and Cressida does not present the morality of Pandarus and Thersites as significant or "positive," it does not justify the validity of their attitudes. On the contrary; as Barfoot comments, the repulsive characters of Pandarus and Thersites dissuade us from following any of their ideas even if we have come to similar conclusions in the course of the play. Pandarus and Thersites are not placed on a firm platform from which they can convincingly negate their environment since, due to the demolishing critical nature of the play, they--their behaviour and character, that is--are negated themselves. In the end, the vehicles of irony, therefore, become the objects of irony creating a complex system of ironic effects and pointing towards sheer and annihilating satire.

The third aspect of the characters of Pandarus and Thersites can be illustrated with the aid of the Epistle to the Reader attached to the 1609 Quarto edition (Q^b) of Troilus and Cressida:

> A neuer writer, to an euer
> reader. Newes.
>
> Eternall reader, you haue heere a new play, neuer stal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawed with the palmes of the vulger, and yet passing full of the palme comicall; for it is a birth of your braine, that neuer vnder-tooke any thing commicall,

> vainly: And were but the vaine names of commedies changde for the titles of Commodities, or of Playes for Pleas; you should see all those grand censors, that now stile them such vanities, flock to them for the maine grace of their grauities....[67]

It is obvious that the Epistle functions as an advertisement for the play; accordingly, its language is remarkably commercial. Its style, its strategy, and its puns such as "Commedy-Commodity" all underline that its object is far more a good for consumption than an abstract piece of art.

It is striking how close this use of the language is to Pandarus's style. The Epistle provides a context which questions the meaning of an evaluation such as that of Pandarus as "a romantic gone rotten" and that of Thersites as "a romantic gone sour." As Fiedler--somewhat tendentiously--remarks, Shakespeare's

> "plays" (it was the word he and his contemporary admirers used for his theatre, leaving the more solemn and pretentious term "works" to culture-climbers like Ben Jonson) are as integral to and unalienated for the Mass Culture of his time as Hollywood movies or T.V. sitcoms or science fiction novels are from ours.[68]

In the light of the Epistle, the interpretation of both Pandarus and Thersites gains remarkable implications. Troilus and Cressida presents and destroys Pandarus as the absolute representative and Thersites as the absolute critic of "Mass Culture." Opening new dimensions, the play as a whole criticizes Mass Culture by making impossible its final products: both

its advocate and its adversary. Negating its contemporary cultural values, the play creates a radically new consciousness of culture, a radically new set of values.

A fourth perspective on the characters of Pandarus and Thersites is highlighted by Foakes when--discussing All's Well that Ends Well and Measure for Measure--he observes,

> The tonality of these plays is established in large part, like that of Troilus and Cressida, by the vital presence of satirical figures related to those of Jonson, as Thersites and Pandarus are succeeded by Parolles and Lavache, and these give way in turn to Lucio and Pompey Bum.[69]

These characters are the primary vehicles of comic overtones, the "fools"--in a wide sense of the term--of the Problem Plays.

The couples are analogous in numerous ways. They comprise of "aristocratic jesters" such as Pandarus, Parolles, and Lucio and socially inferior "servant-fools" such as Thersites, Lavatch, and Pompey. It is striking that all of them express in their respective plays that they "feel" uncomfortable and frustrated in their environments. On the one hand, the "aristocratic jesters" are finally expelled and mercilessly punished. On the other, the "servant-fools" survive as a result of their cunning strategy; although their survival is too sombre and humourless.

Pandarus, Parolles, and Lucio are deeply rooted in their communities;

they are organically involved in certain activities of the plays. Thersites, Lavatch, and Pompey are more independent than their aristocratic counterparts. They are more obviously outsiders in their communities and that is why they can preserve their integrity. The "aristocratic jesters" are too weak and too amateurish; the "servant-fools" are persistent and professional. The former appear as foolish; the latter as "aristocratic."

In Troilus and Cressida, the role of Pandarus and Thersites is to give a framework of the main plot. In All's Well that Ends Well, Lavatch and Parolles take part in the plot more organically; they are aware of each other's existence. They are involved in a peculiar relationship; they have a definite influence on each other's fate. In Measure for Measure, the relationship between Lucio and Pompey becomes even closer. As in Trevor Nunn's recent production (RSC, The Other Place; Stratford-upon-Avon, 1992), it develops into desperate rivalry. They are complementary dramatic phenomena; they serve as a crucial and elucidating element in the interpretation of the whole play.

In the context of the Shakespeare canon, Thersites and Pandarus appear as a link in the series of "fool-couples" whose origin can be traced to that of Feste and Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night. These couples are characteristic of Shakespeare's plays in the given period. They are depicted as the vehicles of comic effect in their respective plays, yet they are

expelled, punished, or rejected in the end. Their fate casts light on a general tendency in the playwright's art.

CONCLUSION

The three plays discussed in this thesis represent three dramatic genres; they offer, therefore, three different frameworks for the examined dramatic phenomena--the fool-characters and those situations and structures in which these characters appear. Beyond the obvious differences originating from the varying contexts provided by the three plays, several similarities occur in the course of the analysis. In addition to some returning formulae frequently and characteristically applied by the fool-characters, their parallel dramatic roles and positions in their respective play-worlds also underline the organic correspondence between these figures.

The analysed characters all represent a dramatic perspective which points out of the given play-world; they all appear as outsiders in their given societies. They, therefore, frequently open play-within-a-play scenes; their external point of view provides them with overwhelming theatricality. On the other hand, they often mediate between the play-world and the auditorium of the theatre and, more importantly, they--consciously or unconsciously--disturb the social and moral order of their environment. Their "otherness" is usually the key to their roles; their individuality is the chief source of their conflicts.

In Hamlet, his fool-mask--"antic disposition"--turns the young Prince of Denmark into a fool-character. Several roles are attached to Hamlet within the play, such as that of a scholar, lover, courtier, etc. While almost all of them are static characteristics, his fool-role gains special significance since it is a dynamic device propelling further action. The conflict between the basic role of an avenger (Hero) and the chosen mask of a comic figure (Fool) is central to the interpretation of Hamlet's character.

Behind Hamlet's fool-characteristics there is a mixture of various traditions. In the sources of the play the Prince is depicted as a trickster-character; in the theatrical traditions of the beginning of the 17th century the avenger is frequently presented as comical. The result of Hamlet's acquired fool-mask is richly multi-faceted and theatrical. In all the scenes in which he appears, Hamlet generates a play-within-a-play scene.

While the audience is aware that Hamlet is not really mad, this consciousness is not shared by the characters whom Hamlet confronts. His game creates a series of ironic effects; Hamlet appears as a catalyst and a vehicle to present his companions as the objects of irony. Hamlet's hiding behind his mask reaches its peak--and also its end--with the The Mousetrap scene. When Claudius realizes that Hamlet feigns his madness and that the Prince behind the mask threatens the throne, the King banishes his nephew.

By the end of the The Mousetrap scene, it becomes apparent that Hamlet's fool-role is subversive in relation not only to the political order established by Claudius but to Hamlet's integrity as well. Hamlet's Fool-role undermines his Hero-role, leading the character's way through the play to a dead-end. Hamlet ceases to be in control of his acts; as he murders Polonius, he is also presented as a suffering object of the play's penetrating irony.

Hamlet's removal from the stage with the aid of the voyage to England is the solution to the checkmate situation. The Hamlet who returns from the sea is different from the Prince who appears in the previous scenes. Discarding his Fool-role, he eventually becomes able to act out his Hero-role. His metamorphosis is highlighted by the Graveyard scene. Hamlet's dialogue with the Grave-digger clearly demonstrates the disappearance of Hamlet's "antic disposition." The revelation that "[h]is madness is poor Hamlet's enemy" (V.2.185) reveals that Hamlet himself finally realizes that his Fool-mask has overcome his character and has become disadvantageously dominant.

Hamlet instigates or points out the various gradations of folly or madness among the members of the Danish court, thus emphasising the 'abnormality' behind the seeming 'normality' established by Claudius. Hamlet's counter-court of fools and mad persons, however, become

eliminated by the end of the play; by the last scene, the elements of Folly and Madness are erased or marginalised in Hamlet. An overall seriousness gains dominance in the play.

A pragmatic reason for the disappearance of comic elements from the play-world is that it is necessary in order to achieve tragic effects in the end. From a wider perspective, however, the new establishment--primarily represented by Fortinbras overtaking the power in Elsinore--creates a new 'normality.' The new order is sober, pragmatic, and rational. In spite of weaving comic elements into the texture of a tragedy, the final political status quo in the play is not a heterogeneous but a solid and solemn constellation. A political sobriety becomes prevalent within the play and--albeit all the seeming neglect of classical aesthetic demands--Hamlet eventually embodies certain attributes of classical tragedies.

While in Hamlet the conflict between Fool and Hero are represented chiefly in one character, in that of the Prince of Denmark, the realms of fools and heroes in Twelfth Night are divided by the play's plot-structure and its locations. Although Orsino's court is not completely exempt from the effects of a dramatic fools' play, its primary location is Olivia's household. Borrowing Mikhail Bakhtin's term, "festive madness" is prevalent in Olivia's environment; Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Feste and their companions are in the centre of the festive topsy-turvydom.

The pivotal dramatic device in Twelfth Night is that of concealing the characters' identity; various forms and modes of role-playing permeate the play-world of Illyria. The characters' shifts between conscious and unconscious role-playing generate the play's characteristic high theatricality. While the audience possesses a distinguished omniscient perspective on the happenings of the play, the characters within Twelfth Night are prone to misundertanding and confusion. The tension between the audience's (external) and the characters' (internal) perspective--similarly to the devices employed in Hamlet--creates irony.

Sir Toby Belch is a crucial character in the revels raging in Olivia's household; he possesses some features of the Lord of Misrule. He represents the overwhelming "bodily principle" which is characteristic of the style of "grotesque realism"--another term elaborated on in Bakhtin's thought-provoking work Rabelais and His World. "Grotesque realism" is the dominant form in the presentation of the holiday sentiment--the "Carnival"--in Illyria; it originates from folk humour, celebrates the "bodily principle," and presents "a contradictory and double-faced fullness of life."[1] In the modern understanding of Sir Toby's character it is decisive to bear in mind that twentieth century recipients of the play can no longer identify themselves with those values which "grotesque realism" demonstrates as positive.

Feste, Olivia's professional jester, also undermines the everyday moral and social order and contributes to the festive atmosphere in Twelfth Night. The fact that Feste is a fool-character employed by a mistress underlines a curious element in Shakespeare's play-writing technique: his fascination with the close ties between the Fool and the Lady. In addition to the intimate links between Feste and Olivia, in Shakespeare's other plays similar examples occur such as the relationship between Rosalind and Touchstone in As You Like It, the Countess of Roussillion and Lavatch in All's Well That Ends Well, and--more indirectly--that between Ophelia and Yorick in Hamlet, Pompey Bum and Mistress Overdone in Measure for Measure, and Cordelia and Lear's Fool in King Lear.

Feste's aloofness in his society is palpable from his first appearance on the stage in Act I, Scene 5. Focusing on Feste's position in the power-structure of Olivia's household, it is obvious that he is subordinated to his Lady. It is surprising, however, that he is depicted as equal to Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the other revellers. With the aid of his linguistic supremacy, Feste manages to bridge across the social chasms which separate him from his aristocratic companions. The momentary social equality also originates from the general holiday sentiment characteristic of the "Carnival" in the Fool's environment.

Beyond the relationship between Feste and Olivia on the one hand

and Feste and the "merry" ones on the other, the third factor determining the Fool's position in the play's social hierarchy is the competitive relationship between Feste and Malvolio. In their struggle to achieve more advantageous positions in Olivia's favour, the steward and the jester create a model of the competition between the "revellers," that is, the entertainers such as actors and playwrights, and the Puritans of Elizabethan England. The rivalry in Twelfth Night ends with the Fool's humiliating victory; in the prison-scene Feste "carnivalizes" the "laughter-hater" Malvolio.

Malvolio's "chastisement" in Act IV, Scene 2, presents a totality of Renaissance entertainment. Feste opens a play-within-a-play scene in which he cures Malvolio's "madness" depicted in terms of animal-imagery. Due to the "animality" attached to madness in the Renaissance mind, the scene draws on bear-baiting. For our contemporary audience Malvolio's treatment appears as inhumanly cruel, while the audience of "grotesque realism" found the scene--similarly to bear-baiting--generally "pleasant" and "comical." The tension generated by the differences between the value-systems of the audience of Shakespeare's and our time is responsible for the difficulties in the modern interpretation of the prison-scene as well as that of Sir Toby's character.

From an overall point of view, however, Twelfth Night cannot be interpreted as a play cherishing the robust characteristics of "grotesque

realism." In the final scene, civilized order regains dominance over the upside-down world of Illyria. In the end, Sir Toby--the Lord of Misrule--and his merry companions are dismissed or forced to adjust to the new order. It is striking that upon a festive comedy--similarly to the previously discussed tragedy Hamlet--eventually general sobriety and firm civil rule prevail. Fools and foolery are presented as the expelled scapegoats of the new social and moral rule.

From an external point of view, from the perspective of the dramatic presentation of Twelfth Night, the final status quo in the play reveals the rejection of the values represented by "grotesque realism." In a step moving away from the dominant scale of values represented in the arts of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance towards the aesthetic values of Neoclassicism, Shakespeare uses the elements of "grotesque realism" in order to criticize and finally deny them.

The analysis of Troilus and Cressida demonstrates a similar process: the playwright selects and uses elements of the Homeric myth and its later descendants in order to annihilate these by transforming them into an iconoclastic travesty. Although various explanations can be found in order to point out how much Shakespeare's technique is rooted in the practice of his fellow-dramatists and artists, Troilus and Cressida, as a whole, is an astonishingly radical departure from the plays of the Renaissance and a

step towards twentieth century dramatic works--those of Brecht, Beckett, and Pirandello.

The contrasts between the two localities and the two thematic lines determine the framework of the actions in Troilus and Cressida. The artificial world of Troy is contrasted with the vulgar realism of the Greek camp; the love-plot is interwoven with the general war-theme. The characters of Pandarus and Thersites are placed in a bipolar arrangement of the localities and the plots of the play; Pandarus in Troy is the voyeur of the love-plot, Thersites in the Greek camp is the voyeur of the war-plot. They are both inactive; they are observers rather than participants in the play's most determining activity: the war.

Pandarus is a unique character in Troy; his "otherness" is emphasised by his observer-role and fool-characteristics. Similarly to Sir Toby in Twelfth Night, Pandarus also appears as a Lord of Misrule; his hedonistic and narcissistic attitude focuses on a single desire: to enjoy himself in his environment. As a gregarious plotter and a master of words, Pandarus is presented as a character whose real dramatic environment would be in a comedy. In accordance with the gruesome overtones of Troilus and Cressida, however, he appears as a bawd, an immoral go-between.

Thersites's repulsive appearance and despicable attitude is

counterpoised with Pandarus's nauseating charm. Thersites is also an excellent speaker, but he uses his outstanding rhetoric to criticize, ridicule, and vilify all the characters and phenomena that he encounters. Due to his critical position as an observer or raisonneur, Thersites is frequently referred to as a "voice of the playwright." Because of his never-ending criticism and devestating mockery, the label of "diabolic malice" has also been attached to his character. Accepting the relevance of both opinions up to a certain extent, I suggest in the thesis that Thersites is the embodiment of the play's devastating irony and a physical representative of an annihilating intellectual procedure characteristic of the structuring patterns of the narrative of Troilus and Cressida.

The play appears as demystifying and rebelliously critical on various levels of its structure. First, the Homeric heroic myth and its later versions are mocked by Shakespeare's treatment, thereby, turning them into a travesty. Then the widely respected ancient characters who served as heroic examples for centuries are presented as fallible, ignorant, and immoral. Furthermore, the characteristics of the great Homeric style, the elements of the venerable ancient rhetoric are transformed into their own verbose and meaningless mockeries. Behind the play's hollow rhetoric and the devaluation of its language appears a totality of overwhelming ironic technique.

At the abrupt end of the play, Pandarus is both dismissed and terminally ill; Thersites fades away by virtue of his refusal to fight: his final scene highlights his alienated and detached standpoint in Troilus and Cressida. As the "clapper-clawing" begins, the inactive observers of Thersites and Pandarus disappear from the stage. The final moments of both Hamlet and Twelfth Night led to the elimination of the subversive factors of fools and folly and the emergence of a civil rule--an overall sobriety in the plays' worlds. The end of Troilus and Cressida also erases the representatives of fools and folly such as Pandarus, Thersites, or other "[f]ools on both sides," but no sobriety or civil status quo appears. Troilus and Cressida does not have a clear-cut final status quo: due to the play's mimetic technique, the final moments bring oppressive emptiness, a tabula rasa, a stage full of frustrations rather than potentials. The all-consuming ironic presentation makes catharsis impossible.

In both the tragedy Hamlet and comedy Twelfth Night, the fool-characters and -characteristics created a challenge to the status quo within the play and became eradicated or transformed in order to create a firmer civil order at the end of the play. In Troilus and Cressida, the rejection of the perspectives offered by the characters of Pandarus and Thersites is embedded in the general negation of the playwright's contemporary cultural values, thus creating a fundamentally new perspective on moral, social, and

cultural values.

NOTES

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