DISTANCING TECHNIQUES IN

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

by

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**CONTENTS**

In this thesis, I attempt to define and to apply a critical approach to Shakespeare's plays. I believe, provide us with some insight into the practice of drama as a performed art and give an added appreciation of the art of Shakespeare as a dramatist.

**Page**

I  INTRODUCTION  1

II  SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF CONVENTIONS  25

III  DRAMATIC STRUCTURE  67

IV  DRAMATIC VERSE  122

My aim in this introductory chapter is threefold. I wish first of all to give a broad overview of general aesthetic theory put forward early this century by Herbert Read. Secondly, to consider a major problem in dramatic aesthetics—the nature of dramatic illusion—in order to explore the advantages of an approach to drama developed along lines that Bullough's theory suggests; thirdly to develop from Bullough's several suggestions a theory relating more specifically to drama, suggesting how this can be used to provide a new critical approach to Shakespeare's plays.

My starting-point is Bullough's well-known essay "Psychological Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle." From this I derive a concept of "distancing" extended beyond Bullough's definition of that term to make possible a structural analysis of drama considered as a dynamic or time-dependent art. Although the verse

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I attempt to define and to apply a critical approach to Shakespeare's plays which does, I believe, provide us with some insight into the nature of drama as a performed art and give us an added appreciation of the art of Shakespeare as a dramatist.

My aim in this introductory chapter is three-fold: I wish first to give a brief exposition of a general aesthetic theory put forward early this century by Edward Bullough; secondly to consider a major problem in dramatic aesthetics—the nature of dramatic illusion—in order to illustrate the advantages of an approach to drama developed along lines that Bullough's theory suggests; thirdly to develop from Bullough's general suggestions a theory relating more specifically to drama, suggesting how this can be used to provide a new critical approach to Shakespeare's plays.

My starting-point is Bullough's well-known essay "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle."¹ From this I derive a concept of "distancing" extended beyond Bullough's definition of that term to make possible a structural analysis of drama considered as a dynamic or time-dependent art. Although the terms

"distance," "distanced," "distancing," have begun to occur in literary criticism, sometimes with a footnote referring to Bullough, the meanings to be attached to them are usually particular to and implicit in their context. There seems to have been no attempt after Bullough to establish the usefulness of, or even well define—meaning for, such terms. Nor has there been any investigation of the possibilities of an approach to literature developed along the lines that Bullough’s theory suggests—probably because the theoretical limitations of Bullough’s aesthetic are sufficient to make direct applications to literature neither immediate nor possible. While it is not a primary aim of this thesis to establish theoretical foundations for such an approach, I need to consider this problem incidentally in providing an essential definition of terms and clarification of the nature of my study.

In his essay "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle" Edward Bullough seeks to define the relation between an art-object and its beholder in terms of what he calls "Distance"—not physical distance but Psychical Distance or Distance "in its general connotation;" he also asserts the importance for Aesthetics of such a concept.

Bullough first presents the concept of Distance by describing it in terms of its effects. He quotes the fairly common
experience of a sudden change from a normal to a "distanced" view of events as when "in instants of direct extremity . . . our practical interest snaps like a wire from sheer over-tension, and we watch the consummation of some impending catastrophe with the marvelling unconcern of a mere spectator" (p.94). The difference of outlook which produces a transformation of the experience in such cases, he claims, is caused by "the insertion of Distance":

by putting the phenomenon, so to speak, out of gear with our practical, actual self; by allowing it to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends—in short, by looking at it 'objectively,' as it has often been called, by permitting only such reactions on our part as emphasise the 'objective' features of the experience, and by interpreting even our 'subjective' affects not as modes of our being, but rather as characteristics of the phenomenon (p.95).

Bullough holds that the sudden view of things "from their . . . usually unnoticed side" made possible by Distance "comes upon us as a revelation" and that such revelations are "precisely those of Art." He concludes that "in this most general sense, Distance is a factor in all Art" and "for this very reason, is also an aesthetic principle"(p.95).

The working of Distance Bullough sees as not simple but "highly complex":

It has a negative, inhibitory aspect—the cutting-out of the practical sides of things and of our practical attitude to them—and a positive side—the elaboration of the experience on the new basis created by the inhibitory action of Distance (p.95).

Distance is obtained by "separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends" so that "the 'contemplation' of the object becomes alone possible"(p.96); but, Bullough emphasises, this does not mean that the relation between the self and the object is broken to the extent of becoming "impersonal":
Distance does not imply an impersonal, purely intellectually interested relation... On the contrary, it describes a personal relation, often highly emotionally coloured, but of a peculiar character... It has been cleared of the practical, concrete nature of its appeal, without, however, thereby losing its original constitution (p.97).

Having described Distance in terms of its effects and having characterised a distanced relation, Bullough derives two aesthetic principles: the "antinomy of Distance" and the "variability of Distance."

"Antinomy of Distance" he regards as "one of the fundamental paradoxes of Art" (p.98). He recognises that a work of Art "has the more chance of appealing to us the better it finds us prepared for its particular kind of appeal;" he further suggests that "the success and intensity of its appeal would seem, therefore, to stand in direct proportion to the completeness with which it corresponds with our intellectual and emotional peculiarities and the idiosyncrasies of our experience;" yet he qualifies this with the observation that this correspondence "should be as complete as is compatible with maintaining Distance" (p.99). His statement of the "antinomy of Distance" follows: "What is, therefore, both in appreciation and production, most desirable is the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance" (p.100).

The second principle--the "variability of Distance"--is "a presupposition to the 'antinomy'" (p.100). Here Bullough asserts the advantages of Distance over notions such as "objectivity" and "detachment" which, far from implying a personal relation, preclude it:

Distance, on the contrary, admits naturally of degrees, and differs not only according to the nature of the object, which may impose a greater or smaller degree of Distance, but varies also according to the individual's
capacity for maintaining a greater or lesser degree. And here one may remark that not only do persons differ from each other in their habitual measure of Distance, but that the same individual differs in his ability to maintain it in the face of different objects and of different arts (p. 100).

He argues, then, that there are "two different sets of conditions affecting the degree of Distance in any given case: those offered by the object and those realised by the subject;" and that in their interplay "they afford one of the most extensive explanations for varieties of aesthetic experience, since loss of Distance, whether due to the one or the other, means loss of aesthetic appreciation." "In short," he concludes, "Distance may be said to be variable both according to the distancing-power of the individual, and according to the character of the object" (p. 100). He finally characterises and places his two principles:

That all art requires a Distance-limit beyond which, and a Distance within which only, aesthetic appreciation becomes possible, is the psychological formulation of a general characteristic of Art, namely its anti-realistic nature (p. 106).

I have given here a very condensed account of Bullough's general theory. He constantly illustrates his ideas with reference to drama, hints at a special relevance of his theory to drama, and gives some suggestion as to how it may be applied. His theory is, however, as we shall see, too general to lend immediate insight. But it can be extended and, it will be my care to show--first by developing a specific example--it can be extended in such a way as to provide an approach to drama that throws light on a number of problems. Instead, therefore, of going on at this point to discuss directly the usefulness of Bullough's concept of Distance for dramatic criticism, I shall turn aside to define one of the problems involved in a study
of drama to which his approach suggests a solution, endeavouring by this means to demonstrate for the reader the suggestiveness and also the limitations of his theory.

There have been numerous attempts to explain and characterise dramatic illusion though no attempt is fully satisfactory. The difficulty of the task is perhaps reflected in the possible development of such extreme and conflicting views as those which S.T. Coleridge in the early nineteenth century sought to qualify and reconcile, producing in his attempt one of the most penetrating and generally acceptable dramatic aesthetics. I shall consider his theory here, however, not so much because of the insight it offers into the nature of dramatic illusion but because an uneasiness that Coleridge himself seemed to feel in presenting it points to a problem never really adequately considered.

Taking issue with both the contemporary French view of dramatic illusion and the view expressed by Dr Johnson, understanding in exactly what way each was short-sighted, Coleridge could see his way to reconciling the insights these attitudes represented. Against the French view "which evidently presupposes that a perfect delusion is to be aimed at" and "the opposite, supported by Dr Johnson, which supposes the auditors throughout as in the full and positive reflective knowledge of the contrary,"¹ Coleridge argued for an intermediary

state of illusion characterised by a "negative faith, which simply permits the images presented to work by their own force, without denial or affirmation of their real existence by the judgment."\(^1\) "The true stage illusion," he wrote, "in this and in all other things consists—not in the mind's judging it to be a forest, but, in its remission of the judgment that it is not a forest."\(^2\)

Despite the strength and imaginativeness of this explanation of dramatic illusion, Coleridge seemed to feel a need to account more adequately for the self-consciousness that distinguishes dramatic illusion from dream and that, overstressed, led Dr Johnson to argue for the full self-consciousness of the audience throughout the performance of a play. Able to describe most adequately the way in which we respond to illusion in a theatre, Coleridge in his explanation yet seemed uneasy as to why we respond as we do, as to how illusion is actually promoted. Dreams he saw as involving the highest degree of illusion because

we simply do not judge them [dreams] to be unreal . . . In sleep we pass at once by a sudden collapse into this suspension of will and the comparative power: whereas in an interesting play, read or represented, we are brought up to this point, as far as it is requisite, or desirable, gradually, by the art of the poet and the actors; and with the consent and positive aidance of our own will. We choose to be deceived.\(^3\)

In sleep the "comparative power" is suspended and so cannot break the illusion of dream. In the theatre the possibility of our judging a

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\(^3\) Shakespearean Criticism, I, 116.
play to be merely illusion is not withheld. To Coleridge, trying to reconcile the audience's consciousness of the unreality of stage events and persons with the audience's readiness to accept dramatic illusion, the only explanation seemed to be that the audience must in some way co-operate with the dramatist in the creating and maintaining of a dramatic illusion: if they are not deluded they must consciously choose to suspend the power of comparison that would otherwise shatter the dramatic illusion. Thus Coleridge speaks of choosing to be deceived and says that stage presentations

are to produce a sort of temporary half-faith, which the spectator encourages in himself, and supports by a voluntary contribution on his own part, because he knows that it is at all times in his power to see the thing as it really is.¹

Uneasiness about the audience's readiness to accept dramatic illusion is reflected perhaps in the verbal ambiguity of the phrases "willing suspension of disbelief"² and "willing illusion."³ Coleridge's emphasis on the importance of the art of poet and actors for sustaining

¹ Shakespearean Criticism, I, 178.

² A felicitous expression of the notion of "negative belief" basic to Coleridge's discussion of dramatic illusion, though the phrase actually appears in Biographia Literaria, II, 5-6, with reference to poetry: "In this idea originated the plan of the "Lyrical Ballads;" in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to promise for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith."

³ Shakespearean Criticism, I, 117: "But besides this dramatic probability, all the other excellencies of the drama, as unity of interest, with distinctness and subordination of the characters, appropriateness of style, ray, and the charm of language and sentiment for their own sakes, yet still as far as they tend to increase the inward excitement, are all means to this chief end, that of producing and supporting this willing illusion."
illusion, and his argument for a conscious rather than an unself-conscious suspension of the comparative powers by the audience, suggest that he was vaguely but uncomfortably aware that, although his notion of "negative belief" or "suspension of disbelief" describes the nature of our response to dramatic illusion, it does not really explain our readiness to suspend our disbelief initially or continuously.

It is for assistance with this problem that we may now return profitably to Bullough. His approach to drama, based on his development of the concept of Psychical Distance, throws some light on Coleridge's difficulties. Bullough notes that the audience has a special relation to the characters and events of the drama:

they appeal to us like persons and incidents of normal experience, except that that side of their appeal, which would usually affect us in a directly personal manner, is held in abeyance. This difference, so well known as to be almost trivial, is generally explained by reference to the knowledge that the characters and situations are "unreal," imaginary . . . But, as a matter of fact, the assumption upon which the imaginative emotional reaction is based is not necessarily the condition, but often the consequence, of Distance; that is to say, the converse of the reason usually stated would then be true: viz. that Distance, by changing our relation to the characters, renders them seemingly fictitious, not that the fictitiousness of the characters alters our feelings towards them. It is, of course, to be granted that the actual and admitted unreality of the dramatic action reinforces the effect of Distance (pp. 97-98).

Elaborating Bullough's suggestions we might consider dramatic illusion anew. In the theatre, however closely the fictional world of the play seems to reflect, or correspond to, the "real world" of the audience, the characters and events of the play are consciously set apart from it. Sometimes a raised stage serves to emphasise their separateness; always

1 My italics.
the self-consciousness of actors projecting a story and playing it to 
an audience imposes a "distance" by which persons and events on stage 
are revealed as "unreal." In terms of Bullough's argument, it is owing 
to the "insertion of Distance" that we respond differently to them; 
we feel free to ignore practical considerations which we would have to 
take into account in ordinary experience. Our response, far from being 
qualified or restricted by our recognition of their fictitiousness, is 
fuller and freer, for Distance, freeing us from self-concern, helps 
to bring about the general relaxation of inhibitions that we experience 
in the theatre: we can respond freely and quickly to stage events and 
persons because the self-consciousness that belongs to ordinary experi-
ence, to our normal concern for the "practical, actual self," is 
banished. Not only is our "imaginative emotional reaction" less 
restricted but also our general awareness is heightened. Freed from 
practical concerns we respond more flexibly, can more rapidly accommodate different views of the action, and can adopt different ways of seeing.

In terms of this argument, Coleridge's well-known description 
of the response required for us to appreciate emotions and thoughts 
communicated through poetry (a medium which involves a higher measure of distance than prose) might well be interpreted as an eloquent statement of the effects of distance upon response. With drama, as with poetry and with highly distanced art generally, our response is characterised

1 This capitalized entity may begin to appear a mysterious ingredient or substance which, "inserted," somehow changes us... I can but promise that it will be given "a local habitation and a name" as the chapter proceeds. I am adopting Bullough's capital D to refer to Distance "in its general connotation" till I can clearly explain the relation of my own conception of distance in drama to Bullough's more general concept of Psychical Distance.
by the combination of heightened awareness with increased responsiveness that Coleridge describes:

In animated prose, the beauties of nature, and the passions and accidents of human nature, are often expressed in that natural language which the contemplation of them would suggest to a pure and benevolent mind; yet still neither we nor the writers call such a work a poem, though no work could deserve that name which did not include all this, together with something else. What is this? It is that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the act of composition; and in order to understand this, we must combine a more than ordinary sympathy with the objects, emotions, or incidents contemplated by the poet, consequent on a more than ordinary activity of the mind in respect of the fancy and imagination. Hence is produced a more vivid reflection of the truths of nature and of the human heart, united with a constant activity modifying and correcting these truths by that sort of pleasurable emotion, which the exertion of all our faculties gives in a certain degree; but which can only be felt in perfection under the full play of those powers of mind, which are spontaneous rather than voluntary, and in which the effort required bears no proportion to the activity enjoyed. This is the state which permits the production of a highly pleasurable whole, of which each part shall also communicate for itself a distinct and conscious pleasure...the greatest immediate pleasure [being] compatible with the largest sum of pleasure on the whole.¹

Coleridge could see that the views of his contemporaries were too simple and extreme, and that the nature of dramatic illusion implies a more complex attitude of mind on the part of the audience than his contemporaries allowed. His assertion of the voluntary or conscious cooperation of the audience in creating dramatic illusion, however, prevented his seeing that the response of the audience in the theatre indicates not so much a conscious effort in accepting the projected illusion as a flexibility of mind which enables them to view the persons and actions on

¹ *Shakespearan Criticism*, I, 147-148.
stage both as the characters and events of the drama, and, simultaneously, as actors acting by prescription.

This flexibility of mind is fundamental in the audience's response. It may be even more complex, indeed, as S.L. Bethell has described in his conception of "multi-consciousness," which he characterises as the ability to "respond spontaneously and unconsciously on more than one plane of attention at the same time" (p.29). Bethell ascribes to the Elizabethan audience particularly the ability to "shift rapidly its modes of attention" (p.102) and takes the capacity to "attend to several diverse aspects of a situation, simultaneously yet without confusion" (p.28) to be a characteristic of popular drama.

But if one argues that "multi-consciousness" is a consequence of distance which, freeing the mind, makes it easier for us to adopt different ways of seeing, it follows that the phenomenon that Bethell describes as "multi-consciousness" is basic to all drama. It is, however, as I hope to show, more apparent in highly conventional than in naturalistic drama, for the general degree of distance and variation in distance are greater in the former. As popular drama tends to be more conventional, it would seem not unnatural for Bethell to have developed his theory through particular study of popular forms.

Whilst Bullough's theory of Psychical Distance may enable us to throw new light on such a problem as that of the nature of dramatic illusion, it is, for purposes of practical literary criticism, conceived

1 S.L. Bethell, Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition (London, 1944).
too statically to be useful. Bullough's investigation is orientated to the relation of the beholder to the art-work but, while it is in the performed arts that this relation is vital, Bullough's theory is more obviously applicable to the plastic arts. Once it is realised that time in drama is not an incidental but a dynamic element, it becomes much harder to characterise the audience's relation to the action. Drama, like music and dancing, is performed, and thus the presentation and relation of impressions that evoke the aesthetic response are dependent on time. Even when distance is unvaried during a performance it must be established for each moment throughout. For the performance to be successful, the distance established must at every moment lie between the limits Bullough termed "the Distance-limit beyond which" and the "Distance within which" so that aesthetic appreciation is continuously possible. If Distance is a factor that is continuously operative during the performance of a play, we can see that "suspension of disbelief" implies continuous, active, orientation, not the gradual adoption by the audience of the "negative faith" that for Coleridge characterised the state of illusion, nor the successful achievement of a singular orientation such as Bullough describes. For when we extend Bullough's theory of Psychical Distance from the plastic to the performed arts and use it to characterise a dynamic rather than a static relation between the beholder and the art-object, we can no longer think of distance in the absolute or static terms that Bullough uses. Whilst we are reading or watching a play we cannot consider Distance but degrees of distance. It is only when the play is complete that we can, in fact, speak of Distance—and only then as an
abstraction of our experience of a distance which varies throughout. For the performed arts, then, we think less in terms of Distance as describing a singular orientation which lies between the limits of under-distanced and over-distanced responses and more in terms of the degree of distance at given moments throughout.

The consequences of this approach can be fairly easily elaborated. A change of distance implies a positive revaluation, the adopting of a new way of seeing. This can be seen most readily perhaps in terms of dramatic probability.

Whilst we may accept the first level of reality projected, no matter how fantastic, once a level has been established we expect a consistency of distance and find it harder to accommodate a change in distance. An expected happening fits readily into the structure of impressions forming in our minds as we watch the action played out on stage; a surprising event either cannot be fitted into that structure at all (and so we term it "improbable") or forces us to revaluate what we have seen and to alter the structure of impressions that has been forming in our minds sufficiently to accommodate it. It follows that the varying of distance is one means at the dramatist's disposal of eliciting active participation from his audience, causing them to evaluate continually as they experience.

Even when we have previously read a play and know what is going to happen, our expectation at any point is determined by the dramatic experience we have undergone in watching the play. While external knowledge may change the degree, it does not change the quality, of our expectation and, if we allow the play to shape our response, a surprise reversal can still come as a surprise at the hundredth reading. The
distance required for a particular scene is partly dependent upon its place in a time-sequence since the audience's attitude is influenced by their anticipation, by the kind and degree of their knowledge. The first scene of a play, which cannot be distanced by expectation in the same way as action of later scenes, thus perhaps more than any other scene requires to be distanced if we are to look beyond its presentness --distanced in such a way that it may appear as the beginning of an action and so arouse expectation of something to follow. By varying distance, making action more immediate or more remote, the dramatist is able to give a right emphasis to each part. It is sufficient to mention one striking example of the dramatic possibilities made available to him by the control of distance--the scene of Hermione's awakening in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Highly distanced to enable us to accommodate it in the total structure of the play, the scene yet conveys to us with the immediacy of the unexpected the wonder of witnessing a miracle.

It is true, of course, that no matter how strong a sense we may have of the direction of the action, every scene of a play in its particular detail is unpredictable and, in this, has "presentness," immediacy, for us. It is this rich interplay of the immediacy of the moment and our more detached sense of a larger, significant sequence, that gives to the dramatic illusion its special quality. Yet, as a general principle, while it is the presence of distance that enables us to see a particular moment in relation to a whole developing structure, our comprehending a moment in this way itself has a distancing effect.

The response of an audience is directed primarily by the
dramatic action, which has a form of its own and can be analysed as a sequence of interacting elements. Bullough, speaking generally of Composition, notes that it "serves to render our grasp of presentation easier and to increase its intelligibility," yet has a distancing effect which can hardly be underrated. For, every kind of visibly intentional arrangement or unification must, by the mere fact of its presence, enforce Distance, by distinguishing the object from the confused, disjointed and scattered forms of actual experience (pp. 114-115).

This idea can obviously be applied to the form that the dramatic action takes, to the order of the imaginary events, and so to dramatic structure in this sense. It can also be applied to dramatic structure when we take this to mean the form our experience of the action has in the theatre. Since dramatic action depends upon time for its presentation and so for its realisation, we might see dramatic structure as something that is being created, forming in our minds whilst we are actually experiencing a play. During the play, dramatic structure in this sense is not something that "is" but something that "is becoming," and when the play is complete, dramatic structure can only be spoken of as an abstraction. It might best be characterised as our sense of the poise between the particularity of a moment as we experience it and the more general significance it has in relation to a dramatic action with "a beginning, a middle and an end" which the moment is itself helping to create, to "make manifest." When we cease to "realise" the play in the active way that continues whilst we are watching it, the dramatic structure, seen as the process, the "form in suspense" of our own realising, can no longer exist in the same sense. Yet because it is the presence of distance which enables us to relate a particular moment to the whole structure of the action, to see the past and future momentarily united and to
glimpse the structure that both generalises and gives significance to each part, in either sense dramatic structure requires distance for its realisation.

To understand more completely the process of distancing conceived dynamically rather than statically, it may be helpful at this point to consider briefly such aspects of the drama as the role of conventions and the operation of dramatic irony. The implications that derive from a study of elements such as these from a functional point of view, can, perhaps, in the light of our notion of distancing, help give some insight into the process of distancing itself and help also to define the usefulness of a notion of distancing for practical dramatic criticism.

The use of conventions both implies and enforces the audience's recognition of the fictitiousness of the drama: it implies the existence and also the acceptance by dramatist and audience alike of the limitations of the theatre. Conventions are essential because of physical limitations on dramatic representation and because of the structural necessity for selection, concentration, and distribution of emphasis. The stage limits the world of represented action and makes dramatic time a continuous present. Dramatic and narrative conventions in the same way require an understanding between dramatist and audience, allowing for a simplification and a limiting of what is represented. This understanding permits the dramatist to give the dramatic experience a form which makes it more comprehensible and immediate to the audience. Because of the "insertion of Distance,"
which the use of conventions itself enforces, we accept conventions readily, often automatically and unconsciously.

Since distance, as we have seen, ensures our freedom from self-concern and leads to heightened responsiveness and awareness in the theatre, it is, significantly, as much a condition for dramatic engagement as it is for detachment.\(^1\) Thus the use of conventions as distancing devices may be a means not simply for defining the audience's relation to the action but, more importantly perhaps, for ensuring their ready engagement. Whilst the soliloquy, for example, is markedly artificial when the villain displays his motives with the clarity and objectivity of impersonal statement, or the hero renders inner conflict with lyrical passion and compression, this device focuses attention on the character who bares his mind to the audience as a person acting or "suffering," that his self-revelation has an intimacy and immediacy that encourages free imaginative identification. We know (by convention) that, whatever face he puts on elsewhere in the play, he is revealing to us the truth about himself, and we can be most surely in these moments his closest companions—indeed, we can most confidently be this person himself. Thus, although conventions are functional in simplifying and limiting what is represented on stage, the dramatist can use them as powerful devices in drama precisely because he can, if he choose, use them to draw the audience

\(^1\) I do not use these two terms "engagement" and "detachment" to describe mutually exclusive attitudes or states of mind; the orientations that they refer to are frequently present simultaneously in the audience's response. The usefulness of the terms lies in the fact that frequently a change in the audience's response can be conveniently characterised by describing it as a variation in the relation between the audience's sympathetic involvement with the characters and action on stage and their more general awareness of significance.
into a sympathetic involvement with the characters and action on stage and no less importantly, use them also to extend the audience's general awareness of the significance of his representation. In Shakespeare's tragedies, for example, soliloquies such as Macbeth's "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly . . .," "Is this a dagger which I see before me . . .," "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow . . ." Brutus' "It must be by his death . . ." Hamlet's "To be or not to be . . ." which have the force and passion of great poetry, are a means of exploring with immediacy and at depth a character's involvement in the drama—allowing Shakespeare "to let down a shaft of light into the hidden workings of the mind." But they also allow him momentarily to take us to a point of stillness outside the action, giving us that detachment which enables us to see, reflected or concentrated in the intense personal present of the character's expressed dilemma, the form and nature of the conflict worked out in the action.

To speak here of Shakespeare's using a highly artificial dramatic device to ensure a high measure of distance, so as to involve the audience both emotionally and intellectually, is, of course, to give only a crude statement of the possibilities for communication that lay open to him as a dramatist. Able, supremely, to measure and control distance in the theatre so as to establish a delicate and precise poise between the audience's sympathy and awareness, a poise which he could vary and exploit at will, he could extend at times to a limit the means by which experience, and insights concerning that experience, could be communicated in the theatre.

Bullough's principle of the "antinomy of Distance," with its demand for "the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance," would seem to be contrary to our experience in intensely dramatic moments. In such moments we find intense engagement held in tension with as intense a detachment, whilst vividly experiencing the particularity of the moment, we as fully and vividly perceive its relation to the total experience of the play and apprehend the experience of the play through it. For instance, when Othello speaks the lines beginning "Put out the light, and then put out the light..." and, in a moment, the whole experience of the play is illuminated and in turn illuminates the lines, our intense ironic detachment exists with deep engagement. The combination of heightened responsiveness with an intense awareness of significance seems to be consequent not on "the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance" but rather, as we have noted, on a high measure of distance. Realising this fact has a major bearing on our understanding of the operation of irony in drama.

The lines quoted above from Othello are an instance of what G.G. Sedgewick calls "specific dramatic irony": "the sense of contradiction felt by spectators of a drama who see a character acting in ignorance of his condition."\(^1\) Sedgewick distinguishes "specific dramatic irony" from the "general irony of drama": "Dramatic irony in its concentrated and specific form ... grows ... out of that pervasive and controlling knowledge which we have called general irony and which is the property peculiar and essential to the illusion of the theatre." Later he adds:

\(^1\) G.G. Sedgewick, Of Irony Especially in Drama (Toronto, 1940), p.40.
"By virtue of dramatic irony, immediately or generally felt, the mind of the spectator moves easily forward and backward. It gives him that sense of control which is the peculiar pleasure of the stage" (p. 55). Sedgewick's notion of irony suggests how irony helps an audience to apprehend dramatic structure: irony itself illuminates the action while an ironic attitude contributes to a free play of mind. It also suggests the way in which their apprehension of dramatic structure enables them to see the point of ironies. Whilst the perception of irony is dependent on distance, ironic perception thus helps to increase or enforce distance.

Sedgewick's notion of irony suggests too how a dramatist can use irony in moments of dramatic intensity to screw tension to breaking-point by playing off the immediacy of the audience's perception and response against their apprehension of the real significance of the action (often sharply contrasted with its apparent significance): through distance both empathy and the distancing perception are made at once deep and extreme. There is a clear example of this in _Cymbeline_. The grief of Imogen on discovering the headless body of Cloten and taking it to be her husband's evokes a sympathy that is the more intense for our realisation that her grief is unnecessary. Our knowledge is painful to us because we are powerless to intervene. Yet the situation is so shot through with irony that it approaches the level of grotesque humour found in _King Lear_. The pathos of Imogen's mistaking:

A headless man? The garments of Posthumus?
I know the shape of's leg; this is his hand:
His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh:
The brawns of Hercules; but his Jovial face--
Murder in heaven! How?--'Tis gone. (IV ii 308-312)

is mocked by our knowledge—the explanation for her mistake—of Cloten's vile scheme to follow Imogen dressed in Posthumus' clothes, to kill him
before her eyes and rape Imogen herself, in revenge for her declaring that she held the very garments of Posthumus more valuable than Cloten's person. The "heroic" imagery (Mercury, Mars, Hercules, Jove) is also at the same time (to the audience) mock-heroic. The tension here between a tragic and a grotesquely humorous awareness is similar to that we experience at Gloucester's tumbling from the "cliff-top" in King Lear.

When a play is highly distanced, as a Shakespearean fantasy is, marked variations in distance which occur during its course so change our relation to stage events and characters that we grope for a phrase like E.M.W. Tillyard's "planes of reality"¹ to explain the difference in our ways of seeing. In As You Like It, for instance, marked variations in distance correspond to the different degrees of fiction accorded to the various characters and events. To explain the co-existence of a Phebe, an Audrey, and a Rosalind, we feel a need to distinguish levels of fantasy. In the theatre, of course, our response to them is controlled by the degree of distance involved in their presentation and in the operation of different sorts of conventions. The juxtaposition of highly distanced with less distanced characters and events in As You Like It, itself, however, also calls the relation of Art to Nature into question, and artificiality in fiction and in life become a theme that is explored dramatically.

"Suspension of disbelief," which implies continuous, active, orientation, explains our ability to respond to two or more levels of reality in the action consecutively (as when we respond first to the Athenian lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream, then to Puck, Oberon,  

Titania and the fairies, then to Bottom and the "rude mechanicals.") "Multiconsciousness," a corollary of this, accounts for our ability to respond to two or more levels simultaneously as we do in watching a play within-a-play and, in a less obvious way, in relating one level of action to another as they are being presented consecutively to us (as in our minds we compare and contrast Touchstone and Jaques, Audrey and Phebe, Hal's relation to Falstaff with his relation to his father, and as in every play we relate sub-plot to main plot.) When a sense of different "planes of reality" has been created by variations in distance, it is obvious that ironic effects become possible. Usually an ironic awareness of events emerges from a contrast of appearance and reality. By presenting a dramatic experience which seems to involve different "planes of reality," moreover, it becomes possible, indeed, to present an ironic and an unironic view of events simultaneously, evoking not only a complex awareness but also a complex emotional response—as we saw in discussing our response to the grief of Imogen, and as F.R. Leavis describes, recalling Miranda's lines from *The Tempest*, "O brave new world that has such people in't":

Shakespeare's power to present acceptably and movingly the unironical vision (for us given in Miranda and Ferdinand) goes with his power to contemplate the irony at the same time.¹

Change in distance, we have seen, involves positive revaluation. As Shakespeare by constantly varying distance forces the

Audience into active participation, he is able to lead them through experiencing to understanding, extending to a limit what can be communicated to them with the peculiar power and effectiveness of drama. Studying the operation of distance in his plays—the prime aim of my thesis—is a way, then, of studying how we experience his drama in the theatre: we find here a guide to the ways in which he evokes and controls our response. Our attention to his control of distance can, I believe, lead to a richer understanding of many techniques in his plays: of his methods of using conventions, for example, to enforce distance and to ensure prompt and ready reorientation when distance is varied; of his skilful handling of such devices as the play within-the-play, soliloquy, aside, to achieve rich effects of irony; and of his use of different verse styles and of contrasted verse and prose to direct the audience's response throughout.
There are few lines of approach to Shakespeare's art as rewarding as a study of his use of dramatic and romantic conventions to distance action, not only to gain a precise control of response, but also to stimulate the audience to a complex awareness of the situation being played out before them.

I propose to demonstrate the operation of this principle of control first by describing some of the ways in which conventions may be used in the plays to effect a particular orientation (or re-orientation) of the audience to the persons and events on stage. Such a study must include instances of the structural use of devices such as the play within-the-play and the aside. A study, even more fruitful, must also be made of a subtler mode of controlling response through distance, which Shakespeare achieves in using conventions to exploit the audience's perception of the relation between the play world and their own world in order to deepen and extend his exploration of experience. My discussion of this mode centres on, and is developed through, a specific consideration of situations (recurrent in both the tragedies and the comedies) in which illusion is used by some controlling figure within the play world as a means of manipulating reality. These situations, which seem peculiarly suited to an exploration of complex relations between appearance and reality, depend for their dramatic effectiveness on a high degree of distance;
and the dramatist is able, as we shall see, to exploit this measure of distance in subtle and extraordinary ways to create for his audience a complex awareness and response.

The dramatist's use of conventions, as we have seen, both implies and enforces a recognition by the audience of the unreality of the stage action. On this recognition is based an understanding between dramatist and audience which allows for the simplification and for the limiting of what is represented; and this understanding also permits the development of a concentration and intensity in representation which gives immediacy and which, less obviously perhaps, engages the audience to participate in the creation of illusion. Thus, for example, the attitude necessary both for our acceptance of verse in drama and for our close attention to the verse is enforced by the verse itself. By its very distinctness from the speech of ordinary life, verse enforces distance; it encourages in the audience a heightened awareness and responsiveness which, making them receptive to the poetry that the characters speak, distracts attention from the verse as a non-naturalistic device.

Now, whilst the use of conventions helps the dramatist to relate the world of the play to the real world, to define and to establish the audience's relation to the persons and events on stage, the audience's recognition that they are watching not real life but drama—a consequence of distance—can itself be used to enforce distance. Thus, by asserting the fictitiousness of dramatic representation, the dramatist can prepare them to accept highly conventional and unlikely action. Frankly admitting its unreality he distances it,
discourages the audience from judging it according to laws governing ordinary experience, and asks them to recognise and to accept the limitations of the theatre. He can then direct them to consider its significance (often Brecht's aim in exploiting what he termed "alienation"). Or, if he choose, he can relegate such unlikely action to the background, allowing it significance only as a condition for the experience being dramatised.

Shakespeare's handling of conventional plot material in As You Like It provides a good illustration of this second possibility. He manipulates the audience's sense of unreality in this play, to induce them to accept the romance action as fantasy, so that he can use a schematic plot to throw into relief the individualised responses of the characters who find themselves in conventional and unbelievable situations. In the second scene, for instance, Le Beau's entry, which has the practical purpose of introducing Rosalind and Celia to the wrestling match, provides opportunity for their imaginative and witty comments on the conventional nature of the action to follow. As Le Beau begins to tell his fantastic tale (taken from Lodge but echoing many a folk tale), Rosalind and Celia seize on its unreality with delight:

Le Beau. There comes an old man, and his three sons,—
Cel. I could match this beginning with an old tale.
Le Beau. Three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence.
Ros. With bills on their necks, "Be it known unto all men by these presents,"— (I ii 108-113)

By playing up conventional elements in this way Shakespeare is able to develop the personal drama realistically, stylising the conventional action that is a background to it. Whilst the tyranny of Oliver and Duke Frederick is depersonalised, the responses of Orlando, Celia, and
Rosalind, which seem so natural by comparison, have immediacy for us. When the Duke enters suddenly in the third scene and in a sentence pronounces banishment on Rosalind, the spirited and positive responses of Rosalind and Celia stand out so markedly against the Duke's humorous and conventional action that they can seem to choose exile. Their clear-sighted choice of the values of love and loyalty is more real to us then than the fact of their banishment, and we can easily accept the attitude they adopt as a preparation for the remarkable freedom of the Arden scenes: "Now go we in content / To liberty and not to banishment."

The regulation of the audience's consciousness of unreality can be a means of controlling distance both to make unlikely events acceptable and to establish a certain focus on the action. There are, however, instances of such regulation in Shakespeare's plays which, unlike the sustained insistence on fantasy that we have in the first act of As You Like It, are instantaneous in their effect. In Twelfth Night, for example, the dramatist suddenly and unexpectedly jerks the audience to a momentary sense of unreality with Fabian's remark about the taunting of Malvolio: "If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction" (III iv 133-134). Recognition from within the play of the preposterousness of the trick to be played on Malvolio discourages us from rejecting the situation as improbable, while the remark, which underlines the fantastic, play-like nature of the trick, also prevents us from feeling undue sympathy for Malvolio and so gives us sufficient detachment to accept and enjoy the situation.

Between the extremes of a sustained insistence on fantasy and a sudden assertion of unreality we find a variety of related effects.
By consistently calling the audience's attention to the unreality of a situation through the naturalistic response of a character (or characters) involved in it, the dramatist is able, for example, to justify its continuation without breaking or straining illusion. Thus, in *The Comedy of Errors* the growing conviction of the Syracusan Antipholus and Dromio that Ephesus is a dangerous, bewitched city ("Lapland sorcerers inhabit here!"), and Antipholus's distrust of his own and Dromio's sanity, help to justify a farcical situation which hinges on their obliviousness to the truth.¹ The characters in responding as they do can seem to help to generate, or at least to further, the farce. The mechanics of the plot do not seem so obtrusive then, and the characters can seem to be "responding" to situations rather than being manipulated like puppets. Because the characters' responses throughout are consistent with their awareness, we are provided with continuous encouragement to accept the unlikely situations which their obliviousness helps to sustain.

At the end of Edmund's second soliloquy in *King Lear*, as in the example cited above from *Twelfth Night*, we have an instance of Shakespeare's unexpectedly calling the audience to a consciousness of the fictitiousness of the drama, and so altering distance to make the action more acceptable. But the instance from *King Lear* is less obvious and self-conscious than that from *Twelfth Night*, less obtrusive because it is consonant in tone and manner with the scene in which it occurs. Edmund's soliloquy functions as a deliberately obvious fill-in between the exit of Gloucester and the entry of Edgar; it enables Edmund's manipulation of his brother to follow

¹ See Bertrand Evan's discussion of this in *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford, 1960), pp.5-7.
immediately on that of his father. Presenting these manipulations in unlikely close relation, Shakespeare can emphasise Edmund's control and dexterity and also give the effect of a rapid undermining of authority and inversion of rights. The latter prepares us to accept the speed with which the same process occurs in the main plot. In designing his plot to achieve this effect, Shakespeare does not try to hide the dramatic machinery: he emphasises unreality by giving the soliloquy the character of extra-dramatic address:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars; as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar--

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O! these eclipses do portend these divisions.

Edmund is being outrageously flippant as though to entertain the audience as much as to express a self-regarding delight. Shakespeare's pointing up the unreality of the too-convenient entry of Edgar--"and pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy"--and the unreality not just of the conventional soliloquy but also of the conventional manner and action of a Vice-like Edmund--"my cue is villainous melancholy"--covers an awkwardness here, a subtle and effective means of controlling distance to make acceptable the conventional basis of the ensuing action.
Whilst Shakespeare may call upon the audience's recognition of the fictitiousness of stage characters and events as a distancing device for making subsequent action more acceptable, he may also use this device to produce an opposite effect: to estrange the audience from the action and so encourage them to adopt and maintain a critical attitude towards it—a device not unlike that of Brecht's "alienation." 

At the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*, for instance, Shakespeare by unexpectedly introducing death into the courtiers' world of "silk-spun hyperbold" breaks its magic. A sudden alteration in distance, which shatters the dramatic illusion, prevents us from uncritically and sentimentally accepting a wedding-bells ending, and sharpens our critical sense so that we can accept the reassessment of the preceding action that is implicit in the judgment passed on the King and his courtiers by the Princess and her ladies. As the formal, masque-like, pattern of the action is broken, the rhetoric of the courtiers rings hollow:

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King. Yet since love's argument was first on foot,
     Let not the cloud of sorrow justle it
     From what it purpos'd; since, to wail friends lost
     Is not by much so wholesome-profitable
     As to rejoice at friends but newly found.

Prin. I understand you not: my griefs are double.
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*(V ii 737-742)*

The King and courtiers are stripped of their pretensions in loving as they had been mocked for their vows to abjure the world:

1 "The spectator was no longer in any way allowed to submit to an experience uncritically (and without practical consequences) by means of simple empathy with the characters in a play. The production took the subject-matter and the incidents shown and put them through a process of alienation: the alienation that is necessary to all understanding," *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. J. Willett (London, 1964), p.71.
Prin. We have receiv'd your letters full of love;  
Your favours, the ambassadors of love;  
And, in our maiden council, rated them  
At courtship, pleasant jest, and courtesy,  
As bombast and as lining to the time.  
But more devout than this in our respects  
Have we not been; and therefore met your loves  
In their own fashion, like a merriment.  

Dum. Our letters, madam, show'd much more than jest.  
Long. So did our looks.  

Ros. We did not quote them so.  

King. Now, at the latest minute of the hour,  
Grant us your loves.  

Prin. A time, methinks, too short  
To make a world-without-end bargain in.  

(V ii 767-779)

Yet the twelve months' trial prescribed by the Princess and her ladies,  
matching the twelve months of the courtiers' earlier vowed retreat, is  
itself mocked, Shakespeare contriving again a sense of unreality by  
breaking the dramatic illusion:

Ber. Our wooing doth not end like an old play;  
Jack hath not Jill; these ladies' courtesy  
Might well have made our sport a comedy.  

King. Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,  
And then 'twill end.  

Ber. That's too long for a play.  
(V ii 864-868)

This kind of effect is used more subtly and with a double  
purpose in Antony and Cleopatra. At the end of this play Shakespeare  
was faced with the problem of making the transformation of Cleopatra  
after Antony's death dramatically convincing, and at the same time of  
preventing the audience from accepting the ending of the play in a  
sentimental and uncritical way.

After Antony's death attention is naturally focused on  
Cleopatra, our sympathy almost wholly channelled to her. There is danger  
that we will identify ourselves with her, uncritically accept her view  
and become so immediately involved in her acting out of her death that  
we will be unable either to appreciate the transformation of Cleopatra
realized in her choice of death or to see the significance of her choice in relation to the dramatic process of which it is the culmination. On the other hand, as Cleopatra assumes the role traditionally accorded to her, that of a tragedy-queen, we have something of the awkwardness that occurred when Edmund, in the soliloquy we examined, seemed from his manner and actions to be assuming the role of Vice. Were Cleopatra or Edmund to show themselves completely absorbed in their roles, we might be tempted to reject these as unconvincing and melodramatic. Yet it would be inappropriate for Cleopatra not to take herself seriously here.

The problem of establishing the right distance Shakespeare solves as before by manipulating our sense of unreality. He breaks the dramatic illusion to allow Cleopatra to express the self-consciousness that saves her from a melodramatic absorption in her role: she refers herself to the role the future may accord her. As he permits her in imagination to move outside the dramatic time confining her to a present, Shakespeare intensifies the reality and significance of this present, sets it against the paltry melodramatic reflection that Cleopatra bitterly conceives, imagining her love cheapened on the popular stage:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{saucy lictors} \\
\text{Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers} \\
\text{Ballad us out o' tune. The quick comedians} \\
\text{Extemporally will stage us, and present} \\
\text{Our Alexandrian revels: Antony} \\
\text{Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see} \\
\text{Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness} \\
\text{I' the posture of a whore.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(V ii 213-220)

He intensifies it also by allowing the audience in another way to move outside dramatic time. For any audience watching the enactment of Cleopatra's death—and especially for an Elizabethan audience witnessing "some squeaking Cleopatra" boy her greatness as these words are said—
the words evoke a consciousness of the audience's own present and recognition of the inadequacies of dramatic representation for portraying the reality of the past. Thus the distance required for us to accept Cleopatra in her role as tragedy queen is given by Shakespeare's calling our attention to this role through Cleopatra's own resentment—a daring device evoking sympathy that allows us to accept Cleopatra as she sees herself and gives her choice of death the significance she herself ascribes to it.

Alternations in distance deliberately contrived by references from within the play to the theatricality of unlikely action are a fairly obvious way of making action probable. Whilst such references may be so obvious as to seem contrived or self-conscious, as in the case of Fabian's remark in *Twelfth Night*, they are often subtler. References to the play-like nature of the action may, as Anne Righter has shown, depend merely on theatrical connotations of words like "act," "speech," "scene," "tragedy." Such references may, however, as we have seen, strain or even break illusion, causing redefinition of the audience's relation to the action. A sudden change in distance may make previous action appear unreal or farcical (as with the dawning of day in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), or alternatively make present action seem more immediate and real, perhaps even heroic, as when Cassius following the assassination of Caesar reflects:

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How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown! (III i 111-113)
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Some conventional plot patterns have roots so deep in folklore that we tend to accept them without question. In romance especially the dramatist relies on our unconscious or automatic acceptance of such patterns. Yet even in romance when there is a chance that conventional action will seem unlikely when it occurs, the dramatist may indirectly use our recognition of the fictitiousness of the plot to induce us to accept it: he may call our attention to conventional plot patterns as one means of preparing us for their enactment and so eventually of arousing the desired response to them.

In *The Winter's Tale* we have a significant example. Shakespeare, by reference to the romantic convention of the exposed babe, indicates the change that is to occur in the nature of the action, opening up the possibility and preparing us, by this indirect means, to accept the eventual recovery of Leontes' lost heir. By Act Two scene three Leontes' jealousy seems to be rushing all towards disaster. His wavering just enough in the face of Paulina's spirited, shrewish attack to relent in his determination to have his new-born child "instantly consum'd with fire," and to decide instead to expose it "Where chance may nurse or end it," literally makes possible the regeneration that is to qualify tragedy in the play. Though Leontes' action in casting out his child (whose birth is the first hint of a new hope in the play) is callously destructive, our recognition of the romantic convention of the exposed babe rescued against all hope by a wild animal or by a kindly shepherd, suggests a new direction. The convention here gives hint of a possible recovery, just as the introduction of an oracle in the play allows hope for a shaping of events which will eventually reverse near-tragic circumstances.
Whether the dramatist depends on the audience's automatic or unconscious acceptance of dramatic (or romantic) conventions or enforces acceptance of them by bringing the audience to recognise the unreality which is basic to drama (and to romance), he relies, then, on distance for their acceptance of conventions, and depends on his use of conventions both to distance the world of the play from the real world and to define and establish the audience's relation to it.

In naturalistic drama the dramatist usually avoids directly manipulating the audience's sense of unreality. As events are not allowed to seem fantastic, and as every effort is made to have the characters and their behaviour seem life-like, the dramatist has no need to promote a large measure of illusion: it is easy for the audience to place themselves in a fairly immediate relation to the characters and events on stage without his having to distance the play greatly to achieve such a relation. But in the conventional drama that Shakespeare wrote, great demands were made on the audience by the development of an action which is not only highly unlikely or improbable when judged by the laws governing ordinary experience but which also generally involves several levels of reality. The control that Shakespeare achieves through distance would be superfluous if his drama were more naturalistic, and the devices that he employs to distance the action or to effect sudden changes in distance would seem only obtrusive and crude. It is, however, precisely because Shakespeare's plays are highly distanced that a naive idea of the relation between illusion and truth precludes an appreciation of his skill in exploiting this relation to comment on reality through illusion. Only in highly distanced (non-naturalistic) drama could one, for example, find extensive manipulation of distance being used as a means for conveying
insights with immediacy and effect as remarkable as that which we find in Shakespeare's plays, and only in highly distanced drama find the refinement of control that enables Shakespeare, as we shall see, to use the audience's perception of the relation between the world of the play and the real world to deepen and extend his exploration of reality.

We have been considering Shakespeare's direct manipulation of the audience's response by particular handling of dramatic and romantic conventions. It might be well to consider also dramatic conventions which are used as structural devices for effecting a particular orientation to the persons and events on stage—notably the play within-the-play and the aside.

The distancing principle of the play within-the-play is easily defined: the audience's consciousness of illusion is enforced by their viewing of illusion within illusion. This principle is not, of course, confined to the play within-the-play. Many scenes without being actual plays within-the-play may take on something of their quality. The theatricality of scenes like Lear's division of his kingdom or Leontes' arraignment of Hermione, for instance, encourages us to view them with some of the distance that belongs to the play within-the-play. In the comedies an Induction may distance the action of the main plot, giving it something of the quality of the play within-the-play. In plays like *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors*, the distancing effect of the Induction is fairly apparent; but the initial action in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in *As You Like It* also, which might be regarded as an extended form of Induction, functions in a similar way: it distances the play sufficiently for us to be able to enjoy the freedom of fantasy and at the same time it provides a natural
means of relating a world of fantasy to a world more like our own.

The principle of the aside is similar to that of the play within-the-play, being used to suggest different levels of awareness (and sometimes of reality) within the play world. Asides are conventionally used to reveal a character's true feelings and attitudes in a situation, particularly where these contradict those he simulates. Often asides show a character's superior awareness over others in the scene and indicate that, whilst participating in the scene, he yet has the detachment of a spectator. Sometimes an aside can bear tremendous dramatic weight: for instance, the aside of Edgar, disguised as Tom o' Bedlam, in the scene of the mad trial in King Lear ("My tears begin to take his part so much, / They mar my counterfeiting," III vi 60-61) saves the dramatic illusion which has been stretched to breaking point. As the pathos and tragedy of Lear's real madness, at this point emerging with terrible immediacy from its background of grotesque comedy, are recognised from within the scene, we find some relief from the painfulness of our own awareness; Edgar's reference to the play-like nature of the scene and to his consciously adopted part helps both to reconcile us to the grotesqueness of the scene and to make us even more immediately aware of the human experience that lies behind this extraordinary enactment.

Frequently transitions in tone are achieved in a play by using the distancing effect of the play within-the-play. The Petrarchan exchanges of Silvius and Phebe in As You Like It are distanced in this way. Prefaced by Corin's invitation to Rosalind and Celia:

If you will see a pageant truly play'd
Between the pale complexion of true love
And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain,
Go hence a little, and I shall conduct you,
If you will mark it. (III iv 48-52)
and presented in the following scene as a play within-the-play, their exchanges are distanced enough to prevent the tone from being discordant with that of more naturalistic scenes, and also to allow parody of Petrarchan conventions. The parody itself, of course, distances the emotions of Silvius and Phebe. In *The Tempest* the transition in the second scene from the harshness of Prospero's command to Caliban:

"Hag-seed hence! / Fetch us in fuel; and be quick . . ." (I ii 366-367) to the elevated tone of "The fringed curtains of thine eye advance, / And say what thou seest yond" (I ii 411-412), preparing us for the first meeting of Miranda and Ferdinand, is effected chiefly by the songs of Ariel, suggestive of transformation and harmony; but Prospero's stepping aside, as observer, as it were, of a "play," serves also to distance and to elevate their encounter.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* the distancing principle of the play within-the-play is carried to a limit. In Act Four scene three the play within-the-play in which Berowne, himself forsworn, watches the King break his oath, is followed by what is for the audience a play within-the-play-within-the-play as Berowne watches the King watching Longaville break his oath, and then by a play within-the-play-within-the-play-within-the-play as Berowne watches the King watching Longaville watching Dumain forswear himself. The audience, aware throughout of the possible revelation of Berowne's unfaithfulness, sees the whole scene at one level of awareness beyond Berowne's; but the expectation of Berowne's being exposed so increases suspense as the artifice is carried to its possible limits that we become not only more detached but also more engaged as the scene is progressively distanced.
I have described but a few of the ways in which Shakespeare manipulates distance through his handling of dramatic and romantic conventions and have suggested how such manipulations frequently constitute a basic means of defining (or of re-defining) the audience's relation to the play world. It is obvious, of course, that the way in which Shakespeare handles conventional material—especially in direct manipulation of the audience's sense of unreality—is to a large extent made possible, or even demanded by, his writing of highly conventional drama. Such drama, as S.L. Bethell has shown, assumes and depends upon a flexibility of response on the part of the audience: there is no necessary assumption by either dramatist or audience that illusion (or reality) is single and intact. The consideration, just undertaken, of how Shakespeare in his plays helps to orientate his audience through his handling of dramatic and romantic conventions, provides a simple demonstration of a way of controlling the audience's response to characters and events through management of distance. Subtler uses of the distancing effects of conventions to control response can, however, be shown. The most extraordinary of all perhaps—one to which our discussion of the play within-the-play and the aside naturally leads us—is Shakespeare's handling of dramatic and romantic conventions so as to use the audience's perception of the relation between the world of the play and the real world to deepen and extend his exploration of reality.

Situations which depend for their dramatic effect on the operation of illusion in the play world seem to be naturally suited to the exploration of complex relations between appearance and reality.
Such situations, recurrent in both the tragedies and the comedies, especially rely on and enforce distance. To demonstrate the effect of illusion on characters in the play, the dramatist frequently suggests a difference in awareness between the characters promoting illusion on the one hand, and those subject to it on the other, which is analogous to our superiority as spectators over the characters of a play. The same principle of distance which sets the characters and events on stage apart from us seems to be operating within the stage world itself. Yet watching characters undergoing illusion frequently calls us to a consciousness of our capacity for illusion and self-deception, and perhaps also it is our own experience of the power of illusion, evoked in watching its effects on the characters on stage, that makes the most unlikely deceptions acceptable to us, gives them a probability and immediacy that cannot otherwise be explained.

Deceptions in Shakespeare's plays whether malevolently, mischievously, benevolently, or accidentally practised by a character on other, unsuspecting, characters, nearly all have an obviously conventional basis—arising perhaps from the conventional contrivings of a Machiavellian villain or from the romantic convention of disguise or of mistaken identity—and the situations to which they give rise usually appear somewhat artificial and contrived. Shakespeare may distance such situations to make them credible simply by calling us to recognise and accept the unreality of the conventions upon which they depend, but usually he achieves sufficient distance by allowing us the vantage-point of full knowledge. Even verbal irony, relying on our appreciation of the disparity between literal meaning and the extended significance given to words by their context, forces us to be aware of the gap between
our god-like view of the characters in their world and their own limited perspective. The superior awareness that enables us, viewing deceptions, to appreciate the disparity between appearance and reality enforces even more strongly our consciousness of being spectators. This consciousness is increased by Shakespeare's use of dramatic conventions, such as the play within-the-play and the aside, able to suggest, dimensionally, different levels of awareness within the play world and our sense of the relationship between our world and the play world.

Situations in which reality is controlled by illusion may, as Anne Righter has pointed out, be made peculiarly credible and immediate to us by our recognition of the power of illusion in human life. This is one effect of distance; but another effect is that we retain the detachment required for us to appreciate the tragic or comic consequences of disparity between appearance and reality.

Often the balance between immediacy and detachment that Shakespeare requires at a particular moment to present his play experience is achieved through his using conventions in such a way as to establish a degree of knowledge or expectation which has a shaping effect on the audience's attitude. Conventions are so handled in Shakespearean comedy, for example, that the action usually seems arbitrary enough for us to feel that the dramatist may at any moment intervene to prevent catastrophe. Or else the action is seen from the vantage-point of a controller working behind the scenes, as it were, to effect a resolution of conflict. Though disaster threatens, our expectation that ill-effects will eventually be reversed distances the action and saves us from the

full impact and tragic immediacy of action that appears both "necessary" and irreversible. The Machiavels of comedy—Don John of *Much Ado About Nothing* and Oliver and Duke Frederick of *As You Like It*—are presented as being dominated by a humour. This humour is characteristically suggestive more of a perverse (and perhaps even curable) blindness than of the cold egocentric rationalism and the dangerously self-conscious role-playing of an Edmund or an Iago. Because we do not regard the threats of the Machiavels of comedy in the unqualified way we do those of tragedy, we lack a sense that the destructive action that they initiate will be irreversible. In *The Tempest* where we do feel that the Machiavellian Antonio is potentially as dangerous as Edmund, Shakespeare distances the threat he represents by allowing the possibility of magical intervention. By depriving the action that Antonio proposes in his plot against Alonso of necessity, Shakespeare removes the possibility of our regarding it in a solely tragic light. Displaying initially the practical as well as the moral limitations of Antonio's awareness, he frees us from Antonio's vantage-point, and our view of Antonio's frustration then replaces interest in his contrivings. The introduction of the sub-plot in *Much Ado*, which imposes a practical limitation on Don John's villainy, helps in the same way to diminish its threat.

In tragedy, on the other hand, the dramatist's giving us full knowledge of the Machiavel's purpose in a conventional soliloquy lends immediacy to action conventionally contrived. By displaying so openly and irrefutably the relentlessness and the calculating competence of a Machiavel committed to an entirely egocentric line of action, the dramatist warns us of the irreversible direction of the tragic action, and the speed with which the Machiavel can effect disaster then furthers our sense of
its necessity. The view that Othello's downfall is too rapid to be credible ignores the fact that it is, indeed, the very speed, the economy of action, with which this can occur that makes the action of the play so powerful and immediate.

In situations where a controlling figure within the play world uses illusion to establish a control over reality, conventions appear to be used primarily to define the nature and limits of the deceiver's control, to define also his relation to the other characters on stage and to the audience. Such definition, however, actually plays an essential part in determining more generally the audience's relation to the action. There is a strong link in awareness between the audience and the person contriving illusion. But if the contriver is linked to the audience by his superior awareness, he is separated from them by his involvement in the action. We sense this separation most in tragedy where the character who is contriving an illusion possesses a power in his knowledge which the audience cannot share. We may be appalled by his manipulations but we are powerless to oppose or intervene. The impunity with which the villain can reveal his plots to us makes us painfully aware of our distance from the play world: we alone possess the knowledge to prevent catastrophe and we are helpless because the price we pay for this knowledge, as John Lawlor points out,¹ is the loss of our powers of intervention. Distance denies us a practical relation to the play world, yet in forcing us to accept this consequence of distance, the dramatist, paradoxically, makes our relation to the play world more immediate.

The controller's involvement in the action in another way enforces our detachment. By having his Machiavels, for example, conventionally reveal to the audience in soliloquy the form and direction of their proposed villainy, Shakespeare places the audience in a position to appreciate the Machiavel's control of reality by illusion. The audience views consequent action partly from the vantage-point of the contriver. But both benevolent and malevolent controllers stand in double relation to the action: objective in their manipulations, they are involved by the very self-interest that motivates their control. It is their involvement that gives the audience an objective view of the controllers themselves. Thus, for instance, whilst we may share the Machiavel's mixed detachment and fascination in watching the self-destruction of the characters whom he is manipulating, we are doubly spectators and with something of the same detachment and fascination view simultaneously the process of his own self-destruction.

Characters who are in a controlling position in Shakespeare's plays seem nearly always to achieve control of reality by means of illusion. They are able to deceive and manipulate other characters and direct the action for their own ends because in being able to distinguish appearance from reality they have an advantage over other characters which often is shared only by the audience. In the comedies this principle of gaining control of reality by means of illusion is perhaps most obviously true for the magical controllers, Oberon and Prospero. They, more clearly than the disguised controllers of other plays, achieve a clarification or a deepening of insight through the creation and removal of illusion. This is the principle of Oberon's trick on Titania with the love-juice and is the mechanism of the series
of delusions undergone by the lovers in the Athenian woods. But the principle is most obviously developed in *The Tempest* where the therapeutic creation of illusion, removed once insight has been attained through it, is the principle underlying Prospero's actions: the creation of the storm in which all believe themselves to be lost and then miraculously preserved; the encouragement of Ferdinand's belief that he has lost his father, and Alonso's that he has lost his son—a loss that causes him to face past guilt and promise Prospero a restoration of his rights; Prospero's assumed severity towards Ferdinand and Miranda; his conjuring up of the strange disappearing banquet for the courtiers and the vision of Ariel as harpy; his creation of the Masque of Ceres; his revelation of himself finally as Prosper of Milan; and his final discovery to Alonso and his court of Ferdinand and Miranda, both "lost" in "this past tempest," playing chess. In all cases the removal of illusion displays the existence of further levels of reality, Prospero like a dramatist using fantasy to extend awareness.

Though the kind and degree of their involvement varies, the benevolent controllers are, however, themselves involved in the action they contrive, and we have in our greater detachment a superior vantage-point from which to view the action, in our appreciation of their involvement a more extensive view of the action and of their part in it. Perhaps because of this Shakespeare, while using conventional means to define the nature and limits of the controller's assumed role, is careful to explore the relation of this role to the hopes, fears, or needs of the person assuming it (frequently doing so by challenging a too-automatic acceptance of the conventional.)
Oberon, save in his relation to Titania where self-interest exists with mischief, remains the aloof controller throughout. In The Tempest, on the other hand, much care is taken to show Prospero's involvement as a human one. His dual role is established early in the play. In the second scene Prospero removes his magic garment before relating the history of events that brought Miranda and himself to the island. His gesture is symbolic of self-revelation, appropriate to his narration of his personal history, of his birth and place in a society from which he has been banished as a man rather than as a magician. Prospero's unmasking and resumption of mask, as an artistic device, makes clear the divorce of his roles as magician-controller and as man subject to the control of Providence: it defines the limits of the conventional role and the relation which this role has to his person and destiny. In the closing scene of the play he abjures unnatural power before his actual unmasking to reveal a human relationship with those whose destinies he has been controlling as magician.

Usually, however, the convention of disguise is used in comedy to define and to circumscribe the role of a benevolent controller, making clear his (or more frequently her) relation to the other characters in the play and to the audience, the limits of her control, and the degree and kind of her involvement in the action. Disguise usually indicates a more direct participation in the action than is true for either Oberon or Prospero. Rosalind's control in As You Like It is so extensive that we might be tempted to compare it with the control that Prospero achieves through his extraordinary powers; we are for a moment, as Mary Lascelles suggests,¹

half-inclined to believe Rosalind's tale of being a magician's nephew and it is as if by her magic that Hymen appears to resume Rosalind's temporary controlling power and to free her to become the leader of the dance of happy lovers at the close of As You Like It. But the disguised Rosalind directly participates in the play she controls. She speaks of this participation herself and of its cause when she says with regard to Silvius and Phebe:

The sight of lovers feedeth those in love.
Bring us to this sight and you shall say
I'll prove a busy actor in their play. (III iv 53-55)

Rosalind, though sympathetic, has something of the exuberant spirit of the disguised reveller. Oberon and Prospero avoid revealing their identities, or even themselves, through participation, and so enhance the mystery of their power. They watch invisible while spirits act out their commands. The exuberance and mischief that would hardly harmonise with the dignity and mysteriousness of these more aloof controllers seems to find its embodiment in their spirits, Puck and Ariel.

By representing the contrivings of villains and by using conventions to define the roles of the benevolent controllers in his plays, Shakespeare can also more easily deflect our interest to the response of the characters who are subject to illusion and in this way he can less directly but more subtly suggest the limitations of the controller. For whilst controllers in Shakespeare's plays can manipulate other characters, create illusions to blind and destroy them or to give them saving insight, Shakespeare repeatedly emphasises, by concentrating on the responses of the characters undergoing illusion, that they have no actual control over the hearts of others. The characters responding
to the contrivings of the Machiavels, he seems to suggest, are not destroyed by them so much as given the occasion to destroy themselves; similarly benevolent controllers in the comedies may create occasions offering characters a second or "golden" chance, but depend on the characters to take the opportunities offered them. Thus whilst the ability to separate appearance from reality characterises the controllers of Shakespeare's plays, and gives them the superior awareness of spectators over the other characters of the play that sometimes enables them to control reality by means of illusion, their control is limited because they have no power over the hearts of others. This fact robs Julia in The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Helena in All's Well That Ends Well of power, though they have the superior awareness of disguised heroines like Portia and Rosalind who can use their disguise to ensure control. A character's actual choice of evil or good is his own. Whether the illusion tempting a character to evil comes from the three weird sisters of Macbeth or from the "demi-devil" Iago, Shakespeare is concerned with Macbeth's and Othello's response to temptation, with their self-deception and self-destruction. Prospero may subject Antonio and Sebastian to illusion designed to stimulate them to a recognition of guilt and so to moral awareness, but when they harden themselves against this recognition, Prospero is powerless.

Concentrating on the responses of those undergoing illusion, and so indirectly suggesting the limitations of the deceiver, is but one of the ways in which Shakespeare studies the discrepancy between appearance and reality. This study goes, for him, deeper than an elaboration of the possible consequences of mistaking; its profound concern, in tragedies and comedies alike, is with the nature of moral blindness.
Rarely does Shakespeare present situations based on deception simply to demonstrate the power of illusion over the gullible or the innocent. He uses such situations more significantly to reveal a human capacity for self-deception. Even in the earliest comedies the romantic conventions of disguise and mistaken identity, for example, are used not only to show the delusion that can result from trusting in mere appearances but also to demonstrate a relation between self-deception and unconscious role-playing which may lead to confusion and even to loss of a sense of identity. The disorientation and loss of identity experienced by characters in *The Comedy of Errors*, for instance, is as significant as the comedy of their mistakings. Their disorientation is brought about mainly by external illusion (mistaken identity) which causes them to assume relationships (that of master to servant, wife to husband) which are immediately denied them by the other. When the roles they automatically adopt are questioned, the characters not only begin to doubt their ability to judge truly but go so far as also to question their own identity. The opposite happens in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Sly is so disorientated by the illusion mischievously created for him that he accepts completely an identity foisted upon him, accepts it with all its consequences, including relationships with a wife and servants. This illusion and its consequences, presented in the Induction, prepare us to accept a similar pattern in the main play where Katharina, similarly disorientated through illusion, is made to accept the new identity and relationships which Petruchio creates for her. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although Shakespeare treats the lovers' blindness farcically and uses the love-juice as a catalyst of confusion, the personal disorientations that the lovers experience in the moonlit woods
and the general chaos and confusion that develops there seem to be largely caused by their own blindness. As the characters assume roles and blindly adopt inflexible lines of action, they lose their own sense of identity; the action becomes more and more farcical as under the pressure of events they become increasingly unable to distinguish themselves from the roles they are playing. In *As You Like It* the relation between self-deception and unconscious role-playing is developed further; and the gaining of self-awareness, not (as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) by external agency, but as a result of inner growth and developing discrimination, becomes also a condition for the resolution of the plot.

Comic deceptions in these plays may cause disorientations, but these usually lead to clarification and sometimes to a gain in self-awareness. A character may temporarily be made to doubt his own identity or to assume a new identity altogether but, the comedies imply, if he is enables to see himself apart from the role he has assumed, he may come to a clearer realisation of self. The conventions of disguise and mistaken identity can thus be used to show a disparity between reality and illusion which is presented, not as an end in itself, but as a means of exposing self-deception and of exploring the nature of illusion.

In making us aware of the limitations of the conventional role that the deceiver assumes, Shakespeare can so manipulate distance as to control the possibilities for our engagement and detachment. The controller views the action from a unique position half inside, half outside the "play" he directs. By making us more or less conscious of the controller as himself part of a dramatic illusion of which we alone
have a controlling view, the dramatist can vary our sympathy for him, and also vary the extent to which we view the action through his eyes. The dramatist can, indeed, so increase and manipulate distance by this means that, as I hope to show shortly, he can enable the audience to appreciate the situation presented with a complexity of awareness and response which may enable them, for example, simultaneously to assess the action of the controller with ironic or critical detachment, to sympathise with any difficulty or embarrassment that may be involved in his or her role, or to take delight in skilful manipulations of a situation, and to grasp quickly the humorous or painful ironic congruities or incongruities of word and action. To illustrate some of these possibilities it is perhaps most fruitful to consider Shakespeare's use of disguise in his comedies.

Frequently in these plays, comedy arising from a disparity between appearance and reality has its source in the deluded assumption by a character (or characters) of a conventional role or of stock responses in a situation in which this proves to be (or is made to seem) particularly inappropriate. (Inappropriateness of response is often recorded simply by a lack of accord between the style adopted by a character viewing the situation from within limits which he imposes upon himself by the conventional role he assumes, and that adopted by a character--either an outsider or an aware participant--viewing the situation more flexibly and realistically.) In contrast to a blind or unaware adoption of a stock role, the assumption of disguise in itself suggests a degree of awareness, an ability to distinguish between oneself and the role one is playing, and those possessing such ability can, by assuming a role themselves, sometimes teach
others the importance of self-awareness by an ironic undermining of roles assumed blindly. When Rosalind in her mock-wooing forces Orlando to mark the excesses of his adopted role and stock attitudes she is, by parody and by refusing to conduct discussion in the terms that the role-player would like to enforce, distinguishing role from player.

Though the device of disguise is artificial, the freedom it offers the disguised characters can make their control seem very natural. Rosalind, disguised, has "carnival freedom from the decorum of her identity and her sex,"¹ and our delight in the encounters of Rosalind and Orlando is akin to the delight of the masque, with its combination of a highly artificial situation and an extraordinary freedom and naturalness in expressing feelings.

In fantasy disguise may be correlative not only with superior awareness but also with control. Rosalind, qualified by her own self-awareness to lead others to self-awareness, maintains a remarkable control of her own destiny—a control redolent of the ingenious and the magical. For the innocent exiles of romance disguise may be a means to power and eventual return; it may enable them to gain an objective and more extensive view of events and it may give them greater freedom then to order them. One is, however, often tempted to see in the assumption of disguise itself an emblematic expression of a relation between control, clear-sightedness and integrity.

In presenting romance situations which depend on disguise, the dramatist is able to use the convention as a distancing device to secure that peculiar combination in the audience's response of critical

alertness and imaginative sympathy which enables them to appreciate and enjoy a situation developed on several levels. Often, as Norman Sanders notes, disguise is the symbolic equivalent of some barrier between lovers which reflects some delusion or spiritual blindness in one or both of them as well as in the characters who surround them. Indications of this are the conscious and unconscious violations of one's nature which is basic in many of the comic situations... Frequently the pretence is given a visual form, the commonest being a change of clothing.¹

This is especially true of the romantic comedies where the delusion and blindness of love are explored directly. In the romances, delusion in the young lovers takes the form of an illusory social barrier between the highborn prince and a princess whose noble birth is unknown. The prince achieves a degree of self-knowledge when he is forced to see himself apart from the role he is born to play—as when Florizel in The Winter's Tale rejects his princely status for the sake of love, or when Ferdinand in The Tempest, with full awareness and acceptance of the responsibility of his princely status forced upon him by his father's "death," chooses to marry one whose worth is unknown. In the process of this growth to understanding, illusion about the low or unknown birth of the princess is removed. The prince's natural choice, his instinctive appreciation of beauty and worth, are seen to coincide with choice that befits his princely nature and princely status. The discovery that the two are in fact related means, for the characters themselves, the movement from one level of awareness to another.

In situations where a heroine in disguise betrays her true identity, the audience's appreciation of the relation between different levels of reality is especially involved. There is then an ironic congruity between the heroine's actions and her nature which contradicts apparent incongruity. The most complex example of this is probably that of Perdita's assumed role in *The Winter's Tale*. Perdita appears as queen of the feast. Reminders of her royalty, reiterated throughout the pastoral scenes of the play, serve to emphasise the divorce (felt by all the characters on stage, and especially by Perdita herself) between her humble role as shepherdess and her make-believe role as queen. As Perdita, following Polixenes' interference, declares, "I'll queen it no inch farther" (IV iv 450), she abjures, with characteristic humility and honesty, a festive role which she feels she has presumptuously assumed. To an audience who knows that Perdita is not a low-born shepherdess, her words are ironically inappropriate. Knowing her to be the daughter of a king, they perceive a similar irony when Camillo contrives to send Perdita with Florizel in the disguise of a princess. Reminders of Perdita's royalty serve to increase the audience's awareness of a subtly ironic inversion of illusion and reality. They are comment on the fact that an intuitively recognised truth may be actually true even when it appears to contravene the likely. In the pastoral scenes all who recognise Perdita as "the prettiest low-born lass that ever / Ran on the green-sward," (IV iv 156-157) "the queen of curds and cream" (IV iv 161), are responding to inherent quality, Shakespeare adopting the romantic convention equating beauty and worth. The situation is so distanced that subtle and complex ironies can be readily understood, the audience's appreciation of
Irony itself having a distancing effect.

Rosalind in *As You Like It* has a control which even for a Shakespearean heroine appears free and natural. Often in the comedies and romances we are made uncomfortably aware of the disadvantages of disguise. Though the heroine's disguise is often assumed as a protection, there is frequently an ironic reversal of this where the disguise leads to a betrayal of feminine weakness or, where assumed to give freedom to control events, it seriously constrains a heroine's freedom of action. We think of Imogen's embarrassment when her brothers suggest that she go hunting with them, or of Rosalind's fainting at the sight of Orlando's blood, or of the recurring situation in the comedies in which another woman falls in love with the disguised heroine. The ironical presentation of the disadvantages of disguise makes the audience aware of disguise as other than a convention, as something that relates more realistically to the situation in which the heroine finds herself, while at the same time it forces them to be conscious of disguise as a convention which of itself imposes limitations on the situation that depends on it. Consider, for example, some of the very different ways in which the dramatic potential of verbal or "mock" betrayal may be realised. In the mock-wooing scenes in *As You Like It*, where much of the delight springs from Rosalind's constant verbal betrayal of her true identity, her mock-revelations of identity become a means of asserting her freedom in disguise, her license to express true feeling. Verbal betrayals of identity, of course, depend on and enforce distance. Where there is unconscious betrayal of relationship as when Imogen in *Cymbeline* calls Arviragus and Guiderius her brothers, the dramatist uses the audience's own sense of a difference in aware-
ness which separates them from the characters on stage to enforce distance. Where the heroine consciously exploits the ironic congruity of her words to her true situation, her verbal betrayal of her identity makes us more acutely conscious of the difference in awareness that sets her apart from those unaware of her identity. In the scenes between Rosalind and Orlando this barrier is exploited with comic effect. It may, however, as with Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* be used to express the painfulness of the heroine's awareness, to convey an idea of the isolation and helplessness of the heroine, the difficulty of her situation. In such cases disguise is far from being a correlative for control: it may serve rather as an external reminder of the alienation or exile that lie behind its assumption, of an enforced hiding of identity until there is a restoration of rights. Though assumed by a heroine as a defence and as a means to control, disguise may expose her to hurt and actually rob her of control. When this happens, when a heroine loses control of a situation because her true identity is masked—for instance, when Imogen is struck down by Posthumus in the concluding scene of *Cymbeline*—we can no longer complacently regard the convention as artifice, and yet we cannot escape a jarring awareness of the artificiality of the convention in the constriction it actually places on the heroine by defining her role. There is not, as we might expect, in such situations a sudden loss but an increase of distance. This increase in distance allows us the detachment to attend to the situation on several levels simultaneously, as we are required to do, while at the same time, we feel an increased immediacy in our relation to the heroine.
We are similarly affected when the heroine’s disguise becomes an embarrassment to her, usually in a situation in which she is doubly involved but constrained to play the part she has chosen as disguise and forget the part she longs to play. Rosalind’s "Alas the day! What shall I do with my doublet and hose?" (III ii 31) is a simple instance of this. There is a more developed example in *Twelfth Night* where Viola, herself in love with the Duke, is commissioned by him to persuade Olivia to accept his suit. The embarrassment and painfulness of Viola’s situation (the darker side to the comedy) is intensified when Olivia falls in love with her; our sympathy for the heroine in her dilemma exists with an awareness of the artificiality of the situation.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Julia’s disguise far from being a defence actually exposes her to suffering. In the scene where Julia with the Host listens to Proteus serenading Silvia, the painful tension between her personal involvement and the constraints of the role she is forced to maintain, finds expression in ironical word-play.

It was to cure her melancholy that the Host had taken Julia to hear the music and to see the gentleman she had asked after. Julia’s sadness is counterpointed against the extraordinary beauty of the song to Silvia, her own intensity against the lack of feeling that she seems to the Host to display listening to it:

**Host.** How now! are you sadder than you were before? How do you, man? the music likes you not.

**Julia.** You mistake; the musician likes me not.

**Host.** Why, my pretty youth?

**Julia.** He plays false, father.

**Host.** How? out of tune on the strings?

**Julia.** Not so; but yet so false that he grieves my very heart-strings.

**Host.** You have a quick ear.

**Julia.** Ay, I would I were deaf; it makes me have a slow heart.
Host. I perceive you delight not in music.
Julia. Not a whit, when it jars so.
Host. Hark, what a fine change is in the music!
Julia. Ay, that change is the spite.
Host. You would have them always play but one thing?
Julia. I would always have one play but one thing.

(IV ii 53-71)

The ironical word-play both distances the scene and makes it more immediate. It gives taut expression to Juliet's real feelings but underlines the artificiality of the situation whereby Julia is able to witness Proteus' unfaithfulness. As Julia watches his serenading, as a play within-the-play, her ironical word-play bridges the gap between the awareness given her, unsparingly, as a spectator and the painfulness of the knowledge to her as one who is not a spectator but personally involved in the drama.

Julia, like Viola in Twelfth Night must help her master to court her own rival:

I am my master's true-confirmed love;
But cannot be true servant to my master,
Unless I prove false traitor to myself. (IV iv 108-110)

Our sense of the embarrassment and painfulness of her situation again is increased by Julia's own painful awareness of it. The scene in which Julia goes as Proteus' page to claim from Silvia the picture she had promised Proteus the night before, gives opportunity for some remarkable play on different senses of the word "shadow." Julia as the page, Sebastian, is an actor, a "shadow." As one who in disguise exposes herself to suffering and is yet forced to hide her true identity, she feels but a shadow of her self. When in her role as page she is asked by Silvia to paint a verbal picture (or "shadow") of Proteus' former love, Julia, she compares a present Julia with a former Julia who had not been exposed to suffering and then compares this
"shadow" of the present Julia with herself as page, whom we know to be also a "shadow":

She hath been fairer, madam, than she is: When she did think my master loved her well, She, in my judgment, was as fair as you; But since she did neglect her looking-glass, And threw her sun-expelling mask away, The air hath starved the roses in her cheeks, And pinch'd the lily-tincture of her face; That now she is become as black as I (IV iv 154-161)

When Silvia questions her further, Julia extends this comparison of her "shadow" with herself, imaginatively:

Silvia. How tall was she?  
Julia. About my stature: for, at Pentecost, When all our pageants of delight were play'd, Our youth got me to play the woman's part, And I was trimm'd in Madam Julia's gown; Which served me as fit, by all men's judgments, As if the garment had been made for me: Therefore I know she is about my height. And at that time I made her weep agood, For I did play a lamentable part: Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight; Which I so lively acted with my tears, That my poor mistress, moved therewithal, Wept bitterly; and, would I might be dead, If I in thought felt not her very sorrow! (IV iv 161-177)

When Julia makes even the "shadow" of the self she assumes a "shadow," giving a description of an imaginary part that she, Sebastian, played in an imaginary pageant, the effect is to make us aware of the real Julia apart from the role ("shadow") she has been forced to accept, for the imaginary role reflects on her real role, with the difference that Julia is not only forced to "play a lamentable part" but actually to feel the sorrow that belongs to it. The distinction made at the end of the description between acting and feeling prevents our viewing Julia's part with the detachment normally established by the romantic convention
of disguise. Moreover, because Sebastian's imaginary role was that of a woman suffering through her lover's unfaithfulness, the description which Julia offers has such emotional relevance that our attention is distracted from the contrivance, and Julia's description of "Julia's" imaginary reaction becomes expressive of her own sorrow in a way that seems both immediate and natural. To describe the mechanics of this passage is involved and tedious; in the theatre, owing to the "multi-consciousness" which enables us to perceive contradictory aspects of a situation simultaneously and without confusion, we respond simply and quickly.

As Julia at the end of this scene, taking up Silvia's picture, refers to herself as "shadow," we see how much her disguise is suggestive not of control but of negation:

Come, shadow, come, and take this shadow up,
For 'tis thy rival. O thou senseless form,
Thou shalt be worshipp'd, kiss'd, loved, and adored!
And, were there sense in his idolatry,
My substance should be statue in thy stead. (IV iv 202-206)

Julia's dilemma looks forward to that of Helena in All's Well That Ends Well. No matter how clear-sighted Julia may be, her knowledge does not ensure control: she is no more able to exercise control over the heart of Proteus than Helena is over Bertram's. In All's Well Shakespeare consistently prevents us viewing Helena's dilemma romantically by forcing us to be uncomfortably aware of the embarrassment, awkwardness, and hopelessness of Helena's following Bertram, rather than allowing us to see her role as merely one prescribed by the romantic convention of disguise. Our feeling for her distress, which becomes almost intolerable as Helena furthers Bertram's plans for seducing Diana, is little palliated by our knowledge of the substitution-in-bed trick. So successfully
does Shakespeare, through irony, force us to be aware of the dis-
advantages of Helena's role—aware so vividly of her embarrassment and
helplessness, with an immediacy that prevents our seeing her disguise
as other than a negation—that to make even an ironically qualified
romantic ending acceptable to us it seems he has practically to remove
Helena from the play.

Most of the comic and tragic situations which arise from
deliberate deception have a conventional basis. The deceiver's role
in the play—his relation to the audience as well as to the other
characters on stage—can thus be explicitly defined: the Machiavel
has a conventional soliloquy, the romantic heroine adopts the convent-
ion of disguise, the magical or god-like controller initially outlines
his motives, purpose and plans. As the play proceeds and the control-
er's own involvement in the action becomes yet clearer, our own
response to the play becomes more complex. Our superior awareness as
spectators extends far beyond that which the contriver of illusion in
the play world has over the characters whom he subjects to illusion.
It enables us to have a distanced view of the controller, to appreciate
the relation between the human player of the role and the conventional
role he plays, while our appreciation of this relation, which develops
as the play develops, itself enforces distance, which controls the
possibilities for our detachment and involvement. On the one hand, our
awareness of the physical weakness or suffering or helplessness of the
disguised heroine may, for example, prevent her role having a purely
conventional character and make us immediately aware of her human plight.
On the other hand, where a controller is unaware of his limitations, our
sensing his human weakness and the limits of his control may make us
cynically aware of his self-interest or ironically critical of his exercise of power; this is true to some extent both for the Duke in Measure for Measure and for Prospero in The Tempest.

Where a controlling figure seeks with either malevolent or benevolent intent to gain control of reality by subjecting other characters to some kind of illusion, Shakespeare is able, then, to use either dramatic or romantic conventions to help define the nature and extent of the controller's (or would-be-controller's) involvement in the action. Freeing the audience, by this means, from the vantage-point of the contriver (who through his superior awareness is often closely linked to the audience) he is able to give them a freer, more objective, and extensive view of the action and of the contriver's part in that action. Not only is Shakespeare, using conventions such as the expository soliloquy, the aside, the play within-the-play, disguise, able to express with ease and clarity the relation of the character contriving illusion to other characters in the play and to the audience viewing his illusions, but he is able also, and more significantly, to use these limited and limiting conventions to achieve a distance that enables him to open up the way for a very immediate exploration of a great range of moral and psychological experience, and to use conventional situations to demonstrate the peculiarly subtle relations between appearance and reality which are such a rich source for irony and insight in his plays.
Though, of course, very different theatrical possibilities have been realised in our own and other ages, recent work on Elizabethan stage practice has shown how a study of Elizabethan staging conventions may considerably increase our awareness of the theatrical possibilities of Elizabethan texts. Much doubt still exists regarding the staging of Elizabethan plays: many conclusions can only be derived through induction or conjecture. Yet there do seem to be grounds at least for asserting as a general principle that the Elizabethan dramatist could to some considerable extent use staging devices as physical or visual conventions to help establish and control the audience’s relation to the actors and action on stage. In the Elizabethan theatre, it would seem, dramatic and romantic conventions whose effect may be readily analysed from the text alone (and to which we have confined our attention in this chapter) were supplemented by what might be described as traditional or conventionalized modes of visual representation; and these, we may suppose, had especially for an Elizabethan audience a strongly reinforcing effect. T.B. Stroup, for example, shows how pageantry, ritual, and ceremonial could be used to intensify and generalise personal drama by setting it in a wider social and metaphysical context,¹ and B. Beckerman’s study of the ceremonial finales of Globe plays leads to a similar conclusion.²


With the recent renewed emphasis on the need for staging devices to be taken into account in interpreting Shakespeare's plays, there have appeared insightful analyses of such aspects of Elizabethan plays in performance as the contrast of interior and exterior scenes,\(^1\) analysis illuminated by Beckerman's recognition of the essential fluidity of stage-space with, it is argued, a consequent ignoring of discrepancy between real and dramatic space;\(^2\) analysis of the control a dramatist may exercise over audience response through exploitation or manipulation of actual physical distance on the platform-stage to create impressions of near-ness or far-ness,\(^3\) of significant movement, of military, ceremonial, or ritual procession,\(^4\) or of "containment,"\(^5\) or for representing the actors' changing relationships with one another (here, J.R. Brown's analysis of a visually indicated change in the relationship of Gertrude and Claudius in *Hamlet*\(^6\) is especially noteworthy.) Especially with a platform stage, the dramatist could obviously use actual distance also to suggest near-ness or far-ness in the actors' relations with the audience—as when a character seems to turn from or even move out of the action towards the audience in direct address, or standing apart from the action as observer (perhaps momentarily assuming this stance in aside) seems physically to mediate or focus the action for the

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\(^1\) Stroup, pp.130-137.

\(^2\) Beckerman, p.164.


\(^4\) Stroup, pp.117-118.

\(^5\) Stroup, p.89.

audience. J.L. Styan gives as examples of this, Romeo's indicating and embellishing the dancing Juliet, Philo preparing us with a judgment on his general, Antony, Ulysses clinching our view of Cressida.¹

From these studies of Elizabethan staging it would seem that, in the Elizabethan theatre at least, staging conventions could be used as distancing devices to heighten the dramatic intensity of a scene, to measure and control, often to generalise its significance. Although it might seem as possible to develop my argument in terms of the dramatist's exploitation of space, as of time, the difficulties of so doing—stemming largely from the lack of certain knowledge of Elizabethan stage practices—and the reduced need for attempting this following the recent publications of Professor N. Coghill's Shakespeare's Professional Skills (Oxford, 1964), T.B. Stroup's Microcosmos: the Shape of the Elizabethan Play (Lexington, 1965), B. Beckerman's Shakespeare at the Globe 1599-1609 (New York, 1962), and especially J.R. Brown's Shakespeare's Plays in Performance (London, 1966), lead me simply to indicate the existence and the relation of this field of study to my own.

¹ Styan, p.57.
Dr Johnson based his famous discussion of the unities on the principle that imaginative experience is integral, that we cannot apply a notion of possibility derived from ordinary experience to prescribe what is imaginatively possible. Once the idea of imaginative represented is admitted, it is foolish to set limits on what can be represented:

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a journey to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitations; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintances are Alexander and Caesar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calementure of the brain, that can make the stage a field.¹

Were we to judge Shakespeare's plays by their apparent relation to ordinary experience, we would find them absurd, melodramatic, fantastic. Were we to judge the play that we experience in the theatre

¹ From the 1765 Preface to Johnson's edition of Shakespeare's Works; quoted in W. Raleigh, Johnson on Shakespeare: Essays and Notes (Oxford, 1908 (1959)).
by an abstract of its plot, we would find our judgment equally irrelevant. Consider, for example, the unlikely sequence of events in *The Winter's Tale*: the sudden onset of Leontes' jealousy; the coincidence of Mamilius' and Hermione's deaths with Leontes' blasphemous denial of the oracle; the miraculous preservation of Perdita, set against the deaths of all others with her; the meeting of Perdita and Florizel, shepherdess and prince; the recognition of Perdita as lost heir to Sicilia; and the final marvel of Hermione's awakening. Thought of as a sequence of external events, the action of *The Winter's Tale* seems to have little relation to the experience undergone by the major characters in the play and even less relation to the audience's experience of the drama. An abstract of the plot hardly conveys a real idea either of Leontes' anguished sense of loss following his alienation from his wife, child, and friend, or of his joy at the renewal of relationship; it cannot suggest how, as the time of trial for both Leontes and Hermione comes to an end, we see suffering and endurance in relation to the renewal they have made possible, tragic experience in a perspective where suffering and joy are together comprehended.

Because Shakespeare as dramatist is less concerned with physical happenings than with what might be described as psychological or moral events, and because his drama depends for its effect more on the audience's imaginative perception of relationships than on the logical coherence of the action, events in a Shakespearean play do not often or only have a simple causal relationship, nor do they have intrinsic significance. In naturalistic drama there is interest in events themselves and in their likely relation, just as there is realistic character portrayal and a definition of the relations between characters.
primarily in social and personal terms. In the conventional drama of Shakespeare, on the other hand, external events are in themselves less important, and a character is not so much realistically individualised, in the sense of being given a personal life and history, as imaginatively defined by his relationships with other characters in the play, even with characters he may not actually meet. As Muriel Bradbrook notes:

Romeo and Juliet without the Nurse and Mercutio, Navarre and his lords without Armado, Costard, Moth and the Worthies, Richard without Bolingbroke, York, Gaunt and the Queen, would in effect cease to exist with the dramatic depth and significance which makes them what they are.¹

A Shakespearean play, one might say, is built up of suggested relationships between characters, between situations, between attitudes expressed and enacted, between the different levels of action in a play. The Induction, for example, is related to the main action, the sub-plots to the main plot, not just because their actions, variously begun, may intersect at some point causing changes to both, but because in some way they reflect on one another and so broaden our conception of values or render our response to the play experience more complex. The dramatist, for instance, may qualify (or he may intensify) our response to the human problems or experience represented at one level by showing them in an entirely different, revealing, light at another, through irony perhaps, defining more sharply, or extending, our conception of the principles underlying the action.

To demonstrate possibilities in terms of the psychological or moral experience that he is examining, the dramatist may well ignore naturalistic considerations. In Shakespearean romance, particularly,

emphasis is shifted from probability to imaginative possibility. Characters are offered a second, "golden," chance; lost opportunities present themselves again, past errors can be reversed, loss can end in recovery. There is some relief from the relentless relation between action and consequence that usually makes it impossible for suffering and loss to be much alleviated, for conflict to be simply and happily resolved. Yet the romance action, improbable, or seemingly impossible, at the level of event, may not be improbable when considered as psychological or moral experience. When, for instance, Leontes is tragically alienated from those he loves as a result of his jealousy, and when his growth to insight seems to come too late to influence events—Hermione appears dead and Perdita forever lost—action bringing about a reconciliation with his wife and child may seem incredible. But, that his gaining new insight, humility, and receptivity, should lead to a reconciliation and renewal of love, has a truth that makes the improbable representation of this at the level of event acceptable to us. In the scene of Hermione's awakening, Shakespeare can use improbability to convey a sense of transcendent possibility. One is reminded of E.E. Stoll's remark: "In the hands of masters improbabilities are opportunities." ¹

Although all drama is necessarily distanced, the control that the dramatist exercises directly through distancing is, as we have noted, generally more extensive and apparent in conventional than in naturalistic drama—conventional drama usually involves greater distance and greater change in distance. If the dramatist is to create

and have us experience a play which depends not so much on a naturalistic representation, as on an imaginative and poetic exploration, of experience, the role of distance is obviously vital. Distance not only gives us the detachment to view the action on stage in terms established from within but also, as we have seen, enables the dramatist to present situations which rise from conventional and extraordinary action with maximum immediacy, using distance to establish an intense personal focus and to direct attention from the action itself to its significance in terms of the values and experience that the play is examining. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Shakespeare repeatedly chose melodramatic or fantastic plots as vehicles for his exploration of experience. Such plots not only require great distance to be given any meaningful relation to ordinary experience but because of their remoteness from actuality do lend themselves readily to such distancing.

One of the most important functions and effects of distance in drama is that of distributing emphasis. Emphasis is partly controlled by variations during the course of a play in the relation between immediacy and detachment, and partly by the precise relations of impressions which sequentially and cumulatively form our sense of dramatic structure. It is largely through the interaction of a moment apprehended in its relation to the structure forming in our minds as we watch a play (which partly determines the emphasis given it in the play) and the structure apprehended through that moment (the structure being itself in some way changed or developed or qualified by the particular emphasis given the moment) that Shakespeare determines emphasis: both the emphasis given any one part and the distribution of emphasis within the dramatic structure.
The question of establishing right emphasis is related to that of ensuring probability. Whether we deem an event probable or improbable depends largely on whether or not we can fit it, as it occurs, into the structure that is being built up—probability being not so much a question of logical as of imaginative consistency. The question of probability is partly one of correct distancing, partly one of structural coherence: hence the need in a play for dramatic preparation, for the relation of an event in its enactment to the previous action and to the action that is to come from it, the need for a balance between anticipation and reminiscence at major points throughout. As the values implied by the action, and also the poetic employed in its presentation, form part of the dramatic structure of a play, probability has also to be gauged in terms of these. Because we tend to reject something that is over- or under-distanced as being improbable or not meaningful, the dramatist, as a prime necessity in building up a dramatic structure, must establish and maintain a distance that is consistent with the audience's continuous aesthetic appreciation of the play. To build up an integral play experience, he must also achieve, through distance, a precise control of emphasis. Presenting contrasts and parallels between persons, situations, or expressed attitudes in the play can, for example, be a means of enforcing distance and of distributing emphasis generally within the dramatic structure. The dramatist presenting any particular contrast or parallel must, however, have control of emphasis to achieve a precise effect. The dramatist needs throughout to establish right emphasis in both a particular and in a more general sense to build up a coherent and thus an imaginatively probable structure.
To demonstrate simply how Shakespeare does achieve such precise command of emphasis, through control of distance, it may be rewarding here to consider his use of the technique of juxtaposition in *As You Like It*.

Although *As You Like It* is highly schematic in the development of its plot and in the artificially structured contrasts between its characters, Shakespeare, through the continuous juxtaposition of attitudes and values, engages the audience in a process of evaluation which enables them, as they experience the play, to appreciate and correlate the complex and sophisticated relations between Art and Nature that the play develops. Combining characters representing different levels of literary reality, playing off declared intention against achievement, conventional or assumed role against the emotions of the person playing it, Shakespeare sets up a dynamic relation between natural emotions and assumed attitudes. For instance, he plays off Silvius, a "cardboard" Arcadian shepherd, against Orlando, a realistic lover playing a stock lover's role. By the juxtaposition of a stock type with a more naturalistically presented character assuming a set of stock attitudes, he enables us to distinguish between the conventional and the natural elements that the second character combines in his role. Or again, he plays off Jaques, the kill-joy moraliser and self-centred satirist, against Rosalind, the self-aware and sympathetic mocker of love's follies, a woman in love playing the role of a witty curer of her own lover's love-sickness. And, whilst Jaques is blindly playing a conventional role, through the insight of other characters (Duke Senior, Orlando, Rosalind) he is made for us more than a conventional representation of Monsieur Melancholy: he becomes the libertine "sick with self-
love" playing this role, and value judgments can then be made concerning him. Or Shakespeare may make significant use of tonal incongruity to further the process of evaluation, as when Orlando enters abruptly into the Duke's company demanding relief for Adam (II vii 87). Orlando's extravagant gesture:

> But forbear, I say:
> He dies that touches any of this fruit
> Till I and my affairs are answered. (II vii 97-99)

is cut down to size as Jaques takes up the challenge literally—Jaques picks and eats a grape, punning on raisin: "An you will not be answer'd with reason, I must die." \(^1\) The Duke's calm welcome, "Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table," has another kind of deflating effect on Orlando's rhetorical hyperbole. The gentleness, civility, and hospitality with which he is received make Orlando's demands incongruous. When Orlando, sensing this, changes his style from melodramatic command to rhetorical persuasion, he ironically appeals to the values of courtesy and graciousness as belonging to civilisation rather than to life in "this desert inaccessible." As the values of the old order under Duke Senior—gratitude, remembrance of past kindnesses and old friendships—celebrated in Amiens' song are brought to life in the Duke's speech of welcome, the incongruity of Orlando's expectation of hostility and churlishness from the Duke and his men because they are living in the forest, becomes comically apparent. Orlando's manner and expectations throw into relief the Duke's own graciousness, and the kindness and civility taken for granted in his court in the forest.

\(^1\) H. Jenkins, "As You Like It," *Shakespeare Survey* 8 (1955), pp. 40-51, p. 46.
Through continual juxtapositions such as these, Shakespeare is able to develop the pastoral opposition of court and country in such a way as to elaborate the conflict of values—essentially of love against selfishness—underlying the court characters' exile, and to maintain our consciousness of these opposed values throughout. Also he is able to reinforce our consciousness of these values by developing, as a qualification to the basic and shaping opposition of court and country, a second contrast between the old order under Duke Senior and Sir Roland and the new order ruled by the humorous tyrants, Duke Frederick and Oliver. Arden becomes a place of liberty for the exiles from court because there the values of the old order can be lived. This second contrast also, is developed through juxtaposition (as in the example quoted above). The contrast of the two worlds in *As You Like It* is not of a court world which represents the tensions and complexities of reality with a simple and unreal world of pastoral escape. Shakespeare makes quite clear through his stylisation of the court world and the inclusion of touchstones in the pastoral world—in the characters of realistic shepherds, William and Corin, of the goat-girl Audrey, of the melancholy Jaques and of Touchstone himself—that there will be a showing up of all that is unreal, false, or of little value in either world. There is no identification of the court world with reality, with a constant measuring up of the idyllic world against it, as might seem inherent in the structure of the play. The uniting principle of love is seen operating in both worlds: Adam's loyalty to Orlando, accompanying him into exile, is matched, for example, by Duke Senior's kindness to them both. In Arden we are not allowed to forget the fact of exile, to forget that there is disharmony which involves some alienation or
compromise for the characters. There is a constant juxtaposition of a sense of freedom against the fact of banishment: while isolation and alienation from a society which is dominated by selfishness and envy, rather than by the values of love, loyalty, and service, is freedom rather than banishment, we are yet reminded that the good fellowship of the forest is incomplete because it is cut off from its natural social centre. Whilst the retreat into the forest—first by the banished duke and his followers and in the play by the court characters—can allow them to partially live out the values they hold to, the fact of isolation is never forgotten. The discomfort, the sense of having to adapt themselves and, indeed, to create an artificial and temporary society "till Fortune smiles again," continually suggests that this idyllic life is in fact not a satisfactory one. The need for reconciling the two worlds is felt not only as a need for purging the court world of selfishness, of envy, and malice, but for finding a place in that world where the ideals upheld by those in exile can be lived out fully, where those ideals can animate society itself.

Through juxtapositions ranging from simple contrasts, like that of Amiens' songs with Jaques' parody of them, to more elaborate contrasts and parallels of characters and of their attitudes, Shakespeare involves the audience in a process of evaluation that is central to their experience of the play. Much of the entertainment of the Arden scenes comes from parody, mockery, witty revaluation, from the unlikely juxtaposition of characters—a court jester with a commonsense Corin, a taciturn William, or goat-girl Audrey; Monsieur Melancholy with Duke Senior and Amiens, with Orlando, Touchstone, Rosalind, the foresters—juxtapositions producing tonal incongruities which are not only in
themselves a source of comedy and delight, but also a means for
evaluation, a means for determining the significance we allow an attitude
or value, the sympathy we accord a viewpoint.

Juxtaposition essentially involves us in viewing something
from two or more points of view, according some sympathy to each of
the viewpoints in turn. We do not achieve balance and detachment through
remaining uninvolved and neutral: it is usually because we have been too
uncritically responsive that we can be surprised into seeing a character
or a situation from an entirely different point of view. We are jerked
into critical awareness, forced to reorientate ourselves—though often
the very unexpectedness of the second viewpoint tends to engage us so
that to some extent again, detachment is limited till a further re-
orientation.

When juxtaposition is a structural principle, as in As You
Like It, the distance required for us to see a particular moment in
the context of the play, to see the relevance and limitations of a
particular insight in relation to total meaning, is achieved mainly
through the continual orientation and reorientation that juxtaposition
involves. Our perception of incongruity has a distancing effect which
contradicts our tendency to a too simple response and so, on the one
hand, prevents unbalanced sympathy or too great an imaginative identif-
ication and, on the other, prevents open mockery or unqualified reject-
ion. Through the distancing effect of juxtaposition the dramatist gains
control both of sympathy and of emphasis. Forcing the audience into an
active, critical, and participatory role, Shakespeare can lead them to
a balanced understanding of the play and to a critical appreciation of
the values underlying its action—such understanding and appreciation
being in themselves part of the play experience.

It is thus through his control of distance and, through distance, of emphasis, that Shakespeare is able in *As You Like It* to develop the subtle and extensive relations between Art and Nature which act as a focus drawing all parts of the play together, relating the characters within the play world and setting the personal drama of relationship in the context of a more inclusive social drama. This control not only enables him to sustain illusion but also to make it integral, so that each part has an essential effect and the emphasis given each part and the interrelations and balance established between parts are precisely determined.

Juxtaposition is, however, but one possible structural means for controlling distance to gain a precise control of emphasis. The distancing effect that an Induction has on the main action of a play, for example, can also provide the dramatist with a precise and effective means for distributing emphasis within the structure of a play, for controlling the audience's awareness throughout to determine not just the quality of their response but the very nature of their experience of the play.

In *The Comedy of Errors* we have a simple instance of such control. The Induction acts as a frame and a focus for the main action of the play. Now, this action, in so far as it is developed farcically, is not greatly distanced. Yet, such is the distancing effect of the Induction on the play, that it tends to contradict a shallow response to farce, and to make our experience of the play more immediate. The seriousness of the Aegeon's tale overshadows the whole comedy. Through its thematic bearing on the main action, the dramatist is able to focus
attention in the scenes of farce on the more serious theme of relationship, suggesting the distress of loss and alienation. This focus gives a significance to the farcical action that qualifies and deepens its comedy. When, for instance, Antipholus of Syracuse, in his soliloquy in the second scene of the play, speaks of the hazard of losing oneself in the quest for relationship, the tone as well as the import of his speech recalls the Aegeon's plight:

I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop,
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
(Unseen, inquisitive) confounds himself.
So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself. (I ii 35-40)

We are hardly likely to regard Antipholus' speech as a piece of sentimental rhetoric when in the preceding scene we have seen the Aegeon's life hazarded in this very quest. Through its relation to the Aegeon's tale, Antipholus' soliloquy is given an emphasis that focuses our attention on the tragic possibilities inherent in the situation that is to give rise to farce. Conditioned by this awareness, our response to the farce will be less shallow. In the play, Shakespeare actually achieves a surprising range and combination of tones by constantly playing off farce against a more distanced, and so a more immediately felt, sense of the hazard of loss. Achieving, through the dynamic relation of the Induction to the inset main action, greater control over the distribution of emphasis in the play, Shakespeare is able to establish a focus on the main action that transforms the presentation of the stock characters and situations drawn from Roman comedy, and creates for us a richer play experience.

The suggestive power of opening scenes in many of the later plays often has a distancing effect on the action of the play so
comparable to that of the Aegeon's tale in *The Comedy of Errors* that one is tempted to see such scenes as a subtle and compact development of the structural principle of the Induction. Whilst there is probably some truth in the argument that Shakespeare's opening scenes are designed for quieting an unruly playhouse mob, such scenes are usually not only attention-catchers but also attention-directors, designed to establish a certain focus on the action which gives the dramatist control of emphasis and means for precisely directing audience response. The opening scenes of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, for example, underlining and helping to generalise main issues or themes, establish an intense focus on the action of the play. The opening scene of *Macbeth* prepares us for the inversion of values and for the confounding of reality and appearance that makes the action of that play so terrifying and mysterious. In *Hamlet* the opening scene gives us a sense of oppressive, general evil that prevents us dismissing *Hamlet*'s melancholy as sulkiness—as the court does so glibly in the next scene—and encourages us to see it rather as reflecting a more deep-seated malady in the state of Denmark. The first scene is an ominous preparation for *Hamlet*'s encounter with the ghost of his father, as his heaviness of spirit in the second scene forebodes the burden to be given him.

Although the Induction and the main plot of *The Comedy of Errors* are related in terms of events, the effect of their relation in the play is chiefly as of a thematic, and even a musical one, in the sense that the contrast in tone between the Induction and the main plot, like a change of key in music, can both indicate a change in mood and also help to characterise and link the part it contrasts. Our perception of the structural relations of Induction to main plot is not just a
detached recognition of a schematic contrast but is a relation which we might be said to experience, for it is the effect that our experience of the one has on our experience of the other that is significant.

Not only in *The Comedy of Errors* but, indeed, in all the romantic comedies, we find sub-plots and main plots schematically related. The distancing effect of this strategy is perhaps most obvious from the early play, but in all, the contrast of tones, the musical relation between parts, tend to suggest a unity as well as distinctness. In the later comedies, as in *The Comedy of Errors*, it is not just our perception of the schematic relations of the plots that is important but the effect that our experience of each of the parts has on our experience of the others.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* we have a fairly complex and sophisticated development of this distancing strategy, used to achieve precise distribution of emphasis within the developing structure. Thematic relations between the sub-plots and main plot are quite obvious. Eavesdropping is central to all of them. The deceptions practised on the eavesdropping Beatrice and Benedick have fortunate consequences, that practised on Claudio and Don Pedro is nearly disastrous. In the case of the Watch, eavesdropping is neither the tool for mischievous nor for villainous false report but accidentally leads to true report, swinging the balance to justice and comedy. When Don Pedro pretends to be Claudio wooing Hero for him in his name, the trick proves a happy one; when Borachio woos a Margaret who answers to the name of Hero, real mischief is caused. The difference between benevolent and malevolent intent is in each case apparent from the result of the deceit.
To describe the schematic relations of the different plots of the play in this way is, however, to give little idea of the subtle way in which these plots work together to qualify the tone and emphasis allowed to each of them in the play. The boisterous game of one-upmanship played by Beatrice and Benedick and the good-natured inefficiency of the Watch, so different in tone from the main plot, both fall under its shadow. To prevent the main plot from being too immediate—from evoking too deep or too intense a response—effort is made to keep its action and characters as shadowy as possible. To this end Shakespeare uses such means as having Don Pedro woo Hero in place of Claudio before the ceremony, and having Leonato voice Hero's grief after her betrayal; representing Don John as a conventional type, the malcontent, and showing only the scene where he makes his initial accusation, not the scene where he successfully practises his villainy on Claudio and Don Pedro. Also, some effort is made to preserve a single, "detached" (or perhaps simply romantic) response to the main plot—in order to prevent it having too great an impact and disrupting the balance of the comedy—by deflecting interest to the sub-plots. The interim between wooing and wedding is taken up with the mischievous deceptions practised on Beatrice and Benedick; in place of an eavesdropping scene showing Borachio wooing Margaret as Hero, there is a scene showing the Watch overhearing Borachio describe the villainy to Conrade.

The low comedy scene with Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch not only distracts us momentarily from the main action, but, with its emphasis on the need for honesty, its assurance of the integrity of the Watch, and its actual presentation of the Watch's overhearing the conversation of Borachio and Conrade, it also opens up the possibility for
a redress of the wrong done to Hero before the scene of her humiliation is enacted. Although this seems to lessen the impact of Hero's slandering and public humiliation when it occurs, from the moment when we are shown Hero's heaviness of heart on the morning of the wedding, tragic overtones in the main action, though muted, more insistently evoke an immediate, and therefore painful, response. And Shakespeare ensures that we are well aware of the inherent tragedy of Hero's story: before the church scene there intervenes a scene in which Dogberry and Verges actually report the discovery of a knavery to Leonato, thus increasing our hope for justice, but the church scene is followed by another scene, balancing this, which stresses the incompetence of the constable and his friends. Although the slowness of the Watch is necessary to give time for the working out of the main plot, the effect of this scene is to emphasise that already they have been too late to prevent damage. The reality of Hero's injury dominates the play to its end. Interest in Beatrice and Benedick becomes necessary.

Hero assumes the masque of death as Julia and Helena had assumed a disguise symbolic of negation, of the death-in-life brought upon them by the unfaithfulness of a lover. Hero's "death" to some extent enforces anonymity on her and helps to lessen our sense of her grief. Her cause is taken up by Leonato and by Beatrice who both threaten revenge. There is a suggestion of further tragedy inherent as Beatrice demands that Benedick challenge his friend Claudio to a duel. But the tragic possibilities of Hero's story are given more direct and emotional expression through the speeches of Leonato, and some kind of emotional catharsis is achieved in the scene where Claudio pays tribute to Hero at her graveside and accepts Leonato's condition for a recon-
ciliation. In the final scene when revenge has proved unnecessary and reconciliation can be effected, Hero can come to life: "She died, my lord, but while her slander liv'd."

The precise control of distance that Shakespeare achieves through interrelating the main plot and the sub-plots in *Much Ado* enables him to determine the emphasis given the various actions during the course of the play, to focus our attention now on Beatrice and Benedick, now on Dogberry and Verges, finally on Hero and Claudio. Each change in distance and focus affects the relation between immediacy and detachment in the main plot; and the development of the main plot in turn qualifies our view of the characters and events of the sub-plots. Beatrice and Benedick's constant mocking rejection of one another is easily converted to affection and acceptance by the deft manipulation carried out by the other characters. Our enjoyment of their raillery and its comic resolution perhaps foreshadows and even prepares us for the comic ending to the main plot, but it also serves to make us aware that the frustration caused to Hero and Claudio by the malevolent trickery of Don John cannot be so easily righted. Though there is considerable care taken to keep it from being too immediate, the public humiliation and rejection of Hero by Claudio is painful and evokes too something of the same intense embarrassment that we feel in *All's Well* in Bertram's rejection of Helena. Even the repentance of Claudio, expressed in his grief at Hero's grave and in his acceptance of Leonato's condition for reconciliation, cannot sufficiently counter-balance the immediacy of the main plot to prevent the effect of a qualified romantic ending. The simple and, for the audience, satisfying resolution of the sub-plot with Beatrice and
Benedick enforces this effect of a curtailed experience, creating a rich but disturbing combination of tones at the end of this play which looks forward to the problem comedies.

In the romantic comedies, the dramatist is often able to achieve considerable distance by making structural relations between parts apparent or by displaying his dramatic machinery. Because treatment of plot is far more obviously schematic than it is in the tragedies, and because changes in the relation between immediacy and detachment at various points throughout are often more obvious, it is generally easier in the romantic comedies to demonstrate the role of distance in shaping the structure of the play—in determining the distribution of emphasis within it. But the structural principles that are developed in the comedies do occur in the later plays also. Usually, however, they are more subtly and complexly realised. It is, consequently, much more difficult, say, to characterise the relation of sub-plot to main plot in *King Lear* than it is in *Much Ado*. In *King Lear* the two plots are simultaneously developed and so closely interwoven that full analysis of their effect on one another is difficult. It is easier to describe how their relation induces detachment than how it induces immediacy, though both effects depend on distancing, and the second is perhaps the more important.

Giving a brief sketch, we can say, for instance, that the audience's perception of structural and thematic relations between the two plots has a distancing effect which Shakespeare uses, both to establish a focus on the main plot which enables him to highlight the issue of values underlying it, and also, to give the audience sufficient detachment to perceive a different placing of emphasis in the main plot.
Cordelia's and Kent's disinterested love, humility, loyalty, and their clear-sighted affirmation of truth, are set in the main plot against Lear's pride and perverse moral blindness, and Goneril's and Regan's callous self-interest. This issue of values is directly and clearly developed in the action of the Edmund-Edgar-Gloucester sub-plot in the contrast between Edmund's self-seeking callousness and Edgar's disinterested love and devotion to Gloucester. Edmund is a brilliantly conceived but conventionalised Machiavellian villain, Gloucester is a dupe until his love for Lear leads him to the "folly" that costs him his eyes and enables him, ironically, to see truly. Injustice is brought about by Edmund's villainous plotting: he contrives his brother's being thrown into disfavour, plans to rob his father of his lands. In the main plot, by contrast, injustice is brought about more directly by Lear's blind folly. It is Lear who casts out Cordelia, Lear who places himself at the mercy of Goneril and Regan. Gloucester acting foolishly (by Machiavellian standards) in his love for his king, is physically blinded and cast out. Lear, acting foolishly in what he believes to be his love for his daughters, blinds himself and brings upon himself his own rejection. The contrast of Lear and Gloucester highlights Lear's rashness, emphasises his responsibility for the chaos that follows upon his division of the kingdom.

To sketch the relations between the plots in this way is to give little idea of the strong reinforcing effect that the two actions have on one another. Not only is our understanding of the basic issue of values sharpened by seeing it developed, with different emphasis, in main and sub-plot, but also, because the distancing effect of the audience's perception of the structural relation of the plots is used
chiefly to induce engagement, our involvement in the action of one plot actually makes the action of the other more immediate to us as well as more significant. Lear's suffering and madness is magnified by Gloucester's physical suffering and despair; Cordelia's love and loyalty made more real to us through Kent's and Edgar's. This reinforcing effect cannot be analysed simply.

The simultaneous development of sub-plot and main plot and the close interweaving of the two enables Shakespeare also to effect a telescoping of time that is partly responsible for the intensity of the action. By breaking the main action to develop the sub-plot (where the speed with which Edmund achieves his ends highlights his brilliance and his self-delighting cunning), our attention is distracted from the speed with which Lear is rejected by both daughters and the forces of Cordelia and those of her sisters come to battle. The telescoping of time in the main plot can thus have its intensifying effect--giving us the sense of a relentless working out of the consequences of Lear's folly--without forcing itself upon our attention and so raising the question of probability. Rapid action in a play when it obtrudes upon us tends to lessen distance, making action appear improbable or farcical. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, for example, the speed with which the lovers fall in and out of love, their extravagant commitments to one another no sooner made than broken and remade, prevents us taking them seriously. The love they assert as an intense reality can only appear to us as delusion.

Suspending the main stream of action by turning aside from it to develop a sub-plot or to present another aspect is, of course, a simple way of building up suspense. In Richard II when the king departs
for Ireland the focus shifts to the Queen, York, Bolingbroke. We hear nothing of Richard during his absence and silence seems to make his absence more conspicuous. Considerable suspense is built up by setting the rapidity with which the rebellion comes to a head against the fact of Richard's absence. Our sense of the time that will be needed for Richard's return gives an increased urgency and immediacy to the action during his absence.

Whilst Shakespeare uses the relation of the two plots in King Lear to achieve a concentration and intensification of action, elsewhere he may use the change in distance caused by his breaking from the main action to give us a more detached view of it. In The Winter's Tale, for example, when Leontes' obsession and delusion are carrying the action forward at terrible speed there is a complete break to the scene in which Cleomenes and Dion describe their impressions of the oracle—a scene whose tone is one of peace and of pervading harmony. This break which makes us more sharply conscious of the speed and intensity of the main action, has two opposite effects: it suggests that the whole action Leontes has begun and which is nearing its climax (the trial scene immediately follows) is fantastic, the product of Leontes' delusion; and this awareness increases our fears for Hermione—the speed of the action makes Leontes' delusion seem all the more dangerous and destruction less avoidable. Both these effects are magnified by the confidence the scene gives us that Hermione is innocent.

A dramatist may also break from, and give us a more detached view of, the main action by introducing a low comedy scene, causing thereby a change in distance which can be used to induce detachment.
Such a scene may offer a new perspective on the main action, perhaps most simply and directly by way of parody—as in Act Two scene two of The Tempest where there is a three-fold parody of attitudes expressed in the play. As Trinculo whirls Stephano round ("And art thou living Stephano? O Stephano, two Neapolitans scap’d!") his joy becomes a parody of Gonzalo’s serious urging in the previous scene of a cause for joy in the miracle of their preservation. Caliban’s wonder and willing service parody Miranda’s from Act One scene two:

These be fine things, an if they be not sprites,
That’s a brave god, and bears celestial liquors,
I will kneel to him. (II ii 117-119)

Caliban’s gods a timid jester and a drunken butler. In these two cases parody works by retrospect, in the third in anticipation—in all three it has a distancing effect. Caliban’s drunken song, ironically sung at the point in the play where his pathetic servility is manifest:

'Ban, 'Ban, Cacaliban
Has a new master:—get a new man.
Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom! freedom, high-day, freedom! (II ii 184-186)

is a parody on the theme of transformation, on the casting out of the old self ("'Ban, 'Ban, Cacaliban") and the taking on of a new freedom ("Freedom, high-day! . . .") More particularly, it is a parody on the theme of the resigning of personal independence to find a new freedom in the service of love—a theme developed in the following scene where Ferdinand speaks of his joy in serving his mistress: a service in which he recognises the pain and degradation actually involved in being Prospero’s "log-man" but can see beyond these to a joy and freedom which make his suffering light by comparison ("'tis fresh morning with me /
When you are by at night.")
The dramatist through the distancing relation of sub-plot to main plot may, then, achieve control of emphasis, directing attention to what is important by means of contrast, or parody; defining, commenting on, or qualifying the importance of the action of the main plot, or throwing it into sharper relief.

Shakespeare can achieve a similar effect through single scenes, as H.T. Price's work has shown. Price directs our attention to "loose detachable scenes" which occur in all periods of Shakespeare's work:

They vary in function as well as in technique, but certain features tend to recur. Many of them are... mirror-scenes, reflecting in one picture either the main theme or some important aspect of the drama. Others offer some kind of contrast to the general run of the action, making it stand out more prominently by a certain difference of tone or implication. Others again affect the plot by keying up or keying down the suspense (p.102).

Price gives numerous examples of episodic scenes. He describes emblematic scenes from the early histories such as the incident of the gardeners in Richard II (III iv 29-107):

Here Shakespeare invents both symbol (the garden) and character (the gardeners). The garden is a picture of the evil state to which Richard has reduced England, the work of the gardeners shows us what Bolingbroke will have to do to create order.

Our Sea-walled Garden, the whole Land,
Is full of Weedes, her fairest Flowers choakt up... (p.104). (11.43-4)

He considers scenes like the musicians' scene in Romeo and Juliet (IV v 102-150) which are similarly episodic (but not emblematic) and which are more directly used for controlling tone and suspense:

Most managers drop this scene, but when it is performed, the effect is to increase the terror and suspense. The main action shows Romeo and Juliet being carried swiftly

to destruction, and then Shakespeare holds up the plot for a while to give us a vignette of quite commonplace musicians, making bad jokes, careless and unconcerned as they pack up their music. In the theatre it seems incredible that the world of disaster should exist with a world of such security. At a good performance we get the feeling that we are viewing hell from a ringside seat (p.108).

or scenes in which incident and symbol are not really separable:

When Caesar is to be assassinated, Shakespeare invents a storm, running through many scenes, in the first place as a symbol of an order about to be broken up. But he also uses the storm to reveal to us the character and the religion of all the important characters in the play, in effect, of the whole class who at that time governed Rome (p.112).

In presenting such scenes, Price tells us:

Shakespeare may invent special characters for this occasion only. Sometimes as in Titus Andronicus he invents a special symbol, arranging round it the more important characters of the play. The symbol often stands for immense forces, cosmic or supernatural, which according to the mood of the drama may save man or engulf him (pp.102-103).

Many of these episodic scenes appear to have little direct or apparent relation to the plot but in varying ways they succeed in making us more sharply aware of the dramatic structure, more conscious of the main issues of the play or of the relative significance of events. For our purpose, of course, the most notable quality of such scenes is that in enforcing a consciousness of dramatic structure and in helping to determine emphasis within it they have an important distancing effect, both directly and indirectly controlling the audience's response to the drama.

We might compare Shakespeare's use of such scenes with his inclusion of song and dance to present objectively—as it were from a point of stillness outside the action—a theme or motif being developed from within, or to crystallise for us a certain quality of feeling or
mood which has bearing on the action. The masque in The Tempest is an outstanding example of the first. One thinks also of how the themes of magical transformation, of regeneration and harmony, are suggested by Ariel's song "Full fathom five" or that of man's inconstancy by the song "Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more, / Men were deceivers ever" in Much Ado, of how the freedom and good fellowship of the men in the forest are celebrated in Amiens' songs, or the self-centredness and ingratitude from which they have escaped recalled in "Blow, blow thou winter wind." Sometimes song is used to convey feeling that would be otherwise difficult to express. Ariel's "Where the bee sucks" expresses his joy in regained freedom where words would be inappropriate. Desdemona's "Sing willow, willow, willow" is similarly expressive of her helplessness:

My mother had a maid call'd Barbary:
She was in love, and he she lov'd prov'd mad,
And did forsake her; she had a song of "willow",
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it; that song tonight
Will not go from my mind . . . I have much to do,
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it like poor Barbary. (IV iii 26-33)

The words of the lament which, equally, "express her fortune" are ironically and pathetically affecting ("Sing all a green willow must be my garland. / Let nobody blamd him, his scorn I approve . . .")

The song Mariana requests in Measure for Measure ("Take, O take those lips away") expresses her sorrow, the sense of negation forced on her, more subtly and effectively than could any other means. Sometimes a song is used for emphasis where this would not otherwise be possible, as when in Twelfth Night in the scene following that in which Viola has been forced to woo Olivia for the Duke we are reassured (both ironically
and unironically) in the song "O mistress mine" that "Journeys end in lovers meeting." This song is matched in the following scene, where Viola makes verbal betrayal of her love to the Duke, by a song which suggests the negation of her role: "Come away, come away, death / And in sad cypress let me be laid"—the song deepening our sympathy for Viola forced to hide true feeling.

The various structural means for controlling distance, so far discussed, are little more than a sample. Any means a dramatist has for directing our attention to, or sharpening our sense of, the structure of the play, or for distributing emphasis within it, has a distancing effect since, as Bullough notes:

> every kind of visibly intentional arrangement or unification must, by the mere fact of its presence, enforce Distance, by distinguishing the object from the confused, disjointed and scattered forms of actual experience (p.114).

Distance is, of course, necessary for us to be able to perceive structure but, as we have noted, our perception of structure itself has a distancing effect which the dramatist is able to exploit to achieve a precise control of emphasis and a right channeling of sympathies. Purely structural means for ensuring distance are usually enforced by other means such as management of time, use of irony, and above all by the control of style and tone. The dramatist through the controlled relation of dramatic impressions and of audience responses is able, then, to build up an integral and effective dramatic experience.

Speaking of probability in the first chapter, we discussed the effect that our knowledge has on immediacy, and suggested that the greater our expectation of an event the easier it is for us to fit it
into the dramatic structure forming in our minds as we watch the play. We can illustrate this distancing effect of knowledge on action very clearly from The Tempest.

The magical transformation of apparent loss to remarkable recovery characterises the action of the four romances, Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest. Increased awareness (both for the characters involved in the drama and for the audience witnessing it) follows from the creation and eventual removal of illusion about seemingly irrevocable loss. Where the audience shares the characters' illusion of loss—notably in The Winter's Tale—they share, too, with immediacy in the characters' sense of the marvellous on discovery that there has been a miraculous preservation. In The Tempest where the audience, aware of Prospero's magical powers and of the controlling effect of these on the action, do not share the characters' illusion, we find a minimising of dramatic suspense and a general distancing of the action. Viewing the action largely through Prospero's eyes, the audience retains throughout a position of superior awareness.

The first scene is an exception. Notable in its dramatic impact and immediacy, the scene is the one instance in the play where reassurance for the audience, as well as for the characters, follows the illusion of loss. The audience, given no more insight into the nature of the storm than are those experiencing it, are temporarily committed to the characters' own limited framework of questioning and uncertainty. They gain new perspective in the following scene. As the sense of disaster felt by the audience is expressed by Miranda and juxtaposed with Prospero's assurance of control, the audience comes to
realise that what seems to be tragic experience may not in itself be final (a realisation which the play will carefully develop.)

A scene like that in which Antonio conspires with Sebastian to kill Alonso, on the other hand, is distanced by our knowledge of Prospero's control. Because Ariel, the agent of the unseen controller, creates the artificial conditions in the scene for the plot of Antonio and Sebastian, we cannot believe that their plot will not be fore-stalled. The contrived speaking apart of the conspirators at the end of the scene, allowing Ariel to enter, breaks the tension in a deliberately artificial manner, reinforcing the effect of a play within-the-play illusion:

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Ant. Draw together;
      And when I rear my hand, do you the like,
      To fall it on Gonzalo.

Seb. 0, but one word. They talk apart.
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(II i 289-291)

The device of having all but Antonio and Sebastian fall asleep, emphasising the defencelessness of their victims, points obviously to the callousness of those taking advantage of them. Dramatic suspense is so diminished by our sense of Prospero's control that we watch the scene chiefly with a moral interest and perspective.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the control of distance achieved by managing the degree of knowledge allowed the audience is vital. The assurance we are given that ill-effects can and will be reversed is essential to prevent the situation having too great an immediacy for us, becoming painful rather than farcical.

Oberon's benevolent control is a condition of ultimate harmony. The total confusion, through which all the lovers in the woods suffer in turn being mocked and scorned by the one they adore, develops with
logical absurdity, the notion of love as a blindness. The lovers find themselves trapped by the impersonality of the situation—impersonality that makes their dilemma farcical rather than tragic. As they grope frantically for some orientation and some identity, the audience attains to an increasingly humorous perspective of their dilemma, and of the self-delusion and need-created delusion that lie behind the lovers' experience of the blindness of love. The assurance of Oberon's control prevents the humorous seeming tragic or the farcical pathetic. For example, in Act Two scene one, Oberon's overhearing the scene between Demetrius and Helena, which in itself gives hope for an eventual comic resolution of the love-triangle, reduces overtones of pathos. The humorous potential in Helena's pursuing a Demetrius in love with Hermia can then be exploited freely. We can be amused by the scene where "Apollo flies and Daphne holds the chase" when we have the assurance of Oberon:

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove, Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

(II i 245-246)

These examples from The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream show, fairly obviously, how knowledge—expectation of a particular event, of a happy or of a tragic outcome, for example—can have a distancing effect on present action. But, as we suggested in the Introduction, our expectation of an event can also distance that event for us when it eventually occurs. Dramatic preparation of any kind has an ultimately distancing effect simply in taking us beyond the particular event and making us aware of its place in the structure of the action.
In manipulating the audience's expectations, the dramatist has a major tool for distancing events. The obvious relevance of such devices as oracles (The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline), prophecies (the histories, Macbeth), prophetic dreams (Clarence's dream of drowning in Richard III, Romeo's dream in Romeo and Juliet, Posthumus' dream in Cymbeline), for establishing probability hardly needs to be developed. The principle is simple: the dramatist can create expectation in the minds of the audience not only by providing enough direct knowledge for them to be able to deduce the likely outcome, but also more subtly (and perhaps more often) by the force of suggestion.

P.J. Alders has thrown new light on the way in which Shakespeare makes the actions of his plays probable. He shows how Shakespeare may prepare the audience for unlikely events by presenting first an analogue of the events, inducing the audience to accept in miniature, as it were, the pattern of action to be worked out fully in the play. He shows, for example, how the first scene of Julius Caesar may be regarded as an analogue for the whole action:

Flavius and Marullus, the tribunes, are, in their attitudes and actions, the unmistakable equivalent of the conspirators. They too want to make Caesar "fly an ordinary pitch" to prevent being "servile fearfulness." Like the conspirators, they take action against Caesar; they pull trophies from his images, and disperse the celebrants. In doing this, they too confidently underestimate the powers they are opposing ... The pattern is completed in two lines towards the end of the second scene of the act, in Casca's report that "Marullus and Flavius, for

pulling scarves off Caesar's images, are put to silence" (I i 289), a statement having its appropriate irony in that the greater conspirators do not sense their fortune in that of their lesser counterparts.

But the probabilities established in the scene by Shakespeare are more subtly inclusive; there is more than just this relatively simple pattern. Not only do the tribunes represent the conspirators—they also illustrate the power of oratory over the mob, and the mob's vacillation. The eloquence used by Antony later to achieve a serious reversal in the fortunes of the faction against Caesarism has its briefer version in the scene (pp. 401-403).

Alders notes that this analogue is especially important in establishing fear for the conspirators. Probably in *Julius Caesar* the analogue has a more general effect in controlling distance and emphasis in the play. By giving us a sense of the whole pattern of the action, it prevents us from seeing events in the first three Acts too much through the eyes of the conspirators. Were we to feel too great an identification with their viewpoint, we might see the death of Caesar as a triumph rather than a turning-point. Not only would Antony's rise to power be less predictable then, but also, and perhaps more significantly, the fate of the conspirators would be less acceptable. Shakespeare's use of analogue in contributing (whether consciously or unconsciously) to our sense of dramatic structure, helps to establish right distance, without which it would be difficult to establish the fine balance of sympathies and ironies in the play. Though the audience may well be expected to have a general idea of the pattern of events from history, Shakespeare does not rely on this: he provides an analogue and through suggestion more directly controls the kind and degree of the audience's knowledge.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare achieves a tour de force by reversing expectation. The anticipated happy ending is cut off short by news of the king's death, distance and tone being changed sufficiently for the Princess and her ladies to impose their conditions on Navarre
and the courtiers. The reversal comes as a surprise, and is therefore more immediate than the preceding action; yet, following Alders' principle, one can show how Shakespeare through use of analogues actually leads us to expect the reversal (though our expectation is largely an unconscious one.) Expectation has a distancing effect, making the reversal when it occurs seem less immediate and more probable. It is indirectly prepared for in Boyet's description of the amusement of the King and his courtiers at their page's wit and their exuberance, delighting, at the thought of the trick to be played on the Princess and her ladies, in their own cleverness:

One rubb'd his elbow thus, and fleer'd and swore
A better speech was never spoke before;
Another, with his finger and his thumb,
Cried, "Vial! we will do't, come what will come";
The third he caper'd, and cried, "All goes well";
The fourth turn'd on the toe, and down he fell.
With that, they all did tumble on the ground,
With such a zealous laughter, so profound,
That in this spleen ridiculous appears,
To check their folly, passion's solemn tears.

(V ii 109-118)

We might see this description as a reflection of the pattern of the action to come when, as the exuberance and self-assurance of the wooing King and courtiers mounts to its climax in their mocking of the Nine Worthies, then "in this spleen ridiculous appears, / To check their folly, passion's solemn tears." The King's and courtiers' mockery of the pageant of the Nine Worthies itself anticipates, ironically, the reversal in which they are themselves cut down to size, but the Princess' tricking of the disguised Muscovites acts perhaps as an even more explicit analogue of the final deflation:

King. Then, in our measure vouchsafe but one change.
Thou bidd'st me beg; this begging is not strange.
Ros. Play, music, then! nay, you must do it soon.
Music plays.
Not yet! no dance:—Thus change I like the moon.

King. Will you not dance? How come you thus estranged?

Ros. You took the moon at full, but now she's changed . . .
Since you are strangers, and come here by chance,
We'll not be nice: take hands:—we will not dance.

King. Why take you hands then?

Ros. Only to part friends.

Court'sy, sweet hearts; and so the measure ends.

King. More measure of this measure: be not nice.

Ros. We can afford no more at such a price.

King. Prize you yourselves: what buys your company?

Ros. Your absence only. (V ii 209-225)

Cutting short the dance, taking hands "only to part friends," company to be bought by absence, Rosalind suggests the pattern for the Princess' final resolve.

Though the use of analogue in Love's Labour's Lost is less skilful than in Julius Caesar, not as compact or as intense, it does provide us with a simple and useful illustration of the principle that Alders develops in his article; and from this simpler example we can perhaps more readily see how Shakespeare, through the use of analogue, achieves control of distance and emphasis. In Love's Labour's Lost such control enables him, fairly obviously, to make the climactic reversal "probable."

If our conception of structure at any point (which determines our discernment of probability and improbability) cannot be extended to accommodate an event, we term that event improbable. Frequently the function of an analogue is to extend our conception of structure in this way. In Henry IV, for example, Alders shows how, in order to make the rejection of Falstaff predictable and probable, Shakespeare reinforces the effect of Hal's famous soliloquy "I know you all, and will awhile uphold / The unyoked humour of your idleness" by a number of analogues, the most usually recognised of them being Hal's answer to
Falstaff's "... banish plump Jack, and banish all the world"—
"I do, I will" (II iv 473-474). But, Alders shows also (pp. 407-410), analogues are not used solely for dramatic preparation: they are often used retrospectively. The scenes immediately prior to Falstaff's rejection, for example, are used analogically to recapitulate the pattern of action that predicts and is completed by Falstaff's rejection.

A study of analogical probability in *Henry IV* is of considerable critical interest in that it reflects on the vexed critical issue of how we do, or are to, respond to Hal's rejection of Falstaff. Yet, allowing for both anticipatory and retrospective effects, analogical probability in the play is probably more complicated than Alders' analysis suggests. The operation not of one but, I would argue, of at least two probabilistic patterns, which run counter to one another in the play, produces a more ironical and ambivalent response, than Alders implies, to the final scene whose probability each helps to establish and whose emotional effect each helps to determine. If, as Alders so cogently argues, the retrospective analogues of the scenes immediately preceding Hal's public denial (or, some would have it, betrayal) of friendship contribute to both an intellectual and an emotional acceptance of Falstaff's rejection, the probabilistic effect of another analogue—John of Lancaster's meting out of justice to the rebel knights in the Forest—has a contrary and complicating controlling effect.

Our reaction to Prince John's exercise of justice (IV i) is an ambivalent one. Prince John, acting as regent for the King, his father, represents Justice as Hal more obviously perhaps represents
Justice in the scene where he has assumed kingship and confronts the rebel knight Falstaff (who albeit a vicious Lord of Misrule may yet be more deserving of Mercy in the name of friendship than the rebel knights with whom John deals.) When John's *coup d'etat* of policy is effected (IV i) a sense of betrayal rather than of a triumph of Justice results—largely because John's offer to the rebels had been explicitly made in the name of Mercy as opposed to policy:

```
Mowbr. But he hath forc'\textsc{d} us to compell this offer, 
    And it proceeds from policy, not love.
West. Mowbray, you overween to take it so. 
    This offer comes from mercy, not from fear; . . .
    Our armour all as strong, our cause the best; 
    Then reason will our hearts should be as good. 
    Say you not then, our offer is compell'd. 
    (IV i 147-158)
```

Prince John's victory over the rebels, the satire of the scene that immediately follows suggests, is no more glorious than Falstaff's taking of Sir Colville of the Dale (Prince John's own comment on Colville's yielding: "It was more of his courtesy than your deserving" (IV iii 43) ) Shakespeare (ironically?) uses Falstaff to make the point that John of Lancaster's victory is an unfair, a staged victory, the result of a deceit or fostered mistake. The scene of John's exercising of Justice has considerable impact. Something of our ambivalent reaction to the unfairness of the victory, to the ignoble or deceitful manner in which justice is executed, seems to reverberate and to find an echo in our analogously ambivalent response to Falstaff's rejection (or betrayal) by a justice that also had been disguised under the name of friendship.

Dramatic preparation is, then, often suggestive rather than explicit, and where explicit (as in Hal's soliloquy) may well be reinforced by suggestion. Suggestive dramatic preparation is, however,
not confined to analogue. The principle involved in analogical probability may be seen in a more extended form in structural parallelism or in more compressed form in image patterns which suggest patterns of action. There are good examples of both these ways of ensuring probability in \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}.

Enforced separation of lovers is a motif developed with mock seriousness on four levels in \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}—the development at each level enforcing our acceptance of the pattern at the other levels. The melodramatic potential in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe—a story of insoluble conflict and of enforced separation—is developed humorously in the Mechanicals' play as Wall, a concrete barrier separating the lovers, is represented and cursed. Again, a situation of insoluble conflict and of enforced separation is developed farcically, through stylisation, in the lovers' flight, following the absolute decree of authority and their equally absolute stand against it, and further, in the working out of the complications of the love-triangles when all the lovers have reached the woods. The situation finds another parallel in the estrangement of Titania and Oberon, with its clash of equally resolute wills—the results of this estrangement fantastically magnified as total confusion in the world of Nature. On a fourth level, there is a variation of the theme developed in the play's Induction, in the four days that Theseus and Hippolyta must wait till their wedding night.

Through the imagery of the opening lines of the Induction, the four days that Theseus and Hippolyta must wait are represented as a time of enforced separation, during which there occurs a transformation (symbolised by the change from old moon to new) issuing in the time of
their eventual union;

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
    Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but O, methinks, how slow
    This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hipp. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
    Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities. (I i 1-11)

Theseus sees the old moon as a torturer ("She lingers my desires"),
an unwelcome tyrant ("step-dame"), and as a "dowager / Long withering
out a young man's revenue"—"withering" adding suggestion to his
personification of the old moon and to the idea of its depriving him
of youthful joy. While Theseus concentrates on the length of the
interim to be endured, Hippolyta sees the four days as eclipsed by
their end. She looks forward to the new moon as a thing of beauty,
richness, and energy ("like to a silver bow / New bent in heaven"),
its presence lending grace and dignity to the "solemnities." Hers
is a joy of anticipation that needs no patience, the present absorbed
into the dream.

This movement from heaviness and melancholy to energy and
joy is echoed in the speech that follows:

The. Go, Philostrate,
    Stir up the Athenian youth to merriment;
    Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
    Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
    The pale companion is not for our pomp. (I i 11-15)

The slow rhythm of Theseus' previous speech is replaced by a more
lively and decisive one. There is a suggestion of the banishment of
the old moon in the banishment of melancholy—the two are subtly linked
in the image of "the pale companion." The suggestion, in the lines that
follow, of the change from soldiery to marriage (carrying as an under-
tone that suggestion of threat associated with the harmfulness of the old moon) is, by the transition image of a change of harmony, cleverly transmuted to convey a suggestion that all that the old moon stands for has been defeated:

Hippolyta I woo'd thee with my sword,  
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;  
But I will wed thee in another key,  
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling. (I i 16-19)

"Pomp," "triumph," and "revelling" carry the suggestive force of a soldier's victory.

These lines might be seen as an epitomy of the comic process in the play. A basic alteration of perspective in the movement from estrangement to reconciliation is imaged here in the old moon's giving way to new—the transformation of a sense of alienation and frustration to one of anticipation and realisation.

The use of analogues, of structural parallels, and of imagery as means of dramatic preparation through suggestion is fairly simple and apparent in the early plays. In many of the later plays it is complicated and subtle. The instance of analogue from Antony and Cleopatra described by Alders is, for example, very much more sophisticated than that we considered in Love's Labour's Lost. Alders describes the meeting of the triumvirate and Caesar on board Pompey's galley off Misenum (II vii):

Lepidus is carried out, dead drunk, the first to go, a "third part of the world." The tempo increases to the shouted drunken song, when Caesar calls a halt, and prepares to leave . . . Caesar remains almost completely sober (he has taken little part, spoken only three brief lines up to his farewell admonitions . . .). Lepidus is the first to succumb to the wine by his foolish efforts to keep up with the greater drinkers. As Caesar leaves in concern for "graver business," Pompey and Antony go down, in a boat, to let drink defeat them, after admonition, by choice. Of them all, only Caesar remains standing.
As the action of Act III progresses, Lepidus first disappears, foolishly, after Caesar has used him. Pompey is next, and his fall gives Caesar the fleet, the boats, with which Antony is broken as a great general with great pride, so that in a sense, Pompey's reversal is Antony's. They do down together. Only Caesar remains standing.

And when we find that Antony goes down to defeat at Actium because he chooses wilfully after admonition to fight at sea rather than ashore in his pride against Caesar, in deliberate response to Caesar's challenge, then the last lines here may re-echo to stir pity in us:

Pom. Come down into the boat.

Eno. Take heed you fall not.

(II vii. 139-140)

Enobarbus knows that one may be drunk and fall in more ways than one (pp. 413-414).

Setting the preparation for the fantasy to be enacted in the moonlit woods in A Midsummer Night's Dream against the preparation in The Winter's Tale for the awakening of Hermione, we can similarly see a great advance in art. Shakespeare's management of distance in the final Act of The Winter's Tale is a remarkable technical feat. His ability to manage distance and emphasis in a play through controlling the audience's awareness of structure can perhaps nowhere else be better or more clearly seen. It is with a developed treatment of the fifth Act of The Winter's Tale, then, that I conclude this chapter.

At the beginning of Act Five, Shakespeare reminds us that whilst the audience has every reason to hope that the oracle will be fulfilled, Leontes and those in Sicilia can but trust blindly:

the gods
Will have fulfill'd their secret purposes;
For has not the divine Apollo said,
Is't not the tenor of his Oracle,
That King Leontes shall not have an heir,
Till his lost child be found? which, that it shall,
Is all as monstrous to our human reason
As my Antigonus to break his grave
And come again to me; who, on my life,
Did perish with the infant. (V i 35-44)
The analogy that Paulina uses to emphasise the seeming impossibility of the oracle's being fulfilled carries weight because, as audience, we are even more certain than she that Antigonus cannot "break his grave." Our superior awareness is exploited to confirm as well as to qualify the emotional effect of Sicilia's hopelessness—to create by this means a tension between Leontes' resignation to barrenness and the sense of promised renewal created in the preceding Act. Leontes' sworn submission to the will of the gods—a submission which goes against the dictates of reason and expediency—shows him penitent and faithful, ready for the new life that the return of Perdita brings.

The seemingly impossible condition for Leontes' regaining of peace—the return of Hermione from the dead—is suggested in analogue in the melodramatic image of her ghost, as in a revenge drama, walking the earth:

_Leon._ Thou speak'st truth.

_Leon._ No more such wives; therefore, no wife: one worse,
And better us'd, would make her sainted spirit
Again possess her corpse, and on this stage
(Were we offenders now) appear soul-vex'd,
And begin, 'Why to me?'.

_Paul._ Had she such power,

_Paul._ She had just cause.

_Leon._ She had; and would incense me
to murder her I married.

_Leon._ I should so:

_Paul._ Were I the ghost that walk'd, I'd bid you mark
Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in't
You chose her: then I'd shriek, that even your ears
Should rift to hear me; and the words that follow'd
Should be 'Remember mine'.

_Leon._ Stars, stars,

_Leon._ And all eyes else, dead coals! Fear thou no wife;
I'll have no wife, Paulina. (V i 55-69)

Through this melodramatic image Shakespeare expresses in extreme form the impossibility of Hermione's return. He does so before he conjures us into sympathy with that miracle of preservation. He uses the same
technique here as in Antigonus' narration of his weird dream of Hermione's ghostly appearance. There the fantastic events to follow, relating to the first miraculous preservation, were foretold. Here, in Paulina's promise, we have a more indirect foretelling—an analogue—of the events of the last scene:

Paul. I have done.
Yet, if my lord will marry,—if you will, sir; No remedy but you will,--give me the office To choose you a queen: she shall not be so young As was your former, but she shall be such As, walk'd your first queen's ghost, it should take joy To see her in your arms.

Leon. My true Paulina, We shall not marry till thou bid'st us.
Paul. That Shall be when your first queen's again in breath: Never till then. (V i 75-84)

The arrival of Florizel and Perdita at the court is straight-way announced, disproving the first impossibility, the recovery of Leontes' child, which moments before Paulina had declared to be "monstrous to our human reason." The return of Perdita is expressly associated through imagery with seasonal renewal, the banishment of a Winter of exile, and the scene evokes a simultaneous wonder and regret at a recovery which must involve remembrance of what is lost. The audience's awareness that Perdita is Leontes' lost child returning to him is held throughout in tension with a sympathetic response to Leontes' deepening sense of loss. Leontes seems to recognise spontaneously the relationship that the couple bear to him, but this recognition is checked by a terrible consciousness that the possibility of such relationship is lost to him:
Were I but twenty-one,
Your father's image is so hit in you,
His very air, that I should call you brother,
As I did him, and speak of something wildly
By us perform'd before. Most dearly welcome!
And you fair princess, --goddess! --O, alas!
I lost a couple, that 'twixt heaven and earth
Might thus have stood, begetting wonder, as
You, gracious couple, do: (V i 125-138)

Our awareness that Leontes is torturing himself unnecessarily is the more painful to us because we cannot intervene and because we see, reflected in Leontes' present grief, sixteen years of suffering that cannot be revoked. Our distancing perception of the situation as opposite to that Leontes imagines, serves to intensify both our ironic awareness and our sympathy for Leontes.

The lost possibility of brotherhood for Florizel and Mamillius:

Had our prince
(Jewel of children) seen this hour, he had pair'd
Well with this lord: there was not full a month
Between their births. (V i 115-118)

recalls the broken friendship of Polixenes and Leontes:

and then I lost--
All mine own folly--the society,
Amity too, of your brave father, whom
(Though bearing misery) I desire my life
Once more to look on him. (V i 133-137)

evoking anew Leontes' grief. But with Florizel presenting himself as ambassador for his father, the reconciliation of the "brothers" is prefigured, and associated with the return of Leontes' heir, the coming of Spring after a Winter of exile:

O my brother,--
Good gentleman! --the wrongs I have done thee stir
Afresh within me; and these thy offices,
So rarely kind, are as interpreters
Of my behind-hand slackness! Welcome hither,
As is the spring to th' earth. And hath he too
Expos'd this paragon to th' fearful usage
(At least ungentle) of the dreadful Neptune,
To greet a man not worth her pains, much less
Th' adventure of her person? (V i 146-155)

Yet as this motif of the friendship of the kings is developed, Shakes-
speare calls upon our superior awareness to review Polixenes' behaviour
in the preceding Act with an irony that undermines the harshness of
Leontes' self-condemnation here. Knowing that Polixenes is possessed
of a destructive anger sufficient, if uncheck'd, to alienate his child,
qualifies the uniqueness of Leontes' guilt. We cannot but regard
Leontes' association of Polixenes with holiness, of himself with sin,
with irony:

You have a holy father,
A graceful gentleman; against whose person
(So sacred as it is) I have done sin,
For which, the heavens (taking angry note)
Have left me issueless; and your father's blest
(As he from heaven merits it) with you,
Worthy his goodness. What might I have been
Might I a son and daughter now have look'd on,
Such goodly things as you! (V i 169-177)

Suggestions of sanctity linked with a man's being blest with issue,
which apply ironically to Polixenes, however, apply unironically to
Leontes who having "perform'd / A saint-like sorrow" is now to be
"blest / As he from heaven merits it" with children "worthy his
goodness." Leontes' words

What might I have been,
Might I a son and daughter now have look'd on,
Such goodly things as you!

suggest also a rediscovery of lost possibility within himself, suggest
the new wholeness which he is to find on recovery of his heir—a
recovery which we anticipate and of which Leontes is yet unaware. The
ironic overtones in Leontes' speech are emphasised by the announcement
of Polixenes' arrival in Sicilia in pursuit of the couple. In the
Ill

description the Lord gives of Polixenes' tyrannous refusal to listen

to the entreaties of the shepherd and his son, Polixenes' rage seems
to parody Leontes' earlier jealous fury, effectively calling the whole
experience of the play to mind and presenting it now with a semi-comic
perspective:

Never saw I
Wretches so quake: they kneel, they kiss the earth;
Forswear themselves as often as they speak.
Bohemia stops his ears, and threatens them
With divers deaths in death. (V i 197-201)

There is a beautifully modulated relation at the end of this scene
between the fears of Florizel and Perdita ("The heaven sets spies
upon us, will not have / Our contract celebrated" (V i 202-203),
"The stars, I see, will kiss the valleys first" (V i 205) ) and the
audience's increased hope at the news that Polixenes, though he
threatens, has encountered the shepherd and his son—fulfilment of
another condition for a comic denouement.

The recognition of Perdita is reported, not dramatised,
creating thus an expectation of something further to follow and
distancing the events described in such a way that the whole
structure of the action can be focused through them. The events of the
scene are described with a conscious exaggeration which serves also to
distance them, allowing the dramatist to build up an emotional intensity,
which is used to characterise the precise quality of present events, at
the same time reflecting past action in the play and anticipating the
remarkable scene to follow:

I made a broken delivery of the business; but the changes
I perceived in the king and Camillo were very notes of
admiration; they seemed almost, with staring on one
another, to tear the cases of their eyes: there was speech
in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they
looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed? a notable passion of wonder appeared in them; but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if th' importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity of the one it must needs be. (V ii 9-19)

The transition in tone here is comparable with that which occurs in the last scene of Act Three. There is the same remarkable combination of finality and hope caught in the phrase "of a world ransomed or one destroyed" that, in that pivotal scene, is created by the juxtaposition of Antigonus' death with the preservation of the babe, a juxtaposition recalled in the description of Paulina's joy and sorrow:

But O, the noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the Oracle was fulfilled: she lifted the Princess from the earth, and so locks her in embracing as if she would pin her to her heart, that she might no more be in danger of losing. (V ii 72-78)

The news of the Oracle's fulfilment is followed by a comparison of the wonder of this to the wonder one might expect in an "old tale." The suggestion of incredibility, expressed from within the play, helps preserve dramatic credibility, the dramatist once again manipulating the audience's sense of unreality to enforce distance. Emphasis in this recognition scene is, moreover, diverted from wonder at Perdita's recovery to description of the kings' meeting. In this description the closeness of joy to sorrow is again stressed, contributing to the tonal congruity of the scene and to the sense that recovery is inseparable from remembrance of loss:

Then have you lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears. (V ii 43-46)
In the description of the old shepherd "which stands by like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns," the pun on "reigns" fuses suggestions of seasonal continuity and historical continuity. Suggestion of the interrelation of past and present is furthered through relation of Perdita to her mother which prevents Leontes in recovering Perdita from forgetting the loss of Hermione:

"Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries 'O, thy mother, thy mother!' then asks Bohemia forgiveness;" (V ii 50-53)

The association of Perdita's return with seasonal renewal is again emphasised. Imagery from the song with which Autolycus celebrated, with natural if amoral vitality, the return of Spring ("Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year, / For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale" (IV iii 3-4) ) recurs in this recognition scene. The reanimation, imaged so suggestively in the Third Gentleman's description of the mingled joy and sorrow of Perdita's reunion with her father and his telling her of the Queen's death:

for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble, there changed colour; some swooned, all sorrowed: if all the world could have seen't, the woe had been universal. (V ii 88-91)

is to be made concrete in the seeming animation of the marble of Hermione's statue. Here, in fact, there is an immediate transition to a mention of a statue of Hermione by Julio Romano:

who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer. (V ii 96-101)

We are here prepared for a remarkable relationship between this work of art and the Hermione it represents, if not for the miracle of their identity.
Through his control of distance Shakespeare focuses for us in this scene our whole previous experience of the play. The scene is distanced in such a way that Shakespeare can describe the recognition of Perdita and the meeting of the two kings with an emotional intensity appropriate to events as significant while, at the same time, he can illuminate the whole play experience through them.

The Oracle, laying down the "impossible" condition of the recovery of Perdita, had seemed to those in Sicilia to banish all hope for restoration. For the audience, however, the Oracle offered confirmation of a new direction first glimpsed with a recognition of the romantic convention of the exposed babe to be miraculously preserved. From the tempest onwards the play offers a demonstration of the impossible made possible which reaches its culmination in the final scene. However, as the audience believes that Hermione is dead, the scene breaks on them, as well as on those in the court of Sicilia, as miracle. And yet, any sense of a sudden or contrived reversal of fortune is refined away—partly because the scene is given a deliberately formal, ritualistic, presentation, partly because this revelation has been subtly prepared for in verbal analogues expressing the idea of a reanimation in the two preceding scenes, and partly because this miracle of preservation, which has as its parallel the marvellous recovery of Perdita, seems to be continuous with that recovery: to be part of the same process by which the seemingly impossible is shown to be possible. In this scene a delicate balance is achieved between dramatic credibility and a sense of the marvellous, between Leontes' personal experience, his rediscovery of lost possibility, and the spiritual regeneration this symbolises.
In Act Five scene one, the sight of Florizel and Perdita had touched Leontes with an immediate and deep sense of lost possibility. A delicate tension was established between our sympathy for Leontes and our appreciation of what Florizel and Perdita represent to him. In the statue scene we do not have this superior awareness. Indeed, our awareness is not as great as Paulina's, whose role in the scene is like that of presenter; we experience the scene with the characters to whom Paulina is revealing the wonder.

The isolation of Hermione's statue suggests its rarity (and the isolation Hermione has endured):

As she liv'd peerless,  
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,  
Excels whatever yet you look'd upon,  
Or hand of man hath done; therefore I keep it Lonely, apart. (V iii 14-18)

As Paulina with a dramatic gesture draws the curtain to reveal Hermione, her words prepare us for the extraordinary:

To see the life as lively mock'd as ever  
Still sleep mock'd death: behold, and say 'tis well. (V iii 18-20)

In her gesture and in the objectivity of her comment:

I like your silence; it the more shows off  
Your wonder; but yet speak; first, you, my liege.  
Comes it not something near? (V iii 21-23)

Paulina is very much the presenter of a wonder. The tone of Leontes' response stands in striking contrast to Paulina's: he is caught up by the sight, torn between a deep sense of irreparable loss and a wish to believe the statue real, between a longing recollection of Hermione's living tenderness and a recognition that he sees only the lifeless hardness of stone:
Remembrance of Hermione's innocence, suggested in "infancy and grace," recalls his own guilt. There is, first, wistful recognition that if only the stone could express reproach it would, in so chiding, prove real. But Leontes moves from wishing the statue real to seeing it as being, in its very silence, expressive of the quality of Hermione's tenderness and grace. The recognition that, even if Hermione could now be restored, sixteen irrevocable years have passed, suggests Leontes' resignation to loss and, at the same time, suggests his longing for the restoration, not of an idealised image, but of an actual Hermione:

Leon. But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So aged as this seems.
Pol. 0, not by much.
Paul. So much the more our carver's excellence,
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her
As she liv'd now.
Leon.  As now she might have done,
So much to my good comfort as it is
Now piercing to my soul. (V iii 27-34)

Complex relations between the apparent and the real are evoked in Leontes' further reflection:

0, thus she stood,
Even with such life of majesty, warm life,
As now it coldly stands, when first I woo'd her!
I am ashamed: does not the stone rebuke me
For being more stone than it? 0 royal piece!
There's magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjur'd to remembrance, and
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee. (V iii 34-42)

For the gazer, the statue seems to bring to life Hermione's majesty and yet to mock remembrance of the living Hermione ("Warm life / As now it coldly stands.") We have a strange comparison of the marble Hermione
with the marble-like Perdita, pale, still, silent with wonder: strange, because it is an inversion of the expected comparison of the natural-seeming statue with the living Perdita. Here this comparison calls to mind Paulina's words on revealing the statue:

prepare

To see the life as lively mock'd as ever
Still sleep mock'd death. (V iii 18-20)

Just as we might see sleep as a mock-death, a mask that can be stripped off to reveal waking life, so might we see Perdita's marble-like state as mocking the reality of a marble Hermione. And, perhaps, as a suggested extension of this analogue, we are being subtly prepared to move beyond the bounds of apparent possibility to accept the "impossibility" that the Art-life of Hermione's statue is, too, really mocking life, is a further masking or disguising of a life that is real.

Perdita, indeed, seems to be moving towards this in addressing the marble Hermione as though she were living:

Lady,
Dear queen, that ended when I but began,
Give me that hand of yours to kiss. (V iii 44-46)

Almost at once, however, the dramatic focus changes from Perdita to Leontes, Camillo suggesting the extremity of Leontes' feeling, his comment framing and distancing Leontes' response:

My lord, your sorrow was too sore laid on,
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,
So many summers dry: scarce any joy
Did ever so long live; no sorrow
But kill'd itself much sooner. (V iii 49-53)

For Leontes there is a slow dawning of the possibility that the statue is alive. There is a suggestion of madness, of the rapture of vision, in an increasing emotional intensity as the fulfilment of a wish, barely entertained, becomes for him an intuitive certainty:
Paul. No longer shall you gaze on't, lest your fancy
May think anon it moves.

Leon. Let be, let be!
Would I were dead, but that methinks already--
What was he that did make it?--See, my lord,
Would you not deem it breath'd? and that those veins
Did verily bear blood? (V iii 60-65)

In his "Would I were dead, but that methinks already--" there is again
a tension of a finality of resignation with a barely grasped hope--
a tension which characterises the recognition of Perdita also. Here it
is most moving. After the pause in which the possibility of the statue's
having life is for a split second maintained, "What was he that did make
it?" becomes a wondering appreciation of great artistry and, at a second
level, a question as to whether such an artist could be human, a question
which becomes more and more insistent and is climaxed in certainty:

Leon. The fixture of her eye has motion in't,
As we are mock'd with art.
Paul. I'll draw the curtain;
My lord's almost so far transported that
He'll think anon it lives.
Leon. O sweet Paulina;
Make me think so twenty years together!
No settled senses of the world can match
The pleasure of that madness. Let't alone.
Paul. I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirr'd you: but
I could afflict you farther.
Leon. Do, Paulina;
For this affliction has a taste as sweet
As any cordial comfort. Still methinks
There is an air comes from her. What fine chisel
Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,
For I will kiss her. (V iii 67-80)

Here Leontes' madness—a madness that penetrates appearance to grasp
essential truth—is almost a parody of his former state, when madness,
blinding him to truth, carried him into a self-created world of fantasy.

Paulina offers the choice to all to follow reason and reject
the very suggestion that Hermione lives or to allow madness to take them
further and let them discover a truth beyond credibility:
Either forbear,
Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you
For more amazement. If you can behold it,
I'll make the statue move indeed; descend,
And take you by the hand; but then you'll think
(Which I protest against) I am assisted
By wicked powers. (V iii 85-91)

Leontes' faith and trust are expressed in the calmness with which he
answers her, in his suggestion that this impossibility can be no
greater than any other impossibility, and in his complete receptivity:

What you can make her do,
I am content to look on: what to speak,
I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy
To make her speak as move. (V iii 91-94)

Paulina creates a stillness and solemnity by the formality of her
gesture, as she had done on first revealing the statue:

It is requir'd
You do awake your faith. Then all stand still:
Or—those that think it is unlawful business
I am about, let them depart. (V iii 94-97)

It is as if she is exorcising all discordant elements—contriving a
silence which must precede the creation of a new harmony:

Music, awake her; strike! Music.
'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;
Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come!
I'll fill your grave up: Stir, nay, come away:
Bequeath to death your numbness; for from him
Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs.

The recovery of lost possibility is for Leontes, as for
Hermione, an awakening from a numbness, from a state of death-in-life,
to a new freedom and wholeness. The return of life to Sicilia—King
and kingdom—represented in, and made possible by, the recovery of
Perdita, is completed with the redemption of Sicilia's queen. As she
is freed from her mask of death, Leontes in turn is freed from the bonds
of guilt and loss. The discovery of Perdita, seen from the first as a
The harmony is complete as Leontes, changing roles with Paulina, gives her a husband in Camillo. Leontes begs pardon from Polixenes and Hermione together:

What! look upon my brother: both your pardons, 
That e'er I put between your holy looks 
My ill suspicion. (V iii 147-149)

and tells Hermione of the betrothal of Perdita and Florizel:

This your son-in-law, 
And son unto the king, whom, heavens directing, 
Is troth-plight to your daughter. (V iii 159-161)

Leontes' reunion with Hermione is seen as the end of a barren exile and as a consummation of an old cycle, moving through Winter to Spring. To the end a delicate tension is maintained between a sense of time irreparably lost and of time as alone bringing fulfilment. Leontes and Hermione cannot relive sixteen wasted years; yet the joy of a renewal of relationship for them, of new life and freedom, is given expression and a continuity ranging beyond their own lives in the betrothal of Perdita and Florizel. The creation of a sense of seasonal cycle (with its counterpart in the cycle of generations) which accords great value to individuality yet suggests a perspective transcending its limitations, underlies and binds together the actions of the play, allowing for a deepening sense.
of relation and continuity. Our awareness of this pattern, enforced throughout by repeated associations of Perdita's return with the return of Spring and by the presentation of the unlikely romance action as pre-ordained, has an essential part in controlling emphasis and in so distancing the action that we attain to an understanding of the play as we experience it. It is, however, not till we experience with Leontes and his court the miracle of Hermione's awakening that we realise fully the significance of all we have seen—the dramatist through a superb control of distance effecting revelation with power and immediacy perhaps peculiar to drama.
Basic to the argument of the preceding chapters is the conception of drama as a performed art and not purely a literary medium: enacted and, like music, time-dependent, using movement as well as speech, visual as well as verbal imagery. It is convenient for analysis to separate out various means of distancing—speaking of Shakespeare's use of conventions, of dramatic structure and now of dramatic verse—yet this involves distortion when in performance their effects are concomitant and interacting. A sensitive response to the verse of a play—to its style, its construction, and tone—offers the critic ready descriptive means for close analysis of the text; study of imagery often gives a key to the imaginative unity of the work; but especially when considering the distancing effect of verse it is important for analysis to be qualified by the recognition that dramatic verse depends upon context for significance. A critic's understanding of the enacted experience, however much this experience for him appears to be mediated by the verse of the play, depends also on his responsiveness to a significant sequence of events, on his experience of dramatic juxtaposition, on his insight into characters contrasted and interacting. Just as a particular event derives significance from the dramatic structure which it helps to form, so verse, which may direct attention to what is meaningful in a situation, depends on that situation for an effect which is dramatic rather than lyrical.
In considering the distancing effect of verse in Shakespearean drama we must take into account not only the dramatic situation to which the verse applies but also the general level of playing that is characteristic of the particular scene or Act in which it occurs. Whilst, for example, highly stylised rhetoric may occur most typically in Richard II in scenes charged with emotion, in A Midsummer Night's Dream it characterises those which are most farcical.

Suspension of disbelief, we have seen, implies continuous, active, orientation. Verse is often a primary means for effecting and for maintaining an orientation to the persons and events on stage. A flexible instrument of suggestion, verse enables the dramatist to reinforce dramatic impressions which are induced more directly and to link them in the creation of an integral dramatic experience. Often variations in distance are immediately discernible from the verse which in Shakespeare's plays is a sensitive gauge of change, be it of increase in tension or of relaxation after suspense, of variation in mood or of significant development in the action. It is, however, impossible to estimate absolutely the contribution that verse makes to any particular distancing effect.

Our consideration of distance in drama has been directed towards an understanding of basic structural means for controlling audience response. We have found such a consideration a convenient means for analysing the structural coherence of a work which, like music, is apprehended in time. This means cannot, however, readily be extended to convey an adequate idea of the possibilities that Shakespeare found in dramatic verse for minutely directing the dramatic experience he was creating. While it is apparent that in Shakespearean drama verse is
the most subtle and continuously operative means for directing audience response, and while awareness of the distancing effects of various kinds of verse may throw some light on the dramatist's means of controlling response during a performance, it would be both clumsy and pointless to attempt an analysis of subtle tonal variation in terms of distancing. A consideration of distance in drama can only supplement close textual analysis. My discussion in this chapter will be limited to consideration of Shakespeare's structural use of verse for helping to regulate distance in his plays and his use of verse as an auxiliary to other structural means for controlling response.

Highly conventional drama, as we have seen, usually involves greater distance than naturalistic drama and more significant changes in distance. Shakespeare's exploitation of the fluidity of action possible on the Elizabethan stage and his development of a sophisticated technique of juxtaposition generally required an even greater flexibility of response from his audience, more frequent and rapid reorientations during a performance, than does most non-naturalistic drama. Great demands were placed on the audience by the development of a many-levelled action and even greater demands on the dramatist who had to induce simultaneously in the audience maximum responsiveness to each part of the experience being enacted.

Usually the several interacting plots that make up the action of a Shakespearean play are variously distanced, and are often developed with varying degrees of naturalism. Yet the inclusion of disparate levels of action in a play, far from endangering, can actually further, an audience's acceptance of the dramatic illusion. The free combination of differently distanced levels of action, the juxtaposition of
characters and events treated with differing degrees of naturalism, can be both an assertion of imaginative freedom and a reminder of the essential unreality of drama sufficient to have the audience think in terms of imaginative consistency rather than of verisimilitude. Frequently we find fantastic action made more acceptable to us by virtue of the tensions established within the play between actions and characters seeming to possess different degrees of literary reality. When these actions, impinging on one another, interact and coalesce in a single action, they are seen to be part of a single dramatic illusion. The presence of Bottom and the "rude mechanicals" in A Midsummer Night's Dream seems to give substance to an action involving groups of characters as unlikely of combination as Oberon, Titania, and the fairies, Theseus, Hippolyta, and their court, and the love-deluded Athenian lovers: in giving a further dimension to the dramatic illusion, the presence of Bottom and the "rude mechanicals" provides a focus and measure for all levels of action, making incompatibilities seem relative and extreme variations in distance therefore acceptable.

In a Vermeer or a Rembrandt it is not simply the faithful representation of persons or situations that is responsible for an illusion of life: the relation of elements in the picture, the sense of light and dark, of foreground and background, which technically gives the illusion of a third dimension gives also an extraordinary suggestiveness, making the picture seem rich with unrepresented possibilities. Analogously in Shakespearean drama the development of a many-levelled action gives often an illusion of scope and of concreteness. Shakespeare is able to create the illusion of a society, for example, by representing people from different social classes interacting with one another.
Often, simply by a variation from the remote to the familiar in his treatment of different groups of characters, he is able to suggest the principle of degree inherent in the Elizabethan concept of society, making the participation of characters at the variously distanced levels of action in the play seem to reflect the different roles and places of the various groups in a society which in its structure and diversity seems to mirror the Elizabethan but which at the same time is both inclusive and self-contained. Or, by suggesting with a diversity of character types diversity in human nature, Shakespeare is able to suggest a range in human possibility, a difference between characters in their capacity for insight and capacity for experiencing; or, he may more obliquely suggest different possibilities for personal realisation by showing individuals confronted with major choices which have a direct bearing on their personal development. Including different levels of experience in a play, Shakespeare is able to define the central experience more completely, making it more accessible to understanding and providing within the play a measure for its essential quality and importance. The intensity of Lear's mental suffering, for example, can be partly established by comparison with the physical suffering of Gloucester; the witty and aware teasing of Rosalind in *As You Like It* is displayed more clearly by contrast with the blind perverseness of Phebe. Indirectly the effect achieved by a full displaying of relevant possibilities—that of integral vision—lends authenticity to the experience enacted.

The power of suggestion irradiates and transforms all that is directly presented. Coherence of action in Shakespearean drama, as Una Ellis-Fermor has shown, depends not so much on a logical progression of
events as on inherent suggestiveness in the relation of the various situations represented which enables the dramatist to convey (and the audience to apprehend imaginatively) the precise quality of the experience being enacted:

... If we look at some dozen of such potential scenes that find no place in Macbeth we notice at once that not only is the logical continuity of event set aside in some cases but that it is superseded in order that a profound reality may thereby have the greater power to evoke an imaginative response ... The art of the dramatist has been engaged not in presenting a closely linked and logically coherent action that points irresistibly to a certain deduction, but in selecting those fragments of the whole that stimulate our imaginations to an understanding of the essential experience, to the perception of a nexus of truths too vast to be defined as themes, whose enduring power disengages a seemingly unending series of perceptions and responses.

It would seem that the imagination of the audience or reader is thrown forward, by the immense impact of such scenes, upon a track of emotional experience, to come to rest upon the next scene, at the moment in its curving flight at which it can alight without interference or loss of momentum, to be projected again upon another movement, there to be similarly received, diverted, and flung out again upon its track of discovery. And this proceeds with economy and harmony as do the forces of gravitation at work upon the movements of the bodies in a solar system.

The direct representation of characters and events can be both immediately involving and strongly evocative. The characteristic development of interlacing poetic images in Shakespearean drama frequently acts as an intensifier to the action, directing our attention to what is immediately significant, encouraging our involvement, and also making us more receptive to suggestiveness inherent in its development, to the significance of any part in terms of the developing action.

Because drama is both direct in its appeal and inherently evocative, control of tempo and emphasis is vital to the creation of an integral dramatic experience: it is essential for the precise direction of the audience's response and for the precise articulation of the dramatic experience. A dramatist has, however, far more difficulty in achieving such control than, say, a narrator of a dramatic poem. With suitable verbal preparation for significant events, and with simple and unobtrusive selection (varying the kind and amount of detail he includes, for example), a narrator (or the poet through him) can distribute emphasis within the narrative and control the pace at will, varying perspective and tone, treating the story now with irony, adopting now a sympathetic tone. He is allowed a more obtrusive manipulation, a more direct say in the disposition and arrangement of his story, than is a dramatist, because the story is, so to speak, filtered through the narrator's consciousness, conventionally biased and directed by his telling. A dramatist, by comparison, is working at one remove: he is not allowed direct manipulation for, to be convincing, the dramatic experience has to appear to engender its own pace and direction.

Shakespeare's development of a many-levelled action enabled him to achieve remarkable control of tempo and emphasis. By varying perspective, he is able, with seeming impersonality, to articulate a dramatic experience, stimulating the audience's imaginative awareness and directing their response with precision. He can control pace by switching from one level of action to another, by this means engendering suspense or giving added emphasis to important action, or controlling the audience's perspective of events by developing certain expectations or by shaping their attitude to events to follow. Having
complete breaks from the main action—attention being shifted from the grave to the comic and even literally from the sublime to the ridiculous—he is able to achieve greater concentration, the effect of an intensity of experience.

One of the most important functions of verse in Shakespeare's plays is in helping to make the audience responsive to different levels of action. Owing to conditions peculiar to the Elizabethan stage, Shakespeare perhaps placed a more than usual reliance on verse to this end. Since the performance of a play was continuous, the audience had to cope not only with sudden changes of perspective but also with shifts in time and place as their attention was shifted from one group of characters to another and often from one level of action to another. With no curtain calls marking sharp divisions of the play into scenes and Acts, and probably few pauses to allow the audience to adjust to a new set of attitudes or to a different level of experience, it was essential that the groups of characters belonging to the various plots, and the comic and serious material, should be so sharply characterised that, as the audience's attention was directed from one group of characters to another, they would be almost instantly responsive to the new situation, able to see its relation to what had preceded and thus to appreciate any irony or parody inherent in the juxtaposition of levels. Giving each group of characters distinctive speech was one fairly obvious means of ensuring quick adjustment to their quality. The dramatist could evoke, then, almost immediately with a change in verse style different expectations, perhaps a different set of attitudes. A change in verse style might be used equally for noting significant change in the nature of the action, for setting an emblematic scene apart from the
surrounding action, for indicating that a speech is not spoken in character, or for marking a change in the mood of the play.

One of the simplest uses of a markedly different verse style to distinguish a different level of action is the adoption of rhymed verse for prologue or epilogue or chorus. But within the play also, from the earliest comedies and histories to the tragedies and romances, Shakespeare uses change in verse style to indicate a change in the level of playing. This is true even in the Henry VI plays where there are few variations in an elaborate rhetorical style. In Henry VI, Part Three, for example, there is a scene in which the horrors of civil war are enacted in form close to pageant. The urgent verse of the battle scene before it gives way to a formal patterned meditation which provides tonal setting for the paralleled entry and lament of a son who has killed his father and of a father who has killed his son. In formal soliloquy Henry VI expresses his yearning for relief from the burden of kingship, the patterned organisation of his meditation conveying by sound a sense of the natural harmony and order for which he longs:

O God! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run—
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours brings about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times—
So many hours must I tend my flock;
So many hours must I take my rest;
So many hours must I contemplate;
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will eat;
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

(II v 21-40)
The rhetoric has a distancing effect. In the midst of battle the King's reflection on a life of peace seems dreamlike, remote from the civil strife enacted in the paralleled entry of son and father. The King's meditation frames the scene, directing attention to its primarily emblematic significance. The King acts as a formal presenter, his rhetorical meditation preparing for and giving unity to its formal sequence of laments. Standing outside the scene, the King adds his own grief to that of the lamenting father and son, generalising their woe:

\begin{align*}
\text{Son.} & \quad \text{How will my mother for a father's death} \\
& \quad \text{Take on with me and ne'er be satisfied!} \\
\text{Fath.} & \quad \text{How will my wife for slaughter of my son} \\
& \quad \text{Shed seas of tears and ne'er be satisfied!} \\
\text{K.Hen.} & \quad \text{How will the country for these woeful chances} \\
& \quad \text{Misthink the King and not be satisfied!} \\
\text{Son.} & \quad \text{Was ever son so rue'd a father's death?} \\
\text{Fath.} & \quad \text{Was ever father so bemoan'd his son?} \\
\text{K.Hen.} & \quad \text{Was ever king so griev'd for subjects' woe?} \\
& \quad \text{Much is your sorrow; mine, ten times so much.} \\
\end{align*}

(II v 103-113)

The distancing effect of repetition in the scene, of the balanced entries of father and son, of the formal sequence of laments, and of the highly stylised rhetoric throughout, serve also to set the scene apart from the surrounding action. Henry's reflection following the father's lament with its emblematic imagery of the contending red and white directly points the significance of the pageant:

\begin{align*}
\text{Woe above woe! grief more than common grief!} \\
\text{0 that my death would stay these ruthful deeds!} \\
\text{0 pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!} \\
\text{The red rose and the white are on his face,} \\
\text{The fatal colours of our striving houses:} \\
\text{The one his purple blood well resembles;} \\
\text{The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth:} \\
\text{Wither one rose, and let the other flourish!} \\
\text{If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.} \\
\end{align*}

(II v 94-102)
The Ghost scene of *Cymbeline* (V iv) and the masque of *The Tempest* are comparable with this scene from *Henry VI, Part Three*, both in their function and in the means by which they are effectively distanced, though the scene from *Cymbeline* has been disclaimed as too outlandish to be Shakespeare's.

Posthumus falls asleep (*Cymbeline*, V iv); to solemn music

there enter

(as in an apparition) SICILIUS LEOmTUS, father to Posthumus, an old man, attired like a warrior, leading in his hand an ancient matron (his wife, and mother to Posthumus) with music before them. Then, after other music, follow the two young LEOmATI (brothers to Posthumus) with wounds as they died in the wars. They circle Posthumus round as he lies sleeping.

The pageant-like entry of the Ghosts and the formality with which, one by one, they add their stanza to the smooth, elegant, rhymed verse of the complaint (a formal catalogue of woes and invocation to Jupiter) so distances the masque that it sounds hollow after the dramatic immediacy of Posthumus' soliloquy ("Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way, / I think, to liberty . . .") which immediately precedes it:

Sici. Thy crystal window ope; look out;
no longer exercise
Upon a valiant race thy harsh and potent injuries.

Moth. Since Jupiter, our son is good,
take off his miseries.

Sici. Peep through thy marble mansion, help,
or we poor ghosts will cry
To th' shining synod of the rest against thy deity.

Brothers. Help, Jupiter, or we appeal,
and from thy justice fly.

(V iv 81-92)
The dramatic descent of Jupiter upon his eagle, hurling a thunder-bolt bringing the Ghosts to their knees, is the more effective for the remoteness and seeming shallowness of the Ghosts' rebellion. Jupiter's majestic scorn:

No more, you petty spirits of region low,  
Offend our hearing: How dare you ghosts
Accuse the thunderer, whose bolt (you know)  
Sky-planted, batters all rebelling coasts?
Poor shadows of Elysium, hence, and rest  
Upon your never-withering banks of flowers:

(V iv 93-98)

so overbears their lament that the oracle Jupiter delivers has an authority unquestioned:

Be not with mortal accidents opprest,  
No care of yours it is, you know 'tis ours.  
Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,  
The more delay'd, delighted. Be content,  
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift:

His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent:  
Our Jovial star reign'd at his birth, and in  
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.
He shall be lord of lady Imogen,  
And happier much by his affliction made.
This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein  
Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine,
And so away: no farther with your din
Express impatience, lest you stir up mind.
Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline.

(V iv 99-113)

Sicilius' expression of wonder (which recalls that of Cleomenes and Dion, the source of our confidence in the oracle in The Winter's Tale) reinforces this effect, giving it power and sanction:

He came in thunder; his celestial breath
Was sulphurous to smell: the holy eagle
Stoop'd, as to foot us: his ascension is
More sweet than our blest fields: his royal bird
Prunes the immortal wing, and cloys his beak,
As when his god is pleas'd.

(V iv 114-119)
The Ghosts' wonder guides our own, provides a natural means for effecting the transition from Jupiter's majestic verse to the level of playing previous to the distanced masque and Posthumus' wonder on awakening.

It might well be argued that the masque is included and certainly that the presentation is governed by the need to establish and control distance in such a way that Jupiter's assurance will carry maximum force, lending probability to the events that follow. An increase in distance with the stylised pageant and formal lament of the Ghosts makes possible a rapid orientation to the startling descent of Jupiter. Even more obviously than in Act Two scene five of Henry VI, Part Three a high degree of stylisation and marked changes in verse style characterise, and actually help to effect, rapid successive changes in distance.

In both the scenes we have just considered, the effect of the formal verse, and even more of the characters' patterned responses, tends to be ritualistic. The more rhythmic the formal organisation, the more pronounced this distancing effect, as may be readily illustrated from the Witches' scenes in Macbeth:

1 Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd,  
2 Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig whin'd,  
3 Witch. Harpier cries:--'Tis time, 'tis time'.  
1 Witch. Round about the cauldron go;  
In the poison'd entrails throw.—  
Toad, that under cold stone Days and nights has thirty-one  
Swell'ter'd venom, sleeping got,  
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.  
All. Double, double, toil and trouble:  
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble . . .  
(IV i 1-11)
As the three Witches circle about the cauldron, each one in turn chanting and adding her ingredients to the brew, the individual chants broken by their incantatory chorus, the patterned verse and action gives to the scene something akin to the rhythmic excitement and weirdness of ritual.

The distancing effect of a marked change in verse style and of stylisation itself may be used to any number of ends: not just to set the extraordinary or supernatural apart from the ordinary or natural but also to give, perhaps, an ironic cast to a single speech or even to develop a scene ironically, to mark change in a character's mood or change in the mood of the play, to suggest sympathy or a lack of it between characters, or to suggest the interconnectedness or the separateness of events. We see some of these possibilities realised in Prospero's tale of past wrongs in the second scene of The Tempest.

In Chapter Two we mentioned Prospero's gesture in taking off his magic cloak to reveal himself and his past to Miranda (The Tempest, I, ii), resuming his mask at the end of his tale: an artistic device marking the divorce between Prospero's role as a magician-controller and as a man involved in a personal drama. We observed that the device serves to set the tale within-the-tale apart from the surrounding action.

A marked change in verse style helps also to distance the inset tale. The use of archaic diction, of difficult and contrived rhythms, lends remoteness. Though Prospero's unmasking is symbolic of self-revelation, the tone he adopts is not that of an intimate dialogue between father and daughter but one of dramatic revelation:

\[
\text{The hour's now come;}
\]
\[
\text{The very minute bids thee ope thine ear;}
\]
\[
\text{Obey, and be attentive.} \quad (I \ ii \ 36-38)
\]
Miranda's dim memories help create the effect of distance and mystery that we associate with romance:

'Tis far off,
And rather like a dream than an assurance
That my remembrance warrants. (I ii 44-46)

and there is also suggestion of a dim past in Prospero's question:
"What seest thou else / In the dark backward and abysm of time?"

By contrasting different verse styles in the scene, Shakespeare is able to play off Prospero's distanced account of his past against Miranda's less distanced responses. Whilst the distancing of the inset narrative tends to emphasise the duality of Prospero's role in the drama, it can be used also to emphasise the subjectivity of his account of past wrongs. Miranda's sympathetic but dispassionate responses, characterised by simpler, more natural, rhythms, suggest that Prospero's tale is somewhat remote for her and, indirectly, throw emphasis on to Prospero's personal resentment. For instance, her reply to Prospero's dramatic "Mark his condition, and th' event; then tell me / If this might be a brother":

I should sin
To think but nobly of my grandmother:
Good wombs have borne bad sons. (I ii 118-120)

by implying that evil is something to be expected and accepted, points to Prospero's subjective view of the past, to his being still unable to accept the fact that his own brother could have wronged him.

By presenting the past through the obviously prejudiced eyes of Prospero, Shakespeare is able to review Prospero's innocence ironically. One would expect the audience's sympathies to be with the innocent Prospero wrongfully cast out, but sympathy here is somewhat alienated: not so much by the remote, taut, elliptical verse, as by
Prospero's manner. Anxious to assert his own blamelessness, Prospero stresses the extent of his trust in Antonio. His resentment at Antonio's wronging him appears as righteous outrage at Antonio's betraying his trust:

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that which, but by being so retir'd,
O'er-priz'd all popular rate, in my false brother
Awak'd an evil nature; and my trust,
Like a good parent, did beget of him
A falsehood in its contrary, as great
As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,
A confidence sans bound . . .

(I ii 89-97)

the extent of his trust, in Prospero's eyes, making Antonio the more guilty. There is, of course, self-commenting irony in Prospero's not considering the possibility that his shrugging off of the responsibilities of state and his blindness to evil may have tempted his brother.

When Prospero begins to relate his tale of the past to his present actions as magician-controller, his tale is further stylised, distanced by the exploitation of the romantic narrative convention of innocent exiles cast out to sea in a "rotten carcass of a butt, not rigg'd, / Nor tackle, sail, nor mast, . . ." The suggestion of sympathy between the banished pair and Nature:

casts over this part of his tale the unreal mist of romance. Miranda is seen as the happy "chance" that may redeem Prospero's sorrow, the gift of Providence enabling him to face fortune patiently. The language and imagery in which these ideas are presented is stylised and unreal:
0, a cherubin
Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from heaven,
When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt,
Under my burthen groan'd; which rais'd in me
An underlying stomach to bear up
Against what should ensue. (I ii 152-158)

This distancing, emblematic style serves to relate the events of past and present. Prospero's banishment is seen not as something irrevocable but as subject to a controlling vision which, while allowing the banishment, has yet given him the means of restoration, for they came ashore "By Providence divine," and owing to the "charity" and "gentleness" of Gonzalo they have had not only means of preservation but "Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries" and "volumes that / I prize above my dukedom."

When Prospero's story reaches the point of their arrival on the island, he resumes his magic cloak; he is no longer simply the man subject to storm but once more the magician-controller, and Miranda questions him again as to his reason for "raising this sea-storm."

Prospero's powers are asserted verbally:

By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
(Now my dear lady) hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop. (I ii 178-184)

and visibly in his putting Miranda to sleep and calling up his spirit servant, though Miranda's sleeping suggests as well that the tale has been for her one that was tedious and unreal ("The strangeness of your story put / Heaviness in me.") Prospero's putting Miranda to sleep is, too, a subtle transition, an expression in dramatic action both of Prospero's reassumption of his role as magician-controller, and of the
movement from a dream-like past to a fantastic present.

As we have noted before, the dramatist may use increased distance to give greater detachment but he may also use it to enforce engagement. It is not altogether surprising, then, to find that especially in the earlier plays the adoption of more stylised verse for a scene frequently corresponds to a general heightening of emotion, the increased distance occasioned by the change from blank to rhymed or more conceited verse enabling the dramatist to give increased intensity to the scene. In *Henry VI, Part One*, for example, the three scenes between Talbot and his son John (IV v, vi, vii) which form the emotional climax of the play are, significantly, the only scenes in the play where rhymed verse occurs.

The same relation between emotional heightening and stylisation is seen in *Richard II* where excess of emotion is characterised by a high degree of stylisation. Frequently in Richard's speeches, as emotional lyrical outbursts give way to rant, stylisation becomes extreme. Richard's speeches in the climactic deposition scene (IV i) with their elaborate rhetorical organization of thought and feeling, communicate by the extravagance of word-play, of rhetorical inversions and contractions, word-patterning and rhyme, the extremity of Richard's passion:

Re-enter Attendant, with a glass.
Give me the glass, and therein will I read.
No deeper wrinkles yet? hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine,
And made no deeper wounds? 0 flattering glass,
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face that faced so many follies,
And was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke?
A brittle glory shineth in this face:
As brittle as the glory is the face;
Dashes the glass against the ground.

For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport,
How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face.

Boling. The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd
The shadow of your face.

K. Rich. Say that again.
The shadow of my sorrow! ha! let's see:
'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;
And these external manners of laments
Are merely shadows of the unseen grief,
That swells with silence in the tortured soul;
There lies the substance: and I thank thee, king,
For thy great bounty, that not only givest
Me cause to wail, but teachest me the way
How to lament the cause . . .

(IV i 276-302)

The rhetorical elaboration—the cumulative rhetorical questions, apostrophe, sentence, irony—lend a lyrical intensity and extremity to his expression of passion and bitterness that attracts both compassion and censure.

In earlier scenes in Richard II changes in verse style, from blank to rhymed or highly stylised verse, in Richard's speeches are used to characterise dramatic or pathetic changes of mood. In Act Three scene two, for example, a change to rhyme marks the dramatic change from Richard's elevated confidence:

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord;
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard Imth in heavenly pay
A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.

(III ii 54-62)

to the shocked, despairing, reply to Aumerle's "Why looks your grace so pale?" on hearing Salisbury's news that his army has been dispersed by Bolingbroke:
When Aumerle recalls to him his earlier cause for faith ("Comfort, my liege, remember who you are"), Richard reverts to his earlier blank verse:

I had forgot myself; am I not king?
Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleepest.
Is not the king's name twenty thousand names?
Arm, arm, my name! A puny subject strikes
At thy great glory. Look not to the ground,
Ye favourites of a king: are we not high?
High be our thoughts: I know my uncle York
Hath power enough to serve our turn. But who comes here?

Our knowledge that York has already joined Bolingbroke, after the ironic undermining of Richard's first expression of supreme confidence by the news of Salisbury, makes Richard's renewed confidence here seem the more foolish and naive. The change in distance effected with the change in verse style serves subtly to emphasise Richard's change of mood as a regression, a deliberate blinding of himself to the truth of the situation.

Continual changes from blank to rhymed verse mark Richard's wavering between resolution and despair. Heartened by Carlisle's and Aumerle's persuasion that it is better for him to fight, Richard's more spirited response is reflected in his change to rhymed verse:

Thou chidest me well: proud Bolingbroke, I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague fit of fear is over-blown;
An easy task it is to win our own.
Say, Scroop, where lies our uncle with his power?
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

(III ii 188-193)
Scroop's bitter news:

I play the torturer, by snail and small
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken:
Your uncle York is join'd with Bolingbroke,
And all your northern castles yielded up,
And all your southern gentlemen in arms
Upon his party. (III ii 198-203)

provokes momentary anger, marked by a change for six lines to blank verse, with a change back to rhyme as Richard's mood changes to one of self-pity and bitter resignation:

Thou has said enough.
Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth
Of that sweet way I was in to despair
To Aumerle.
What say you now? what comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly
That bids me be of comfort any more.
Go to Flint castle; there I'll pine away;
A king, woe's slave, shall kingly woe obey.
What power I have, discharge; and let them go
To ear the land that hath some hope to grow,
For I have none; let no man speak again
To alter this, for counsel is but vain.
(III ii 203-214)

Even more marked is the change in the following scene from the impersonal majesty of Richard's speech from the walls:

We are amazed; and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee, To North.
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king:
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismiss'd us from our stewardship;
For well we know, no hand of blood and bone
Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,
Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp.
(III iii 72-81)

to the self-pitying helplessness of his:

What must the king do now? must he submit?
The king shall do it: must he be deposed?
The king shall be contented: must he lose
The name of king? a' God's name, let it go:
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
My figured goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little little grave, an obscure grave;
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway,
Some way of common trade, where subjects' feet
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;
For on my heart they tread now whilst I live;
And buried once, why not upon my head?

(III iii 143-159)

The flexible logical organization of the first contrasts with the more obtrusive rhetorical elaboration and patterning of the second which, indeed, by comparison appears self-pitying rant.

The use of highly stylised verse to express passion is not characteristic of the earlier plays alone. In the later plays the rhetorical means used to effect a heightening of emotion are generally more subtle and less obtrusive; but, throughout his career, Shakespeare uses a non-naturalistic mode of writing to gain maximum control in the organization of ideas and emotions, and maximum clarity and succinctness in their expression. Whilst the very unreality of rhetoric with its formal organization of thought and feeling imposes distance, it makes possible a persuasiveness, compactness, and richness which, when as in Shakespeare's verse combined with unequalled range, flexibility, and imaginative power, give Shakespeare in rhetoric a means of communicating thought and feeling alike with compelling passion.

Whilst change in verse style may be used in the presentation of a scene to express a character's change of mood, a marked change in the mood of the play may be similarly characterised. We have a notable example of this in The Merchant of Venice. The movement of the main characters from Venice to Belmont marks their movement from the tensions of the court-room to a relaxed and harmonious life at Belmont, marks a
change in the nature of the action as the real hazards sustained in Venice in Act IV are replaced by hazards merely contrived by Portia and Nerissa for their husbands by way of playful teasing. The transition in the comedy from averted harm to achieved joy cannot be made immediately in the action. The tension of the court-room scene has been too great to allow for an immediate unmasking by Portia and Nerissa. But this transition is reflected in the lyrical, balanced, richly evocative verse that marks the opening of Act Five, an Act in which comic harmony is established through a resolving of the comic complications of the ring trick (a device to reduce tension, to induce a more playful tone, to allow a comic spirit to dominate at the close.)

Simply by a change in verse style Shakespeare is able to mark the change in the nature of the action and to help both to set the scene for Portia's and Nerissa's playful teasing and to induce a sense of harmony and completeness:

\[
\text{Lo.} \quad \text{The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,}
\quad \text{When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,}
\quad \text{And they did make no noise, in such a night}
\quad \text{Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls,}
\quad \text{And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents}
\quad \text{Where Cressid lay that night.}
\]

\[
\text{Jes.} \quad \text{In such a night}
\quad \text{Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,}
\quad \text{And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,}
\quad \text{And ran dismayed away.}
\]

\[
\text{Lo.} \quad \text{In such a night}
\quad \text{Stood Dido with a willow in her hand}
\quad \text{Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love}
\quad \text{To come again to Carthage.}
\]

\[
\text{Jes.} \quad \text{In such a night}
\quad \text{Medea gathered the enchanted herbs}
\quad \text{That did renew old Aeson.}
\]

\[
\text{Lo.} \quad \text{In such a night}
\quad \text{Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,}
\quad \text{And with an unthrift love did run from Venice,}
\quad \text{As far as Belmont.}
\]
Lorenzo's and Jessica's is a lyrical and delightfully balanced rhetorical duologue. The "high" poetic style, the formal presentation of exempla, have a distancing effect that is not negated by their wittily adding themselves to the list of the world's great lovers.

The possibility of a betrayal of love (an undertone in the ring-trick sequence) is hinted at in the exempla chosen and, more directly, in Lorenzo's and Jessica's gentle mockery of one another. Here, as "betrayal" is countered with "forgiveness", the resolution of the ring-trick is foreshadowed. Predicting harmony (and helping thus analogically to establish the probability of events to follow) the duologue serves, yet more importantly, to assure us that no harm will occur, allowing a full working out of the lover's quarrel within a "framework of warm reassurance"¹—reassurance notably absent from the trial scene. The distanced and distancing effect of the scene, essential to the dramatic structure, is largely effected through the unexpected adoption of an artificial, euphuistic, graceful, and romantic verse style.

Thus, both by deliberately breaking continuity of style and by introducing markedly stylised verse, the dramatist can engineer a distancing effect. In addition, Shakespeare frequently effects a marked

tonal change without actually changing to euphuistic verse or to prose. In Act One scene six of *Macbeth*, for example, Shakespeare is able to convey a sense of pervading harmony (and so have us appreciate the newly restored peace so soon to be disrupted by Macbeth's treachery) through verse which in style is comparable to that of the preceding scene but which in tension and tone is so different that by contrast it appears **lyrical** and even ceremonial:

**Dun.** This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

**Ban.** This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendant bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
The air is delicate.

**Enter Lady Macbeth.**

**Dun.** The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God yield us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

**Lady M.** In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad, wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits. (I vi 1-20)

The gentle rhythms, the soft full vowels, the smooth and balanced phrasing, convey through sound a sense of the deep and pervading natural harmony, both fertile and blessed, which is the subject of the King's and Banquo's exchange: the natural harmony seeming to reflect the harmony between king and subject seemingly enacted in Lady Macbeth's ironically gracious welcome, a harmony which, based on principles of love, honour, and fealty, is of course soon to be disrupted by treachery.
Where a highly rhetorical verse style appears incongruous to a situation, our consciousness of the incongruity tends to undermine its distancing effect. Consequently, instead of taking the rhetoric spoken by the characters for granted (we do not, for example, think of Hamlet's "To be or not to be" as a rhetorical exercise), we see it more as the characters' own chosen means of expression. We are aware of conceited verse, of rhetorical expression, as such, and may well be amused at what seems to be the characters' own inappropriate adoption of such expression; we may even see its inappropriateness as an indication of the characters' lack of awareness.

Our impression of the blindness of the lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream, for example, is largely based on their seeming confusion in applying conventional sentiments to their own situation. In Act Two scene one, when Demetrius enters pursued by Helena, much of the humour arises from the reversal of the conventional love situation, the role of icy mistress and fawning lover being inverted. The effect of this reversal is enhanced throughout by the use of Petrarchan conceits. The playing on words, the punning, so typical of Petrarchan love verse, are used to expose a blindness and excess inherent in their roles. Helena's

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you. (II i 195-198)

plays with the conceit of the lodestone attracting true metal, and would wittily throw responsibility on to Demetrius. The Petrarchan paradox that the disdain of the mistress should only increase the burning fervour of her lover, on Helena's lips intensifies the absurdity of the situation:

The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you . . . (II i 204-207)
Demetrius, in exasperation, tries by bluntness and realism to break through the artificial situation and the net of conceits Helena would weave round him:

You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night,
And the ill counsel of a desert place,
With the rich worth of your virginity. (II i 214-219)

The Petrarchan mistress' strength was her unassailable dignity and aloofness. Demetrius' strength is physical. He is capable, as he points out, not just of inflicting the conventional harm of "icy glances" but actual harm. The foolishness of Helena, and the absurdity of the whole scene, are exposed in this juxtaposition of the conventional and actual. Helena's refusal here to recognise something she does not want to face is presented not only as the conventional blindness of love but also as thick-skinned unawareness:

Your virtue is my privilege for that.
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you, in my respect, are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me? (II i 220-226)

Her unawareness is carried to its extreme as Helena answers Demetrius' threat "if thou follow me, do not believe / But I shall do thee mischief in the wood" with the extravagant resolution:

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. (II i 243-244)

When some touchstone is included in a scene to make us conscious of the inappropriateness of conventional expression to a particular situation, we laugh at the rhetorical exaggeration of sentiment and expression. This is invariably how Touchstone's parody works in As You Like It:
Sil. If thou remember'st not the slightest folly
That ever love did make thee run into,
Thou hast not loved:
Or if thou hast not sat as I do now,
Wearing thy hearer in thy mistress' praise,
Thou hast not loved:
Or if thou hast not broke from company,
Abruptly, as my passion makes me,
Thou hast not loved.
O Phebe, Phebe, Phebe! Exit.

Ros. Alas, poor shepherd! searching of thy wound,
I have by hard adventure found mine own.

Touch. And I mine. I remember, when I was in love, I
broke my sword upon a stone and bid him take that
for coming a-night to Jane Smile; and I remember the
kissing of her batler and the cow's dugs that her
pretty chrop hands had milk'd; and I remember the
wooning of a peascod instead of her, from whom I
took two cods and, giving her them again, said with
weeping tears, "Wear these for my sake". We that
are true lovers run into strange capers: but as all
is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal
in folly.

Ros. Thou speak'st wiser than thou art ware of.

Touch. Nay, I shall ne'er be ware of mine own wit till I
break my shins against it.

Ros. Jove, Jove! this shepherd's passion
Is much upon my fashion.

Touch. And mine; but it grows somewhat stale with me.

(II iv 31-59)

Silvius' action mocks his words: his departure makes what is usually a
verbal conceit actual. His ephusistic style is parodied as Touchstone
adapts it to prose, the repetitive patterning of Silvius' "If thou ... Or if thou ... Or if thou ..." mocked by Touchstone's "I remember ... and I remember ... and I remember ..." and Silvius' notions of
a lover's role mocked in Touchstone's earthy actualising of conventional
folly. Rosalind's sympathy, on the other hand, is recorded in her
adopting Silvius' verse style ("Jove, Jove! this shepherd's passion / Is
much upon my fashion.")

There are many ways in which we may be made conscious of the
inappropriateness of a verse style. It may simply be that words are
mocked by action, or that they appear to falsify or simplify a situation which is recognisably complex; or it may be that an eiron is included in the scene whose perspective on events is so very different and so much more flexible than that of other characters that, by contrast, they appear to be entirely absorbed in their roles, and the formal verse style that they use seems a reflection of their limited awareness and self-awareness. We have a sophisticated example of the latter in *Measure for Measure*.

Whilst *Measure for Measure* may seem akin to a morality play in that a principle of justice, of testing and rewarding virtue, appears to govern its structure, its apparent structure is developed with wry logic. The play begins with a scene in which the Duke, for the duration of a proposed absence, formally hands over the reins of power. It becomes clear in Act One scene three that his retirement is contrived partly so that laws may be tightened and made more effective by Angelo:

> Who may in th' ambush of my name strike home,  
> And yet my nature never in the fight  
> To do in slander. (I iii 41-43)

without the Duke losing his name as a merciful ruler, and partly as a calculated experiment to see "If power change purpose, what our seemers be." Shakespeare preserves the comic framework throughout—"we may regard the Duke's formulation of this experiment simply as an arbitrary starting-point for the ensuing action (comparable with Duke Frederick's decision to banish Rosalind in *As You Like It*)—but Shakespeare uses it also for an ironic exploration of the discrepancy between avowed motive and self-interest and between a character's self-image, the image he projects to others, and his true self.  

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1 My interpretation of *Measure for Measure* is influenced by Professor D.R.C. Marsh's reading of the play; see "The Mood of Measure for Measure," *SL* XIV, 31-38.
Through a continual play of irony, we come to regard the Duke's experiment and his direction of it not only as comic convention but also, more naturalistically, as an experiment formulated and conducted to its conclusion by someone who has dangerously little awareness of the implications or dangers of allowing evil to occur and altogether too little regard for the human beings he subjects to it.

In the final scene Shakespeare, through his management of verse style and through the inclusion of an eiron, uses irony, as he has done by various means throughout, to undermine a view of the play which would induce us to accept it, less critically, as a comedy or morality. He is able thus to make the audience responsive to satirical overtones. While, within the comic framework of the play, the conclusion appears to be a re-establishing of equilibrium, or moral order, the scene is so managed that we see it also as the farcical imposition of an arbitrary "moral" framework on the situation.

The "justice" meted out, the self-satisfaction of the Duke as he brings the play to a successful close, would come dangerously close to being acceptable were it not for the presence of Lucio, who as eiron serves both to undermine the formal dignity imposed on the scene by the role-playing Duke, and to show up a certain rigidness of mind and a smug self-righteousness in the Duke, which ironically qualify our view of his chosen role and of the justice he dispenses. In the Duke's interrogation of Mariana, for example, Lucio's bawdy interruptions comically destroy the effect that the Duke, with his play-acting, is striving to create, the dignity he is trying to preserve. The distancing effect of Mariana's riddle, conventional in recognition scenes in romance, is quite lost:
The final scene is distanced by our expectation of events and by our awareness of the Duke's control. In the previous scenes the Duke's various contrivings have been displayed one by one, the scene of unmasking all too obviously prepared for. Lucio's presence in the scene, however, has an undermining effect. Throughout the play the Duke's disguise has made him vulnerable to Lucio's malicious depreciation. Ironically the Duke has been unable to prevent Lucio's continuous pricking of his self-esteem: ironically, because the Duke has planned his experiment partly as a means of protecting his public image and his self-image. The presence of Lucio's taunting is the more strongly felt in the final scene because the Duke cannot hasten his unmasking to silence him. The Duke's punishment of Lucio not only smacks of personal revenge—Lucio is the only one to have personally wronged the Duke—so undermining the Duke's projected image of himself as a disinterested dispenser of justice, but also points up the dubious justice in marrying off Mariana and Angelo. The Duke seems to be using

1 Perhaps, however, Lucio's interruptions in the final scene are so extreme as to make the audience feel some irritation towards him, and to feel, therefore, more ready to accept his punishment.
matrimony arbitrarily as an instrument of justice, as both the means of rewarding Isabella and Mariana and the means of punishing Angelo and Lucio. The extraordinary logic that the Duke employs takes so little account of the human situation to which it is applied that his solution carries a self-commenting irony.

Not only does the presence and the punishment of Lucio contribute to our ironical view of the final scene of Measure for Measure but also, less directly, Shakespeare uses the verse of the scene for a subtle ironical undermining of assumed attitudes. It may be argued that the Duke's own lack of insight and of self-awareness are subtly and effectively revealed in the flat, smug, unfeeling verse:

'An Angelo for Claudio', death for death.
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure,
Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested,
Which, though thou wouldst deny, denies thee vantage.
We do condemn thee to the very block
Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like haste.

(V i 407-413)

Or, it may perhaps as cogently be argued that here the Duke is with conscious irony adopting this rigid attitude, that as a means of educating Angelo he is playing out the scene first as it might be played according to Angelo's rigid scheme of Justice and then, rejecting this scheme having demonstrated its inadequacies, as directed by an all-merciful Duke. Whether one accepts either or both of these interpretations as likely, it is notable that in the Duke's final speech there seems to be the same kind of ironic undermining of the Duke's role as all-merciful ruler:
She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore. 
Joy to you, Mariana; love her, Angelo: 
I have confess'd her, and I know her virtue. 
Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness; 
There's more behind that is more grateful. 
Thanks, Provost, for thy care and secrecy; 
We shall employ thee in a worthier place. 
Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home 
The head of Ragozine for Claudio's; 
Th' offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel, 
I have a motion much imports your good; 
Where to if you'll a willing ear incline, 
What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine. 
So, bring us to our palace, where we'll show 
What's yet behind that's meet you all should know. 

(V i 522-536)

The artificial balance of the verse makes us conscious of the Duke 
smugly tying up all the threads, the over-simplification involved in 
his neat summary (and enacted in the neat phrasing) suggests the 
imposition of an unreal and superficial harmony. In self-congratulatory, didactic verse, the Duke seems to be thanking the cast of his play.

By considering even the very obvious changes in verse style 
in the plays we can gain some idea of the way in which Shakespeare uses 
verse structurally to help effect significant changes in distance: to 
indicate changes in the mood of a play or changes in the level of 
playing, even to further characterisation by conveying an impression of 
intensity of emotion or of an excess of emotion, or to invest a speech or 
a scene with self-commenting irony. It is as illuminating to consider 
Shakespeare's use of alternating verse and prose.

Conventionally in Elizabethan drama prose was used for low-
life scenes, verse for courtly; prose for comic plots, verse for romantic 
or tragic. The convention seems to occur naturally in the many-levelled
drama which Shakespeare inherited and perfected. In many plays Shakespeare makes subtle and extensive use of prose to distinguish comic material which in a complex plot is developed as comment upon the central experience; in other plays he reverses the convention, using prose to develop the central experience with greater naturalness and freedom. Typically he uses the contrast of verse and prose to suggest the co-existence of different social worlds in the play, to contrast different kinds of experience.

With prose as a foil to the elaborateness and intensity of verse, Shakespeare can make us more conscious of and more responsive to heightened language; he is able thus more effectively to use verse to distance action requiring an intense response, a deeper order of commitment to the dramatic illusion. In the church scene in Much Ado a change from the light prose jesting on the difference of the active and passive senses of the verb "to marry," with Claudio's answer ironically ominous:

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.
Claud. No.
Leon. To be married to her: friar, you come to marry her. (IV i 4-6)

to the harshness of Claudio's rejection of Hero is registered in a change from prose informality to the mock formality and sneering intensity of Claudio's verse:

Bene. How now! interjections? Why, then, some be of laughing, as ah! ha! he!
Claud. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave: Will you with free and unconstrained soul Give me this maid, your daughter?
Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.
Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?
D.Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.
Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed:
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

(IV i 16-39)

In Twelfth Night Viola speaks prose to Olivia till she begins formally
to woo her for the Duke. All other characters dismissed from the stage,
their exchange has greater intimacy and this is reflected also in the
change to verse. In verse, Viola's praise of Olivia's beauty has an
impersonality that at once lends it force and makes Viola's position the
more painful. Olivia's tendency to mock in prose gives way to verse as,
moved by Viola's words and person, she becomes increasingly sympathetic
towards her and her suit:

Vio. 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on:
Lady, you are the cruellest she alive,
If you will lead these graces to the grave
And leave the world no copy.

Oli. O! sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; I will give
out divers schedules of my beauty; it shall be
inventoried, and every particle and utensil
labelled to my will; as, Item, Two lips indifferent
red; Item, Two grey eyes with lids to them; Item,
One neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent
hither to praise me?

Vio. I see you what you are: you are too proud;
But, if you were the devil, you are fair.
My lord and master loves you: O! such love
Could be but recompens'd, though you were crown'd
The nonpareil of beauty.

Oli. How dost he love me?
Vio. With adorations, fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.
Oli. Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him:
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulg'd, free, learn'd and valiant;
And in dimension and the shape of nature
A gracious person, but yet I cannot love him:
He might have took his answer long ago . . .
(I v 247-272)

The change to verse helps to make a change in distance, the prose that precedes being, to use Milton Crane's phrase, "a frame and measure" for the verse, the contrast an effective means of distancing what follows.

The same principle of contrast governs what is commonly described as "comic relief" in the tragedies when the presence of characters, oblivious of tragedy, speaking relaxed prose when the tension of the action is mounting unbearably, may be used both to increase suspense and to increase our awareness of the significance of the events about to occur. They help, indirectly, to distance those events by making us more responsive to the heightened language in which they are presented: the Porter's speech in Macbeth or the gravediggers' scene in Hamlet are notorious examples.

The fluidity of action on an Elizabethan stage, the development of a many-levelled action, the use of juxtaposition as a basic technique, required rapid and repeated reorientations by the audience during a performance. Shakespeare's command of a flexible verse medium and his mastery of dramatic prose enabled him to effect such orientations with remarkable speed. In the pivotal scene, Act Three scene three, of The Winter's Tale, for example, Shakespeare, with a switch from verse to prose in mid-scene, might be said suddenly to effect a change not just in the mood but in the whole character of the play. A more detailed analysis of the scene, and consideration of its place in the play as a

1 Milton Crane, Shakespeare's Prose (Chicago, 1951), p.100.
whole, suggest, however, the difficulty of estimating the extent to which the change from stylised verse to naturalistic prose in the scene actually contributes to the major reorientation that is effected. We are faced here with the danger of too readily ascribing a general effect to a single means. It is perhaps worth considering the scene in some detail.

Act Three scene three opens with a heavy sense of foreboding, occasioned by the threatening storm, by the Mariner's warning of the dangers of the place "famous for the creatures / Of prey that keep upon't," and even more by the Mariner's premonition that this storm means more than the fury of the elements:

In my conscience,
    The heavens with that we have in hand are angry,
    And frown upon's. (III iii 4-6)

Foreboding deepens with Antigonus' relation of his weird and apparently supernatural dream (a narration which distracts attention from Antigonus' present situation but influences the way we regard it.) Antigonus tells how Hermione appeared to him, a figure both of sorrow and of sanctity. The description of Hermione is distanced, conveying both strangeness and a visionary quality that brings to mind the description that Cleomenes and Dion give in Act Three scene one of Delphos with its air of the "ceremonious, solemn and unearthly": there is in Antigonus' description

I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,
    So fill'd, and so becoming: in pure white robes,
    Like very sanctity. (III iii 21-23)

the same tone of awe and reverence that we find in their description of that isle. Here Hermione's motions, as Antigonus describes how she "thrice bow'd before me" suggest ritual. Instead of the peace and
fertility associated with Delphos, however, we have Hermione's sorrow
associated with storm, though the imagery is distanced by an almost
bizarre extravagance:

And, gasping to begin some speech, her eyes
Became two spouts; her fury spent, anon
Did this break from her? (III iii 25-27)

Hermione's direction to leave the child in Bohemia and her
foretelling of Antigonus' death are solemnly recorded. Antigonus'
affirmation that the dream is not meaningless carries weight:

Dreams are toys:
Yet for this once, superstitiously,
I will be squar'd by this. (III iii 39-41)

even though he misinterprets the dream. His conviction that Hermione
is dead and that her ghost has appeared to him is allowed to stand
uncorrected here (and remains uncorrected till the revelation of the
statue scene), though his assumption of Hermione's guilt is waived by
the confirmation given in the preceding scene of her innocence. However
we decide to interpret its cause and meaning, the recorded apparition
has dramatic significance, in its emotional effect expressive of the
sorrow that has apparently caused Hermione's death.

Where concentration on Antigonus' feelings on abandoning
the child would evoke from the audience only protest at the inhumanity
of its exposure, the dream gives to the fantastic events to follow
(both immediately and subsequently) an appearance of divine ordinance.
As there was direction for placing Perdita in Bohemia, both the
shepherd's finding her and, less directly, her eventual meeting with
Florizel, the prince of Bohemia, seem less coincidental. And so in
this eventual meeting the emphasis in presentation can move away from
chance to the natural fulfilment of something made possible or even
purposed by the gods.

There is an abrupt change in distance with the dramatic tour de force "Exit, pursued by bear." Surprise compounded of fear, thrill, and amusement at the too immediate realisation of Antigonus' and the Mariner's forebodings and Hermione's prophecy, jolts the audience into accepting without protest the immediate entry of the kindly old shepherd who, conventionally, must find the exposed babe. The new level of playing is immediately established by the Shepherd's opening monologue. The seriousness and the formality of Antigonus' verse

The day frowns more and more: thou'rt like to have
A lullaby too rough: I never saw
The heavens so dim by day. A savage clamour!
Well may I get aboard! This is the chase:
I am gone forever! (III iii 54-58)

is replaced by an informal, flexible prose:

Enter a SHEPHERD.
I would there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty,
or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is
nothing in the between but getting wenches with child,
wronging the ancentry, stealing, fighting—Hark you
now! Would any but these boiled-brains of nineteen
and two-and-twenty hunt this weather? . . .
(III iii 59-65)

The foreboding of Antigonus and the Mariner furthered acceptance of the incredible action. The perspective brought to events by the old shepherd and his son enables Shakespeare to bridge the two dramatic actions of the play. The melodramatic events of the first three Acts are recalled—now subject to a rustic humour. The court world has treated the subject of adultery with almost unmitigated gravity, has literally made a life and death issue of it in Hermione's trial. In the Shepherd's world such matters are accepted and unexceptionable, as but further instances of human folly. The play on the difference between
"three-and-twenty" and "two-and-twenty" in the speech above points to a humorous awareness that the definition of youth as prone to any excess and maturity as exempt from them, is not entirely the matter of age he declares it to be. Indirectly this is a recognition of general human folly that cancels a too-serious view of human weakness and puts tolerance and kindness in place of rejection and cruelty. Misconduct is seen as something forgivable, as something that is, after all, hardly more than to be expected (and especially of those in courtly circles!)

The clown, even in witnessing death, can find incongruity. His perspective of events turns tragedy into bathos. The frothing sea engulfing the ship, by an image both apt and incongruous, becomes an overflowing keg. Antigonus who affirms his nobility in the very face of "Death the leveller" is a subject for laughter as well as for pathos; and the screams of the unfortunates meeting death are seen as if in comic and pathetic contest with beast and elements. The clown's prose description is not altogether unfeeling. It lacks the subjective aspect that belongs to sympathy. How extraordinarily elastic it is in its objectivity, on the other hand, is seen in the comment: "I have not wink'd since I saw these sights; the men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half din'd on the gentleman; he's at it now." The Shepherd's sympathy is mocked:

| Shep. | Would I had been by, to have helped the old man! |
| Clown. | I would you had been by the ship side, to have helped her; there your charity would have lacked footing. |

He turns immediately from considering death to considering birth:

The scene offers many perspectives on disaster—ranging from Antigonus' forebodings and his sense of being cursed by the task that falls to him to the dramatic surprise, the mixture of fear, thrill, and amusement, experienced by the audience in the almost immediate realisation of these forebodings as a bear appears and pursues Antigonus off the stage; from the Shepherd's acceptance of disaster—with surprise no greater than that on his discovery of the babe—to the Clown's perception of the incongruous not in the fact of disaster but in the more trifling circumstances surrounding it; the scene ending on a note of elation with the Shepherd's and Clown's discovery of the gold ("'Tis a lucky day, boy, and we'll do good deeds on't.")

Verse is obviously an important means for regulating distance in the scene: the use of different verse styles and the contrast of verse and prose enables Shakespeare to characterise and to present different perspectives on the events in the scene (Antigonus', indirectly Hermione's, the Shepherd's, and the Clown's.) Yet one cannot reduce the organization of the scene to being purely verbal. Although at the most immediate level the verse seems to mediate the varying perspectives in the scene and changes in verse style and especially the contrast of verse and prose mark changes in distance, the sequence of events in the scene and the place of the scene in the play, impose distance of themselves, and the dramatist, through his management of the audience's knowledge, through his creation of expectations alone, achieves a measure of control. However, the combination of flexibility and control that springs from Shakespeare's mastery of both verse and prose enables him to use to maximum effect both the fluidity of action natural to the Elizabethan stage and the peculiar dramatic force, the veritable shock
tactic, of juxtaposition, to effect in a matter of minutes complete reorientation of the audience and a new direction for the play.

Shakespeare is able to exploit the different distancing effects which verse and prose may have not only to suggest or reflect a change in the nature of the action, but also, as we have remarked, to contrast different social worlds in a play, even to suggest different levels of experience, helping, through the development of a many-levelled action, to give an illusion of scope and concreteness. As Milton Crane notes:

Prose, the form of common speech, introduces an atmosphere of realism; and prose speakers in Shakespeare constantly recall the existence of a world which, although not the "real world" of the audience, is nevertheless somehow physically nearer than the poetic world. His greatest effects of dramatic illusion are obtained by the sense he communicates of the coexistence and interaction of these two worlds. Shakespeare's prose provides a frame and measure for his verse.¹

In the contrast of the two mediums both are defined, but much depends on the way in which the contrast is made. The looseness of prose may be contrasted with the general tautness of verse to help produce a change in tone, to mark a change from tension to relaxation, or from intensity to flippancy; or the bluntness of prose may be opposed to the elaborateness of verse to suggest an opposition of the realistic and the heroic. Prose is suited to direct or business-like communication—effects of bluntness and precision seem natural in prose—but it is suited as well to witty indirection, to the relaxed, the casual, or the flippant. Broken or rambling prose may be used as the language of madness or distraction,

¹ Crane, p. 100.
opposed to the order and metrical regularity of verse, but against passionate verse pleading the simplicity and directness of prose seems the natural medium for calm reasoned argument: Brutus appeals to the mob's reason in a firm, measured prose, Antony stirs them to revenge with passionate verse. Because prose is less constrained than verse the dramatist is able to achieve naturalistic effects by exploiting its comparative looseness or its comparative sharpness (depending on which way it is contrasted with verse), with looseness achieving a range of effects from a casual wit to a garrulous lack of it, with sharpness a range of from the sarcastic to the abrupt or uncouth. It is essentially the way in which verse and prose are contrasted that determines the distancing effect of either.

The contrast which Shakespeare establishes within a play, of heighten with more naturalistic verse, prepares us for and helps us to adjust to changes in distance between scenes: it makes us quickly responsive to changes in style, ready to adjust, with the change in medium, to a major change in tone or to a change in the level of playing. While it is fairly easy to see how Shakespeare manages such contrasts in speech with their related changes in distance when we are considering consecutive scenes or a sudden but complete change from prose to verse, or verse to prose, within a scene, it is perhaps with some surprise that we realise that Shakespeare by having some characters speak prose while others speak verse in a scene can control our relation to the characters, those speaking verse being more distanced for us than those speaking prose, and that he can then exploit that difference in our relation to the various characters or groups of characters to help to define the characters' relations to one another. By having one char-
acter's speech approximate to another's as Olivia's does to Viola's in the scene mentioned earlier, he can suggest an influence of one on another, the development of a sympathy between them; by opposing verse and prose he can suggest a basic lack of communication or accord, a gap in awareness that sets individuals or classes apart.

In Act Two scene five of Romeo and Juliet, for example, in the conversation between the Nurse and a Juliet anxious for news of Romeo, the Nurse's insensitivity throws Juliet's intensity into sharp relief, the different tensions of their speech—the Nurse's prose set against Juliet's taut verse—suggesting the Nurse's lack of sympathy and Juliet's aloneness:

**Jul.** Now, good sweet nurse,—0 Lord, why look'st thou sad? Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily; If good, thou sham'st the music of sweet news By playing it to me with so sour a face.

**Nurse.** I am aweary; give me leave awhile: Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce have I had!

**Jul.** I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news. Nay, come, I pray thee, speak; good, good nurse, speak.

**Nurse.** Jesu, what haste? can you not stay awhile? Do you not see that I am out of breath?

**Jul.** How are thou out of breath, when thou hast breath To say to me that thou art out of breath? The excuse that thou dost make in this delay Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse. Is thy news good, or bad? answer to that; Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance; Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

**Nurse.** Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man. Romeo! no, not he; though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare. He is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench; serve God. What, have you dined at home? (II v 21-47)
Frequently the juxtaposition of different speech media within a scene, with a sharpening of our sense of the tones contrasted, allows for a rich play or irony and for an intensification of a character's awareness or emotion. In Cleopatra's death scene the prattling prose of the Clown is set against Cleopatra's dignified verse; his blithe ignorance acts as foil to Cleopatra's intense awareness of the significance of her choice:

Clown. Look you, the worm is not to be trusted, but in the keeping of wise people; for indeed, there is no goodness in the worm.

Cleo. Take thou no care, it shall be heeded.

Clown. Very good; give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not worth the feeding.

Cleo. Will it eat me?

Clown. You must not think I am so simple but I know the devil himself will not eat a woman: I know, that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not. But truly, these same whoreson devils do the gods great harm in their women: for in every ten that they make, the devils mar five.

Cleo. Well, get thee gone, farewell.

Clown. Yes, forsooth: I wish you joy o' the worm. Exit. Re-enter CHARMIAN and IRAS with a robe, crown, and other jewels.

Cleo. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me ... (V ii 266-280)

The contrast in tension between Cleopatra's verse and the Clown's prose has the effect of isolating Cleopatra, emphasising her essential dignity, her uniqueness: a distancing effect brilliantly contrived.

Crane gives an instance from Antony and Cleopatra of Shakespeare's measuring the gap in awareness between two characters by setting the verse of one against the prose of another. In Act One scene two, when Antony, following news of Fulvia's death and of the serious situation in Rome, determines to leave Egypt, Enobarbus, who has not heard the messengers, refuses to take him seriously. In prose he mocks Antony's terse statements of his intention:
each stimulates him to a newer and more imaginative gibe at Cleopatra. He is brought suddenly to a dead stop:

Ant. Fulvia is dead.
Eno. Sir?
Ant. Fulvia is dead.
Eno. Fulvia!
Ant. Dead. (I ii 162-165)

But Enobarbus has not been Antony's comrade so long for nothing, and his cynicism will not permit him to credit this implausible grief. Eventually only Antony's direct command: "No more light answers," can make Enobarbus desist. The use of prose and verse externalizes the conflict between the two men. Antony is half-relieved, half-saddened by the news of Fulvia's death; he is much more moved by the realization of the grave situation at home, and determines to leave Cleopatra at once. Enobarbus, unaware of the changed situation in Rome and confident that Antony will be unable to give Cleopatra up, takes his master's resolution first for one of a series of unfulfilled decisions to leave, and then as an expression of purely histrionic grief for Fulvia, Antony closes the interview with a statement of orders and an explanation of facts (p.178).

In The Tempest interesting use is made of contrasting verse and prose within a scene in playing off Caliban's earnestness against Stephano's swaggering role-playing as the plot is formed against Prospero. The second scene of Act Three is in part a parody of court intrigue, a comment on the ruthless self-interest displayed in the plot of Antonio and Sebastian against Alonso. The play on court manners by Stephano and Trinculo, Stephano adopting verse and having the suppliant Caliban kneel before him, makes Caliban's presentation of his temptation absurdly formal:

Cal. I thank my noble lord.
Wilt thou be pleas'd to hearken once again to the suit I made to thee?
Ste. Marry, will I: kneel, and repeat it;
I will stand, and so shall Trinculo. (III ii 36-39)

Ariel straightway enters invisible so that the formulation of this plot against Prospero's life is presented, as was Antonio's and Sebastian's plot against Alonso, as a play within-the-play: Caliban's plea is
presented in passionate verse:

there thou mayst brain him,
Having first seiz'd his books; or with a log
Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,
Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember
First to possess his books; for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command: they all do hate him
As rootedly as I. (III ii 86-93)

Stephano answering him in verse but turning aside constantly to chide
Trinculo in prose. Finally Stephano concluded, switching to a swagger-
ing prose:

Monster, I will kill this man: his daughter and I will
be king and queen--save our graces!--and Trinculo and
thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou like the plot,
Trinculo? (III ii 104-107)

There is a double sense in "plot" here--meaning both intrigue and a
fictional plan which Stephano takes self-contemplating delight in
formulating. This second meaning is suggested again in Stephano's
(prose) reply to the single-minded determination expressed in Caliban's
insistent "When Prospero is destroyed": "That shall be by and by: I
remember the story."

In Act Four scene one as Caliban leads Stephano and Trinculo
on to carry out his plan, his purposefulness is contrasted with their
petulance and capriciousness:

Cal. Be patient, for the prize I'll bring thee to
Shall hoodwink this mischance: therefore speak softly.
All's hush'd as midnight yet.

Trin. Ay, but to lose our bottles in the pool,—

Ste. There is not only disgrace and dishonour in that,
monster, but an infinite loss. (IV i 205-210)

Caliban as single-minded as they are readily distracted, his verse stands
in marked contrast to their prose:
Cal. Prithee, my King, be quiet. See'st thou here, 
This is the mouth of th' cell: no noise, and enter. 
Do that good mischief which may make this island 
Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban, 
For aye thy foot-licker.

Ste. Give me thy hand. I do begin to have bloody thoughts. 

Trin. 0 King Stephano! 0 peer! 0 worthy Stephano! 
look what a wardrobe here is for thee!

Cal. Let it alone, thou fool; it is but trash. 

Trin. 0, ho, monster! we know what belongs to a frippery. 
0 King Stephano!

Ste. Put off that gown, Trinculo; by this hand, I'll have 
that gown.

Trin. Thy grace shall have it. 

Cal. The dropsy drown this fool! What do you mean 
To dote thus on such luggage? Let't alone, 
And do the murder first; if he awake, 
From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches, 
Make us strange stuff. 

Ste. Be you quiet, monster. Mistress line, is not this 
my jerkin? Now is the jerkin under the line: now, 
jerkin, you are like to lose your hair, and prove 
a bald jerkin.

Trin. Do, do; we steal by line and level, an't like your 

Ste. I thank thee for that jest; here's a garment for't: 
wit shall not go unrewarded while I am King of this 
country . . . (IV i 214-243)

Caliban's aloofness from their childish play-acting, marked by a contemptuous verse, prepares us for his reconciliation with Prospero in Act Five scene one:

... I'll be wise hereafter, 
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass 
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god, 
And worship this dull fool! (V i 294-297)

Although, as Milton Crane has shown, Shakespeare adopted conventional uses of dramatic prose, he frequently developed these almost beyond recognition as formal devices. 1 Adopting the Elizabethan convention of prose as the language of madness, for example, he recorded disintegration of personality through the breaking down of control, of meaningful pattern

1 See especially Crane's discussion of Shakespeare's use of prose in Macbeth (pp.173-176).
and order in speech. But, sensing the innate appropriateness—the raison d'être—of the convention, Shakespeare adapted it so skilfully and subtly to psychological and dramatic needs of character and situation that we cease to be aware of it as a formal device. Sometimes Shakespeare uses prose as a blanket means for indicating disorder—as in Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene. More often he uses prose alternating with verse to record sudden fluctuations between madness and insight, between anguish and control, or simply between unbearable tension and exhaustion.

In Othello verse and prose are skilfully juxtaposed. In Act Four scene one, for example, when Iago claims that Cassius has lain with Desdemona, Othello speaks a broken prose till he falls into a trance, his chopped phrases mirroring a shock and confusion that is in sharp contrast with the controlled flow of Iago's verse:

Oth. Lie with her; lie on her?—We say lie on her, when they belie her;—lie with her, zounds, that's fulsome! Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief! To confess, and be hanged for his labour. First, to be hanged, and then to confess; I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears and lips. Is't possible?—Confess?—Handkerchief?—O devil! He falls down.

Iago. Work on, My medicine, work: thus credulous fools are caught, And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus All guiltless, meet reproach. What ho, my lord, My lord, I say! Othello! (IV i 35-48)

Othello waking from his trance resumes verse but turns to prose again when trapped into jealousy by witnessing the meeting of Bianco and Cassio that convinces him of Iago's honesty and Desdemona's guilt. The sympathy between Iago and Othello won over to his purpose is registered then in a common prose:
Oth. I will chop her into messes . . . Cuckold me!

Iago. 'tis foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago, this night; I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again, this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison, strangle her in bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Oth. Good, good: the justice of it pleases, very good.

Iago. And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker: you shall hear more by midnight.

Oth. Excellent, good. (IV i 196-208)

Adapted often to violent fluctuations in tone, the alternation of prose and verse in King Lear is yet more complex. The meeting of the blinded Gloucester with Lear in Act Four scene six provides a striking illustration of a significant sudden change in style:

Glou. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril with a white beard! They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to everything that I said! "Ay" and "no" too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am notague-proof.

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember:

Lear. Is't not the King?

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember:

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:

When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
Adultery?
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'twixt the lawful sheets. To't, Luxury, pell-mell!
For I lack soldiers ... (IV vi 95-120)

The dramatic impact of the meeting, as Professor Coghill has shown, depends on the "explicit recognition of Lear by the blind Gloucester and on
the blind recognition of Gloucester by the seeing Lear" (p. 26).

Lear's verse response underlines the essential ambiguity to which Coghill points:

The act of homage that brings Gloucester to his knees, a loyal subject, leaves him there a seeming culprit, for that is how Lear interprets the ambiguity in kneeling; and now Gloucester's guilt is to be thrust home (pp. 25-26).

If Lear, assuming verse, seems to accept Gloucester's homage as homage due, his speech resounds not only with the dignity of office but also with the authority of justicer.

Having characters of aristocratic rank conventionally speak verse whilst characters of lower rank speak prose is a fairly natural way of distinguishing different social levels in a play and of introducing an implicit notion of social decorum. In The Taming of the Shrew the tinker, Christopher Sly, protests in vigorous prose:

What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marion Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not: if she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom. What! I am not bestraught: here's— (I ii 18-27)

till he begins to be convinced that he is indeed a lord who has slept fifteen years, whereupon he immediately switches to verse:

Am I a lord? and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream? or have I dream'd till now?
I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak;
I smell sweet savours and I feel soft things:
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed,
And not a tinker, nor Christopher Sly. (I ii 70-75)

In our first view of Falstaff and Prince Hal in Henry IV, Part One the enormity of Falstaff's presumption is underlined in simple yet startling manner by his overriding all decorum in speaking with the Prince: "Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?"
In *Coriolanus* the dramatic contrast of verse and prose is developed so richly against the background of a class war as to assume a symbolical aspect. As Crane notes:

> ... In *2 Henry VI* the nobles speak verse and the commons prose primarily because those forms are proper to their respective classes. In *Coriolanus* it is rather the function of the various characters in the play that determines the use of prose or verse. The haughty Coriolanus can really speak only verse; his prose is once a suggestion of disguise and once an actual disguise. Memenius is a blunt and jovial old man whose informality finds a more felicitous expression in prose than in verse. One is, consequently, not astonished to find him serving as a peacemaker between the upper and lower classes. The matrons may speak prose at home, but only verse on the street. Thus there is a kind of double justification of the verse-prose distribution. The patricians speak verse not only because they are patricians but because there is that in their rank (and in their awareness of their rank) which makes verse appropriate to them. In the same way, the plebeians speak prose because prose can best express their confusion and irrationality. The conflict is a class war, beyond doubt, but the symbolical representation of that war is only superficially paralleled by the division in the more primitive drama ... (pp.183-184).

The development of the Elizabethan convention of according prose to the commons and verse to those of aristocratic rank which Crane illustrates here from Shakespeare's own plays is a measure of Shakespeare's ability to transform a formal device till it becomes in itself an instrument for expression and for making us more conscious of, or responsive to, issues explored more deeply in the play. Ten years before *Coriolanus* was written, we find this kind of contrast developed with sophistication in the *Henry IV* plays where the contrast of formal verse and energetic prose is used throughout to define and to suggest, less forcibly perhaps than in *Coriolanus*, the problem of establishing any real communication or accord between different classes in a society.
Hal's control and grace in being able to move freely between the two worlds of Court and Tavern, speaking the language of either, evokes our admiration, but the contrast of verse and prose so sharply mirrors basic differences between the two worlds--differences in attitudes and values which make them ultimately irreconcilable—that we are unable to forget that Hal allows himself only temporary freedom from the responsibility and from the essential isolation of office, a limited time in which claims of personality are to have primacy. If Hal's enjoyment of the companionship, his participation in the life of the Tavern, make us aware what he must forgo in accepting office, the excesses of Falstaff and his crew, of which the Prince is only too keenly aware, make us aware, too, of the need for order and established rule. The formal opposition of verse and prose keep these limiting possibilities constantly before us. If Falstaff as Lord of Misrule seeks with his irresistible prose to confine Hal within the bounds of his world:

Fal. And, I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king, as, God save thy grace,—majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none,—
Prince. What, none?
Fal. No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter.
Prince. Well, how then? come, roundly, roundly.
Fal. Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty: let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal. (Part I: I ii 17-30)

his efforts are matched by the King's long verse persuasion in III ii:

... Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost,
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,
And art almost an alien to the hearts
Of all the court and princes of my blood:
The hope and expectation of thy time
Is ruin'd, and the soul of every man
Prophetically do forethink thy fall ... (III ii 32-38ff)
the blind hopes of one and fears of the other answered for the audience at the end of the second scene of the play in Hal's verse soliloquy, an assertion both of freedom and control:

I know you all, and will uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base and contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him . . . (I i 194-202)

The contrast of verse and prose is, of course, but one means of mirroring and of helping to define an opposition which, through Shakespeare's mastery of the art of significant juxtaposition, is developed complexly and variously. It is, however, worthwhile noting how consistently Shakespeare uses a supporting contrast of verse and prose in the Henry IV plays—not just for juxtaposed scenes but within scenes. The meeting of Falstaff and Hal on the battlefield at the end of Part One is a significant instance:

Prince. What, stand'st thou idle here? lend me thy sword:
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are yet unreversed: I prithee, lend me thy sword.

Fal. O Hal, I prithee, give me leave to breathe a while. Turk Gregory never did such deeds in arms as I have done this day. I have paid Percy, I have made him sure . . . (V iii 40-47)

Hal's impatience for honour contrasted with Falstaff's predictable self-concern and self-indulgence and his irrepressible role-playing. Again, the sudden entry of a messenger at the end of a long and relaxed prose scene (II iv) in Part Two, stressing to Hal the urgency of the national situation in tense verse, is answered by Hal's decisive:

By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame,
So idly to profane the precious time,
When tempest of commotion, like the south
Borne with black vapour, doth begin to melt 
And drop upon our bare unarmed heads.
Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night.

*Exeunt Prince and POINS.*

(II iv 358-363)

Hal's verse thrown into sharp relief by Falstaff's irresponsible prose comment: "Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and we must hence, and leave it unpicked. *Knocking within. Exit BARDOLPH.*

More knocking at the door?"

Verse, we have argued, is in Shakespeare's plays a primary means for effecting and for maintaining orientation to the persons and events on stage, variations in the style and mode of speech an important means for inducing major reorientations: helping both to characterise and to effect important changes in distance and helping to distinguish differently distanced levels of action and experience. However, as we have noted at the beginning of this chapter, a study of the role of dramatic verse in distancing is limited: both because it is impossible to estimate absolutely the contribution that verse makes to any particular distancing effect and because, while verse may be the most subtle and continuously operative means for directing audience response, it is unnecessary and confusing in close analysis to consider subtle variations in tone with regard to the notion of distancing. It can be illuminating to consider in broad terms a structural use of verse and prose to effect major changes in distance but such a critical approach cannot be readily extended and can, as we noted earlier, only supplement close textual analysis.
Despite the limitations of an approach to drama developed along the lines I have chosen, however—analysis of the dramatist's use of distance for controlling audience response—I have attempted at least in some part to satisfy a genuine and largely unfulfilled need for finding critical means for analysing the time-dependent structure of poetic drama (as opposed to dramatic poetry.) By trying to define and illustrate one possible approach to drama as a performed art, I have sought to cast some light onto the nature of live drama and, more especially, onto the art of Shakespeare as a dramatist.
The Arden Shakespeare, old series (gen. ed. W.J. Craig) and new series (gen. eds. H.F. Brooks and H. Jenkins), is the text I have quoted throughout.

I have divided the select bibliography given below into Parts A and B. Part A consists of works which I consider to be helpful and relevant to my study, Part B of works which for the most part do not have direct relevance to the subject matter of my thesis but which have a background usefulness.

Part A


Part B


Fraser, R.A. Shakespeare's Poetics in relation to 'King Lear.' London, 1962.


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<td>Stroup, T.B.</td>
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<td>Shakespeare from 'Richard II' to 'Henry V.'</td>
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