

SHAKESPEARE'S OBLONG WORLD
THE SCURRILOUS CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM PLAYS

by

SUZANNE D. COHEN

B. A., Allegheny College, 1953

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

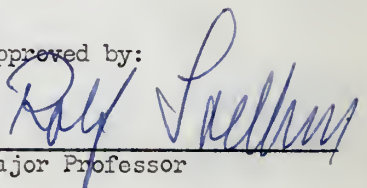
MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1967

Approved by:


Major Professor

LD

2668

R4

1967

C678

C.2

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Robin Goodfellow

A Midsummer-Night's Dream

III, ii, 115

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Section I	
<u>Troilus and Cressida</u>	
Thersites, The Virulent Fool	7
Section II	
<u>All's Well That Ends Well</u>	
Parolles, The Admitted Fool	16
Section III	
<u>Measure for Measure</u>	
Lucio, The Merry Fool	25
Section IV	
<u>Timon of Athens</u>	
Apemantus, The Philosophic Fool	34
Conclusion	46
Bibliography	50

INTRODUCTION

During the first decade of the seventeenth century Shakespeare wrote at least ten plays--his greatest tragedies Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth--and a group of plays which have caused such vastly varied comment and puzzlement that they have become known as Shakespeare's Problem Plays--Troilus and Cressida, All's Well, Measure for Measure, and the little known Timon of Athens. It was a decade in which there was an outpouring of drama unequalled in the century before. Although the theater of England was considered active during the reign of Elizabeth, the demand for theater increased fourfold during the early years of James I. Playwrights strove to supply the increased demand for plays as if clairvoyant of the coming end of the harmonious and expansive atmosphere of the Elizabethan stage. The intense rivalry of the Puritan and Cavalier elements was already apparent and the actual closing of the theaters in 1640 was perhaps at least a spectre on the horizon during this magnificent decade, the decade in which, besides the amazing productivity of Shakespeare, there was the production of Jonson's Volpone and Marston's The Malcontent.

The so-called Problem Plays have been consistently overshadowed by the great tragedies and seldom played until recently. Some critics consider them, in the main, failures and better left to gather dust and oblivion. But their closeness in time to the tragedies make them at least of scholarly interest as clues to the interpretation of the tragedies. A list of the plays illustrates graphically the chronological relationship of the Problem Plays and the tragedies.

Hamlet 1601
 Merry Wives of Windsor 1602
 Troilus and Cressida 1602
 All's Well That Ends Well 1603
 Measure for Measure 1604
 Othello 1604
 Timon of Athens 1605 or 1606
 King Lear 1605 or 1606
 Macbeth 1606
 Antony and Cleopatra 1608¹

All of the plays in the list other than the tragedies and Merry Wives² have been included by at least one critic in the group called Problem Plays.

All's Well, Troilus and Cressida, and Measure for Measure are generally included and make up the nucleus of the classification. F. S. Boas,³ who originated the term, included Hamlet, as does E. M. W. Tillyard⁴. J. W. Draper⁵ and Peter Ure⁶ include Timon of Athens. Ernest Schanzer,⁷ who takes a position on the Problem Plays which has not had much critical acceptance includes Julius Ceasar (1598 or 1601) and Antony and Cleopatra. The Problem Plays seem to occupy a place in time after the earlier comedies and histories and immediately before the tragedies.

¹ Cf. Peter Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays (London, 1964) p. 8. This is a conjectural list, of course, but most scholars agree to or would vary only a year or two from the dates given in the list.

² Merry Wives was apparently written at the special request of Queen Elizabeth.

³ Shakespeare and his Predecessors, (New York, 1896, 2nd edition 1905) p. 345.

⁴ Shakespeare's Problem Plays, (Toronto, 1950) p. 1.

⁵ The Tempo-Patterns of Shakespeare's Plays, (Heidelberg, 1957) p. 94.

⁶ Shakespeare: The Problem Plays, p. 1.

⁷ The Problem Plays of Shakespeare, (New York, 1963) p. 1. Schanzer alone excludes All's Well.

But beyond their relationship to the tragedies the plays are significant in themselves. Their enigmatic quality has an appeal to modern audiences. Different from the tragedies and the earlier comedies they offer a unique point of view. Their uneven quality and nonspecific conclusions record the changing and maturing propensities of their playwright. They seem a bellwether of the cacaphony and the unrest of the oncoming century. If the label tragedy is applied to them they fail to fulfill the dimensions demanded by the tragic view--questions remain. If the label comedy is applied, the conclusion is inevitably that they are a strange, bitter, and brittle brand of humor. The term tragicomedy has been employed in compromise. The term Problem Play is better.

The phrase was borrowed from the plays of Ibsen and Shaw by F. S. Boas in 1896.

All these dramas introduce us into highly artificial societies, whose civilization is ripe unto rotteness. Amidst such media abnormal conditions of brain and of emotion are generated, and intricate cases of conscience demand a solution by unprecedented methods. Thus throughout these plays we move along dim untrodden paths, and at the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain; we are excited, fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome, even when, as in All's Well and Measure for Measure, the complications are outwardly adjusted in the fifth act. In Troilus and Cressida and Hamlet no such partial settlement of difficulties takes place, and we are left to interpret their enigmas as best we may. Dramas so singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies. We may therefore borrow a convenient phrase from the theatre of today and class them together as Shakespeare's problem plays.

It is true each of these plays is set in a troubled society: the King is ill and aged in All's Well; Vienna, in Measure for Measure, has a juvenile

delinquency problem in its "burning youth" and "headstrong jades" who are disrupting "all decorum"; in Troilus and Cressida, "Nothing holds fashion but lechery and war"; the Athens of Timon is filled with "glass-faced flatterers" and ingrates; the Denmark of Hamlet is called "rotten".

Similarly, the society of London was troubled in the early sixteen hundreds by the uncertainty caused by the change in monarchs, by the effects of the plague, and by the rivalry and contrasting philosophies of the Court of James I and Parliament. The decade of Shakespeare's greatest achievement is marked by a turbulent air as if the London of Elizabeth, like an idealistic youth brought up in the belief that the world was round, is dismayed and disillusioned by the realization that the world is, instead, oblong.

If one tenet can be attached to the Problem Plays of Shakespeare it is that there are no simple answers to most of the dilemmas of life or, to put it in turnabout, the simple answers are likely to be at least partially wrong. Shakespeare's Problem Plays, unlike those of Ibsen and Shaw, utilize the troubled society as a setting only. Shakespeare's emphasis is on ethics, on moral judgment, on seeking answers. His focus is on the consequences ethics and moral judgment produce in a particular character's life. The search goes beyond any simple, harmonious answer.

In the years since Boas borrowed the classification, Problem Plays, the term itself has been a subject for debate. Critics have questioned as well as asserted its truth and its usefulness. Peter Ure,⁹ in a review of the important critical attitudes toward attaching the term Problem Play to Shakespeare, concluded that Troilus and Cressida, All's Well, Measure for

⁹"The Enigmatic Problem Plays", Shakespeare Newsletter, April-May, 1964, p. 54.

Measure, and Timon of Athens--usually considered the Problem Plays--are charged with a common source of current. A list of the "features in common" held by these plays emerged from his study.

... disputable though their designation as 'problem plays' may be, it is true to say that all four of the plays considered here have some features in common: the probing of character under the test of situations which raise conflicting ethical interpretations; the replacement of the strain of occasional melancholy which is found even in Shakespeare's most festive comedies by an urgently satirical and disfiguring temper; a willingness even in comedy to draw near to pain and death; a curious interweaving of romantic and even fantastic tales with realistic characterization which itself sometimes moves towards allegory and symbol: an art whose occasional apparent contempt and carelessness about what W. B. Yeats called the 'wheels and pulleys' of drama, the machinery for achieving consistency and smooth running, mediate the reach and pressure of a mind profoundly aware that energy and meaning in the theatre may spring from the attempt to embody in its forms the very resistance which life offers to being translated into the expressive modes of art.

If a simplified list of the qualities characteristic of a Shakespearean Problem Play were extracted from Ure's discussion it might appear somewhat like the following:

1. Probing of character through posing conflicting ethical interpretations of a dilemma dramatically.
2. Domination of satirical and disfiguring tempers in the tone of the play.
3. Pervading realism.
4. Earnest investigation on many contrasting levels.
5. Inexplicit conclusions.

Each of these plays contains a derisive and scurrilous commentator who contributes a major proportion to the features which these plays hold in common. Their coarse and sometimes vulgar language creates much

of the satirical tone and disfiguring temper of their play; their comments emphasize the conflicting ethical interpretations; their characters are part of the pervading realism. Sometimes they are the agents of Shakespeare's investigation.

In Troilus and Cressida there is Thersites, the traditional railer who plays the fool for the enjoyment of the Greeks while he provides scurrilous commentary on the ways of the world in an inane and foolish war. In Timon of Athens there is Apemantus, a churlish philosopher whose self-imposed isolation from the society of Athens provides the platform from which he comments acidly on the idle foolish ways of shallow, greedy mankind. Lucio of Measure for Measure and Parolles of All's Well are idle buttonish fops who comment on society through their own particular characteristic language and actions.

In the belief that Shakespeare did not put these derisive commentators into all four of the Problem Plays merely by coincidence, the following study attempts to determine the particular purpose and function of each character in his own play and in the plays as a group. The effect of these similar unsavory characters on these plays is of particular interest and significance because these characters are Shakespeare's own invention and were not present in more than name in the plot sources of these plays.

SECTION I

Troilus and Cressida

Thersites: The Virulent Fool

Of the four plays considered, Troilus and Cressida is by far the best and Thersites is the most effective of the scurrilous commentators.

Troilus and Cressida has the discomforting effect of catching realistically the ludicrous and often degrading activities of men. The play portrays men brought to a level much beneath their real power for good, their aspirations wasted and lost forever in an inglorious and dubious enterprise of war. The war's origin has lost its point and, in the first instance, its point was unworthy of the best efforts of men whose intentions were to right a wrong. The play could be billed an Unpleasant Play in the same manner that Shaw titled a group of his plays.¹⁰

It is not known whether Troilus and Cressida was ever performed in Shakespeare's time but because of a remark in a preface to the second quarto of Troilus and Cressida which appeared in 1609¹¹ some critics have conjectured that it was played and failed. Others, including W. W. Lawrence¹², think the play was designed for a special audience--possibly one of the Inns of Court.

¹⁰G. B. Shaw's first collection of plays was Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant in 1898. Shaw liked this play. He said it was "Shakespeare speaking to the 20th century."

¹¹Two quartos of Troilus and Cressida appeared in 1609. Each had differing title pages but with identical text. The second quarto carries a preface absent in the first which declared that the play was "never stal'd with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar."

¹²Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, (New York, 1931), p. 125.

The realism and immediacy of Troilus and Cressida easily leads the imaginative modern reader to produce for himself the special audience at one of the Inns. Such an imaginative venture increases the understanding and enjoyment of the play and at the same time enhances critical appreciation of the work according to Henri Bergson's tenet that comedy needs the atmosphere of the filled theatre to be at its most effective:

To produce the whole of its effect, then, the comic demands something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to intelligence, pure and simple. This intelligence, however, must always remain in touch with other intelligences. And here is the third fact to which attention should be drawn. You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others. Laughter appears to stand in need of an echo.¹³

In this theater of the mind there might be a group of well-educated and worldly barristers congregated for revels--food and drink, plays and talk. They are well acquainted by a common renaissance education with Homer and with all the characters and events of the coming dramatic performance by the Chamberlain's men of Shakespeare's new play Troilus and Cressida. They are ready to enjoy the legal imagery woven into the dialogue to please them and to laugh at the ribaldry and scurrilous talk. It has become the fashion of the world of plays to be satiric and derisive and these barristers are nothing if not fashionable. To such an intelligent audience a sophisticated play is welcome, and high flown speeches with fine turns of rhetoric will be applauded even in the midst of the dramatic action.

Missing from his traditional seat on the aisle or wherever Elizabethan drama critics traditionally sat, is the most acidic and vitriolic of the first night drama critics--one Thersites of Greece.

¹³On Laughter, 1911, p. 4.

A glance at the play program discovers that he has joined the players. While witnessing an earlier performance in rehearsal, perhaps Thersites, a most incontinent man, found it impossible to witness the performance in silence. Instead of saving his epithets for the London Times, "Drama Section," he commented on the drama and its characters in asides and in direct address to the rehearsal audience. He issued extremely audible mumblings under his breath, and, unable to restrain himself, bounded upon the stage to engage his critical wit directly with the characters as they played out their well worn parts lifted from historic lore. The playwright must have perceived that Thersites, in his intense concentration upon the performance of his critical duties, supplied the essence of a chorus--with his audible mumblings, comments and asides--as well as the part of a clown during his verbal accosts of the characters. He must have decided to incorporate Thersites's critical duties into the play and place Thersites's name on the Dramatis Personae. His name is there still directly under Patroclus. It reads "Thersites, a deformed and scurrilous Greek," which must be, for most playwrights and actors, an apt designation for the Drama Critic.

The audience recognizes Thersites's name and, familiar with his manner of speech and the usual direction of his thought, they expectantly await his verbal virtuosity, his scandalous and outrageous imagery.

Even if Troilus and Cressida was tailored to the tastes of a derisive and sophisticated audience,¹⁴ it is, in addition, a protracted

¹⁴ Robert Kimbrough, "The Problem of Thersites", Modern Language Review, LIX (1964), p. 173.

rumination upon men and women and upon life. It is a re-creation of two old, well known dramas, a war story--the siege of Troy by the Greeks including the death of Hector, and a love story--of Troilus and Cressida, from Boccaccio, Chaucer and Henryson--but a re-creation quite different from the usual treatment of the traditional institutions of love and heroism. Thersites's acid tongue and hyperbolic commentaries satisfy the fashionable taste and also create the play's darkened atmosphere and tone. The seed of truth buried within his vitriolic rhetoric is a major source of the play's strength.

The play begins, not at the beginning, the Prologue states--and there is a sigh of relief from the audience--but "leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of these broils, / Beginning in the middle" (I,i,27-28) and seems to have no end. Though Troilus is sadder, following his discovery of the perfidy of Cressida, there is a question if he is wiser as he vain-gloriously seeks out Diomed, Cressida's Greek lover, attacking a side issue rather than the source of his disillusionment. Though Hector is heroic and noble in intention, his death has an ignominious and futile air. If the play does not have an end--at least not yet, then it may be said to be still going on.¹⁵ The twentieth century and its two world wars and its wars in the middle east, in Korea, Cyprus, Cuba and Vietnam testify that it is.

Although Thersites proclaims himself as one who "looks on", the characteristic function of the drama critic, he is most peculiarly emotionally involved. His role is a vital one. He fulfills the offices

¹⁵ Cf. W. W. Lawrence, p. 168: "The ending of the tale is in accord with the facts of human experience; life often settles nothing, it leaves the innocent to suffer, the guilty to prevail." Picasso's war mural and Sartre's post-war plays bear close relations to Troilus and Cressida.

of both Chorus and Clown. He is a drama critic--as he criticizes the realistic characters and events of Troilus and Cressida, he criticizes life. He is surely more than a Clown and a Chorus. How much more is the question.

Thersites is not a wise sage. Rather his extreme and deformed criticism of others' activities and his peculiar emotional involvement itself are caveats to those who would take him too seriously. The over-extended epithets and coarse expressions, though containing a basis of truth, come from some embittered corner of the seat of his emotions rather than from his critical or philosophical acuity. If we use Schücking's method of understanding character,¹⁶ the lines of Thersites about himself indicate that Shakespeare's concept was not of a rational man of thought but of a man driven by the passions of anger and envy and by the frustration of being other than he wishes he is. The best example comes when Thersites, speaking in chorus-soliloquy says:

How now, Thersites! What! lost in the labyrinth of thy
fury! Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? He beats me, and
I rail at him. O worthy satisfaction! Would it were otherwise:
that I could beat him, whilst he railed at me.

The speech ends with:

I have said my prayers, and devil Envy say Amen.
I,iii,1-5,22

Looking at a list of the appellations others give to Thersites, it can be inferred that Thersites is ugly, that he is envious, that he typifies the bitter juices of gall. No one particular term should be allowed to

¹⁶L. L. Schücking, Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays, 1948, p. 153. States that there is an unassailable method of determining how Shakespeare wished a character to be understood (a) from the self examination of the character (b) from the comments of other characters.

outweigh the others but the term, "Fragment", applied to Thersites by Achilles, suggests an important dimension of the characterization of Thersites.

Achil. From whence, Fragment?

Ther. Why, thou full dish of Fool, from Troy.

V, 8, 9

Achille's salute, Fragment, may have been aimed only at Thersites's physical deformity. Yet an overall scansion of Thersites's traits suggests that he is deformed more than physically, that he is a fragment philosophically and emotionally as well. He is a particle, something that was or could have been whole, but which was broken. His most emphatic trait, his extreme manner of speaking, denotes his lack of balance, his lack of wholeness. Thersites is more than comic relief; yet, not being whole, he is not the over-riding voice of wisdom.

Thersites has no action in the play except to carry messages, to "look on," and to criticize any foul or foolish happening on the field. He mimics Ajax in the fashion of the traditional clown. He castigates in chorus-soliloquy Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Menelaus, and Diomedes. His intensity and fury imply some deeper interest in the affairs of man, deeper than mere ridicule and shallow derision. The subjects against which he rails with such ingenuity are deserving of it. He shrieks and laments upon such subjects as:

Lechery and War

Lechery, lechery; still wars and lechery; nothing else
holds fashion. A burning devil take them!

V, ii, 196-197

Folly and Ignorance

The common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance,
be thine in great revenue.

II,iii,30-31

(to Achilles)

Would the fountain of your mind were clear again,
That I might water an ass at it! I had rather be
a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance.

III,iii,313-315

Pride

(Speaking to Achilles about Ajax)

He must fight singly tomorrow with
Hector and is so prophetically proud of an
heroical cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

He's grown a very land-fish, languageless, a monster.

III,iii,247-249 263-264

Gluttony

(watching Troilus and Cressida)

How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and
potatoe finger, tickles these together!
Fry lechery, Fry!

V,ii,55-57

Thersites chronicles sins in others and accepts in himself traditional sins such as anger, envy, and cowardice. His interests portray him as a moralist. The last refrain, "Fry lechery, Fry!" depicts him in the mode of a gleeful devil rubbing his hands and cackling, rejoicing in witnessing the follies of men. Yet, at other times, his mood is moralistic and saddened:

O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus, forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods, and, Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little less than little wit from them that they have, which short-arm'd ignorance itself knows is so abundant scarce, it will not in circumvention deliver a Fly from a spider, without drawing their massy irons and cutting the web!

II,iii,10-18.

Here his tone is of despair and anguish at the destruction ignorant men do. Here, also, is the first image of the web--an image of power and emotional strength. The fly must be Helen, the spider, Paris, and the web the civilized world which is being destroyed. In this chorus-like speech, Thersites rises above the mere depraved and devil-like railer.

The importance of the image of the web introduced by Thersites is increased by its repetition by Troilus as he is convincing himself of Cressida's infidelity. Troilus speaks of the destruction of his own concept of the unity of the vows of love, a kind of civil behavior-- another kind of web:

Within my soul there doth conduce a fight
Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate
Divides more wider than the sky and earth
And yet the spacious breadth of this division
Admits no orifex for a point as subtle
As Ariachne's broken woof to enter.

V,iii,147-152

A second parallel in Troilus's speech to the character of Thersites occurs when Troilus refers to Cressida's faith now broken like the web; her love now deformed, as is Thersites.

Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself;
The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolv'd and
 loos'd;
And with another knot, five-finger-tied,
The fractions of her faith, orts of her love
The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

V,ii,154-169

These fragments are not pretty things.

Thersites appears only three times in the last act. He is proven a coward, which was his historic role, and which emphasizes his position on the outside of the major action. His criticism is of the actions of others.

Though moral in content, his criticism aims toward destruction. It may not be coincidence that his name sounds like a disease. The suffix -itis, which is Greek in origin, means "inflammatory" or inflammation of the particular part which the suffix follows. Commonly used medical terms employ the suffix -itis frequently. Bronchitis is, of course, inflammation of the bronchus. There is tonsillitis, laryngitis, encephalitis, gastritis, and so on. That Thersites is inflamed is obvious from his first vituperative word till his last. If he is a fragment, an inflamed fragment, like the disease-causing virus, he infects the whole body of the play. And though his criticisms contain particles of truth, his vision is diseased--like his imagery. His mission, like the virus, is destruction, not healing.

SECTION II

All's Well That Ends Well

Parolles: The Admitted Fool

The similarities of construction and plot devices in Measure for Measure and All's Well have induced critics and scholars to deal frequently with the two plays in conjunction. Both plays use the much debated "bed trick", the substitution of one woman for another in bed without the knowledge of the man involved, and both have extremely complicated denouements in their final acts. However, in other aspects, these plays differ profoundly. Measure for Measure is deeper and greater than All's Well and Lucio, the scurrilous character of Measure for Measure is a more successful character than is Parolles whose foppish and cowardly behavior provides the scurrilous commentary in All's Well. Yet All's Well has a certain charm of its own and Parolles is a subtly delineated comic figure; his folly effectively comments upon human folly in general.

G. K. Hunter calls All's Well "Shakespeare's potboiler",¹⁷ a suggestion that story line, suspense, and humor supplant the attention paid to any lofty perusal of ideas or themes. Like the watched pot that never boils, All's Well is a play about which much probing leads to disappointment and to wishful conjecture about what might have been. Few critics' temperatures have risen above lukewarm when they have discussed

¹⁷All's Well That Ends Well, ed. G. K. Hunter, (London, 1959) Arden Edition, p. 11.

the play. Arthur Quiller-Couch, for instance, registers a measurement approaching zero degrees:

In fine we hold this play to be one of Shakespeare's worst; in the beginning travestied upon a fine prose story . . .¹⁸

Yet, it is a play about which there are reservations--about its failing as well as its succeeding. E. M. W. Tillyard, before pronouncing final judgment, would like to see the play acted.

But perhaps it is premature to talk of failure. Fail the play does, when read; but who of its judges have seen it acted? Not I, at any rate; and I suspect that it acts far better than it reads.¹⁹

Surely a characteristic of a potboiler is that it plays better than it reads--even a Shakespearean potboiler. There is thus the suspicion that a great deal depends upon the actor's interpretation. It is certain that All's Well's poetry is not strong enough to carry it as is true of other of Shakespeare's plays.

There is an historical document now preserved in the British Museum which registers a reaction to the play as it was acted. This is the copy of the second Folio which belonged to Charles I on which he penned simply "Monsieur Parolles" on the title page of All's Well. This seeming royal approval testifies at least to the success of the character of Parolles and quite likely to the success, therefore, of the play itself in the seventeenth century.

A modern version of All's Well was seen recently by the British critic, Peter Ure.

¹⁸All's Well That Ends Well, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch, (Cambridge, 1929) p. xxxv.

¹⁹Tillyard, p. 89.

Those who saw Tyrone Guthrie's production of All's Well at Stratford on Avon in 1959 will remember it as a cool and gracious, blue and silver affair, stately and Puritanian and somewhat withdrawn in its general effect.²⁰

A cool and gracious, blue and silver affair it is in some ways. There is the stately decorum of the King and the Countess and the more leisurely pace of their generation. There is a courtly romance and the stylistic qualities of a fairy tale. But the words "cool, gracious, blue and silver" hardly apply in any way to Parolles. There is a suspicion that, instead of being a major influence, as he was on the seventeenth century production, Parolles was dismissed as unimportant--a relic only perhaps--in the modern one. The scripts of each production are similar enough that the interpretation of Parolles would come from essentially the same words. Thus, if the hypothesis that there indeed was such a difference in emphasis may be accepted for the moment at least, the role of Parolles should be a significant vehicle from which to survey the play. The addition or subtraction of Parolles was an original decision of Shakespeare since, like all the other scurrilous characters under consideration, Parolles was an invention of Shakespeare's and was added by him to the source story, the story of Giletta of Narbonne. A production without Parolles would be a very different kind of play than one with him.

Parolles has been a controversial subject of numerous critics' discussions. W. W. Lawrence believes his addition unnecessary. Tillyard believes Parolles is necessary to the unity of the play as a balance to the heroine Helena as well as a scapegoat for Bertram, the romantic hero. Some critics see Parolles as a lesser Falstaff; Ure calls him a classic Miles Gloriosus; Hunter, the tempter figure in a morality play.

²⁰Shakespeare: The Problem Plays, p. 9.

Parolles's volubility, foppish dress, affected language, and scurrile talk suggest that his role may have been satiric commentary on the behavior popular at the court of King James. At least such behavior was one of the interests of the King in All's Well and quite probably an interest of the playwright's.

"Let me not live", quoth he
 After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff
 Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
 All but new things disdain; whose judgements are
 Here fathers of their garments; whose constancies
 Expire before their fashions."

I, ii, 58-62

These are among the first words spoken by the King to Bertram and Parolles after they arrive at court. Parolles's dress is frequently commented upon throughout the play and he fits the King's description well.

Undoubtedly the modern production of All's Well was greatly influenced by the study of the play by W. W. Lawrence who asserted that its roots lay in folk lore and fairy tales. Lawrence contended that the two major plot devices in the play which tend to offend modern audiences would not be given a second thought by Shakespeare's audience because of their relatively greater familiarity with the traditions of folk and fairy tales. Therefore Shakespeare's contemporaries, unlike moderns, would not sympathize with Bertram's anger at being awarded to Helena as a prize, as it were, for her feat of healing the King's abscess; nor would they be offended by Helena's aggressive use of the "bed trick", the substituting of herself for Bertram's illicit love, Diana, in order to trap him again. Lawrence isolated these two obstacles and related them to basic folk motifs. The first is the Healing of the King, involving a clever "wench" who performs a miraculous

cure and deserves a reward. The second is the Fulfilling of the Tasks, involving the requirement of the industry of a virtuous wife to fulfill some impossible tasks set for her by her husband.²¹

The modern production may have sought to emphasize the fairy tale background in order to encourage the modern audience's acceptance of the plot in the spirit of its folk heritage. But in so doing, by emphasizing the blue and the silver, the modern production must have eclipsed the muddy yellow of truth that was also present in the original script largely in the presence of Bertram, the unwilling bridegroom and his willing accomplice, Parolles. It is the incongruity of Bertram and Parolles with the grace, patience, courage, and good sense of Helena and Bertram's mother, the Countess, that is the shocking quality which qualifies All's Well as a Problem Play. Shakespeare's purposeful inclusion of Bertram, the "unbaked and doughy youth" and Parolles, "that vile rascal" injects realism into the fairy tale plot. There is subtle irony and truth when Shakespeare's Prince Charming turns out to be Bertram who, according to La Feu, is an Ass.

There's one grape yet. I am sure thy father-drunk wine;
but if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen;
I have known thee already.

II,iii,100-103

And Prince Charming's closest associate is that "general offense," Parolles. Shakespeare gave Bertram Parolles on which to lay some of the blame for his rudeness. He gave Parolles the major comic incident of the play and a unity of character which distinguishes him from the mere plot or comic device which he might have been. Bertram and Parolles give validity to the play.

²¹Lawrence, p. 33.

By the end of the play, when Bertram and Parolles have been outsmarted and are docilely submitting to the rehabilitation, the audience has enjoyed a hugely successful joke. And they are reminded that fairy tales are only dreams of life and that people like Bertram and Parolles are real and numerous. The play has a further motif than those suggested by Lawrence in the words:

The web of our life is of a mingled yard, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherish'd by our virtues.

IV, iii, 83-87

It is a motif which requires the inclusion, not exclusion, of Parolles and Bertram.

But, returning to the controversial role of Parolles, there is never any doubt of Shakespeare's intentions concerning the character of Parolles. Every mention of him, characterizes him as reprehensible. For example, Helena's words introducing Parolles are:

"I know him a notorious liar, in a great way a fool, solely a coward."

I, i, 111-112

The masterful development leading to the comic exposure of Parolles is begun in the first words about him. Apparently Parolles' real character is known to everyone save Bertram. A partial list of references to Parolles demonstrates amply Shakespeare's visualization of him:

Thou art a general offense	II, iii, 268
Much fool may you find in you	II, iv, 34
There is no kernal in this light nut	
The soul of this man is his clothes	II, v, 46-47
A tainted fellow full of wickedness	III, ii, 89
I know that knave, a filthy officer	III, v, 16
That vile rascal	III, v, 87
That jack-an-apes with scarves	III, v, 89
a hilding	III, vi, 4
a bubble	III, vi, 6

a most notable coward, an infinite and endless
 liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of
 no one good quality worthy your lordship's
 entertainment III,vi,10-12
 this counterfeit lump of ore III,vi,39

Shakespeare is careful to allow no sympathy to build for him and thus his downfall is doubly sweet.

Hunter notes that the comic figure of Parolles is more of the genre of Jonson than of Shakespeare. Perhaps Parolles is also the type of comic figure of the genre of the problem plays. There are, as Martin Day explains, some basic differences between a Shakespearean and a Jonsonian comic figure:

Jonson as a master of comedy often seems to modern readers of English literature to lack both good taste and good funny comedy. The potent influence of Shakespeare has probably caused in us this preference for romantic comedy. Jonson's comedy is classical comedy, his figures are intended not for our sympathy so much as for our critical laughter.²²

The definition does seem applicable to Parolles. There is amazement at the extreme to which he can go but no real sympathy on the part of the audience for him. Parolles is much more despicable than Lucio in Measure for Measure; Parolles has no honesty, no loyalty, no feeling for anyone save himself.

Like Thersites, who also has no endearing qualities, however, Parolles utters lies that tend to have a grain of truth. Much of the humor in Parolles's ordeal is the discomfiture he causes those who would expose him. For example, Bertram's first words, upon finding that the plot to trap Parolles has worked, are worried: "Nothing of me, has'a?" (IV,iii,29)

²² Martin S. Day, The History of English Literature to 1669, (New York, 1963) p. 332.

And Parolles's account of Bertram is quite true as far as it goes:

That is not the Duke's letter, sir; that is an advertisement to an proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurements of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish.

IV,iii,240-243

The brother of Captain Dumain also has no wish to expose himself to Parolles's lies. He says plaintively, when a question is put to the blindfolded Parolles: "Why does he ask him of me?" (IV,iii,317). The scene, to repeat, is masterfully executed and would deserve in itself the praise of Charles I. But after the scene is finished, Parolles is not dropped, as he would have been if he were merely a stock comic figure. Instead of disappearing, he shows a remarkable resiliency, a spark of life, which elevates him above any mere convention such as the Miles Gloriosus, though the convention of Plautus has been nearly completely carried out.²³ His amazing speech following his discovery of the plot emphasizes his fantastic will to live. The more mature Dumain recognizes this when he notes that Parolles "out-villains villainy" and lets him go despite a rather good case for treason. Bertram, who has been burned personally with Parolles's extreme behavior, is not so willing to forgive. Nevertheless, Parolles, with this speech, rises out of the ashes, and, though he limps away, he is still moving and alive:

Yet am I thankful. If my heart were great
'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more,
But I will eat and drink and sleep as soft
As captain shall. Simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this; for it will come to pass
That every braggart shall be found an ass.

²³Eight Great Comedies, ed. by S. Barnet, M. Berman, W. Burte, (New York, 1958) p. 563 Convention says that the braggart must be exposed, ridiculed, swindled, and beaten.

Rust, sword; cool, blushes, and Parolles live
 Safest in shame; being fool'd, by fool'ry thrive
 There's place and means for every man alive.
 I'll after them.

IV,iii,318-330

Parolles has known all along what "thing" he was. He now must drop the masquerade and the pretence and live as the fool that he is. He goes to the man who most clearly recognized him, expecting and receiving solace. He is given a new name for his old one, further evidence of his dropping of his former pretence. Parolles, which in French means merely "words," becomes "Good Tom Drum," also a fine irony since bragging about the dishonor of the lost drum brought about his downfall.

As we are ourselves, what things are we!
 Merely our own traitors.

IV,iii,23

The clothes of the man whose "soul is his clothes" are soiled, ragged, and malodorous in the last scene of the play. Parolles, in spite of his unsavory nature, is important to the health of the play. He gives it unity and ironic perspective. Without him the play would be only a shadow and a pageant; without him it would not be a Problem Play.

SECTION III

Measure for Measure

Lucio: The Merry Fool

The modern practice of broad use of theatric effects and symbolism in stage setting, presentation, and interpretation is particularly well suited to the Problem Plays because of their "realistic characterization which sometimes moves towards allegory and symbol."²⁴ Modern productions commonly intermingle the arts, one complementing another or two together creating greater clarity and impact. Ballets are danced to Bach Fugues. Film slides accompany stage plays. Jazz accompanies Shakespeare productions. Decisive and artistic use of accompanying art forms in otherwise straight dramatic productions spotlight a theme or an idea in a play and make it memorable.

Measure for Measure is an intricately constructed and balanced play. Its complicated message might be highlighted effectively by the dramatic linking of several artistic modes of expression. Because its construction is itself like a carefully choreographed ballet in which ideas and characterizations balance and contrast dramatically, it is not difficult to imagine a modern style ballet as a kind of Elizabethan style "Dumb Show" introducing the main play. The setting for the dance might be on a construction site in a large city.

²⁴Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays, p. 8.

Turning, crossing, bending, weaving in and out, the characters of Measure for Measure, dressed as carpenters dance an intricately planned choreography symbolic of the play itself. Each carries an instrument for measuring or a tool for building. There are T squares, long metal tape measures, levels, a transit set on a tripod, and a sextant as well. The jointed stick rules click out in rhythmic sequence and extend long wavering lines of measure. There are hammers, nail buckets, paint brushes, and saws.

Slightly above the rest, directing the effort, is the construction engineer, a large note pad and pencil in his hand, his slide rule hanging on a chain from his waist like the cross habitually swinging in the flowing habit of a priest. The music is jazz, though it could as well be Bach, a slow deliberate jazz, a careful counter-pointed investigation. The construction gradually forming an outline is proceeding slowly but seriously when at the edge of the activity, working his way interestedly around the structure, comes the only smiling and leisurely moving dancer. He carries a curious measuring device, a yard stick with an obvious bow in the center and a broken tip. He gradually steals up behind the preoccupied chief engineer and, with a knowing grin to the audience and a fool-like leap, lays his warped and foreshortened measure along the backside of the earnest engineer.

Through the suggestive use of the builders who must measure, the dancers who move in measures, and the music which is played in measures, the title and the impact of the theme of Measure for Measure is expanded beyond the biblical source usually brought to mind:

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgement you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

Matthew VII,ii

The play is interested in justice. It is interested in investigating the quality of justice as it is related to an ethical construction of living. Therefore it is interested in much more than the single theme of justice. The dance prologue can suggest this fact.

The play is filled with speculative measurements of ideas and values. Every character, major or minor, comic or otherwise, is a standard of measure; each embodies a commentary on some issue or issues such as justice and mercy, death, sin, honor, virtue, and truth. Each character takes the measure of an idea and by his characteristic action illustrates the consequences of that idea. For example, the heroine Isabel is a novice about to take the absolute vows of celibacy in the order at St. Clare. She is intellectually inclined and interested in abstract concepts, a suggestion encouraged by her decision to seek religious seclusion in a convent. She symbolizes goodness. The Duke says of her:

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good.
The goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief
in goodness; but grace, being the soul of your complexion
shall keep the body of it ever fair.

III,i,179-181

Yet Isabel must decide whether to forget her chastity vows and submit to the lust of Angelo, her brother's judge, or let her brother die. Her intellectual nature measures the abstract tenets of the dilemma and its material nature--for her decision affects the material existence of Claudio, her brother. Isabel and the other characters in Measure for Measure are confronted with the length and width of a moral dilemma.

Carefully collecting the evidence resulting from the interaction of the characters is the Duke. He is, of course, the construction engineer of the Dance Prologue, the master carpenter, the chief measurer of the play and, at its conclusion, it is he who knows the true measure of those

present and attempts to treat each character according to his true worth and deserving. The Duke, in the play, disguises himself as a Friar to facilitate his measurings. As a Friar he intends to "visit both Prince (meaning Angelo, who is taking the Duke's place during his supposed absence) and people" to observe and measure them. His goal is to ascertain how to build a better Vienna, a better way of living, and to test the apparent virtues already present--to discover truth or as he puts it: "Hence shall we see / If power change purpose, what our seemers be." (I,iii,53-54) While he is thus occupied, protected by his Friar's cowl, close behind him comes Lucio, the scurrilous character in Measure for Measure and, of course, the smiling lazy carpenter in the dance sequence. Lucio begins to measure, busily and in turnabout, the Duke. Lucio's measuring device, the crooked stick, is like the ancient bauble or Marotte of the traditional jester or fool, an appropriate stage prop, for the measured ingredient that is the character of Lucio lightens and brightens the great unrelieved seriousness of the rest of the play. It is his charge to keep the play's sense of humor and in this important duty he succeeds.

Most critics feel that the play has two distinct parts and that the first part is much better than the second, which is largely taken up by Lucio and the Duke. But, as comedy, the second half of Measure for Measure succeeds very well. The comic action so much dependent upon Lucio, keeps the play on its track. It is useless to speculate about what might have been had Angelo dominated the second part of the play, useless to wonder if the play might have become one of the great tragedies. Shakespeare chose to follow behind the Duke and Lucio and, despite the grumblings and

outrage of some critics at the scandalous foulmouthed Lucio,²⁵ there is no choice but to also pursue the interchanges between the Duke and Lucio.

Lucio, as it is, returns the play to earth in a sense. If it were not for Lucio, the Duke would be no more alive than the usual chorus or Deus ex Machina. Lucio's ridiculous aspersions so nettle the Duke that he is rendered human after all. It is as if the Duke knows that, though he may control everything else and manipulate the futures of Angelo, Isabel, Claudio, and Mariana, Angelo's jilted fiancée, from his check-mate position on the stage, he cannot hope to control the tongue of Lucio--not any more than Lucio can control it himself.

Duke. No might nor greatness in mortality
 Can censure 'scape. Back-wounding calumny
 The whitest virtue strikes: What king so strong
 Can tie up the gall in the slanderous tongue?
 III,ii,178-182

The first comment made about Lucio by one of his gentleman friends characterizes Lucio's slanderous and measuring habits.

Thou art always figuring diseases in me; but thou art
 full of error; I am sound.

I,ii,49-50

In the second half of the play Lucio turns his tainted yardstick upon the Duke and however much the Duke attempts to escape Lucio, he is unsuccessful.

Duke. Well. You'll answer this one day. Fare ye well,
 (going)

Lucio. May, tarry, I'll go along with thee; I can tell
 thee pretty tales of the Duke.

Duke. You have told me too many of him already sir, if
 they be true; if not true, none were enough.

IV,iii,162-166

²⁵ Measure for Measure, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch, (Cambridge, 1922)
 p. xl. Arthur Quiller-Couch finds Lucio "insufferable".

and

Duke. Sir, your company is fairer than honest; rest you
well. (going)

Lucio. By my troth, I'll go with thee to the Lane's end. If
bawdy talk offend you, we'll have very little of it.
May Friar, I am a kind of burr, I shall stick.

IV,iii,173-176

Lucio is indeed a kind of burr, the seed pod of a noxious weed. His earthy imagery is fertile ground for the typical reproduction of more such seed-bearing plants. Lucio enjoys his own imagery so that he carries himself grandly into the excessive and foolish state of lies and counter-lies in which he is finally caught, caught in the barbed spikes of his own burrs. The realism of his character is part of his classic comic form. Lucio expects that everyone is as interested as he in illicit sex, in his clever allusions to it and its adjuncts, drunkenness, disease, and debt. He is typical of the embarrassing uncle or next-door neighbor somewhere in nearly everyone's life. Lucios have been present for thousands of years in the theatres as well as in the neighborhood.

The beneficial effect of comedy has been variously stated for over two thousand years; comedy cures us of our folly by showing it to us on the stage; or less extravagantly, comedy affords us the chance to laugh at our neighbors, and it is healthier for social man to laugh at his neighbors when he sees them on the stage than when he meets them on the street.²⁶

Lucio is a stock comic figure and his scurrility, though also the fashion of the day, is the stuff of which comedy is made. Aristotle states that comedy was originated by the leader of the phallic Chorus. Lucio with his own particular yardstick is qualified to wield such a baton.

²⁶Eight Great Comedies, "The Comic View", p. 7.

But Lucio also invokes a certain amount of affection. He is more than just a jester bedeviling the Duke. His ready compassion for the plight of Claudio and later for the sorrow of Isabel increases the girth of his character.

Lucio's part in the first half of the play is not inconsiderable. Lucio, besides having the accoutrements of the fool or clown, is also representative of a standard of measure. The central sin under investigation in the play, lust, is measured in its varied depths by the three young men of the play who all commit it. Lucio's sin is shallow, habitual, and dilettante, while Claudio, who according to Mistress Overdone is worth "five thousand" Lucios, is trapped in the youthful consequence of his more natural yet also unlawful act. Angelo, whose ways are "precise", represents the greatest degree of lust, a characteristically pure lust, lust for the sake of lust. To Angelo, just as to Tarquin, the single act overrides any other consideration. His lust for Isabel has no softening attributes.

Each character seems to be created in a careful weighed manner and in balance with another character. These parallel constructions are characteristic of the measuring, speculative nature of the play. The tempered maturity of Escalus suggests a moderate view of power and government. He contrasts with the violent absolutist philosophy of Angelo. Escalus states his point of view simply:

Let us be keen, and rather cut a little
Than fall, and bruise to death.

II, i, 6-7

Angelo, the striver after virtue, states a point of view quite the opposite:

We must not make a scarecrow of the law
 Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,
 And let it keep one shape till custom make it
 Their perch, and not their terror.

II, i, 30-34

The abstract intellectual natures of Isabel and Angelo seem to be a pair. The lightness and foppery of Lucio contrasts in group with the dark villainy of Angelo and with the sober moral contriteness of Claudio. The one "philosophic" utterance of Lucio evinces this as he confronts Claudio being conducted to prison:

If I could speak so wisely under an arrest
 I would send for certain of my creditors; and yet,
 To say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery
 of freedom as the morality of imprisonment.

I, ii, 122-126

Even Pompey, the bawd, and Abhorson, the hangman, balance each other. They contrast their occupations humorously and yet seriously. The Provost, speaking of both occupations says to Abhorson: "Go to, sir, you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale." (IV, ii, 28-29) In this manner the characters of Measure for Measure step the measure of a planned choreography, each a measuring device calculating one particular assault upon the business of living and the fitness of things.

Lucio's scurrilous tongue, unlike that of Thersites, is not responsible for the dark and ominous mood of the play. Rather, in Measure for Measure, Lucio's indomitable wit and singular interest in life suggests a plucky will to live, and, if that is not possible, to laugh. Rather than promoting the looming shadow of the executioner's block, he contrasts with it. The reminding eminence of death is never long out of mind in Measure for Measure. Paradoxically, the preoccupation with death focuses the play's theme on life. The simple wish to live is eloquently and dramatically voiced in the most powerful scene of the play by Claudio:

Sweet sister, let me live!
 What sin you do to save a brother's life,
 Nature dispenses with the deed so far
 That it becomes a virtue.

III,i,132-136

and by Pompey, the arrested whoremaster, who says just as passionately:
 "Truly sir, I am a poor fellow that would live." (III,i,220) Lucio
 would prefer being whipped to being hanged, yet, laughably, he sticks to
 his principles and prefers death to marriage, even a very short marriage,
 to a punk. Instinctively, Lucio, in his ancient role of fool makes the
 audience laugh at death. They laugh also at his ridiculous behavior
 but cannot banish completely its extension to their own. Both his
 foolishness and his courageous spirit are demonstrated in the simple line
 which Lucio utters when he discovers that the Friar and the Duke are the
 same: "This may prove worse than hanging." (V,i,364)

One or two measurements are never enough to complete any
 investigation. A measurement is only one entry of evidence. A carpenter
 must measure in all directions. A song must contain many measures. A
 measurement is not a conclusion. The play Measure for Measure does not
 offer a clear unwavering conclusion about the conducting of life. It
 does offer pertinent, and impertinent, thoughtful and dramatic evidence.

SECTION IV

Timon of Athens

Apemantus: The Philosophic Fool

Timon of Athens is another "failure" among the Problem Plays--at least it is so designated by most critics. The nineteenth century found it so poor that they attributed the worst parts to an unknown collaborator. There is no evidence that Timon ever reached the stage during Shakespeare's lifetime.

Now most critics are agreed that Timon is most likely an unfinished play which totally belongs to Shakespeare. It has been found playable in the recent Shakespeare festivals in England and the United States and has found an enthusiastic champion in G. Wilson Knight who has both acted the title role and written two critical essays about the play. Knight believes the play is one of Shakespeare's best, and he elevates it above Lear.²⁷

Timon literally meant manhater to the educated of Shakespeare's contemporary society. Shakespeare alluded to "Timon the critic" himself in Love's Labours Lost. H. J. Oliver, who edited the Arden edition of Timon, notes:

Elizabethan literature abounds in references to Timon's misanthropy and to Timonists; and allusions are found in Lyly, Greene, Mashe, Lodge, Dekker and Marston, to mention only more prominent dramatists.²⁸

²⁷The Wheel of Fire, (New York, 1930) p. 89.

²⁸Timon of Athens, ed. H. J. Oliver, 1958, p. xl.

The character of Timon must have seemed a perfect one to dramatize for he could be expected to use the most outrageous derisive language-- appropriate for him and right in fashion. The outline of the story of Timon is in North's Plutarch, a frequent source used by Shakespeare, and in Lucian's Dialogue, Timon the Misanthrope, which, although not available in English translation to Shakespeare, he may have known it in Latin from his school days or perhaps from friends who had "larger" Greek than he. Shakespeare characteristically did not change the story outline but tried to bring to life the same Timon who, in Plutarch, was enraged at the ingratitude of his friends and reduced to poverty, having given his wealth away.

In Timon, as in all the Problem Plays, Shakespeare's interest was in the characters and in using them to investigate questions of a moral and ethical nature. In Timon there are four characters whose philosophic standards are contrasted in an effort to determine an answer to the question of what is important in life. There is Timon, the Lord who has a childlike belief in the goodness and enduring quality of friendship: "He thinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends / And ne'er be weary." (I,ii,219-220) and

We are born to do benefits;
and what better or properer can we call our own than
the riches of our friends? O what a precious comfort
'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one
another's fortunes.

I,ii,95-98

Timon's gentle concepts of friendship and life's purposes contrast ironically with those of the sophisticated and worldly flatterers who so willingly accept the gifts of Timon. The flatterer Lucullius prides himself on his "business sense" and rejects Timon's request for a loan.

Lucullius. (speaking to Timon's servant)

Thy Lord's a bountiful gentleman; but thou art wise, and Thou know'st well enough, although thou com'st to me that this is not the time to lend money, especially upon bare friendship, without security.

III,ii,42-45

Lucullius modifies friendship with the word bare, an ironic counterpart to the concept that Timon entertains.

There is Alcibiades, the army general, who also experiences the ingratitude of the Athenian lords. His reaction is an angry determination to wreak revenge, and he raises an army and marches toward the Athens who banished him. His attitudes toward friendship also contrasts ironically with Timon's.

Timon. (speaking to Alcibiades at his banquet table)

You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a dinner of friends.

Alcibiades. So they were bleeding-new, my lord, there's no meat like 'em. I could wish my best friend at such a feast.

I,ii,76-82

Alcibiades might also be classified a manhater.

But the most interesting and spirited contrast in the play is between the two openly avowed manhaters--the manhater which Timon becomes--and Apemantus, the angry philosopher of whom it is said--"few things loves better than to abhor himself." Timon and Apemantus appear together only twice in the play in any sustained action but whenever they meet they carry on an extremely interesting and subtle debate. They debate on their own particular approach to a man's, not a beast's life.

The play has much better poetry than All's Well. The language is powerful and imagery memorable. The ironic banquet menu of warm water and stones which Timon holds for his friends after they have betrayed him,

Timon's digging for roots to eat, his finding of gold, his incredible invective--all have dramatic value.

Yet the play flounders. The motivation for the extreme force of Timon's fury is not enough. His fury seems misdirected and vapid; and little sympathy is generated for him. Possibly man's "inhumanity to man" has been historically so monstrous that Timon's childlike belief in friendship is like a candle held to a bonfire. The tragedy may not lie with Timon but with its readers who are so jaded they cannot accept Timon's idealistic belief in joy and friendship as anything more than foolishness.

But it is possible to enjoy the play for what it attempts, for its powerful poetry, and for the subtlety of the philosophic questions it asks. Timon, asks whose life is more "bare" or barren--whose life is wise and secure--that of the lavish prodigal childlike Timon, who expected more of men and could not forgive them when they failed him; that of the flatterers like Lucullius whose ideas of life and values such as friendship are materialistically limited; that of Alcibiades whose depth reaches only to force and revenge; or that of the disdainful, contemptuous philosopher, Apemantus, who expected nothing of men and therefore perhaps was the most limited of all.

The most finished investigation of the play is the spirited debate between Apemantus and Timon. Apemantus's role is a critical and vital one in its clues to the interpretation of Shakespeare's intentions for the play while also being the vehicle of much of the humor, irony, and plot unity. Like Thersites, the eccentric nature of Apemantus's life gives him the prerogatives of the allowed fool, and Apemantus comments freely, if always from his own peculiar viewpoint, upon the actions and characters.

That Shakespeare intended Apemantus and Timon to be compared dramatically and thematically is suggested by these lines at the beginning of the play:

Timon. Thou art proud, Apemantus?
Apemantus. Of nothing as much as that I am not like
Timon.

I, i, 189-190

and these lines at the end:

Apemantus. (to Timon) Do not assume my likeness.
IV, iii, 220

and:

Apemantus. (to Timon) Art thou proud yet?
Timon. Ay, that I am not thee.

IV, iii, 279

The importance of Apemantus's pivotal role as a contrast, not only to Timon, but to almost all the characters of the play is apparent in the first mention of Apemantus. The hypocritical poet is explaining his poem extolling Timon while he and the Painter await their invitation to Timon's table:

All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer
To Apemantus, that few things loves better
Than to abhor himself; even he drops down the
Knee before him and returns in peace
Most rich in Timon's nod.

I, i, 58-62

These few lines place Apemantus in his position of combat--the combat between the flatterers and the detractor. Further evidence of Apemantus's position as a dramatic foil in Timon is his placement at a table apart from the others at Timon's feast. Timon has welcomed Apemantus and has received the warning that Apemantus intends no politeness in return.

Timon. Fic, th'art a churl, y'have got a humor there
 Does not become a man; 'tis much to blame.
 They say, my lords, Ira Furor Brevis Est,
 But yond man is very angry.
 So, let him have a table by himself
 For he does neither affect company,
 Nor is he fit for't, indeed.

I,ii,26-32

The visual dramatization of the contrasting elements would be quite apparent on the stage as Apemantus sits in verbal and spatial conflict with the total group. There he is free to comment to the audience. Like Thersites, Apemantus sits outside the action and "looks on". Like Thersites, Apemantus is marked with the humor anger.

Timon's admonition that Apemantus has a "humor that does not become a man" rings ironically when, in the last encounter between the two, Apemantus in return admonishes Timon:

This is in thee a nature but infected,
 A poor unmanly melancholy sprung
 From change of fortune.

IV,iii,204-206

There is the deft repetition of an idea turned about in ironic counterpoint to its first use as the play enforces subtle attention to the question of what is or is not manly. Timon first decrees anger unacceptable, but his ironic destiny is utter fury. Similarly Apemantus's philosophic creed does not permit a man to be angry or melancholy, but he breaks it at the end of the play.

A further clue to Apemantus's philosophic and dramatic position comes in the words of one of the lords in attendance to Timon as he says of Apemantus: "He's opposite to humanity." (I,i,272-274) Being "opposite to humanity" turns out to be a defensible position. In this play "humanity" does not acquit itself on a very high plane. A second meaning of the phrase "opposite to humanity" applies to Apemantus's own personal

philosophic creed which is based upon just that--opposition to humanity--on restraining the human that is himself. The seating arrangement at Timon's banquet has Apemantus "opposite to humanity" as well.

To fully appreciate and understand Apemantus it is important that he be recognized as a Cynic Philosopher in the vein of the famous Diogenes. In the play he is listed as a Churlish Philosopher but it is possible that the Jacobean audience would have immediately recognized his similarity to Diogenes. The Arden edition of Timon states unequivocally in a footnote²⁹ that Apemantus is a Cynic philosopher. They derive the conclusion apparently from the number of times Apemantus is called a dog as was Diogenes and from the fact that the term "Cynic" was popularly thought to be derived from the Greek word for dog. There is a hypocritical raging philosopher, Thrasyelos, in Lucian's Dialogue which may also have suggested Apemantus except that there is no evidence in the play that Apemantus is hypocritical; rather he is earnest to the point of piety. Willard Farnham believes that Shakespeare may have taken a suggestion from Montaigne's essay "Of Democritus and Heraclitus" which contrasts Diogenes and Timon.

We are not so full of evil as of voidness and inanity. We are not so miserable as base and abject.

Even so Diogenes, who did nothing but trifle, toy, and dally with himself in rumbling and rolling of his tub and flirting at Alexander, accounting us but flies and bladders puffed with wind, was a more sharp, a more bitter, and a more stinging judge, and, by consequence, more just and fitting my humor than Timon, surnamed the hater of all mankind. For look what a man hateth, the same thing he takes to heart. Timon wished all evil might light on us; he was

²⁹ Timon of Athens, ed. H. J. Oliver, (London, 1959) line 200, p. 15.

passionate in desiring our ruin; he shunned and loathed our conversation as dangerous and wicked and of a depraved nature. Whereas the other so little regarded us that we could neither trouble nor alter him by our contagion; forsook our company not for fear but for disdain of our commerce.³⁰

Apemantus is, in opinion, close to Montaigne when he finds the melancholy in Timon "a poor unmanly melancholy sprung from change of fortune". But Shakespeare's Timon seems to have a passion more noble than that with which Montaigne endowed him.

A quick perusal of the basic tenets of Cynicism does support the belief that Shakespeare had the Cynics in mind when he developed Apemantus. The Cynics were followers of Antisthenes who had been a student of Socrates. Antisthenes, apparently gave up his aristocratic way of life to live as simply as possible. He believed, like Socrates, that the only good was virtue and that virtue could only be reached through complete control of the will. To control his will, Antisthenes and the Cynics believed that a man must reduce to the minimum his dependence upon the external world. Therefore he must disregard social convention, shun pleasure, and live in poverty. Riches, honor, health, society, family, life itself must be regarded with indifference and ultimately with a studied, controlled contempt. Apemantus's refusal to return any social greeting is characteristic of the Cynic indifference to social conventions. His diet of roots and "honest water" simulates the custom of Diogenes and effectively shuns the pleasures of feasting and drinking. "And all this courtesy" is his exclamation as the courtly behavior of Timon's guests and the rituals of

³⁰ Willard Farnham, The Tragic Frontier, (New York, 1950) p. 89. quoting Michel de Montaigne, Selected Essays of Montaigne, translated by John Florio, ed. Walter Kaiser, p. 18. originally published in 1603. Shakespeare's familiarity with Montaigne is proved by a borrowed passage in the Tempest.

polite society sicken him. Apemantus apparently has no home, no family, and is concerned only with himself. But he is striving for control as befits the good Cynic. His goal is to achieve indifference to all aspects of the world. He trains for this by eating roots and water in the same room with the vast banquet of Timon. Apemantus's grace is a Cynic's grace before his philosophic banquet of roots.

Immortal gods, I crave no pelf;
 I pray for no man but myself.
 Grant I may never prove so fond
 To trust man on his oath or bond;
 Or a harlot for her weeping;
 Or a dog that seems a-sleeping;
 Or a keeper with my freedom;
 Or my friends, if I should need 'em.
 Amen. So fall to't
 Rich men sin, and I eat root.

I, ii, 63-73

The eating of roots, the control of his appetite, is not difficult for Apemantus. It is the maintaining of the indifference to caring about anyone but himself which causes Apemantus's philosophic failure. It is his desire to do so to maintain his indifference, that makes him a philosophic fool.

The first verbal interchange between Timon and Apemantus ironically foreshadows Apemantus's downfall from his philosophic perch.

Timon. Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus.
 Apemantus. Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good morrow.
 When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.

I, i, 179-180

Timon's use of "gentle" is calculated to arouse an intemperate reply, for his own entertainment and that of the audience. The word has the connotation both of the gentle in gentleman and the idea of gentling or taming an animal. Either connotation links it with the word humanity and both of these Apemantus repudiates. Apemantus barks that he will be

gentle when Timon turns into his own dog which in its obvious interpretation is never. But, by the end of the play this is exactly what has happened. The philosopher who is so frequently called "dog" will show a strange and new streak of concern for another human and will thus in some measure "be gentle", and it will be Timon who will set himself apart--change tables and places with Apemantus. Later, when Apemantus finds Timon digging for roots, after Timon has denounced man and gone to live on the shore, he says: "I love thee better now than e'er I did." (IV,iii,235) A Cynic has no business loving anyone.

The climax of this strange and subtle debate comes in the last scene in which Timon and Apemantus appear together. Apemantus and Timon duel verbally on the sand shore. Apemantus has come ostensibly to "vex" Timon--to say "I told you so". But there is also his philosopher's curiosity and a sincere period of genuine concern for Timon's welfare. Apemantus, on a philosophic basis, that of Cynic Philosophy, disapproves of Timon "assuming his likeness" because he believes that Timon is not asserting control but is reacting to the external world. Apemantus calls Timon a caitiff or a captive of his emotions and Timon's fury "unmanly". He believes that Timon is not in control of his own will but is driven to his fury. Apemantus believes that he himself may dig for roots and disdain man because he does it voluntarily. Timon should not:

If thou didst put this sour cold habit on
 To castigate your pride 'twere well; but thou
 dost it enforcedly. Thou'dst courtier be again
 Wert thou no beggar. Willing misery
 Outlives incertain pomp, is crowned before;
 IV,iii,241-245

But Timon disagrees and in turn calls Apemantus the captive of fortune.

Timon. Not by his breath that is more miserable.
 Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm
 With favor never clasp's, but bred a dog.
 IV,iii,251-253

Then Timon compares Apemantus with the flatterers who betrayed him: "If thou hadst not been born the worst of men, / thou hadst been a knave and flatterer." (IV,iii,275-276) The worst of men, in Timon's view, is not, ironically the flatterers who betrayed him but is a man without sensitivity, a man who has never allowed himself to feel, to suffer, to give:

I, to bear this,
 that never knew but better, is some burthen,
 Thy nature did commence in sufferance, Time
 Has made thee hard in't. Why shouldst thou hate
 men?
 They never flattered thee. What hast thou given?
 IV,iii,269-273

The phrase "What hast thou given?" might well be the dramatic high point of this subtle debate and of the whole play. Apemantus's nature or soul is enclosed in the enforced callousness of self-control. He is incapable, according to Timon, of living a man's life and has no more life than a dog. Apemantus, by taking no risks, takes no gains. Timon means that he has risked all and lost, but that he is proud to have done so, that he was and is prodigal; and he engages as wholeheartedly in hate as he did in what he thought was love.

And then, ironically each takes the other's advice though neither has given way in the debate. Apemantus offers a gift, his first, a gift of food. His gift is rejected and he loses his temper, an un-"Cynic" reaction to the external world. Timon turns, as Apemantus's logic has counseled him, to thoughts of death.

Timon saw himself living honestly and fully. He saw himself as a god-like man dispensing joy and love. The sudden loss of this heavenly delusion plunged him into a fury. He became a pagan god betrayed--throwing thunderbolts wantonly.

Whether Apemantus saw the extremity of his own position is questionable; his refusal to even look up, makes any change of heart problematic. The last sight of him is of his back, attempting to return to his "hard"-won indifference to men after Timon's logic has penetrated the thin armor he has erected against the pain of living.

CONCLUSION

The fading image of Apemantus's back retreating toward Athens signals the end of these studies of the scurrilous characters in the Problem Plays of Shakespeare. The question of the importance of each to his play has been answered. The question of why these plays contain such characters remains.

Shakespeare chose to add them to the plays. Although Thersites and Apemantus are mentioned in the sources of their plays, neither has the prominence nor the character which Shakespeare gives them. Lucio and Parolles are created wholly by Shakespeare.

One obvious reason Shakespeare invented these characters is that he wished to supply the plays with the fashionable wit of the day which tended toward derision and scurrility. Though no doubt such is partially true, a better answer is that the major characteristic of the plays, their probing, questioning quality, is encouraged by the creation of an unpleasant atmosphere; and Thersites, Apemantus, Lucio, and Parolles help to create the atmosphere best suited to the plays' themes.

The comic theory of derision is especially effective when the dramatist is treating ideas and characters critically. Although physical degradation, eccentric characters, and insulting language are confined mostly to farce, the satirist bent on attacking ideas also makes use of ridicule . . . Derision is an effective weapon of criticism in the theatre and a suitable source of laughter, but because it is critical and carries the overtones of contempt, it often ruffles those who are laughed at, and may beget bitterness and retaliation unless it is confined to those who have no power or status.³¹

³¹Theodore Hatlen, Orientation to the Theater, 1962, p. 108.

These four are a combination of stock comic form and realistic characterization. The satirical and disfiguring temper they produce is the tone best suited to the examination of some difficult questions.

All four are outside the mainstream of society. Thersites is even deformed. Each excels in insulting language. Lucio and Parolles are extremes of realistic characters, characters in need of reform; they are made to appear ridiculous, each the butt of joke for the enjoyment and the instruction of the audience. Bergson also observed this instructional effect in laughter:

Laughter is, above all, a corrective, being intended to humiliate; it must make a painful impression on the person against whom it is directed. Hence, in comedy, the butt of the joke, by implication, suggests the sin of anti-social behavior.³¹

Shakespeare made the four scurrilous commentators into characters with "no Power or status" as Hatlen recommends. He also gave them the play on words and the broad ribaldry, the usual affairs of the stage fool, and thus endowed them with a freedom to comment that real and stage fools traditionally had.

But the wit and commentary made in the forms of these characters is not the full measure of the plays. These derisive characters contribute to the unique point of view which the plays have. They cast a shadow over the plays; they dominate certain parts, but their view, their shadow, comes from an oblique angle. Their scurrility adds some of the mass which pulls to one side and creates the discordant image of the oblong world of these plays.

There is enough truth in their comments and characterizations to color the world of the Problem Plays a realistic muddy gray. Like the

³¹ Henri Bergson, On Laughter, (New York, 1911) p. 197.

classic fools from which they derive, their worlds are not beautiful.

The fool does not necessarily inhabit a romantic or beautiful world; on the contrary his world may be very well adapted to his nature, which is often greedy, grasping, dirty and heartless.³³

All, except Lucio, tend to see the world somewhat as Enid Welsford described the world of the fool. Thersites and Apemantus, the more philosophic pair, tend to take a black view of men and their world; while Parolles is "greedy, grasping, dirty, and heartless" himself. Lucio's breadth of interest in calumny and bawdy talk, while witty also symbolizes a lesser world.

The effect of their classic comic form is also important. Thersites and Apemantus "look on" and comment upon the other characters like the classic fools who remained without the dramatic plots. Lucio and Parolles are butts of the joke within the play. They are the type of fool who fit the definition by St. Chrysostom that a fool is "he who gets slapped".³⁴ The comic form of the four criticizes as it laughs and contributes to the satiric quality of the plays.

W. W. Lawrence felt that the linking quality of the problem plays was their realism.³⁵ These four are endowed with living breath. Their actions easily extend to a large segment of humanity. But their point of view is purposely limited, like the point of view of all people. Thersites and Apemantus, because of their derisive and caustic outlook on the world of men, betray that they care rather deeply about it. That they pick too

³³Enid Welsford, The Fool, 1935, p. 322.

³⁴Welsford, p. 314.

³⁵Lawrence, Problem Comedies, p. 210.

narrow a viewpoint is their own particular foolishness. And since they choose a viewpoint that symbolizes the least struggle with a world stacked against them they reveal at the core a lack of courage. They do not speak for Shakespeare.

Lucio and Parolles differ from Thersites and Apemantus. They represent a less elevated less philosophic involvement in living, but nevertheless they symbolize the resiliency of the human struggle. Enid Welsford comments that the most successful fool is "he who is none the worse for his clapping."³⁶ Both Lucio and Parolles recover from their ordeal and press onward. They carry a white plume, the mark of courage. Perhaps it is a matted and bedraggled collection of feathers but it is nevertheless held high. Theirs is not the courage of great men but the courage of the majority of men who press on, the foolish courage of most mortals.

The Problem Plays, also marked with courage, try to look the world straight in the eye, blood vessels, cataracts, blind spots, and all. And it is, to a large extent, because of these scurrilous characters that they do. Without Thersites, Parolles, Lucio, and Apemantus, it is probable that there would not be a group called Shakespeare's Problem Plays.

³⁶ p. 314.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, Peter, Shakespeare's Life and Art, 1939.
- All's Well That Ends Well, ed. G. K. Hunter, (Arden Shakespeare), Cambridge, Mass., 1959.
- All's Well That Ends Well, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch, Cambridge, England, 1929.
- Aristotle, The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. S. Ross, Great Books of the Western World, 1952.
- Battenhouse, Roy. "Measure for Measure and the Christian Doctrine of Atonement," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LXI (1946), 1029-1059.
- Bradbrook, M. C. "Authority, Truth, and Justice in Measure for Measure," Review of English Studies, XVII (1942) 385-389.
- Campbell, Oscar J. Shakespeare's Satire, Oxford University Press, 1948.
- Carter, A. H. "In Defense of Bertram", Shakespeare Quarterly, VII, 1956, 21-31.
- Chambers, R. W. The Jacobean Shakespeare and "Measure for Measure". London, 1938.
- Coleridge, S. T., "Troilus and Cressida", Complete Works, 1884.
- Day, Martin S., History of English Literature to 1660, New York, 1963.
- Drapor, J. W., The Tempo-patterns of Shakespeare's Plays, Heidelberg, 1957.
- Dunkel, W. "Law and Equity in Measure for Measure", Shakespeare Quarterly, XIII, 1962. 275-285.
- Eight Great Comedies, ed. Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, William Burto, (Mentor), New York, 1958.
- Ellis-Fermor, Una The Jacobean Drama, London, 1936.
- _____. Shakespeare the Dramatist and Other Papers, 1961.
- Farnham, Willard, Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier, 1950.

- Fluchere, Henri, Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, 1953.
- Goldsmith, Robert; Wise Fools in Shakespeare, 1955.
- Harrison, G. B. Shakespeare's Tragedies, 1951
- Hatlen, Theodore, Orientation to the Theater, New York, 1962.
- Hotson, Leslie, Shakespeare's Hotley, London, 1952.
- Kimbrough, Robert, "The Problem of Thersites", Modern Language Review, LIX, 1964.
- Kirschbaum, Leo, Character and Characterization in Shakespeare, Detroit, Wayne State Press, 1962.
- Knight, G. Wilson, The Wheel of Fire, 1930.
- Krapp, G. P., "Parolles", in Shakespearean Studies, ed. Matthews Torndike, New York, 1916, 291-300.
- Lascelles, M., Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, London, 1953.
- Lawrence, W. W., Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, 1931.
- _____. "Troilus, Cressida, and Thersites", Modern Language Review, XXXVII, 1942.
- Lawson, R., "Lucio in Measure for Measure", English Studies, XIX, 1937.
- Leech, Clifford, "The Meaning of Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Studies, III, 1950, 66-73.
- _____. "The Theme of Ambition in All's Well", English Literary History, XXI, 1954.
- Measure for Measure, ed. J. W. Lever, (Arden) Cambridge, Mass., 1965.
- Measure for Measure, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch, Cambridge, England, 1922.
- Measure for Measure, Text, Source, and Criticism, ed. Rolf Soellner and Samuel Bertsche, New York, 1966.
- Montaigne, Michel de, The Selected Essays of Montaigne, Trans. by John Florio, ed. by Walter Kaiser, 1964, First published by Florio in 1603.
- Russell, Bertrand, A History of Western Philosophy, 1945.
- Shakespeare's England, ed. Walter Raleigh, Sidney Lee, and C. T. Onions, 2 Vol, London, 1919.
- Shakespeare, William, Complete Plays and Poems, ed. William Allan Neilson and Charles Jarvis Hill, Cambridge, Mass., 1942.

Schanzer, Earnest, The Problem Plays of Shakespeare, 1963.

Schücking, L. L., Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays, 1948.

Tillyard, E. M. W., Shakespeare's Problem Plays, London, 1950.

Timon of Athens, ed. H. C. Maxwell, (the New Shakespeare) 1964.

Timon of Athens, ed. H. J. Oliver, (Arden), 1959).

Troilus and Cressida, ed. Robert Metcalf Smith, (Arden), New York, 1932.

Ure, Peter, "The Enigmatic Problem Plays", Shakespeare Newsletter,
May-June, 1964.

_____. Shakespeare: The Problem Plays, London, 1961.

Welsford, Enid, The Fool, New York, 1935.

Wilson, F. P., Elizabethan and Jacobean, 1952. (London)

SHAKESPEARE'S OSLONG WORLD
THE SCURRILIOUS CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM PLAYS

by

SUZANNE D. COHEN

B. A., Allegheny College, 1953

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1967

ABSTRACT

The first decade of the Seventeenth Century saw an outpouring of drama unequalled in the century before. Shakespeare wrote the greatest of his tragedies during the period: Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth. Jonson wrote Volpone and Marston saw the production of The Malcontent. It was if playwrights were clairvoyant of the coming end of the harmonious Elizabethan atmosphere and wrote feverishly to fill the demand for theater before the Puritans could be successful in their drive to close the theaters.

During this decade Shakespeare also wrote a group of plays which were neither comedy nor tragedy, plays which were puzzling and unusual. They have become known as Shakespeare's Problem Plays. F. S. Boas originated the term in 1896 and included Hamlet, All's Well, Troilus and Cressida, and Measure for Measure. J. W. Draper and Peter Ure, as do most modern critics, include Timon of Athens and place Hamlet among the great tragedies. The Problem Plays seem to occupy a place in time after the early comedies and histories and immediately before the tragedies. Their uneven quality and nonspecific conclusions record the changing and maturing propensities of their playwright.

Each of these plays is set in a troubled society. The King is ill and aged in All's Well; Vienna, in Measure for Measure, has a juvenile delinquency problem in its "burning youth" and "headstrong jades"; in Troilus and Cressida a cruel and inane war is fought; Athens in Timon of Athens is filled with "glass faced flatterers and ingrates." The Denmark of Hamlet is called "rotten". Shakespeare's emphasis is not on the troubled society like the Problem Plays of Shaw and Ibsen. His Problem

Plays focus on the consequences that ethics and moral judgements produce in a particular character's life. These are probing, questioning plays and simple harmonious solutions seldom are found in their denouement. Instead, there is a pervading realism and a sense of earnest search which creates an intensity and urgency in their atmospheres. These are unpleasant plays and disfiguring tempers dominate their tone. They speak to the Twentieth Century in a way that Shakespeare's other plays do not.

Each of these plays contains a derisive and scurrilous commentator who contributes a major proportion to the features which these plays hold in common. Each is given the free hand of the traditional fool. Their comments emphasize the conflicting ethical decisions which are made by the anguished characters in these plays.

In Troilus and Cressida, Thersites, although overtly a coward himself and full of the sins of envy and anger, finds that the sins of lechery, gluttony, and pride override any nobility to be found in warring. In Timon of Athens Apemantus, a churlish philosopher, comments acidly on the idle foolish ways of shallow, greedy mankind but betrays that he cares deeply about the welfare of mankind or he would not rail so strongly against it. Lucio of Measure for Measure and Parolles in All's Well are idle buffoonish fops whose need of reform is fully revealed in their characterization and actions and thus provide the corrective comment Shakespeare used in these plays.

Each of these characters is an invention of Shakespeare and is not found in more than name in his plot sources. Shakespeare used their derisive attitudes to contribute to the unique point of view which these plays have. They cast a shadow over them; they dominate certain parts, but their view, their shadow, comes from an oblique angle. Their personal

scurrility adds distorted weight which creates the discordant image of the oblong world of these plays, a world that is changing from the harmonious regular measure of the Elizabethan times to the more complicated, maturer, and perhaps darker, yet more truthful world of the Seventeenth Century.