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Duke Vincentio of Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure": A review of the criticism from a dialogic viewpoint

Ahn, Woo Kyu, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1989

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DUKE VINCENTIO OF SHAKESPEARE'S MEASURE FOR MEASURE: A REVIEW OF THE CRITICISM FROM A DIALOGIC VIEWPOINT

by

Woo Kyu Ahn

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the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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Since the neo-classical period, critics writing about Duke Vincentio have exhibited different forms of literary provincialism (generic, historical, New Critical, psychological, ideological, etc.), and recently these different provincial approaches have been subjected to rigorous "scientific analysis" under the influence of post-Hegelian dialectics, thus making the critical situation more complicated, if not worse.

This writer reviews some of the criticism of the Duke in several "provincial" categories from the early conventionalism of the neo-classicists, through psychological relativism of the romanticists, down to ideological "representations" of the neo-historicists, and highlights some inadequacies of these approaches from the writer's East Asian dialogic (yinyang) viewpoint.

In the concluding chapter, this writer argues for the legitimacy and usefulness of a dialogic approach to Shakespeare's characters and offers an analysis of the Duke's characteristic behavior and action (as politician and philosopher) in terms of dialogic tension and harmony, which characterize the Duke and the play as having a peculiar sort of "tragicomicality."

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CHAPTER I

A PROVINCIAL BEGINNING FOR A FRIAR-DUKE

I

Referring to Shakespeare criticism, T. S. Eliot says, "Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative but its own critical turn of mind."[1] When he makes this assertion, he has in mind mainly the French criticism, which has had a very different critical tradition from the English since the neo-classical period. Dryden, as we know, defended Shakespeare against the attacks of the French critics in terms of the same neo-classical rules and regulations of dramatic art that the French were using. In a sense, Eliot's remarks here can be interpreted as an apology for some sort of critical relativism--with its imlications for a proliferation of provincial viewpoints--that would promote the image of Shakespeare as a universal writer in today's global Shakespearean theatre. In other words, Eliot seems to advocate a broad base for

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[1]T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in Selected Essays, 2nd ed. (1950; New York: Harcourt, 1964) 3.

Shakespearean criticism to cater to "every nation, every race."

Any provincial viewpoint in criticism, however, seems to have its own conventional habit or specific environment which colors that viewpoint. To illustrate this point, let me turn to a couple of "Shakespeare" episodes which relate to a particular provincial viewpoint--an East Asian kind. Just a few years ago in 1986, a week-long performance of Hamlet by a group of Korean players at Seoul Hoam Art Hall received enthusiastic critical acclamations in the news media, despite the fact that the performance failed to evoke any tragic catharsis among the audience. In a catastrophic scene (V.ii.), the Korean audience kept on laughing, and the play ended in a tragi-comic way. However, no one seemed to be bothered by this sort of ending or with a need for tragic catharsis; rather everybody seemed to enjoy the play as a comedy--I mean, as a "tragedy."

What mattered most to me was not the players' performance (for they were all famous), but the translated scripts which seemed to invite such a comic catharsis. In any modern Korean translation of Hamlet, something of that classical, tragic air of the play's Elizabethan English is missing, and the drama's tragic implications, along with

the rich Shakespearean imagery and puns, seem to have evaporated somehow. All this seems to have been translated into the players' eloquent but tediously rhetorical speeches during that performance at Hoam Art Hall. Any Korean adaptations of Hamlet would have promised a superior performance as tragedy, for no audience (or players) would want to have possibilities of tragic catharsis buried in "words, words, words" or translated into spectators' laughs and laughs.

Another episode I have in mind is a more serious one in terms of its implications for an East Asian provincial viewpoint in Shakespeare criticism. One day in a semester when I was teaching Measure for Measure, I asked my students to speak out their opinions about the characters of this play. I was amazed by what the students had to say about Angelo and Lucio.[2] Lucio is one of the four principal characters (Duke Vincentio, Angelo, Lucio, and Isabella) and a most indispensable one for the play--

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[2]A cross-cultural perspective I maintain for a while here is excusable in view of the fact that I have been exposed to Japanese and American educational systems since my elementary school days. I owe it especially to the American Jesuit missionaries in Seoul who taught me undergraduate courses in English--particularly Dr. John P. Daly, S.J., and Dr. John E. Bernbrock, S.J., professors of British and American literatures.

perhaps because of his bawdry and satiric jokes[3]--, but what was more intriguing to me was that Lucio had come out "clean" for most students: he was praised for his worldly wit and wisdom and for a "reformist intention" in speaking out against corruptions in high society (very comparable to Satkat Kim, a satiric poet of Lee Dynasty and straw-hatted troubadour, who had a slanderous tongue against the high yangban class).

According to one bright student, Angelo is an "honest" man--being honest about his feelings and motives, especially about his women, Isabella and Mariana. What are they to him, or he to them?: Isabella is a woman possessed with a vanity of tongue, who pays her price (a humiliating bed-trick), and Mariana is a real woman who would make an excellent companion for either the Duke or Angelo, for she has a "motherly patience" and "wifely understanding" (capable of seeing Angelo as "a better man for being a little bad"). At this point, I thought to myself, "Here come Renaissance triumvirs of honesty--Lucio, Angelo, and this student, all unashamed to speak out," leaving out the Duke, of course.

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[3]For some reason Lucio's bawdy and satiric jokes are translatable without much difficulty for college students in Korea.

As I have illustrated so far, an audience or readers with an East Asian sensibility would respond to Shakespeare's drama in their own "provincial" way--traditional in a sense, yet "modern" in another sense (unattached to any past conventions of literary analysis). Shakespeare criticism in East Asia[4] may also show a surprising turn of mind, as Eliot would perhaps have anticipated. For instance, a typical Korean critic is most likely to read a modern translation of Hamlet and analyze it like a modern play. He is likely to avoid its original text in English, which, for all practical purposes, would give him a headache--with all those complicated meanings in imagery, ideas, and puns, which are often untranslatable. As a result, Shakespeare would appear to be surprisingly "modern" in the writings of this critic.

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[4]Here I am referring to Shakespeare criticism in Japanese and Korean, for these two languages, unlike Chinese, belong to the same linguistic family (Ural-Altaic), share many similarities in linguistic behavior and customs, and are easily translatable into one another (see Edwin O. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank, East Asia: The Great Tradition [Boston: Houghton, 1958] 398). As a result, criticism in both languages shares much in common. Since the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula in 1910, there has been a consistent trend among Korean circles of translators and intellectuals of looking for "Japanese experience or precedents" in "receiving western literature"--as Prof. Byung Chul Kim has investigated in his recent work, Hanguk bunyuk munhaksa [A History of Translated Literature] (Seoul: Eulyu, 1975) 4-6.

To a certain degree, translated texts of Hamlet in Korea are responsible for creating a modern cosmetic image of Shakespeare, for they are frequently revised to update language style to cater to the reader's sensibility, while paying little attention to the play's original textual meanings with appropriate comments on puns, allusions, rhetorical devices, etc.[5]

Furthermore, Shakespeare criticism in East Asia can take an unexpected turn in view of the fact that there is no tradition of genre theories and critical conventions available for literary critics if they wish to judge Shakespeare, as Eliot says, "by the standards of the past."[6] Therefore, the kind of complex critical vocabulary that has been developed in the West since Plato and Aristotle in conjunction with genres, rhetoric, criticism, etc., does not exist in Korean criticism. In Korea, contemporary discussions about the novel or drama in terms of unities of plot, character, and theme are a twentieth-century phenomenon under the influence of western

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[5]Several translations of Hamlet have been published in recent years, including those of Professors Sukgi Yeoh, Jaenam Kim, and Geunsam Lee, but none of these new translations has made any essential improvements over Professor Jaesuh Choi's earlier translation of the play, with substantial commentaries, in the 1950's.

[6]Eliot, 5.

literature. In the absence of such a critical tradition, interpretations of Shakespeare can be surprisingly free-handed and perhaps "modern"--I say "modern" for reasons similar to those mentioned above in relation to Hamlet's translations. But on the other hand, the same interpretations can be "traditional" and remote to the eyes of some western critics, especially to those who are not familiar with an intuitive mode of character analysis.

Duke Vincentio, an elusive character for any logical analysis, has evoked a variety of viewpoints in critical history which I perceive as "provincial" in both temporal and spacial dimensions. If Schlegel forms his critical opinion of the Duke in terms of nineteenth-century German aesthetic theory, William Hazlitt's view of the same Duke is rooted in British empirical psychology--both particular provincial viewpoints further deriving from a more comprehensive provincial outlook called "Romanticism," whose tenacious influence in Europe and America lasts well into this century, as Howard Mumford Jones points out.[7] So, when a modern American critic like Harriet Hawkins

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[7]Howard Mumford Jones says that an American (or Western) sense of "indestructible" human individuality is "the enduring gift of romanticism to modern times" (see his book Revolution and Romanticism [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974] 464).

condemns the Duke's behavior "New Englandly" (that is, betraying a Puritan flavor from the viewpoint of American sex-psychology), it still is an American by-product of the Romantic provincial outlook. This sort of provincial dialectic still continues in the criticisms on the Duke today, as I intend to show in the chapters following, but let me ask a timely rhetorical question at this point: would it be possible and profitable to expose this "Duke of dark corners" to an angle of vision with an East Asian critical twist? The first part of this question is answered already in my "Shakespeare" episodes above: the episodes suggest that it is entirely possible.

Would it be profitable to do so? Here again the answer seems to be positive. I believe an East Asian "provincial" viewpoint, characterized by a habit of intuitive thinking, will be particularly useful for analysis of dialogic qualities apparent in a character's behavior, such as the comic and the serious, the practical and the contemplative, good and evil, all of which the Duke seems to be possessed of. I also believe that this viewpoint is useful for reviewing some of the extreme interpretations of the Duke and for keeping them in proper perspective, for all too often western critics strain their interpretation of Shakespearean characters with post-

Hegelian literary methods of analysis. Shakespeare is a Renaissance man, and all his characters are possessed with "traditional" habits of thinking and feeling. Therefore, "Shakespearean" ways of thinking may perhaps be in closer affinity to an East Asian frame of mind (retaining its "traditional" ways of perceiving human qualities) than to that of western contemporaries which has been so accustomed to Hegelian dialectics. Like a bridge over troubled waters in Shakespeare criticism, an East Asian approach may perhaps find a silkroad passage--if not Ophelia's "primrose path"--to the gold mine of Shakespeare and give him the richer and greater dimensions of interpretation he deserves. What I wish to emphasize here is that an East Asian critical viewpoint is also very much at home with Shakespeare, especially in character criticism which must deal with complex characters such as Duke Vincentio. At any rate, it is with these considerations that I find Eliot's theory of a critical relativism meaningful and still very much current.

II

Perhaps none of Shakespeare's plays has generated more conflicting criticism than Measure for Measure. The play, though widely appreciated, has nonetheless been labeled as ambiguous, problematic, and confusing, and thus amenable to many different interpretations. It has baffled many serious students of Shakespeare. A modern critic expresses this feeling well: "No one . . . has read or seen Measure for Measure without experiencing some bewilderment. Even on the first acquaintance, the variety of impressions which the play generates is disquieting."[8] Critics and audience alike have long been aware of this disquieting variety of opinions about the play itself and especially the Duke's role and character.

Some positive and negative interpretations of the Duke have existed side by side throughout the critical history of Measure for Measure. Among early observers who have influenced later critics are Charlotte Lennox and Augustus William Schlegel. Lennox (1750), disapproving of the play in terms of the eighteenth-century neo-classical rules of

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[8]Mary Lascelles, Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (London: Athlone, 1953) 1.

dramatic poetry, severely criticizes the characterization of the Duke for violating these rules.[9] She feels that Shakespeare has "tortured" the materials of tragedy into a comedy and has "corrupted" the original moral fable by Giraldi Cinthio with "useless Incidents, unnecessary Characters, and absurd and improbable Intrigue" (1: 29). In doing so, Shakespeare has violated the "unities" in the play as well as its "poetic justice," for the play does not end with "one good Beheading [of Angelo]," a consequence "naturally expected," but with "three or four Weddings": "Shakespeare has not mended the Moral: for he also shows Vice not only pardoned; but left in Tranquility" (1: 25), thus making the whole story "greatly below" Cinthio's original story. The Duke is "afraid to exert his own Authority" and his actions are "unworthy of a good prince" whose "excellent plotting Brain" is used to corrupt and deceive Angelo, and to misjudge his moral character. In short, all his actions are "absurd and ridiculous" (1: 28).

Lennox's criticism, though meager in volume and possessed of a moraling bias stemming from her neoclassical background, is important because it initiates a trend of negative criticism for the Duke. And because her

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[9]Charlotte Ramsay Lennox, Shakespeare Illustrated. 3 vols. (London, 1753-4; New York: AMS, 1973) 1: 28-29.

difficulty in accepting the Duke derives from her distaste for tragicomedy, I would say that hers was the first generic approach to this character.

On the other hand, August William Schlegel has created a legacy of positive criticism under the auspicious influence of German aesthetic philosophy, imbued with a broad Romantic optimism. In A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature (1815), Schlegel has recognized two positive aspects of the Duke--one religious and one secular--which are "united in his person of the priest and the prince." As a priest, he is, like "an earthly providence," always present over Angelo to prevent any evil-doing and to ensure a happy ending.[10]

Schlegel, however, observes that the Duke as a secular prince is not a very effective ruler. He is whimsical, "too fond of round-about ways," and is forgetful of what he intends and sets out to do:

> He takes more pleasure in overhearing his subjects than governing them in the customary way of princes. As he ultimately extends a free pardon to all the guilty, we do not see how his original purpose, in committing the execution of the laws to other hands, of restoring their strictness, has in

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[10]August William Schlegel, A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art & Literature, trans. John Black and rev. by A. J. W. Morrison (London, 1846; New York: AMS, 1965) 387.

any wise been accomplished.[11]

Except for his whimsical and "round-about" ways, Schlegel finds "no faults" or "none of the black knavish monks" in this Christian ruler who "purposes a happy result" for the play's overall plan, which is "the triumph of mercy over strict justice" (388). Schlegel is the first critic to suggest allegorical implications in the Duke's character--as "an earthly providence"--and to identify the "tender and mild" tone of the play.

Among the English critics of the nineteenth century, William Hazlitt is perhaps most important as far as Measure for Measure is concerned. Unlike Coleridge, who finds the play "most painful,"[12] Hazlitt is generally more sympathetic towards its characters, but he finds the Duke lacking in "passion." The Duke's behavior, he finds, is "more tenacious of his own character than attentive to the feelings and apprehensions of others," thus showing no real sympathy "for the welfare of the State."[13]

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[11]Schlegel, 388.

[12]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespeare Criticism, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1930; New York: Dutton, 1967) 1: 102.

[13]William Hazlitt, The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London; Toronto: Dent, 1930-34) 4: 345-6.

Hazlitt's comment is brief, but it reflects a principle of romantic relativism which applies to psychological as well as ethical interpretation of Shakespeare. In his essay on Measure for Measure, Hazlitt speaks of Shakespeare as both "no moralist" and "the greatest of all moralists":

> In one sense, Shakespeare was no moralist at all: in another, he was the greatest of all moralists. He was a moralist in the same sense in which nature is one. He taught what he had learnt from her. He shewed the greatest knowledge of humanity with the greatest fellow-feeling for it. (4: 356)

Thus the integrity of the Duke's character depends on the psychological power of sympathy and passion or "fellow-feeling" which Shakespeare allows him to have. Of course, this psychological relativism is an important romantic heritage, but Hazlitt's particular way of seeing a Shakespearean character as Shakespeare sees comes more from his British empirical background than from Germanic aesthetic theory or Coleridge's more idealistic theory of the imagination.[14]

Hazlitt's psychological approach with its implied moral relativism has, however, been carried to polarized

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[14]Read John Kinnaird's comment on Hazlitt's view of Shakespeare in William Hazlitt: Critic of Power (New York: Columbia UP, 1978) 173-180.

extremes by later critics. In the nineteenth century, the Duke continues to receive negative epithets, such as "painful," "dark," or "pessimistic," as he is perceived to lack in human sympathy. One critic calls the Duke a "moral Mephistopheles" who arms Angelo with power and ambition and waits for "the destined hour to call him to account."[15] But, an increasing number of critics begin to see some positive aspects of the Duke's character under the influence of Hazlitt's romantic relativism. Henry Hallam, for instance, feels that the Duke is "designed" as a "philosophical character" in an "intensely philosophical" play in which Shakespeare, with the "over-mastering power of his own mind," searched into "the depths and intricacies of being."[16] Alfred Mezieres, a French critic, recognizes the play's "moral elevation of the sentiments and the abundance of philosophic ideas" of which the Duke has an important share.[17] Walter Pater, one of the best known Victorian critics, declares Measure for Measure to be a

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[15]C[harles] H. Herford, ed. The Works of Shakespeare, 10 vols. (London, 1899) 3: 239.

[16]Henry Hallam, Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, new ed., 4 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1882) 3: 295.

[17]Alfred Mezieres, Shakespeare, ses oeuvres et ses critiques (Paris: Carpentier, 1860) 478-9.

"perfect work" and "an epitome" of Shakespeare's delicate moral judgments[18]:

> True justice is in its essence a finer knowledge through love. . . . It is for this finer justice based on a more delicate appreciation of the true conditions of men and things, a true respect of persons in our estimate of actions, that the people in Measure for Measure cry out as they pass before us. (183)

Although Pater makes a passing comment on the Duke (noting his "quaint but excellent moralizing" [175]), the Duke's intricacy and subtlety in behavior would no doubt have been sympathetically viewed by Pater, who reminds us not to forget the situations, "special circumstances, necessities, embarrassment" of the drama into which each character is placed. If the play is considered "perfect," the Duke, whose action dominates in the second half of the play, can certainly be responsible for such success.

Along with this rising tide of positive criticism near the end of the nineteenth century, there appears also a biographical-psychological theory today called the "Mythical Sorrows of Shakespeare," popularized mostly by

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[18]Walter Pater, "Measure for Measure," Appreciations. Library ed. (London: Macmillan, 1910), 170-184. This essay is a revision of his earlier article "A Fragment on Measure for Measure" in Fortnightly Review ns 16 (1874): 652-58.

Edward Dowden.[19] Dowden believes that the sorrows depicted for a few years in Shakespeare's great tragedies are reflective of the artist's own experience in the tragic aspects of life and that those "dark and bitter" plays which have "gone astray and wandered uncertainly to the very borders of the realm of tragedy" (All's Well, Troilus and Cressida, and Measure for Measure) reflect "a moral crisis" of Shakespeare in his love affairs with the mysterious young man and the dark lady and, therefore, his deepened knowledge of the human heart and its mysteries of passion.[20] In Dowden's opinion, the Duke appears in Measure for Measure as a character fostering optimism with "providential foresight" against its dark and bitter background in which Shakespeare searches and probes into the "evil and deceitful heart of man."[21]

Dowden is one of the first critics to rely on external evidence to explain internal elements of a Shakespearean play. His use of somewhat dubious biographical material to explain his "dark and bitter" plays is less convincing

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[19]Edward Dowden's work like Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art (London, 1875; New York: Harper, 1881) popularized his theory.

[20]Dowden, 72.

[21]Edward Dowden, Introduction to Shakespeare (1907; London; Freeport: Books for Library Press, 1970) 72-74.

than those psychological views of the romantic critics that nonetheless rely on internal evidence from the plays themselves. Also, he has an extreme romantic tendency to idealize even "dark and bitter" moods as Shakespeare's "deep searching and probing" of man's deceitful nature. It is through Dowden's effort to publicize the "sorrows" of Shakespeare, however, that the critical interest in those "dark and bitter" plays has been kept alive well into the twentieth century.

There is also, in Dowden's time, another source of positive influence on the "dark and bitter" plays, especially Measure for Measure. This comes from Ibsenian modern dramas called "problem plays," which became popular in England, mostly in the hands of Bernard Shaw. Shaw put on stage plays of contemporary social problems or social interest. He liked Measure for Measure for its "intellectual" content which makes the audience become aware of social issues. The term "problem play" for Measure for Measure is first used by Frederick S. Boas, but Shaw's problem plays had a definite influence in publicizing Shakespeare's "problem plays" as well.

As far as we can see, the critics' views are subject to the influence of a particular trend of their age from which they form their opinions. Thus, Lennox's view is

neoclassical; Schlegel's colored by German aesthetic philosophy, and Hazlitt's by British empirical psychology; Pater is a critic with Pre-Raphaelite sensibility; Dowden's "mythical sorrows" are more becoming to the Decadent period, and so on. When the social dramas of Ibsen and Shaw come into vogue, suddenly Shakespeare's Measure for Measure takes on meanings relevant to the critics of that time.

However, most of the critics of Measure for Measure, in my review so far, have left no extensive or exclusive analysis of the Duke. Pater, who wrote the longest piece of criticism on this play, had in fact very little to say about this character. In all, the criticism on the Duke until the end of the nineteenth century would amount to nothing more than a compendium of quotable remarks. Nonetheless, these pioneering critics form a catalytic force for a revival of critical interest in the play afterwards and for a further development of critical opinions about the Duke into several "provincial" categories.

Beginning with the next chapter, I will review some of those critics who are responsible for this revival of critical interest and for taking distinctly "provincial" approaches in interpreting the Duke. For the convenience

of reviewing, I have, somewhat arbitrarily, divided them into six groups of major critical approaches. There has been a large volume of criticism on the Duke since the beginning the twentieth century, but only a small number of critics who, in my opinion, best represent these major critical approaches are reviewed. Some early pioneering critics are included also when deemed appropriate to do so in any given chapter. The following chapters are then devoted to: (1) the generic approach, chiefly represented by Lawrence, Campbell, Stevenson, Bennett, Lascelles, Tillyard and Schanzer, which is mainly concerned with interpreting the role of the Duke as a conventional "genre" character according to the play's generic expectations; (2) the "history of ideas" or historical approach, by which critics like Battenhouse, Bradbrook, Bryant, Pope, Bradbrook, Stevenson, and Lever attempt to examine the Duke's role and character against backgrounds of Renaissance political and religious concepts; (3) the New Critical approach through which G. W. Knight, R. W. Chambers, Kirsch, and others analyze the Duke's character and action chiefly from evidence drawn from the text of the play itself; (4) the psychological approach, by which critics like Hans Sachs, Norman Holland, Marvin Rosenberg, Robert Rogers, Marilyn Williamson, Meredith Skura,

Hawkins, David Sundelson, Carolyn Brown, etc., attempt to examine mostly the abnormalities of the Duke's behavior; and finally, (5) miscellaneous approaches, for which I review some of those latest critics who base their discussions of the Duke on distinct ideological grounds--namely, feminism, Marxism, and New Historicism.

The critics I have classified among these different approaches may not be truly "representative" of their respective categories, but they are so arranged with a view to keep them in proper perspective--that is, to review them in such a way that each individual interpretation may lead to another alternative view within the context of its provincial category and also in such a way that some weakness or strength of each provincial category as a whole may further lead to another alternative category--until the whole process of elimination clears the way for an "East Asian" alternative. Also, the manner in which I emphasize certain critics more and some others less has the same purpose in mind. However, if all those other approaches are linked together they will reveal a continuing dialectical process leading finally to my own "provincial" approach in the concluding chapter, titled "An Apology for a Dialogic View of Duke Vincentio."

CHAPTER II

GENERIC INTERPRETATIONS

The Duke is often discussed as a genre character, linked to certain conventions of a genre to which Measure for Measure is supposed to belong. Depending on whether the play is viewed as a comedy or tragicomedy or morality play or problem play, the Duke is interpreted as a different genre character--comic, serious, moral, problematic, etc. The real problem with the case of Measure for Measure is that the critics are sharply in disagreement about the Duke's role and character, for they are in dispute over the play's generic form.

Although most of the studies on the Duke with a generic emphasis have been done in the twentieth century, the first generation of English critics in the neoclassical period left a legacy of this generic approach, for they were intensely concerned with genre forms and with "perfections" of each genre form. Unfortunately, however, they did not discuss Measure for Measure or the Duke's character to the extent they discussed other plays and characters of Shakespeare. Nonetheless, Johnson leaves some interesting comment on the play and the Duke.

Johnson, who approves of tragicomedy, finds the comic elements in the play "very natural and pleasing," but expresses some reservations about the "serious parts" of the play which show "more labor than elegance."[22]

Along with this generally low opinion about the play, Johnson makes a somewhat negative comment on the Duke:

> After the pardon of two murderers Lucio might be treated by the good Duke with less harshness; but perhaps the Poet intended to show, what too is often seen, that men easily forgive wrongs which are not committed against themselves. (1: 380n1)

Johnson apparently thought that the Duke violates poetic justice when Lucio is punished for his slanderous jokes while a "murderer" like Angelo is allowed to go free without a punishment of any sort. To Johnson the "good Duke" must have been a good example of Shakespeare's lack of moral purpose in creating a character by being "so much more careful to please than to instruct," sacrificing "virtue to convenience."[23] Johnson leaves an important reminder for later critics that the Duke's action must be considered in conjunction with the play's overall concern

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[22]Samuel Johnson, ed. The Plays of William Shakespeare (London, 1765; New York: AMS, 1968) 1: 382n5.

[23]Johnson's "Preface" to The Plays of William Shakespeare 1: xix.

with a moral purpose: Johnson says, "it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent of time or place."[24]

In the introductory chapter, I already mentioned Lennox's generic approach. Her severely negative judgment on the Duke is directly related to her rigid conception of the play's generic form, a conception based on the neoclassical precepts including a writer's serious moral purpose in creating his characters. Unlike Dryden and Johnson, Lennox does not approve of plays or characters that are mixtures of "compassion and mirth." In her opinion, the plot of Measure for Measure belongs properly to a serious play and the Duke should remain a serious character, but because of Shakespeare's "twisting" of the plot into a "happy ending," the Duke changes into a comic character, thus becoming "unworthy of a prince."

Lennox properly recognizes both serious and comic aspects of the Duke, but sees the mixing of the serious and the comic as a violation of dramatic unities. Her "generic" viewpoint deviates from the main stream critical thinking of Dryden and Johnson, which is more cautious and more balanced in view.

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[24]Johnson, 1: xix.

This generic approach revives in a peculiar way in the first half of the twentieth century, as there was a new surge of critical interest in Measure for Measure as a problem play. This revival was prompted, in large part, by the change of public taste in England, as the country was moving away from the turn-of-the-century "Art for Art's Sake" and was facing ever-increasing urban and other social problems in an industrialized world. The popularity of problem plays in Shaw's time, as mentioned earlier, has triggered a new awareness of "problematic" aspects of Measure for Measure. The term "problem play" was first used of the play by F. S. Boas, but this term has been popularized by later critics. E. M. W. Tillyard, for instance, uses this term in titling a popular book of his, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (1949), even though he recognizes it as an unsatisfactory term for the group of Shakespeare's plays he discusses, including All's Well, Troilus and Cressida, and Measure for Measure, since they are not related to the modern problem plays.[25]

Serious study of Measure of Measure as a "problem"

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[25]The term "problem" has no doubt had a tremendous boosting effect on the study of Measure for Measure and the Duke in particular. Even as late as 1976, Rosalind Miles, in The Problem of Measure for Measure: A Historical Investigation, emphasizes the "problem" aspect of this play.

play begins with W. W. Lawrence. Lawrence calls Measure for Measure a "problem comedy," as he believes that the play combines the seriousness of a problem play and the happy ending of a comedy. Lawrence points out that a significant change in the plot occurs when the Duke is made a prominent figure as "the dramatist's right-hand man." The Duke is an active character throughout the play and also acts as a deus ex machina and a Chorus.[26] Lawrence, however, argues that Duke is

> . . . a conventional and romantic figure, whose actions are determined by theatrical exigencies and effectiveness; he is, as it were, a stage Duke, not a real person. (102)

Lawrence further argues that the Duke is a conventional romantic as well as theatrically functional character in whom are united "the functions of both State and Church" representing two traditional institutions of justice. Lawrence also views the Duke as a theatrically functional character, as a convenience for the movement of the plot story but feels that Shakespeare did not bother to have the Duke be concerned with the "strict legality or

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[26]W. W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies (New York: Macmillan Co, 1931) 91-92.

rationality" of his actions.[27]

The "artificial" nature of this character is clear when he is compared with more "natural and human" characters like Mistress Overdone, Pompey, Elbow, or even Lucio, for these "minor" characters are

> . . . studies of the riff-raff of the Southwark bank, the unsavory yet amusing types of the Elizabethan brothels. . . . [These minor characters] show us, in naked realism, the unlovely side of London life. . . . But in spite of all their vices, they are likable as well as human. (109)

Lucio's tongue may be loose, but his heart is "simply affectionate, and he is eager to help his friend" (109). By contrast the Duke is preoccupied with his "shifts and tricks," which Lawrence says strain the play's plausibility "to the breaking-point" (109). Thus the Duke is

> . . . a puppet, cleverly painted and adroitly manipulated, but revealing, in the thinness of his coloring and in the artificiality of his movements,the wood and pasteboard of his composition. (112)

Lawrence has produced one of the major arguments among critics with a generic focus, by defining the Duke's role in terms of the play's comic plot dealing with the "problem

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[27]Lawrence, 103.

of justice." But because of his emphasis on the artificiality of the Duke's action, his view has been challenged by many opposing arguments. One problem with his argument is that the focus of attention was too much on the "problem" aspect of the play, especially the problem of unities between the seriousness of the "problem of justice" and the comicality of the Duke's action. His sincere attempt to reconcile dissimilar and unreconcilable elements of the play consequently strains his argument about the characterization of the Duke, who is "manufactured to meet the exigencies of dramatic construction" (109). As a result, Lawrence does not recognize any evidence of the duke-friar's "human" feelings--whether of indignation or compassion--in his dealings with some other characters in the play. Besides, it is quite difficult to credit Lawrence's view of the Duke as a mere functional character when the Duke delivers more speech lines than any other major character in the play.

Whereas Lawrence interprets the Duke as a figure in romantic comedy, Campbell sees him as a conventional satiric character in Measure for Measure, which is interpreted as a satiric comedy. Campbell points out that the play is filled with the harsh spirit of formal or comical satire, occupying the middle ground between comedy

and tragedy, like Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour.[28] Therefore, the main focus of the play is to expose the folly of Angelo's self-righteousness with the social background steeped into sexual degeneration. The Duke, in Campbell's opinion, has a dual role--as satiric commentator and manipulator of the play's action.

Campbell believes that for this Duke, Shakespeare is indebted to John Marston's Malevole (who is Altofronto, the deposed Duke of Genoa) in The Malcontent (1600) and also to Hercules, the disguised Duke of Ferrara, in The Fawn (1602). He points out that the Duke's satiric comments on the corrupt social condition of Vienna are sometimes emotional or personal, as when he lashes the bawd Pompey:

> Fie, sirrah a bawd, a wicked bawd!
> The evil that thou causest to be done,
> This is thy means to live. Do thou but think
> What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back
> From such a filthy vice. Say to thyself
> "From their abominable and beastly touches
> I drink, I eat, array myself, and live."
> Canst thou believe thy living is a life
> So stinkingly depending? (III.ii. 20-28)

Some other times the Duke's satire is more philosophical or "reservedly enigmatic," as when he deplores the rotten state of the world:

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[28]Oscar James Campbell, "Preface" to Shakespeare's Satire (New York: Oxford UP, 1943) vii.

> There is so great a fever on goodness, that the dissolution of it must cure it. Novelty is only in request; and it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course, as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure; but security enough to make fellowships accurst. Much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. (III.ii. 235-42)

For Campbell, the Duke is not a spectator or a deus ex machina, as Lawrence has suggested. Rather, he manipulates events in the play in order to expose and humiliate the foolish and evil characters. The Duke is the main intriguer who sets the traps for the fools and knaves like Angelo and Lucio (133); it is the Duke also who relieves Isabella of her dilemma or pardons the fools and knaves at the end. Thus his complicated plotting has "the supreme merit of laying bare the ugly scars in Angelo's nature" and the Duke succeeds in his attempt to reform (134). As for the happy ending of the play, Campbell explains, Shakespeare has made structural changes so that the play could end with "a self-effacing compromise with comedy," not with "a note of savage scorn" (134).

Campbell certainly allows more action and commentator's activity for the Duke than Lawrence would allow but does not recognize the Duke as a major character, satirical or comical. The Duke remains outside the main

action of the play as commentator, without getting involved in it emotionally.

Critics who view the play as satiric comedy or comical satire basically interpret the Duke in the same way as Campbell does. For instance, Murray Krieger examines Measure for Measure with an elaboration on Jonsonian comic satire.[29] He observes that Jonsonian satirical comedies typically include: (1) a mischief-maker or intriguer who simply enjoys exposing the foolishness of those who are to be gulled (as in Chapman's An Humourous Day's Mirth or Comedy of Humours [1597] or Jonson's Every Man in his Humour [1598]), or (2) "the element of moral corruption of which the gulls are examples and against which the intriguer rails" (as in Marston's Antonio and Mellida [1599], The Malcontent [1604], and Parasitaster or The Fawn [1606]). These plays, Krieger continues, have a similar pattern in plot[30]:

> . . . we have the introduction of the gull or gulls along with the intriguer who may also be the moral commentator; the main action involves the

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[29]Murray Krieger, "Measure for Measure and Elizabethan Comedy" PMLA 66 (1951): 775-84.

[30]Krieger, 778-9. In support of this idea, Krieger refers to David Klein's Literary Criticism from the Elizabethan Dramatists (New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1910).

> successful perpetration of the intriguer's plot to frustrate and expose the gull, ending in his cure or his being hooted off the stage. (779)

Krieger believes that the Duke clearly falls into this pattern as an intriguer, who takes Angelo as a gull and uses Isabella as the means of gulling Angelo. He argues that the Duke's unbecoming persistence in his intrigues and his delay in bringing about justice is a purely dramatic convention (783). Thus, the Duke, like Malevole in Marston's The Malcontent, is a commentator who moralizes about social corruption. Krieger, however, believes that Marston may have borrowed this commentator's role from Shakespeare, rather than vice versa (784). As I have suggested, the basic generic focus on the Duke as a commentator in a comic satire is similar to Campbell's.

Some critics have shifted their generic focus to other "kinds" of comedy (comedy or "pure" or festive comedy or tragicomedy, etc.) in order to make some sense out of the Duke's behavior and action, though he may not be the main focus of their attention. D. L. Stevenson, Josephine Bennett and Mary Lascelles seem to best represent some of these comic classes.

Among these critics, D. L. Stevenson makes an interesting study of the play as a comedy with much

emphasis on reader-response. He categorically defines the play as "an intellectual comedy," in which "arbitrary contrasts in moral attitude and moral decision among principal characters . . . are balanced."[31] The play has an "intellectual design" or "intellectual-moral experiment" through which these arbitrary moral contrasts and conflicts are resolved with a happy ending. The Duke sets the boundaries of this experiment "by which Angelo, hitherto virtuous in name only, must translate his theoretical rectitude into action as absolute ruler of Vienna, and under the twin obligations of justice and mercy . . ." (13).

Stevenson interprets the Duke's role as that of an outsider and observer. Interestingly, he likens this Duke's role to that of an audience. In other words, the Duke is a dramatic device to reassure the audience of its all-knowing role. In the play, a moral problem is created by Angelo, and the audience, through the Duke, is "intellectually" participating in the play's conflicts and resolution. He further argues that in this way, the audience are relieved of a "possible emotional involvement in tragedy" as in the play, where "no one (including

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[31]D. L. Stevenson, The Achievement of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1966) 29.

Angelo) is allowed to suffer the results of his own folly." Stevenson, however, recognizes that the duke's arbitrary balancing of justice at the end is an "ironic" outcome of a moral-intellectual "experiment" (14).

Putting aside his identifying the Duke's role with the audience's, Stevenson's argument about the Duke is not far removed from the positions Lawrence, Campbell, or Krieger have already taken--that the Duke is basically an outsider: He is detached, aloof, and only "observes and controls and comments on the actions of the other characters" (13).

Another critic who interprets the play more or less as a "pure comedy" is Josephine W. Bennett. In her perceptive study of the play, Measure for Measure as Royal Entertainment,[32] Bennett believes that the play is a festive comedy "selected for the entertainment of King James and his court at the beginning of a Christmas season," 1604-5.[33] She argues that while Cinthio and Whetstone made the original story into tragicomedies,[34] Shakespeare has "metamorphosed" the same material into a comedy although

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[32]Josephine Waters Bennett, Measure for Measure as Royal Entertainment (New York: Columbia UP, 1966).

[33]Bennett, 5.

[34]Cinthio's Epitia (1583) and Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra (1578); see Bennett, 14-15.

some elements in the play may seem "absurd" to a modern sensibility. She also argues that the play's comic underplot owes "nothing to Whetstone" but rather to Shakespeare's own earlier comedies. Bennett further points out that Shakespeare has deliberately made the old law of Vienna look absurd by making Claudio look more honorable and realistic than Andrucio, his counterpart in Whetstone, and by exaggerating the purity of Isabella and the self-righteousness of Angelo.[35] Bennett, like some other critics, refers to similarities existing between the Duke and King James (87-93).

One crucial aspect of Bennett's argument on the Duke is that he is given both theatrical as well as allegorical implications. On the one hand, she believes that Shakespeare has made the Duke the "deus ex machina of the whole play," who, like Prospero, "creates the situation and then resolves, using disguise instead of magic to achieve his ends" (21). The Duke's disguise here, Bennett points out, is "a well-organized comic device" by which Shakespeare reassures his audience that the play is going to be a comedy--an artificial element but important for comic implications often overlooked by modern critics (22).

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[35]Bennett, 15.

On the other hand, Bennett believes that the Duke, as a crucial character in a comedy of Christmas festivity, is endowed with an allegorical import as well: he is a "Redemptive Man" who "benevolently manipulates and turns the absurdity and injustice of the law of Vienna" into the spirit of a new law of mercy, which derives from the redemptive spirit of Christmas:

> In the larger implications of Measure for Measure, Angelo and Isabella play the part of mankind . . . in the universal frame of every man's fall . . . ; and the Duke embodies the Divine mercy which watches over man, giving him power to do both good and evil, yet guiding, teaching, and, when he is truly humbly repentant, forgiving and saving from the worse consequences of his folly. (126)

While Bennett incorporates well the factual similarities between the Duke and King James as well as the allegorical meaning of the Duke into her discussion of "pure" comedy, she still fails to recognize the Duke as an individual character or even as a major character--not the deus ex machina which is more or less like Lawrence's functional character. Bennett seems to make a Renaissance kind of morality figure out of the Duke--a character sufficiently allegorical and yet potentially realizable with a distinct individual quality. Some Shakespearean characters succeed, of course, in incorporating allegorical

elements from morality characters (as in the case of Falstaff, who is fully individual although a Vice character), but as some critics have shown, a morality character was thought by the Elizabethan writers as being "subject to a process of limitation" and to be restricting the audience's imaginative freedom to make something meaningful out of such a character.[36] Bennett also does give an account for the Duke's serious speeches or his seriously deliberating behavior which seems to disturb the audience if he is to be interpreted as a purely festive character.

Some critics who regard Measure for Measure as either tragicomedy or as "problem" play recognize the Duke's more serious role. As we know, tragicomedy had existed for some time in Renaissance Italy before Shakespeare's time, and Italian Renaissance critics like Guarini and Giraldi in the sixteenth century made some efforts to make this

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[36]According to Angus Fletcher in his Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1970), the allegorical mode appeared to the Elizabethan rhetoricians "not only to restrict the reader's freedom, but further to restrict itself, in scope of moral attitude and degree of enigma" (305). Bernard Spivack in his Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York: Columbia UP, 1958) also notes that in Shakespeare's time the morality's hero is subject to "a constant process of limitation" (305).

genre acceptable.[37] However, for some reason, playwrights as well as critics must have felt some uneasiness or uncertainty about this genre because it has not survived well and has brought adverse criticism upon itself. In England, also, neoclassical critics like Dryden and Johnson approved of this relatively foreign genre. Despite such efforts, most critics in England have been uncomfortable with tragicomedy. We have seen already a neoclassicist like Lennox severely criticizing Measure for Measure for mixing "compassion and mirth."[38]

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[37]For example, Guarini, in his Il compendio della poesia tragicomica (1599), defends tragicomedy as "the highest form" of drama partly because it does not allow an audience to fall into either "excessive" tragic melancholy or "simple [silly]" comedy (Alan H. Gilbert, Literary Criticism [New York: American Book, 1940] 512, 524). Guarini's own tragicomedy, Il Pastor Fido (1590), was very popular in Italy for over a decade (Gilbert, 504). The tragicomic story of Giraldi's "Epitia" was adapted by George Whetstone for his tragicomedy, Promos and Cassandra (see Frank H. Ristine, English Tragicomedy: Its Origin and History [New York: Russell, 1963] 30).

[38]When Dryden and Johnson speak of Shakespeare as a poet of "nature" or a mirror of life, they seem to refer to the dramatist's conception of life "as it is" (tragicomicality) as well as his ability to mix "compassion and mirth" or to excite "laughter and sorrow . . . in one composition" (referring to his adeptness at composing tragicomedy); read Neander's argument in Dryden's "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" and Johnson's "Preface to Shakespeare." However, there are many critics who would not accept tragicomedy as a valid dramatic genre. For instance, Milton, a Puritan Classicist, condemns any "intermixing Comic stuff with Tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all

Genre critics have recently begun to explore some possibilities of Shakespeare's experimenting with this genre in Measure for Measure. Critics like Mary Lascelles and Tillyard have felt that Measure for Measure and its Duke can be understood within the context of tragicomic conventions. Both critics recognize the serious mood of the play through the first half as well as the comic mood in the second half of the play. As a consequence, the Duke is interpreted in a similar fashion. Lascelles, for example, examines the Duke in terms of the tragicomic context of the source play. As in the source play of Giraldi Cinthio, the Duke's characterization in Measure for Measure is "coldly drawn." Lascelles finds that the Duke begins with "a focus of suspense" in the first scene, but remains as a reduced figure after the third act. She points out, however, that the Duke, in comparison with his source characters, is "more substantial than before," being charged with the burden of the play's meaning.[39] The Duke's "shifty" behavior, she believes, comes from the art of tragicomedy, for "tragicomedy is notorious for its shifts"

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jucicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people"; see Milton's preface to Samson Agonistes (1671).

[39]Mary Lascelles, Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (New York: Athlone P, 1953) 118.

(135). Lascelles further believes that the Duke fails to communicate his feelings to the audience, even to a worse degree Prospero does, although he is a more allegorical character than Duke Vincentio (148).

Despite her thorough scene by scene analysis of the Duke, Lascelles comes short of recognizing the Duke as a major character of the play partly because of her angle of vision. Her assumption that the Duke's behavior is "shifty" because "tragicomedy is notorious for its shifts" is not acceptable, for Shakespeare himself is notorious for not following dramatic convention. Ben Jonson, who understood Shakespeare to be a poet "not of an age, but for all time," also declared that "Shakespeare wanted art" (Converstaions with William Drummond of Hawthornden): "His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too" (Timber).[40]

Some critics seem to have been aware of problems associated with this sort of conventional generic approach, as taken by Lascelles, for they rather choose to discuss the Duke as a "problem" character from various perspectives of regarding the play as a "problem play," a term associated with the modern social drama of Ibsen and Shaw.

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[40]Hugh Maclean, ed. Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets (New York: Norton) 418, 404.

The usefulness of such a modern contemporary generic category in interpreting Shakespeare's characters is, however, still debatable.

The term "problem play" is first used by Frederick S. Boas for a group of plays--All's Well, Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure, and Hamlet--which cannot be categorized either as comedy or as tragedy because of some "perplexities" existing in theme, mood, or characterization in each of these plays. Boas, as I mentioned earlier, borrowed this term from his contemporary theatre and called them simply "Shakespeare's problem-plays." For Boas, Measure for Measure is a "problem play" characterized by a "brooding sense of the pollution spread by lust in the single soul and in society at large" and by a "deeply reflective temper."[41] Accordingly, the Duke is viewed by Boas as a man of shy, meditative, and sluggish temperament who even recoils from "punishing sins to which his own laxity had granted a 'permissive pass'" (359). Boas's

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[41]F. S. Boas, Shakespeare and his Predecessors (New York: Scribner's, 1896) 344-345. In his preface to this work, Boas says that "in discussing such plays as Measure for Measure and Antony and Cleopatra, I have sought to interpret the dramatist's attitude towards some problems which are often supposed to be distinctively modern" (vii-viii). "Problem play" was intended to be a convenient phrase by Boas but it is commonly used today as a generic term.

discussion of the play is very brief, however. Some later critics discuss Measure for Measure more extensively as a "problem play." Critics, however, use the term "problem play" for Measure for Measure with such different meanings that it would be better to ignore the epithet "problem" altogether sometimes: for instance, to H. B. Charlton, the term means a "dark comedy"[42]; to E. M. W. Tillyard, it means a tragicomedy. W. W. Lawrence uses "problem comedy" for the play, but he discusses it essentially as a comedy; and so on.[43]

Although "problem play" can be broadly applicable to all four plays mentioned by Boas, it is questionable whether that category is really necessary to characterize Measure for Measure. "Tragicomedy" may perhaps be a more appropriate term to signify its distinct flavor and its apparent thematic import since the term was used in Shakespeare's time for drama which does not end in tragic catastrophe but may contain any serious elements of

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[42]H. B. Charlton, "The Dark Comedies," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 21 (1939): 80.

[43]For more studies on Measure for Measure as a problem play or on Shakespeare's so-called "problem plays," see Rosalind Miles, The Problem of Measure for Measure: A Historical Investigation (New York: Barnes, 1976) or William Toole, Shakespeare's Problem Plays: Studies in Form and Meaning (The Hague: Mouton, 1966).

tragedy. Also, tragicomedy by its nature is amenable to social satire. Any "deep issues," social or moral, in a so-called "problem play" can easily and naturally be part of a tragicomedy as well. Even in a comedy like The Merchant of Venice or in a history play like Henry V, Shakespeare brings out "deep issues" in society, which are perhaps quite disturbing for such genres.

Setting aside the question of the usefulness of the term "problem play," it is Tillyard principally who popularized this term as well as the categorization of Measure for Measure itself as a "problem play." In his discussion of the play, he argues that the serious tone and poetic style in the first half of the play are inconsistent with the low comic tone and prosaic style in the second half: up to III.i., the play is realistic and charged with poetic tension, "of that kind of which Shakespeare is the great master, the kind that seems extremely close to the business of living, to the problem of how to function as a human being" (123-4), but from III.i.151 to the end of the play, there is "a lack of poetic intensity" and, instead, the action is "all folkloric and low comedic."[44]

In Tillyard's view, the Duke is an artistic failure

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[44]E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (1949; London: Chatto & Windus, 1951) 132.

not just because he demonstrates this inconsistency in mood and style but more because he lacks in human sympathy, vividly so in the latter half of the play (118)--here Tillyard still repeats Hazlitt's romantic view of the same character. In comparison, Lucio is highly praised by Tillyard: "the livest" [sic] character, "the one who does most to keep the play from quite falling apart" (129).[45] In short, Tillyard's summation of the Duke amounts to a "conventional stage-character of the plot-promoting priest" combined with a folk-motive of the disguised ruler (126).[46]

Tillyard's so-called "artistic breach of internal harmony" in the play as a whole seems to echo Boas's earlier observations that the internal demands of the play are violated when its later scenes are confusingly rapid and written in prose of a more or less comic quality. While regarding the play as a tragicomedy, Tillyard still sheds light on a "problematic" aspect of the play in terms of "artistic" considerations, in contrast to other critics

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[45]Incidentally, this view compares well with a Korean student's observation about Lucio's character in Chapter I.

[46]Tillyard recognizes a kind of "theological lore" on the relation of justice and mercy in the play, but only in the latter part of the play, in which the folk material can be handled with ease to make allegorical meanings possible (6).

who define "problematic" with reference to intellectual or social issues. This disagreement about the term contributes to confusion as to the meaning of "problem play."

Among the critics viewing the play as a "problem play," Ernest Schanzer is representative. He defines "a problem play" as a play which presents "a moral problem" and evokes "uncertain and divided responses" in the minds of the audience at the same time:

> A play in which we find a concern with a moral problem which is central to it, presented in such a manner that we are unsure of our moral bearings, so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible or even probable.[47]

The whole play is then "a serious and coherent exploration of certain moral issues" with an intention to perplex the audience (73), of which the main moral concern is with Justice and Good Rule and through which Shakespeare, in Schanzer's opinion, pleads for

> . . . more human and less literal interpretation of the law, both man and divine, in accordance with the circumstances of each case, and for the seasoning of Justice with Mercy. (117)

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[47]Ernest Schanzer, The Problem Plays of Shakespeare (New York: Schocken, 1963) 6.

With this pattern and purpose in mind, Schanzer views the Duke essentially as "a convenient stage machine": a character who represents initially one type of misrule (in contrast to another type of misrule by Angelo) but later represents Good Rule--all these types deriving from folktales. Schanzer argues that the Duke has "misruled" Vienna for fourteen years by allowing too much leniency in the administration of legal justice, while Angelo, a deputy in the Duke's absence, also misrules, seeking legal justice to the letter of the law. Schanzer points out that although much of the action focuses on this latter type of misrule by Angelo, the Duke returns at the end to the Good Rule of the golden mean, "seasoning Justice with Mercy" exemplified in the play by Escalus.

Interestingly, Schanzer believes that this "seasoning" of justice with mercy comes from the classical concept of equity (Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics). He denies that there is anything "peculiarly Christian" about this concept (126), for in the play, this Aristotelian golden mean is demonstrated only by Escalus (what's in a name?), and the Duke's universal pardon can be interpreted as a administrative gesture of "amnesty" with no Christian implications. Moreover, this technically legal solution

is intended as an "ironical solution" for the minds of the audience (129), strengthening further an awareness of the perplexing nature of justice in human society.[48]

One implication that can be drawn from Schanzer's argument is that Shakespeare, by writing this kind of "problem play," may have himself become a perplexity for the audience; for, if Schanzer refers to the play's moral concern as being the Duke's as well as the audience's, then Shakespeare's "resolution" seems not so much ironical as it is confusing. If critics like Stevenson and Bennett are right to any degree in suggesting that Shakespeare has borrowed some of the Duke's personality traits and his thoughts from those of King James and Basilikon Doron, it would be very perplexing or even inconceivable to imagine that Shakespeare assumes an ironical stance in the matter of administering civil justice. For, as a "ring-side" member of the "King's Men," Shakespeare could not afford to suggest anything politically liable which could mean an

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[48]Discussing Measure for Measure as a play specifically dealing with a moral problem does not originate with Schanzer. Walter Raleigh, in Shakespeare, 2nd ed. (1907; Lodon: Macmillan, 1928), saw it as Shakespeare's "direct treatment of a moral problem" and viewed its characters, including the Duke, as coping with "the questions at issue as Shakespeare saw them" (169, 171). In particular, the Duke is seen shirking his "odious" public duties facing the "weak world" of Vienna and playing a "benevolent spy" instead (166-7).

instant death sentence to his dramatic career.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL APPROACHES

The genre interpreters in the foregoing chapter made good use of pertinent theatrical conventions and historical background to a certain extent, but there are some critics who wish to emphasize the importance of tradition and historical consideration much more extensively than the genre critics in discussing Shakespeare's characterization of the Duke. Some of them emphasize allegorical tradition while others take the implications of the Renaissance political ideas and background more seriously. The raison d'etre for this sort of historical approach is perhaps expressed well by Elmer Edgar Stoll, who warns against the fallacy of anachronism in interpreting Shakespeare:

> The function of criticism is not to make the poet in question the contemporary of the reader, but to make the reader for the time being a contemporary of the poet.[49]

Stoll charges that those genre critics who discuss Measure for Measure as a problem play are making a serious mistake

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[49]Elmer Edgar Stoll, "Anachronism in Shakespeare Criticism," Modern Philology 7 (1910): 557.

by "plunging Shakespeare into the company of Ibsen" (564); and, he also criticizes any modern psychological or symbolic interpretations, for "all the symbolism there was in Shakespeare's day was that prim and palpable sort, allegory" (568).

A hermeneutic tendency in interpreting Measure for Measure is not strictly a twentieth century phenomenon, given the appearance of the so-called "Christian" interpreters. Shakespeare's use of the Bible in this play has been observed since the eighteenth century--for instance, early commentaries by Thirlby (d. 1753) and Whiter (1794) recognize some parallels between the title and some passages of the play and Gospel parables such as the Sermon on the Mount or the parable of the talents.[50] Also, in the nineteenth century, Ulrici, as seen in Chapter I, left an important legacy of allegorical interpretation for all later "Christian" interpreters. But it is mainly through the ambitious efforts of some twentieth-century critics that Christian interpretation of the play has been revitalized as well as diversified in viewpoint, whether from perspectives of allegorical tradition, or Renaissance

[50]For a brief summary of writers who observe biblical sources for the play, see Mark Eccles, ed. Measure for Measure (New York: MLA, 1980) 392-393.

political/ religious ideas associated with Christianity, or a New Critical approach to the biblical themes of the play. This line of interpretation is represented chiefly by G. Wilson Knight and his followers, such as Battenhouse, Bradbrook, Bryant, Pope, Lever, and Stevenson. Since Knight may be regarded as a "New Critic" and his approach is not "historical," I will begin with those other Christian critics who have followed Knight's lead but take a distinctly historical approach in interpreting the play. For the convenience of my review, I am going to divide these modern "historical" critics into sub-classes of allegorical and non-allegorical approaches.

A) Allegorical

Perhaps one of the most unusual allegorical interpretations of the Duke from a historical perspective is Roy Battenhouse's classic essay, "Measure for Measure and Christian Doctrine of the Atonement."[51] Unlike G. W. Knight, who has interpreted the play as a dramatical "Gospel parable" without making any historical reference, Battenhouse discovers wholly Christian meaning in the play within the context of the medieval allegorical tradition. He at once recognizes in the play a "familiar" pattern of the medieval story of atonement--typically running as follows:

> A sovereign disguises himself in order to visit his people and reform them. Though he is the Lord of men, he condescends to become their brother. Acting incognito he sows within their history the processes whereby they may be reconciled to him in a just and happy kingdom. By temporarily taking the form of a servant, he is able to mingle intimately in his people's affairs, discover their hearts, prevent and remove sins, intrude wise and far-reaching counsels, and direct all things toward a great Last Judgment when he shall appear with power to establish peace. (1032)

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[51]Roy W. Battenhouse, "Measure for Measure and Christian Doctrine of the Atonement," PMLA 61 (1946): 1029-59.

Battenhouse believes that in Measure for Measure, this atonement story is made into a "mystery" play dealing with a "contest between Law and Grace," in which Law serves a "providential function" whereas Grace is the ultimate victor who brings "the supernatural 'justice' of mercy" (1033-4).

Duke Vincentio, Battenhouse argues, has a prominent allegorical role in this story of the Atonement: he assumes the role of a sovereign, working as "a sort of secret, omniscient, and omnipresent Providence" (1047). His names are significantly allegorical--Vincentio, meaning "Victor or Conqueror," and his disguised name "Lodowick," meaning "famous warrior"; they point to a Christian God as "the General of an Army, having as His purpose victory over sin" (1035).

Battenhouse compares the Duke's strategy in this contest between Law and Grace to Christ's ransom for people who are in the prison of sin and death, which proves to be beneficial and just for everybody. In Measure for Measure, however, the law does not lead people to salvation but instead increases sin, as shown in both Angelo and Claudio. The Duke, thus, directs a strategy, including the use of deceit like a little "poison for healing," by which both

Angelo and Claudio are redeemed from the curse of the law. At last, Angelo, the self-righteous "angel," becomes wise enough to know that he is but a man, and Claudio, the "lame man," learns to walk in grace. As this reform is achieved, the Duke is hailed as victor. Battenhouse also contends that the Duke's marriage to Isabella reflects the idea of Christus Victor becoming Christus Sponsus ("the Nuptial Idea is the sequel of the Idea of Salvation"), a culmination of the atonement drama in which Shakespeare intends to tell "a mysterious way of mirroring by analogy the cosmic drama of the Atonement" (1053-4).

Battenhouse's real contribution is the fact that he not only interprets the Duke as a crucial major character, "the key personage," but also attempts to give him both natural and supernatural dimensions--a very important point for this character. But the problem with Battenhouse's argument is that while he rightly emphasizes the "natural" aspects of the Duke's character, "a man of all temperance" who "wins the confidence alike of the rake Lucio and of the novice Isabella," he overemphasizes those supernatural qualities which make the Duke "the ideal prince of four names--Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." I find this difficult to balance with his less than perfect behavior, such as his dislike

of common people or his involvement in the scheme of a bed-trick. The "Incarnate Lord" is not the real picture of the Duke, who is a much more complex and individuated Renaissance character than Battenhouse would allow him to be.

However, Battenhouse's view that the modern reader lacks imagination to appreciate what is obvious for the Renaissance audience and, thus, that one needs to examine the play from a historical perspective (especially in terms of the medieval man's appreciation for multiple meanings) is perceptive. Shakespeare, however, may not have been so intent as Battenhouse suggests upon the medieval cosmic analogy in creating this exceptional character in particular. It is doubtful that Shakespeare would relinquish all the jokes and dirty words spoken by the rake Lucio to have him "redeemed." Lucio's character remains the same throughout the play, and only his wild slandering and blasphemy are subdued at last in the presence of the real Duke whom he knows he has slandered.

Other allegorical interpretations have also been attempted by M. C. Bradbrook and J. A. Bryant. Bradbrook's essay, "Authority, Truth, and Justice in Measure for Measure," Review of English Studies 17 (1941): 385-399, which precedes Battenhouse's study, is important

for its suggestion that the play has the structure of a Medieval Morality, which is "The Contention between Justice and Mercy, or False Authority unmasked by Truth and Humility." Bradbrook finds the characters in this allegorical scheme representative of some ethical value: the Duke standing for Heavenly Justice, Angelo for Authority, Isabella for Truth and Mercy, etc. But Bradbrook quickly points out that the play is "shallower" and "more incoherent" than Shakespeare's other plays and, moreover, "stiffened by its doctrinaire and impersonal consideration of ethical values" (398).

The Duke's role is considered important by Bradbrook because he is associated with the Renaissance idea of justice:

> No idea was more stressed by Elizabethan playwrights than that Justice lay in the hands of the magistrate, as God's vice-gerent on earth. (386)

The Duke, this God's viceroy on earth, is "more than the average disguised puppet master," for he is an "omnipotent disguised character who directs the intrigue" and yet displays, as a poor Friar, humility residing in that true authority (386).

An interesting observation Bradbrook makes is that for

the allegorical treatment in Measure for Measure Shakespeare owes much to Edmund Spenser. She says:

> The basis of Justice and Law is the establishment of truth. Perfect truth resides only in God: the devil is the father of lies, and in the current morality representations of him, his power of disguise, particularly of disguising himself as a virtue, was his subtlest weapon for the destruction of man. Hence the question of Truth apparent and real, of Falsehood conscious and unconscious is crucial to the plot. Shakespeare had before him the great visionary panorama of the first book of The Faerie Queene. (392)

Thus Angelo, like Duessa and Archimago, stands for Seeming Resemblant and for a false Authority or the letter of Law; Isabella stands for "unerring Truth," which is "always merciful" (386). And, the final marriage of Justice (the Duke) and Truth (Isabella)

> . . . resolves the frenzy of lies, prevarications, truths and half-truths which in the last scene records the hollowness of all external judgment, even as in The Faerie Queene, the marriage of Truth and Holiness, in the persons of Una and the Red Cross Knight, defeats the calumnious and evil forces represented by Duessa and Archimago. (386-87)

The contention between Justice and Mercy taking place in this play is relevant to the current Elizabethan marriage laws about which Shakespeare voices his opinions. Bradbrook believes that some retributive aspects of

Elizabethan marriage laws distressed Shakespeare.

Curiously (but perceptively), Bradbrook concedes that the Duke, supposedly representing "Heavenly Justice," does not quite fit into the above allegorical scheme, for he is placed in many "ironic" situations which reveal his conflicting nature, thus becoming "as great a seemer as Angelo" and an "extremely peremptory" ruler who enjoys "probing and investigating into the lives of the common people" (396).

Bradbrook's essay is somewhat self-contradictory because her argument does not quite support her basic assumption about the play's allegorical scheme. Speaking of the Duke as a seemer as great as Angelo is not consistent with her view of the Duke as an allegorical character, "Heavenly Duke." Also, the comparison she brings out between the allegorical pattern in Measure for Measure and the allegorical story in the first book of the Faerie Queene cannot be justified, as these two works are extremely different in generic character as are their authors' intentions. Spenser's intention in his work is explicitly allegorical, and his messages or meanings are quite clear to the reader. But, some aspects of Measure for Measure contradict the allegorical intention, as Bradbrook also recognizes. And those supposedly "false"

characters like Angelo, Claudio, and Lucio are intensely human, "true" in feelings and worthy of our true sympathy, as some other critics have pointed out. They are not punished in any allegorical sense. Angelo proves to be a hypocrite during his lascivious adventure with Isabella, but he is not really defeated at the end; he is rather saved from the pitfalls of temptation, so to speak.

Less specific in Christian allegory but broader in Christian context in another way, J. A. Bryant, Jr., bases his interpretation of the play on the assumption that Shakespeare's view of poetry is derived from a Catholic or Christian view of life.[52] Speaking in terms of "Christian topology," Bryant believes that Shakespeare attempts a reconstruction of the Christian vision, which transforms our human experiences into "something strange, admirable, and of great constancy"--according to Hippolyta's view in A Midsummer Night's Dream (V.i.23-27). Bryant argues that the habit of seeing symbols beyond what is seen is normal for the Elizabethan audience:

> The average Elizabethan (who was religious and Christian, whatever his doctrinal persuasions may have been) would probably have sat, or stood,

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[52]J. A. Bryant, Jr., Hippolyta's View: Some Christian Aspects of Shakespeare's Plays (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1961) vii.

> through a Shakespeare play without noticing the astonishing number of allusions to Scripture, Prayer Book, and dogma generally. (15)

Bryant believes that this Christian topology--a Christian way of giving a "local habitation" and a "name" to something not apprehended by the senses by means of allusions to the biblical scriptures, prayer books, etc.--is something the Elizabethans were "thoroughly but unconsciously familiar" with, something Shakespeare knew how to conjure up for his audience, but something that has to be interpreted for modern readers because

> . . . the average Elizabethan would have them [allusions to Scripture, Prayer Book, etc.] because to him they were common place but we of the present age miss them because to us they are almost completely foreign. (15)

With this frame of reference, Bryant interprets the Duke as a Christian exemplar character, a perfect man of "all temperance," invested with a redemptive mission for the sinners in Vienna, which symbolizes a human society in need of regeneration:

> Vienna cannot get well without coming to recognize that incompleteness, without passing through a nightmarish corruption of what goodness she has. Her destiny differs in no essential way from our own in that we, though we are continually enjoined to be good, are continually advised that we cannot be good of our own will to be good. (91)

The role of the Duke is then to define and direct the other incomplete characters in the play toward achieving this regeneration and "human perfection," which Bryant believes ultimately comes from "Jesus of Nazareth, incarnate creator of the world," who commands his followers to seek human perfection: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v.58). And the Duke's schemes in the play are designed as "human testing" to bring all the characters to their completeness after realizing their shortcomings. Furthermore, Angelo's "fortunate fall" is designed to help him become a complete man. The "success of this design," Bryant believes, is "evidence of the Duke's completeness as a man" (92).

Despite his excellent argument about the play's overall allegorical design in terms of the fortunate fall, regeneration and human perfection, and the Duke's redemptive role in particular, Bryant seems to ignore some evidence which does not conform to this pattern. For example, the problem of prostitution, one of the crucial elements in the play, is not treated squarely in the play nor by the Duke himself. As we can recall, the Duke, as a civil magistrate, intends to do something about this epidemic of social evil in Vienna, having neglected it for

fourteen years, but he seems to abandon his design of "mortality and terror" to address this problem. Here the Deputy Angelo may in fact claim a higher credit than the Duke himself, for, whatever social reforms are being carried out in the back streets of Vienna are due to Angelo's vigorous campaign. Also, there is some evidence in the play that the Duke's design for regeneration of the other characters is after all not that universal and impartial as Bryant seems to suggest. Among the characters, Lucio and Isabella do not seem to change at all in spite of their shortcomings. Isabella's arrogance and vehement temper flare up at the slightest suggestion of injustice, from her early conversation with Claudio to her last confrontation with Angelo at the judgment scene. And especially Lucio, though closely associated with the Duke throughout the play, remains unchanged in his behavior.

While Bradbrook and Battenhouse have considered Measure for Measure within the framework of medieval morality tradition, Bryant's allegorical interpretation is more broadly Christian--in the same way The Rime of Ancient Mariner can be interpreted broadly as a Christian allegory. Bryant seems to favor a romantic conception of the imagination, which gives his interpretation a broader

symbolic meaning than the traditional allegorical meanings illustrated by Battenhouse and Bradbrook. All these allegorical interpreters, however, curiously ignore the fact that Shakespeare created a great part of this play in a very comic mood, with no allegorical overtones at all.

B) Non-allegorical

Among those critics who maintain historical perspective without emphasizing any medieval allegorical legacy, Elizabeth Pope, D. L. Stevenson, and J. W. Lever are the most significant critics of the Duke, all of whom focus on Renaissance background material to substantiate their interpretations.

Of these the most thorough "history of ideas" approach is perhaps taken by Elizabeth Pope, who is convinced that in Measure for Measure, Shakespeare has produced "a more Christian piece of thinking" on the subject of justice than most Renaissance theologians.[53] Dismissing any allegorical theory about the play, Pope, instead, is asking us to pay more attention to the Renaissance religious texts on the subject--"the annotated Bibles, the translations, the English commentaries, the sermons, and the tracts, through which the teaching of the Church reached the individual without special training or interest in theology" (66).

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[53]Elizabeth Pope, "The Renaissance Background of Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Survey 2 (1949): 66-82.

To clarify the problem of justice associated with the Duke in this play, Pope performs a task of reconstructing the Renaissance concept of temporal authority mainly by comparing similar ideas expressed in these religious texts and the play itself. In the eyes of Renaissance people, all civil authority derives from God, and a civil ruler is God's deputy on earth. Thus, any Renaissance audience, Pope points out, would have taken it for granted that the Duke stands for God; that he is possessed of "the sanctity of person" which "no man can rebel against . . . or abuse the personage of" (32); that he has "sovereignty of power" which all his subjects must obey without question; and that he has the right to enforce the law.

The privileges and duties of a Renaissance ruler are many, but some of them are quite unusual. One particular privilege of his that Pope highlights for us is the use of extraordinary means in the administration of justice, such as disguise or secret watching, which may be offensive to modern sensibility but was apprehended as quite natural to the Elizabethan. Thus, Pope suggests that the Duke's disguise and secret watching are to be understood as the use of "Craft against vice" (III.ii.291); and, she then points out that the use of this extraordinary means is advocated by some Renaissance political writers, for

example, in Basilikon Doron (1603), a widely known political treatise by King James, which reads: "Delight to haunt your Session, and spy carefully their proceedings . . . to take a sharp account of every man in his office" (90).

One of the principal duties of the Renaissance ruler, Pope finds, is to "know himself" (III.ii.246), remembering that he is not really God, but man "dressed in a little brief authority" (II.ii.118), and to cultivate virtue, "all temperance" (III.ii.250), thus setting good examples for his subjects and to be fair in administering justice (73-4). In enforcing legal justice, the ruler cannot be either too strict or too merciful--a good Renaissance expression of which appears, for example, in William Perkins's Treatise on Christian Equity and Moderation, which speaks of two types of bad rulers:

> . . . such men, as by a certain foolish kind of pity are so carried away, that would have nothing but mercy, mercy, and would . . . have the extremity of the law executed on no man . . . [and] "such men as have nothing in their mouths, but the law, the law and Justice, Justice: in the meantime forgetting that Justice always shakes hands with her sister mercy, and that all laws allow a mitigation. . . .[54]

[54]Quoted from Pope, 74.

The Duke initially represents a type of bad ruler who would have "nothing but mercy, mercy," but later, he is portrayed as the good ruler whose "Justice always shakes hands with her sister mercy." Pope's focus of attention is on the Duke as a type of Renaissance ruler who matures during the course of events in the play: despite the obvious difficulty of administering justice even when "the fault is disgusting and the criminal despicable," the Duke is

> . . . essentially a wise and noble man who has erred from an excess of good will . . . has put an end to his foolishness before the action proper begins, and so can step gracefully into the role of hero and good ruler. (76)

Pope elucidates well for us some extraordinary means the Duke uses in administering justice in the light of Renaissance theory of government, thus making some of his questionable actions more agreeable or less repulsive to modern sensibility. With supporting evidence coming from contemporary Renaissance texts, she makes a strong case against those apologists of allegorical and modern psychological approaches, who tend to avoid such historical reference in favor of more "universal" elements--allegorical or psychological--that make up a character. But, at the same time, the extreme emphasis she puts on the

historical context seems to be inviting charges against the historical approach itself from another direction, namely from the New Criticism, for it is still essential to discuss the Duke as a literary or dramatic character whose integrity as a character must depend, at least for the most part, on internal evidence in the play itself, not so much on historical reference. In fact, Pope seems to realize this possibility when she interprets Duke Vincentio at the closing of the play as a Renaissance duke stepping gracefully into the role of the good ruler and yet "proceeds not only to pardon, but to let off Angelo, Lucio and Barnardine as well, with penalties entirely disproportionate to what their conduct deserved by ordinary Renaissance standards" (79).

Some critics, like D. L. Stevenson and J. W. Lever, do not employ the historical approach quite as extensively as Pope, but rather keep it to limited materials, such as historical personalities or characters from dramatic convention and folklore, which are often used by Shakespeare in creating his dramatic characters. D. L. Stevenson, a critic discussed among the generic interpreters in Chapter II, has also used historical biographical references in interpreting the Duke. Like Chalmers, Albrecht, and Schanzer, Stevenson also has

advocated that King James' theory of government in his Basilikon Doron (written c. 1598) is reflected in Measure for Measure and that the Duke is modelled on the personality of King James.[55] This critic believes that it would have been difficult for Shakespeare, a leading playwright for the king's men, to have ignored the most talked about person in London around 1603-4 and his self-portrait in Basilikon Doron,[56] and that the dramatist makes a conscious effort to create the Duke "in the mold of James' ideal prince," "the observed of all observers" (144n5). Stevenson points out that Escalus' praise for the Duke as a model of virtue, as "one that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself" (III.ii.26) comes from a phrase actually used by King James himself in 1603 (150). Portraying the Duke as a recluse and a scholar is also the dramatist's "consistent mirroring of the Basilikon Doron" to describe this ideal prince (151).

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[55]David L. Stevenson, "The Historical Dimension in Measure for Measure: The Role of James I in the Play," The Achievement of Shakespeare's 'Measure for Measure' (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1966) 134-166; Louis Albrecht, Neue Untersuchungen zu Shakespeares Mass fur Mass (Konigsberg, 1914) 156-73; Ernest Schanzer, The Problem Plays of Shakespeare (New York: Schocken, 1963) 120.

[56]D. L. Stevenson, "The Role of James I in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure" ELH 26 (1959): 195-96.

As some other critics have also noted, the Duke's dislike of a public crowd and his harsh reaction to Lucio's slanders are also very much like the behavior of King James, who was known to be annoyed by the rude and disrespectful mobs in London.

While Stevenson may be right in pointing out that Shakespeare caught some of the essence of the sober, self-conscious moods and attitudes of the Jacobean political world in Measure for Measure and that there exist inevitable parallels between the Duke and the historical King James, his argument that the Duke is deliberately made respectable and, thus agreeable to King James is not supported fully by either historical reference or evidence from the play. As F. E. Halliday has observed, King James was often a figure of fun on the stage, even "to the great amusement of the Queen, who enjoyed the laugh against her husband," and a frequent object of satire or ridicule by his own King's Men.[57] Stevenson limits his historical perspective only to focus on the positive side of both the Duke and King James, thus overlooking some evidence in the play that makes the Duke not a respectable or even likable character.

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[57]F. E. Halliday, Shakespeare in His Age (Cranbury: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965) 269-71.

J. W. Lever, a critic with a limited historical focus like Stevenson, views the play as "a drama of ideas," exploring the theme of moderation, and advances a theory that Shakespeare's portrayal of the Duke is indebted to King James for the personality and virtues of the model ruler, as well as to the folklore motif of the Disguised Ruler, which had appeared in some sixteenth-century drama before Shakespeare's time.[58] The Duke's role throughout the play is viewed as that of a mediator, of Aristotelian means based on the principle of temperance, who brings about the issues and conflicts in the play and resolves them: the Duke, says Lever,

> . . . served to erect a norm as well as an active force reconciling opposites through moderation and virtue. Between the extremes of justice and mercy, holiness and vice, tyranny and licence, stood the Duke, 'a gentleman of all temperance,' exemplifying what most of Shakespeare's contemporaries would regard as the model ruler of a Christian polity. (li)

Lever basically interprets the Duke as a thematic character, somewhat similar to the viewpoint of any allegorical interpretation, but his historical perspective is kept in such a way that his approach may show more

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[58]J. W. Lever, ed. "Introduction." Measure for Measure: The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1965) xi-xcviii.

affinity to a Hegelian dialectic process of history or ideas. Lever constantly puts the Duke in the synthetic position of "Aristotelian mean" in the dialectic process of this "drama of ideas." Thus the Duke is always "a gentleman of all temperance," a mirror of Christian polity, and even in disguise, the observed of all observers, as Lever seems to suggest. But, like the other historical critics, Lever also seems to ignore some individual traits and behaviors of the Duke which can look extreme, not temperate, in the eyes of any observers, Elizabethan or modern.

Lever and the other critics who emphasize historical perspectives in their interpretations of the Duke exhibit both the strength and weakness inherent in such a critical approach. On the one hand, they make good use of any historical reference available with respect to this character which will enhance and enrich the meaning of the Duke's role and behavior if placed in proper perspectives (through source character study, dramatic convention, etc.). As we know, Shakespeare frequently makes use of some character traits available from source material in shaping his own individual dramatic characters. In the case of Hamlet, for example, the problematic aspects of this character, such as his "antic disposition" and

"procrastination," come from the quasi-legendary source character and ur-Hamlets and are incorporated or transformed into a distinctively individual Shakespearean character. Studies of the Duke's character with proper historical perspectives can therefore be beneficial.

On the other hand, most historical critics have a common tendency to emphasize those clear character traits which they find logically agreeable to their particular historical viewpoint or critical sensibility, while at the same time discrediting conflicting evidence that may exist in the very text of the play. As a result of this tendency, the Duke of Measure for Measure suffers from what I think is a "critical thinning of character": the Duke may be logically interpreted as a figure of some consistency or even a figure of contrast, but his character or the image he projects will become thinner in exact proportion to the degree such evidence is curtailed. In short, historical critics have a tendency to view the Duke more as a type character than as a complete individual character.

I wish to point out here that there are some cases in which Shakespeare becomes subjected, for some reason, to a kind of "creative" process of weakening or thinning a character, especially when the character in hand is

supposed to reflect some particular historical or political viewpoint and yet to be endowed with many historically known traits which make it difficult to individualize him in characterization. A good case in point is the warrior king in Henry V. Despite his noble cause of war, his famous victory at Agincourt, his eloquent speeches and soul-searching soliloquies, King Henry still remains a thinly drawn character with little depth of personality. This thinning of character is perhaps caused by the dramatist's conscious effort to make Henry V a spokesman for the myth of Tudor monarchy and, at the same time, to use the historically known traits about this rake-king, which may become a straining factor in the artistic execution of such a character. At any rate, Shakespeare fails to communicate to us any individual traits or thematic qualities of any depth for Henry V, at least not enough to individualize him as a major dramatic character or even to idealize him as a type character, "the model ruler of a Christian polity." In the case of the Duke in Measure for Measure, however, there seems to be no such clearly "historical" or thematic references which would make the dramatist uncomfortable in his creativity or hurt the integrity of the character he is shaping.

CHAPTER IV

NEW CRITICAL APPROACHES

During the second quarter of the twentieth century a group of critics attempted to analyze Measure for Measure and its characters with a critical approach typical of the so-called New Criticism.[59] These critics, in general, emphasize the close reading of the text for evidence in interpreting a character without paying much attention to its historical background or its generic context. Turning away from the previous emphasis on studying at the level of "plot" and "character," these critics seek to analyze characters and reinterpret the meaning of a play in terms of its textual or internal evidence such as language, imagery, metaphor, symbol, tone, and atmosphere. These critics, who use the methods of the New Critics, can be divided into sub-classes of allegorical and non-allegorical, as has been done in the previous chapter, for

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[59]As Rene Wellek points out, various misconceptions have been associated with the New Criticism, but the general views and methods of the New Criticism were well established by John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, Yvor Winters, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, and William K. Wimsatt; see Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950, 7 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986) 6: 144-45.

the convenience of my reviewing.

A) Allegorical

In his introduction to The Imperial Theme (London, 1931), G. Wilson Knight describes the advantages of his "imaginative interpretation" over any "commentary" approach in interpreting Shakespeare's characters in the following manner:

> Hence criticism of 'character' often leaves pages of commentary with few references to the Shakespearean text; whereas an imaginative interpretation will always be interwoven with numerous quotations. . . . The persons of Shakespeare are compact of poetic color, poetic association, and are, moreover defined as much by what happens to them or is said of them as of what they do and say.[60]

By "imaginative interpretation," Knight means, here, not just a character analysis using the New Critical methods, but also interpreting the themes and symbolic meanings of the play in the light of what characters say and do. For Knight, any mode of character discussion will be subordinate to a more general interpretation of philosophic, thematic, or symbolic aspects of a play; and, each Shakespearean play is "a visionary whole, close-knit

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[60]G. Wilson Knight, The Imperial Theme (1931; London: Methuen, 1965) 19-20.

in personification, atmospheric suggestion, and direct poetic symbolism" or "an extended metaphor."[61]

In his essay, "Measure for Measure and the Gospels," Knight explores a new view of the play as a Christian allegory, "a parable of Jesus," expounding on the theme of Matthew vii.1.: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (73). Measure for Measure is Shakespeare's dramatic illustration of this Gospel message to reveal to us a vision about "the moral nature of man in relation to the crudity of man's justice, especially in the matter of sexual vice" (73).

The characters of the play, Knight says, tend to illustrate certain qualities chosen with careful reference to this vision or theme of the play:

> Thus Isabella stands for sainted purity, Angelo for Pharisaical righteousness, the Duke for a psychologically sound and enlightened ethic. Lucio represents indecent wit, Pompey and Mistress Overdone professional immorality. Barnardine is hard-headed, criminal, insensitiveness. Each person illumines some facet of the central theme: man's moral nature. (74)

The Duke, standing for "a psychologically sound and

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[61]G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (1930; London: Methuen, 1930) 12, 16.

enlightened ethic," is viewed as the central character who, following an "exquisitely inwoven" structural pattern, progresses from "worldly power through the prophecy and moralizing of the middle scenes, to the supreme judgement at the end" (96, 83). He is, Knight observes, "lord of this play in the exact sense that Prospero is lord of The Tempest" (74). The Duke is "a kind father" and all the other characters are "his children," and as the play's action unfolds, he assumes the dignity and power in "proportions evidently divine," like Prospero (79).

Knight specifically suggests that the Duke's ethical attitude corresponds to that of Jesus, who is "the prophet of a new order of ethics" (80). Knight draws upon parallels between the Duke and Jesus: the Duke, like Jesus, "moves among men suffering grief at their sins and deriving joy from an unexpected flower of simple goodness in the deserts of impurity and hardness" (82); the incident of his rebuking Pompey the bawd by gently saying, "Go mend, go mend" (III.ii.28) is also reminiscent of Jesus's saying to the woman taken in adultery: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more (John viii.2)" (82); again, the Duke's marveling at the soft-hearted Provost, saying, "This is a gentle provost: seldom when / The steeled gaoler is the friend of men (IV.ii.89)" is also similar to Jesus's

marveling at the Roman centurion in Matthew viii.9: "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (82), and so on. The Duke, at the final judgement scene also "exactly reflects the universal judgement as suggested by many Gospel passages (83)." "No play of Shakespeare," Knight concludes, "shows more thoughtful care, more deliberate purpose, more consummate skill in structural technique, and, finally, more penetrating ethical and psychological insight" (96).

There is no doubt that Knight's well combined New Critical-allegorical approach or his "imaginative interpretation" of the parabolic parallels between the Gospel and Measure for Measure has left a very positive influence on the critical history of the play and the Duke. His emphatic focus on the Duke seems particularly justified in light of his broad thematic interpretation of the play. However, there are some problems with his interpretation. The mood of the play is not so pervasively allegorical, nor are most characters so explicitly allegorical. The parallels between Jesus and the Duke are somewhat overdrawn: the bed-trick, eavesdropping, spying on his people in disguise are not becoming actions for such a profoundly Christ-like figure as Knight makes of the Duke. It is quite plausible that Isabella's sainted purity is

also tainted with some ambiguous words of her own expression which Angelo finds tempting enough to seduce her; that "pharisaical" Angelo is truly agonizing about himself in his confrontation with Isabella; and that Lucio is not always so bad, being a helper to Claudio and Isabella and an entertaining companion to the Duke himself. Most low class people in the play are possessed with a mixture of qualities that reveal their immoral nature as their charming human nature, including Mistress Overdone, Pompey, and even Barnardine.

Earlier critics like Ulrici (1846), Snider (1875), and Arthur Symons (1920) had already moved in the allegorical direction before Knight,[62] but his interpretation is thoroughly modern in the method of his analysis and stands alone, epitomizing all Christian allegorical interpretations. Since allegory calls for thematic dominance over individual character and action, critics with this particular approach seem to avoid discussing any details from the play which tend to blur their allegorical perspectives. It is ironic, it seems to me, that Knight's

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[62]Ulrici, in Shakespeare's Dramatic Art (1846) 309-316, saw the play as an allegory demonstrating Christian ethics with the Duke representing 'true virtue'; and in Symons' Studies in the Elizabethan Drama (1920) 44-45, the Duke is a "figure of personified Providence, . . . a Prospero working greater miracles without magic."

"imaginative interpretation," advocating a free-hand method of the New Criticism, has produced a most rigidly allegorical interpretation of Measure for Measure and its characters. As Northrop Frye well points out, "continuous allegory prescribes the direction of his [the critic's] commentary, and so restricts its freedom."[63]

[63]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 90.

B) Non-allegorical

Although Knight's classical essay has immensely strengthened a "Christian" view of Measure for Measure, not many followers of Knight have supported his allegorical position. In his British Royal Academy lecture in 1937, R. W. Chambers, an early critic contemporary with Knight, maintains historical perspectives to defend the play as "a play of forgiveness."[64] The most significant and extensive analysis of the play with a Christian perspective, so far, is one that published by Arthur Kirsch.[65] Kirsch insists that the dramatic experience of the play is "inaccessible or unintelligent" without an understanding of the play's biblical meanings. Although the play begins with "an ostensive emphasis upon politics and civil justice," Kirsch says, it is mainly about man's "spiritual limitations" and "the possibilities of grace in human life and the need for it" (93). From the standpoint of dramaturgy, the

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[64]R. W. Chambers, Jacobean Shakespeare and Measure for Measure (London: British Academy, 1937) 28.

[65]Arthur Kirsch, "The Integrity of Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Survey 28 (1975): 89-105; a revised edition of this article appears in his Shakespeare and the Experience of Love (New York: Cambridge UP, 1981) 71-107.

characterization of Angelo is, therefore, the focus of Kirsch's attention. The behavior of Angelo is viewed as "a parabolic instance of the hypocritical condition of all Adam's descendants,"[66] with appropriate Gospel references coming from Matthew vii.1-5, Luke vi.36-42, and the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew xviii.32-45--all stressing the "hypocritical condition of all men who do not perceive their inherent corruption and the infinite mercy of Christ's Redemption." Angelo's behavior as well as these Gospel passages all remind us men that "We are all Angelos . . . born with a beam in our eye . . . [who] can be ransomed only through grace."[67]

As for the Duke, Kirsch says, "it does not require us to see him as an allegorical representation of Christ" and even to see him as an allegorical character like Prospero (104), as Knight does. But Kirsch views the Duke's role as being just as prominent and all-pervasive as Knight does, as the Duke acts like both "power divine" and a stage director: "Like power divine" the Duke moves through the play and brings his subjects to recognize that "the corruption which boils and bubbles in Vienna is within

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[66]Kirsch, Shakespeare and the Experience of Love 76.

[67]Kirsch, "The Integrity of Measure for Measure," 92.

themselves," a sinful moral condition of their own lives and hearts (100); and like a stage director, he also intervenes and directs them toward their redemptions (103). Thus, the Duke combines both his civic and spiritual roles in "reconstituting both their souls and the soul of his society," which Kirsch believes creates "a unified, if highly sophisticated, effect" for the play.

Like Knight, Kirsch tends to overemphasize the theme of Christian redemption and, subsequently, overburdens the role of the Duke for a unified effect for the play. From the standpoint of dramaturgy, it is difficult to perceive any unified effect as a result of the Duke's so-called "redemptive" role. Certainly, the dramatist would have made such a role more explicit if he had intended universal "workings of Providence" in the play, for the Duke indeed assumes the role of a friar for the most part of the play. However, this Friar-Duke does not even show any interest in the redemption of a soul nearest to him--Lucio, a constant companion who needs it most. Rather, his show of irritation with the slandering Lucio projects an image of his being very human and calls into question Kirsch's view of the Duke as a figure of universal redemption.

Furthermore, while overemphasizing only positive aspects of the Duke's action in both his spiritual role

throughout the play and his overt stage management later in the play, Kirsch fails to recognize any such thing in Lucio: Lucio, Kirsch says, is "a kind of the Blatant Beast, an enemy both of social and moral order" (102). Kirsch, who denies allegorical meaning to the play, assigns to Lucio a simile associated with horrible allegorical meanings. In Spenser's The Faerie Queene, the Blatant Beast is a hellish dog pouring forth "poisonous gall" to infest "noblest wights with notable defame" (VI.vi.12). Kirsch's use of this allegorical image of the Blatant Beast to represent the slandering Lucio may be seen as an indication that his explanation is not totally successful in departing from allegorical interpretation.

A "Christian" interpretation with a more explicit New Critical approach may be illustrated by Dayton Haskin's article "Mercy and the Creative Process in Measure for Measure," TSLL 19 (1977): 348-62. Haskin explores the gospel theme of the play with a particular focus on its forensic metaphor of "justification," which, he believes, generates the very structure of the play and creates patterns of character behavior and action in the play. This metaphorical pattern in the play is rooted in the biblical understanding of human existence, which interprets human life and history as "a great trial" and "a prelude

to judgment" (352). Haskin suggests that this biblical view of human life is specifically related to the Pauline theology that all men have sinned and deserve punishment but that there is a way out of this human dilemma, for which Paul uses forensic metaphors of justification, such as deliverance, ransom, salvation, and propitiation, to make people believe that God acquits the guilty--which is "a travesty of justice"--but he delivers all who acknowledge their guilt and repent. In the play itself, life for each character is conceived as a process of salvation or deliverance: "a progressive creation and gradual revelation of the individual's essential self in the total series of his actions" (352).

The Duke, Haskin argues, comes into the play as "a dramatist-like designer" who provides "controlled experiences" for the other characters and also as "a judge" who judges their actions. Many functions that the Duke performs in the play are designed to make the characters understand "moral complexities" and a ruler's dilemma in bringing about "something like a just temporal order" (352). The trial in the final act is a device by which the Duke makes the sinners recognize their "ultimate moral powerlessness" and their total dependence upon God for their salvation--whose recognition relates to the basic

theme of the play that "the personal relations of God to men cannot be described in legal terms at all" and that the revelation of God's justice and mercy is "made manifest without the Law" (Rom. iii:21).

Although the Duke here is not viewed as a Christ-figure providing any "justification" for the other characters, but only as a temporal ruler simply associated with Christ or God, "as the Christian prince was supposed to be" (354), Haskin does not include the Duke himself in the process of Pauline justification. Haskin, at one point, refers to the Duke's initial permissiveness as being partially responsible for his subjects' moral failings (356), but he continues to keep this Christian ruler aloof in the role of "a dramatist-like designer," instead of examining his actions in the play to see if they fall into any metaphorical pattern of justification.

Some critics, not satisfied with any "Christian" or any other hermeneutic interpretation of the play, seem to find it still necessary to focus on some alternative thematic concerns for the play, particularly as a measure of accounting for its characters' "successes and failures." However, an atmosphere of controversy seems to have been created by such critics as L. C. Knights, F. R. Leavis and D. A. Traversi.

L. C. Knights, in his argument against F. R. Leavis's view of the play in Scrutiny 10 (1941-2), expresses rather a Romantic conception of the play, emphasizing the ambiguity of its meaning and "the greatest sense of strain and mental discomfort" it creates in most readers.[68] Thematically the play focuses on the relation between "natural impulse and individual liberty on one hand, and self-restraint and public law on the other," (222-3) with the characters reflecting the conflicts of "nature" versus "law," and "liberty" versus "restraint," in their attitudes. Angelo, Claudio, and even Isabella show "feelings at war with themselves" (225). Knights believes that Shakespeare clearly demonstrates some uneasy feelings about these characters because they are incomplete characters--for instance, Angelo is not a consistently developed character, and Claudio is hardly developed at all.

Least attractive among the characters, in Knights's opinion, are the Duke and Isabella, for they are "disposed to severity towards 'the sin' (II.v.28-36; III.i.148) of Claudio and Juliet" (227). The Duke feels that the sin is "too general a vice" and "severity must cure it" (III.ii.

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[68]L. C. Knights, "The Ambiguity of Measure for Measure," Scrutiny 10 (1941-2): 222.

103). The Duke, thus, represents a legalistic point of view in the play. As such, the Duke is not even a key character: it is Claudio, not the Duke, who is the central figure of the plot because the play's mainspring of action is the sexual instinct (223, 228). Knights believes that Shakespeare expresses his own uncertainty about the moral teaching of the Duke, for the dramatist's own moral standard is always "nature itself" (228). In the play, therefore, the Duke's role is neither positive nor prominent because Shakespeare's intention for the play is to present "various possible attitudes and points of view" (230).

Knights' view is attacked effectively by F. R. Leavis in his article "The Greatness of Measure for Measure," which appeared in the same issue of Scrutiny with Knights' article.10 Leavis points out that it is rather Shakespeare's "fineness of ethical and poetic sensibility," not any ambiguity about the play's characters or its basically "morality" plot, that speaks for the great complexity of this play.[69] Complexity of attitude need not be ambiguity, Leavis asserts, and Shakespeare's use of morality "permits far subtler attitudes and valuations than

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[69]F. R. Leavis, "The Greatness of Measure for Measure," Scrutiny 10 (1941-2): 243.

the morality does," thus bringing about the resolution of the plot "consummately right and satisfying" (241).

Along with this view of the play, therefore, the Duke's role is much enhanced because he is burdened with the play's moral or ethical concern, and also, his viewpoint is "meant to be ours--his total attitude, which is the total attitude of the play" (238). Although the Duke is not interpreted as an allegorical character, Leavis says that our sense of him as "a kind of Providence directing the action from above" is established, for all the characters are more or less the subjects of his demonstrations or experimentation (244).

These extreme views of Knights and Leavis seem to be not shared by D. A. Traversi, whose article "Measure for Measure" in Scrutiny 11 (1942) advances a more balanced ethical view of the play. He describes its theme as "the inextricable interdependence of good and evil within human experience as centered in the act of passion."[70] Traversi points out that the ideas of virtue and vice do not present themselves in the play as "clear-cut and opposed issues" but rather tend to "merge into one another in the difficult business of living" (52).

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[70]D. A. Traversi, "Measure for Measure," Scrutiny 11 (1942): 58.

Traversi discovers that most characters in the play lack a proper balance in moral judgment or action. For example, Claudio describes his sexual "liberty" in terms of both good and evil--"a thirsty evil" or an irresistible sugar-coated "bane." Isabella does not seem to understand "the natural root" of Claudio's sin; and also, her virtue includes "a touch of wilful egoism" (51). Thus, in Traversi's opinion, the egoism Angelo shows in his "appetite" for sexual promiscuity is not totally different in nature from Isabella's defense of her chastity. "Virtue" in these characters is still "a partial and abstract thing" because they all lack the "self-knowledge which true moral maturity requires" (52).

Traversi views the Duke as a crucial ethical character exemplifying the moral concern of the play. He points out two important aspects of the figure of the Duke. The Duke is, first, an indispensable character who is involved deeply in the action of the play, providing judgment and experience that is more mature and impartial than the other characters; and, more importantly, he is a symbolic character, "a detached symbol of truth":

> Mysterious and retired in the early scenes, he comes forward increasingly as the action advances. In the later episodes he holds the threads in his hands, directs them, and provides in his

> observations upon them the most impartial comment. No other Shakespearean character, at this stage in the poet's career, had been conceived with so clearly 'symbolic' an intention; it is even possible to think of the Duke as a first faint approximation to Prospero. (53)

Traversi believes that the symbolic aspect of the Duke is intended by Shakespeare to present "symbolic" solutions to the complex moral problems in the play. The Duke, and Shakespeare with him, does not offer clear-cut solutions to difficult problems but rather "resolves" the contradictory elements of experience which help each character gain "in self-knowledge, in awareness of the complex knot of good and evil which centers on human passion" (53). As a law-giver, the Duke himself "must be aware of this complexity, must seek to harmonize the natural sources of experience with the moral law."

The Duke's resolution includes a painstaking realization of his own self-knowledge. The process is "a strife" rather than harmony: "the goodness of human inclination, which must be recognized to attain moral maturity, contains also a seed of evil which the moral law must uproot" (53). Traversi points out that the Duke's own self-knowledge hangs in the balance, but this balance exists not without a "strife," a "contention." Thus as a confessor to Claudio (III.i.), the Duke asserts the

futility of all desire, and yet he must still offer him a clear-cut moral choice (54). There is, of course, an enigmatic aspect in the Duke's behavior--"the old fantastical duke of dark corners" (IV.iii.)--but Traversi believes this obscurity in him to be only "a reflection of the situation, moral and spiritual, with which he is struggling" (57).

Traversi has offered the best critical judgment and most penetrating analysis of the Duke's character in the entire history of criticism on Measure for Measure--setting aside, of course, his purely ethical approach, which is problematic in the main. Those critics who take an ethical approach tend to skip over any peculiarly Christian quality in the Duke's behavior, despite the fact that they draw upon the internal evidence from the play to interpret this Christian ruler-friar personality. Such a tendency to avoid any "Christian" orientation toward Measure for Measure continues, as can be illustrated by Robert Ornstein here and by most critics in the ensuing chapters.

Robert Ornstein's article, "The Human Comedy: Measure for Measure," U of Kansas City Review 24 (1957): 15-22, is particularly interesting because it illustrates for me a typical mode of critical thinking in the West today, which

is non-allegorical, non-historical, non-Christian, etc. in a sense, but all that is still "allegorical, historical, Christian," etc., in another sense or from another point of view.[71] Objecting to any allegorical meanings in the play, Ornstein seeks to "rediscover the play's essential human truths." He believes the play dramatizes

> . . . the "social mode" of morality, the counterfeited expression of divine law and judgment, mercy, and love in ordinary life. Its thematic image is, in fact, the counterfeit coin, the debased marker of worldly value which passes undetected until weighed against an uncorrupted standard of worth. (15)

Vienna does not represent a symbolic religious world in which the characters wrestle with problems of moral choice; it is, rather, itself a "realistic civic world" in which its "little men," such as "bureaucrat and bawd, priest, novitiate, judge and jailer, take their customary places, creating and solving the mundane problems of society." And, counterfeitings and substitutions are the very stuff of the play's story and meaning, as well as of most characters. Angelo, for example, is "a dissembler by expediency rather than by nature" and has "the mentality of a smug" (15).

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[71]For instance, see my own "dialogic" point of view about which more will said in the concluding chapter.

In Ornstein's view, the Duke is the key to the play because he represents "an uncorrupted standard of worth" for all "little" people and because he appears in the play as an experimenter with these human beings to achieve his limited moral purpose--that is, to "rehabilitate rather than to sentence" these "little men" and, thereby, to attain "a higher justice than Vienna's demands that Claudio be set free" (19). By calculated risks and fantastic tricks, the Duke seeks to "transcend the customary forms of civil law" and even allows justice to be inverted, temporarily (22). Yet Ornstein's critical frame of reference for interpreting the characters is basically "allegorical"--the Duke standing for Justice, and Isabella for Mercy, etc.--albeit the human aspects of those characters are also emphasized as they were all involved in human risks and failures.

CHAPTER V

PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

The critics to be discussed in this chapter generally maintain what I would categorize broadly as a "psychological" approach although most of them are using the so-called psychoanalytic methods of analysis in one way or another.[72] Psychoanalytic study of Shakespearean characters originates with the Freud-Jones reading of Hamlet as the reworking of the Oedipus myth[73] and has inspired more critics to pay attention to the difficult characters of the so-called "problem plays," but its methodology has been controversial all along, as a recent critic points out:

> The methodology [of psychoanalytic criticism] has often been sloppy, the claims have often been exaggerated, and the conclusions have sometimes

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[72]The term "psychological" may be appropriate because its generic meaning can go much beyond any narrow application of it to "psychoanalysis." In some cases it is difficult to separate a "psychological" or "psychoanalytic" approach from, say, an allegorical or religious approach, although this latter often focuses on moral or religious instruction.

[73]Sigmund Freud, The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, gen. ed. James Strachey, 21 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1966-74) 4: 264-66.

> been outrageous. . . . When a distinguished critic of Faulkner's novels tells us that Benjy in The Sound and the Fury represents the "Id," Quentin the "Ego," and Jason the "Super-ego," we may either yawn or we may rage, but we do not learn.[74]

While this extreme branch of psychological criticism may prove to be a passing phenomenon of this post-Freudian society in which sex psychology is still rampant in every field of human knowledge, it would be unfair to underestimate the accomplishment of psychoanalytic criticism. As far as Measure for Measure is concerned, there have been some fascinating psychoanalyses of its major characters, although most analyses of the Duke cast a negative light upon him.

The first significant psychological criticism of Measure for Measure was published in 1942 by Dr. Hanns Sachs of Harvard Medical School. He has observed some similarities between the play and Oedipus the King of Sophocles and has, by psychoanalyzing their main characters, pointed out their relevance to the Gospel admonishment against moral judgment.[75] In Sachs's view, the

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[74]Edward Wasiolek, "The Future of Psychoanalytic Criticism," The Frontiers of Literary Criticism, ed. David H. Malone (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1974) 153.

[75]Hanns Sachs, "The Measure in 'Measure for Measure'" The Creative Unconscious, 2nd rev. ed. by A. A. Roback (Cambridge: Sci-Art, 1951) 63-99.

identity of the man who judges with the man who is judged--which is the basis of the Oedipus the King--is the "everlasting symbol of human guilt" (85). Likewise, in Measure for Measure, all the characters are sinners, "deceivers deceived" by their own "passions." Angelo, for example, is diagnosed as an obsessional neurotic because his temptation takes the form of suppressed sadistic wishes. And everyone who dares to be a judge is "a potential Angelo."

The Duke, Sachs finds, is no exception to this. The Duke commits the same crime which Angelo has attempted in vain, only "in a legitimate and honorable way." Dr. Sachs says:

> Maybe a distant inkling of the feeling that he would not be unable to commit the same crime as Angelo, is at the bottom of the somewhat obscure words with which he proclaims Angelo's pardon: "I find an apt remission in myself." (97)

Following Sachs's lead, a similar but more critical interpretation of the Duke was advanced by Norman Holland. Holland interprets the play's characters as possessing "a peculiar kind of complexity" which makes them do contradictory things.[76] Holland sees Measure for Measure

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[76]Norman Holland, The Shakespearean Imagination (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1964) 216-232.

as a play of contradictions and opposites--a play about both "authority, providence," and "dramatic creation." The Duke, in particular, can be interpreted as a character representing "justice or divine grace" or "a dramatist arranging plots and characters and scenes" (230). Holland further points out that the Duke's own person, therefore, embodies the opposite things--a Renaissance Prince of justice as well as a religious figure of mercy, a friar.[77] In his disguise as a friar, he also becomes a dramatist, "moving around behind the scenes, putting characters here and there, arranging plots and miraculous escapes" and, in Act V, he sets up (now as a prince) "a dramatic ritual." However, Holland's focus on the Duke is charged with much more negative psychology: the Duke's reasons for appointing Angelo are not unlike those clever governing tricks of Machiavelli and those "grislier acts of Cesare Borgia" (218), thus making of him "a very strange combination of Prince and friar; dramatist, God, and Borgia" (219).

Holland finds the same contradictions in the Duke's language behavior as well. The Duke, he says, both forbids and encourages "sexual license," saying that it was his

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[77]Norman Holland, 216-32.

fault to give the people "scope" and that it would be his tyranny "to strike and gall them / For what I bid them do" (I.iii.35-39). The Duke's "magnificent speech" in III.i.5-41, given as a friar's religious counsel to a troubled soul, reveals "no blessed assurance," but a stern denial of "all that the virtues might attribute to life or to ourselves," even to the point of nihilism (220). Thus for Holland, this paradoxical duke is nothing more than "a kind of benevolent Iago"(231).

Holland, more than any critics before him, including Dr. Sachs, has helped create a psychological atmosphere in recent criticism which tends to view the Duke not simply as a character of artistic failures or psychological contradictions, but also as a good Shakespearean case of a psychologically abnormal person, from perspectives either purely psychological, historical, or ideological or any other. The Duke's speeches, acts, and motives are scrutinized to diagnose his symptoms and identify his psychological sicknesses of one kind or another. This critical tendency is still very much alive today, but it seems to have had its heyday during the 1970's and early 80's, a time when no other critical forces of considerable strength had yet to emerge to challenge the New Criticism.

In reviewing some of these critics, I must say in

advance that I have some reservations about making intelligent comments about this "psychological" approach as well as other specialized approaches--such as feminist or new-historicist, to be dealt with in the next chapter--partly because such a specialized approach is often conceptually unintelligible to me; thus, having no common base either to agree or disagree,[78] and partly because it may not be essential or even necessary to be so "clinical" (Wordsworthian "dissecting"), conceptually as well as descriptively, to analyze a Shakespearean character as an artistic creation on the basis of what I believe to be "sporadic" or scattered evidence in any psychological terms. But since critics with various psychological persuasions seem to take the Duke seriously as the object of their analyses and since their analyses represent a variety of extreme as well as entertaining interpretations of the Duke, I propose to continue to review them here and in the next chapter without criticizing them too severely. Also, a large number of the specific references to the text

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[78]As a person brought up perhaps with a "provincial" outlook of a very different tradition, I must point out here that I believe Shakespeare's understanding of human psychology is much deeper and much more universal than what Freudian or any other contemporary psychology can illuminate with its own limited, specialized vocabulary of a provincial nature, at least in terms of systematic psychological concepts that have been developed.

of the play these psychological critics make--along with critics of other approaches--will perhaps make my own interpretation of the Duke less burdened with a necessity to repeat or quote references extensively; I may also appear less blameable for my own "provincial" outlook which may look extreme in any logical sense.

There are, of course, some critics, such as Marvin Rosenburg and Harriet Hawkins, whose atypical psychological approaches to Measure for Measure and its characters are more or less "literary" still, and, thus, easily distinguishable from other critics who may be more explicitly psychoanalytic in their interpretations.

Marvin Rosenberg, similar in approach to Holland, has suggested that we pay attention to the Duke's "comically ironical and paradoxical behavior" against the play's brilliant comic spirit in background--in his paper presented at the Shakespeare Institute Conference at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1968.[79] Rosenberg believes that Shakespeare's intention for the play is, essentially, of a paradoxical nature, "a trick to make mortals laugh and angels weep": the play's seeming premise is that "man, who must procreate, may be executed for procreating; killed for

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[79]Marvin Rosenberg, "Shakespeare's Fantastic Trick: Measure for Measure," Sewanee Review 80 (1972): 51-72.

making life" and yet the play's gentlefolk like Angelo, Isabella, and the Duke

> . . . who most deplore impulses to copulation and violence are themselves hotly impelled; they champion morality and act immorally, they cry allegiance to the living and clamor for death. And they do these terrible things comically. (51)

According to the play's basic comic design, the Duke is made to play "the most fantastic tricks" and play them as "a man, vain, proud, passionate, disguised, deceptive, self-deceptive." The Duke is, thus, interpreted as a fantastical trickster, to a degree comparable with Polonius or the "fantastical" Petruchio of the Shrew (69). Yet, there is a certain irony about the Duke's behavior--for instance, when he as a friar instructs Claudio in "a non-Christian view of the worthlessness of life" or when he engages Isabella in a bed-trick to trap Angelo (63).

Furthermore, Rosenberg suggests that there are some similarities between the fantastical Duke and the passionate Isabella. Both are "seemers"--the Duke being "first among the seemers, and Isabella close behind" (52), for they both disguise their erotic passion in their verbal or non-verbal communication and in their "holy robes." In Isabella, there is "a prone and speechless dialect, / Such as move men"--that is, "men only look at her, and get an

unmistakable sub-verbal message from her face and body" (52). She wears the dress of a sister until the end but only to display "the visual irony of enclosing a passionate, sensual maiden better fit for a different life" (54). From his first encounter with Isabella, the Duke "feels the full force of that prone and speechless dialect of hers" and is "shaken by the lovely, seductive image of Isabella" (64). Rosenberg concludes that both the Duke and Isabella "in their religious garb exalt at the staging of their sexual fraud" (69).

Harriett Hawkins is perhaps most explicit, among critics, about expressing her personal feelings of aversion and contempt for Measure for Measure, denouncing both the play and its major characters as "a magnificent failure."[80] Finding the play not only "aesthetically unsatisfying" but also "personally infuriating," Hawkins describes the trio of Angelo, Isabella, and the Duke as "the devil's party."[81] She suggests that the dramatic confrontation between Isabella and Angelo in II.iv displays their perverse sexual affinities with "sadomasochistic undertones": virtue

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[80]Harriett Hawkins, Likeness of Truth (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 74.

[81]Hawkins, "The Devil's Party: Virtues and Vices," Shakespeare's Survey 31 (1978): 105-13.

invites vice when Isabella's purity ignites Angelo's desire to defile it. The borderline between the extremes of virtue and vice, therefore, is very thin, "all too easy to cross" (108-9). Hawkins finds the Duke especially a contradictory and unconvincing character. From early on in the play, the Duke is an impressive character with human defects. Vienna is socially ill, and we see the Duke in no control of the situation. The Duke cannot face up to the dilemmas and responsibilities of a governor; instead, he asks someone else to clean up "the mess which his own permissiveness has created" (I.iii.19-43).[82] The Duke's initial permissiveness is to be blamed, as much as Angelo's later severity, for the personal and social suffering we see in Vienna, Hawkins points out. Later in the play, however, we see the Duke in full control of the action both as an administrator and spiritual leader, and we suddenly discover him as an "aggressive, manipulative, superhuman character"; but the same duke is also an "arbitrary and psychologically repulsive" man of "dark corners." The Duke, moreover, contributes to the play's failure on the structural level since he arranges the "forced" happy ending. Hawkins points out that Shakespeare's experiment

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[82]Likeness of Truth, 64.

in tragicomedy is stuck with a structural failure when the playwright "suddenly endows the Duke of Vienna with the superhuman, omniscient, manipulative powers of a Prospero" (62).

Hawkins's interpretation represents, of course, an extremely negative view of the Duke--more so perhaps than psychoanalytic critics who mostly would not fault the Duke for being abnormal or "sick" in behavior, at least not sufficent enough to account him among the devil's party. Occasionally, psychoanalytic readings can imply something judgmental while referring to positive or negative aspects of the Duke's behavior (Robert Rogers, Richard Wheeler), but most psychoanalytic critics apparently feel no such obligation to pass judgment on the Duke, and, as a result, the negative side of his conflicting personality may not look so psychologically repulsive as Hawkins or Leech seems to suggest. Recent critics like Robert Rogers, Marilyn L. Williamson, David Sundelson, Carolyn E. Brown, Richard Wheeler and Meredith Skura will illustrate this point further.

Meanwhile, the readings of Richard Wheeler and Stephen Reid seem to represent polarized views of the Duke, either positive or negative. Reid presents a more positive view of the Duke as an apologist of marital sex while Wheeler

takes a negative view of the Duke as a kind of spoiled nihilist. Reid basically interprets the play as a dramatized argument for marital sex, as opposed to unrestricted sexual liberty. Basing his argument on a psychological theory of Herbert Marcus (claiming that "unrestrained sexual liberty from the beginning" results in lack of full satisfaction), Reid asserts that a concern with an "inner barrier" to sexual satisfaction is clearly present in the minds of the main characters of Measure for Measure, including the Duke.[83] The play, he says, is not particularly about justice or mercy but is an apology for marital sex. Reid, like Marcus, believes that sex with certain conventional restrictions, as in marriage, is more satisfying and rewarding than promiscuity because a man's wife inaccessible to other men is an object closer to the Oedipal "incestuous ideal" and, therefore, that easily available sex in Vienna brings "unhappiness" to Claudio and "repressive morality" to Angelo. As for the Duke, Reid says, there should be no uneasiness about his role because his main concern is to make "people see and accept the constraints of the law as necessary for their own

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[83]Stephen A. Reid, "A Psychoanalytic Reading of Troilus and Cressida and Measure for Measure," Psychoanalytic Review 57 (1970): 263-82.

happiness" (276). However, by focusing on the Duke's conventional--though positive--attitude toward sex, Reid seems to have diminished the Duke's complex psychological role and its implications for the meanings of the play other than the sexual one.

In contrast to Reid's view, Richard Wheeler (1981) interprets the Duke's behavior in terms of psychological nihilism associated with his fear of sexual drives and his longing for death. He points out that the Duke's advice to Claudio on death ("Be absolute for death" [III.i.5]) reflects his own contempt for procreation, which further implies his "impotence that links fear of death to sexual anxiety."[84] This speech is not an appropriate advice for Claudio at all, who, unlike the Duke, admires "this sensible warm motion" of life, but expresses the Duke's own "gesture of self-definition" (121).

The Duke's nihilism or his withdrawal from sexual impulses altogether is paradoxically a strategy to express and satisfy his latent sex desires, Wheeler suggests. Thus, the Duke's plan to deputize Angelo includes the desire to keep his "nature never in the sight / To do it

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[84]Richard P. Wheeler, Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies (Berkeley: U of California P, 1981) 116-7.

slander" (I.iii.42-43). The Duke is preoccupied with how he is looked at but remains a "looker-on" while manipulating the actions of others. He hides his own person in disguise but participates secretly in the actions of others while he himself stages and directs them. The Duke, furthermore, exhibits his "sexual parasitism" when he arranges for a sexual union between Mariana and Angelo, an "abominable" service he has publicly rebuked Pompey for. By focusing on the Duke's nihilistic inner drives and his paradoxical moves in the play, Wheeler seems to make of the Duke a half-spoiled symbolic character representing, in my mind, a kind of corrupt nihilism or extrovert narcissism.

Unlike Wheeler and Reid, some other critics--specifically, Rogers, Sundelson, Brown and Skura--seem to be more detached and perhaps more professional as they are primarily concerned with psychoanalyzing the Duke's abnormal behavior. In A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (Detroit, 1970), Robert Rogers turns to a discussion of the play in terms of "a comic exorcism of sexual guilt" and then an analysis of the Duke in terms of "decomposition"--the splitting, doubling, and multiplication of literary characters.[85] Noting that all

[85]Robert Rogers, The Double in Literature (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1970) 72-3.

the crimes and jokes in the play are sexual in nature, Rogers asks us to be aware of the way in which decomposition operates, especially in the parodies and the substitution motif. Lucio's first licentious jokes are a parody of the judgment theme:

> Luc. Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes. I have purchas'd as many diseases under her Roof, As come to
> 2. Gent. To what, I pray?
> Luc. Judge.
> 2. Gent. To three thousand Dollours a yeare. (I.ii.139-143)

The sexual crime for which Claudio is to be beheaded is parodied when Lucio is forced to marry a bawd whom he got with a child, Mistress Keepdown. Angelo's later crime duplicates Claudio's. Moreover, the psychological doubles are represented in the substitution motif: Escalus, Angelo and the Friar (disguised) substitute for the Duke; Mariana's body substitutes for Isabella's; Barnardine's or Ragozine's head is to be substituted for Claudio's, etc.

As for the psychological doubles in the Duke, Rogers points to the disparity between the Duke's verbal claim in sexual probity and his actual promotion of sexuality by his own proposal to marry. The Duke seems to relish sexual innuendo even when he verbally denies the possibility of any "aims and ends / Of burning youth" or "the dribbling

dart of love" to enter his "complete bosom" (I.iii.6,2,3). Rogers points out further that the Duke's ambiguous remarks, such as "To weed my vice and let his [Angelo's] grow," or "I find an apt remission in myself" look "rather suspicious" (75).

Marilyn L. Williamson, in her article "Oedipal Fantasies in Measure for Measure" (1976), explains the major characters' action and motivation in terms of oedipal incest fantasies and stresses "the fundamental importance of patriarchal authority in maintaining a social structure" in the entire action of the play.[86] In particular, she points at the significance of the Duke's double "figures of authority"--both as ruler and as friar. Keeping this idea of authority in a historical perspective, Williamson suggests that the image of father as a figure of authority is common to Renaissance thought, as in Basilikon Doron, where the ruler is referred to as "natural father and kindly master" to his subjects and as "a loving nourish-Father" to his Church (175). In Measure for Measure, the Duke refers to himself as a fond father to his children (I.iii.23-25) and, as friar in disguise, assumes the role of a spiritual father to Claudio, Isabella, Barnardine,

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[86]Marilyn L. Williamson, "Oedipal Fantasies in Measure for Measure," Michigan Academician 9 (1976): 173-84.

Juliet, and Mariana. The device of disguise is, psychoanalytically speaking, "a means of splitting the father-figure into the authority figure (castrating father) and the nurturing father in the friar" (175).

One interesting characteristic of this Duke as ruler-parent, as Williamson indicates, is sexual permissiveness toward his subjects or his figurative children:

> The Duke reveals a typically parental ambivalence toward the sexual behavior of his subjects: he wants to restrain and control it while at the same time expressing a loving indulgence in his neglect of the laws. (176)

The Duke's absence, for instance, allows Angelo to fulfill his oedipal fantasy about Isabella, who will marry the Duke later. The father-figure (Duke Vincentio) has been removed, and the figurative son (Angelo) functions in his place. Williamson's view of Angelo's motive and behavior is quite extreme when she says that a son's "characteristic anxiety over assuming the father-figure" takes over Angelo and leads him to regress to "a childishly sadistic cruelty toward those he governs" (176).

Williamson, however, adequately emphasizes the Duke's large psychological role in the play within the context of her psychoanalytic argument: the Duke remains, throughout the play, "a model of good parenthood" who fulfills the

benign therapeutic functions for his children in the oedipal situation and helps them to achieve a certain measure of maturity in sexuality and in the wisdom in exercising the patriarchal authority necessary to maintain a healthy society in Vienna (and in Shakespeare's England). Williamson makes this large psychological role available for the Duke because she makes Shakespeare's as well as the Duke's view of sexuality, even sexual permissiveness, a cathartic, "life-giving" rather than a corrupting element in Measure for Measure. If Williamson's focus on "patriarchal authority" (a psychoanalytic term) makes her interpretation more appealing to us than other psychoanalytic interpretations, it is mainly because she keeps it in historical perspective--associating the idea of "patriarchal authority" with the historical reality of Elizabethan patriarchal society--but so much because of her psychoanalytic focus.

Meredith Skura, in her The Literary Uses of the Psychoanalytic Process (1981), similarly utilizes a psychoanalytic concept to interpret the play and the Duke. She begins with an interesting observation that Shakespeare has presented us "a Viennese psychoanalyst [Duke Vincentio] three hundred years before Freud, conducting his own self-analysis." She observes that characters in Measure for

Measure anthropomorphize the parts of the human mind and that the Duke in particular anthropomorphizes "an absconding or observing ego":

> The Duke steps back from active life to the position of a disinterested "observing ego" and presides over the working out of the psyche's battle between Angelo (who represents the sadistic superego) and the crowd surrounding the clown Pompey Bum in the brothel (who represent [sic] the id).[87]

The Duke's proceedings over this psychic battle are in a sense "therapeutic" because he has made each character come to terms with his or her major weakness. Thus, he can be appropriately acclaimed as a man of "complete bosom" (III.i.33) who has "contended especially to know himself" (III.i.232) and "a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier" (III.ii.237) in a world of extremists.

In another sense, Skura argues, the Duke's way of working things out in the play is definitely problematic from a psychoanalytical viewpoint. Skura points out that there is definitely something odd about the play. For instance, the action turns "stiff" once the Duke begins his manipulations of the other characters:

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[87]Meredith Ann Skura, The Literary Uses of the Psychoanalytic Process (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981) 35, 245.

> For the first three acts the characters engage in fast-moving, psychologically plausible and realistic exchanges. Suddenly, instead of psychological development we see only these ducal machinations, a hugger-mugger operation which the provost thinks illegal and critics have found shabby when the Duke treats his subjects as puppets for the fun of making them twitch.[88]

Thus, the Duke's "machinations" are a shabby, muddled operation conducted in secrecy and disguise. Worse still, Skura believes that the Duke repeats other characters' crimes, though in another level of action (44). For instance, the Duke who told Angelo not to hide his light under a bushel engages in "duplicities" and arranges for "dubious sexual encounters" (45). As a consequence, Skura believes, the Duke leaves Vienna in a worse state of moral and spiritual corruption, which is "a license far more threatening than the original sexual license" and takes away any absolute values like justice, mercy, or even death. Skura blames the Duke for causing this muddled situation in Vienna--especially his "personality of irresolution." Previously, she points out, the Duke could not handle the sexual corruption in Vienna and leaves the cleaning job for Angelo; and he could not handle death

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[88]Meredith Skura, "New Interpretations for Interpretations in Measure for Measure," Boundary 2 7 (1979): 44.

in the case of Barnardine, who is willing to die but is kept in prison for nine years without any decision either to be freed or executed. Skura believes that the Duke is one character in the play who should admit he has "an incomplete bosom after all" (53). More than any other abnormal personality traits of the Duke, Skura seems to make the Duke's habitual indecision or his irresolute personality responsible for all the administrative failures in Vienna.

In the light of what the Duke actually does in the course of action in the play, however, Skura's argument about the Duke's personality of irresolution seems unjustifiable, to the degree to which she emphasizes it, at least, for indeed the Duke in disguise engages in a resolute course of action which demonstrates his administrative skills, and he can be credited with a measure of success in administering to his peoples--for instance, thwarting Angelo's wicked plan or in persuading Isabella, Mariana, and the Provost to choose to follow alternative courses of action. Just because the Duke's course of action in the second half of the play looks more "stiff" or "shabby" from a psychological viewpoint, it does not necessarily make him a man of "incomplete bosom" or a dramatic personality of "irresolution." It is a bit

anachronistic, it seems to me, that Skura refers to the Duke as Shakespeare's "Viennese psychoanalyst."

David Sundelson, a critic recognizing a pattern of Shakespeare's "concessions to patriarchy" in the play, believes that Duke's absence from rule and his return--the loss and the restoration of the father-figure--forms the structural basis of the play; and, that fears about the precariousness of male identity and fears of the destructive power of women dominate the behavior of the Duke as well as of his deputy Angelo.[89] He points out that the Duke's basic strategy in the play is an attempt to preserve or defend himself against "anxieties" about both "political and sexual power."[90]

Sundelson believes that political power and sexual power are psychologically interrelated in the play. In particular, there is an erotic dimension to the Duke's abdication of his political power, and the real reason hidden behind this abdication is his fear of sadistic impulses as well as his fear of the temptation to let the

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[89]David Sundelson, Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1983) 5.

[90]David Sundelson, "Misogyny and Rule in Measure for Measure" in Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father (1983) 89-90. The same article was originally published in Women's Studies 9 (1981): 83-91.

body politic "straight feel the spur" (I.ii.163):

> The Duke seems to equate rule and exhibition--"to stick it in their children's sight / For terror" (I.iii. 25-26)--and ranges nervously from one vulnerable appendage to another. To save his nose from plucking, he confers on Angelo "all the organs / Of our own pow'r" (I.i.21-22) in the hope that his double, "one that can my part in him advertise" (I.i.42), will perform that exhibition for him, and with more vigor than he himself is willing to risk: "In our remove be thou at full ourself (I.i.44)." (90)

Sundelson further says that what makes us most uneasy about the Duke's behavior is Isabella's "protracted torment at the hands of the duke" (93). The Duke lies to Isabella that her brother has been dead, accuses her of madness, and nearly drives her to the point of real madness. Sundelson argues that the Duke's lie amounts to a kind of exorcism aimed at subduing Isabella's destructive power as a woman:

> The lie also feeds the rage that can make Isabella so threatening, directs it once again at Angelo, and enables the Duke to dispel it and belittle its power: "This nor hurts him nor profits you a jot. / Forbear it therefore; give your cause to heaven" (IV.iii.123-4). What happens is not unlike an exorcism: a woman's hidden and unpredictable menace is exposed and then tamed by the controlling wisdom of her husband-to-be [the Duke]. (94)

Furthermore, Sundelson believes that the Duke's strategy of concealing the truth about Claudio produces a "synthetic miracle" of both resurrecting Claudio from the dead and

gratifying Isabella in union with the Duke. This strategy is, after all, an attempt to define "a hierarchy . . . that precludes any marriage of equal partners" (95)--which is a clear concession to patriarchy in Sundelson's view.[91]

There is no real substance or power in the Duke's partriarchy, Sundelson points out, because the Duke is essentially a weak, "ghostly father" figure or simply a phantom. Voyeurism is his key strategy through which he can be everywhere and nowhere like the ghost of Old Hamlet. He lets his subjects act out his fantasies and anxieties, but the Duke himself remains a phantom to the end, seeking "to rise above the messy domains of human sexuality and power, to assume . . . a sanctity not available to ordinary men" (98). This paradoxical status, everything and nothing, Sundelson perceives, is linked to a psychological tension between "dismemberment and reconstruction" (100). It reflects a fear that a truly powerful father never existed and cannot exist (102). "Nowhere in Shakespeare," Sundelson concludes, "is this sense of a powerful but essentially empty father . . . more pervasive than in Measure for Measure" (102).

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[91]Sundelson's phrase "concession to patriarchy" reflects also his feminist viewpoint. See the next chapter for some critics who represent the feminist approach.

Despite his penetrating psychological insight in describing the Duke's basically patriarchal pattern of behavior, Sundelson overemphasizes the illusion or emptiness of such a patriarchal character. The existence and reality of such patriarchal patterns of behavior in all facets of Elizabethan society is simply too overwhelming and even risky for a gentle dramatist of the King's Men to challenge or even to suggest their illusive and empty nature. As far as patriarchy is concerned, Shakespeare seems to have no qualms about its absolute values in human society, as can be seen in his plays and perhaps in his own personal life. As a dramatist who expressed some doubt about life "signifying nothing," has he not, in his own personal life, attempted to recover his dead father's coat of arms? In spite of all that euphemism about his "gentleness," he remembered his own wife with a "second best bed"--an understandable "patriarchal" behavior in Elizabethan society although some psychoanalysts today may interpret it as a poignant case of male chauvinism or a "morbid" form of patriarchy.

In this connection, there are also many occasions in his own plays where Shakespeare dramatizes or refers to the importance of social hierarchy or patriarchal authority in rulership. See, for instance, how beautifully Shakespeare

puts such an idea in the mouth of a relatively insignificant character in Hamlet, Rosencrantz:

> The cess of majesty
> Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
> What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,
> Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
> To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
> Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
> Each small annexment, petty consequence,
> Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
> Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.
> (Hamlet, III.iii.15-23)

Of course, this eloquent speech is made in the presence of King Claudio, a strong king, though a wicked character in that play. But Shakespeare makes Ulysses comment on the same theme even in the absence of such order in Troilus and Cressida. In any case, what I wish to point out is that Shakespeare makes it verbally explicit in the text of each play whenever such a theme becomes a matter of concern to him and that in the case of Measure for Measure, Shakespeare has no reason to play with the idea of patriarchy in such a negative figuration as Sundelson would have it--that is, in the "sense of a powerful but essentially empty father" or a ghostly figure.

Another interesting psychoanalytic interpretation of Measure for Measure was advanced by Carolyn E. Brown, with specific historical references made to the Renaissance

practices of "erotic religious flagellation." In her article "Erotic Religious Flagellation and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure,"[92] Brown contends that the play is saturated with a diseased sexuality and a morbid atmosphere of bondage which were often found in religious flagellation, noting especially a deviant, "dark carnality" among the so-called purists--Angelo, Isabella, and Duke Vincentio:

> Lurking in every corner of the play, the sexuality . . . is "not quick and fresh," . . . but fetid and sick. From the purists' revulsion for the "prompture of the blood" to the lowlifes' talk of French crowns, the sweat, and the stews bubbling over with disease, Measure for Measure exists almost totally in what feels like a sewer. (140)

Brown believes that the cruelty displayed by a triumvirate of Angelo, Duke Vincentio, and Isabella is definitely related to their preoccupation with both sex and asceticism:

> While consciously dedicating themselves to the highest moral principles, the triumvirate harbor a subterranean sexuality, one aroused not by affection but by abuse. In fact, by drawing parallels to historical and topical events [religious exercises in self-denial such as flagellation], Shakespeare suggests that the

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[92]Carolyn E. Brown, "Erotic Religious Flagellation and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure," ELR 16 (1986): 139-165.

> protagonists' very asceticism, ironically, causes this deviant desire and that they associate their austere religious practices with pleasurable feelings. Their painful self-abnegation compels them to correlate pain with gratification. (141)

The Duke, like Isabella and Angelo, denounces sex as "abhorrent" desire or "filthy vice" (II.iv.42) and lechery as a punishable sin--"too general a vice, and severity must cure it" (III.ii.96), but he turns to repression and dedicates himself to displeasure by living a "grave and wrinkled" life (143). The Duke, Brown argues, is preoccupied with flagellation instruments, alluding to birch rods and whips (I.iii.24) with which to beat children. A life oriented to hate tender affection and to glorify displeasure and harshness misleads the Duke to "revere--even love--destruction, to treat the passions with contempt, and to correlate the desires with pain" (143).

Brown sees the Duke as a "deeply troubled man," taking carnal pleasure from abuse and still convincing himself in his "moral" intentions. In Act V, the Duke urges his Deputy to interrogate those who slander rulers ("punish them to your height of pleasure" [V.ii.239]) in order to see justice done. The Duke encourages Angelo to "gall" his children, to "strike home," and to practice "tyranny" (V.i.36). Moreover, the Duke's administration of justice

is described in predatory terms: a ruler should be like a lion who "goes out to prey." These terms, Brown says, mean "not just to inflict abuse but to experience sexual pleasure or orgasm" (160). The Duke also has beating fantasies, like a Freudian figure of a tyrannical parent "flagellating a helpless child or adult victim"; Brown suggests that fantasies of victims receiving a beating are characteristic of those of sadists or masochists (160).

Brown also makes an interesting suggestion that the Duke's earlier leniency as well as his deputization in enforcing the laws is a "defense mechanism" on the part of the Duke to protect himself from his subconscious love of abuse and from his fear of his forbidden desires. This is why the Duke remains an "observer" (I.i.28), a voyeur, peeking secretly at the scenes of suffering and "deriving pleasure without blame" (161). Brown believes that Shakespeare has the Duke assume the role of a confessor in order to entertain him with this secret delight in "observing at first hand the suffering of penitents as he visits them in the guise of a friar" (159). Brown suggests that the action of the whole play focuses on the Duke's "well-guarded perversion" through which Shakespeare dramatically creates "a psychological nightmare" (165).

Although Brown illustrates well her points of

arguments with proper historical reference, she makes some erroneous assumptions about the Duke's personality. For instance, there is no reason to believe that the person of a friar the Duke assumes in the play is devoted to "a life oriented to hate tender affection and to glorify displeasure and harshness." The friar may appear in Elizabethan drama as an object of ridicule and humorous attacks, and Shakespeare's handling of the disguised friar may even be ironic--as Rosalind Miles suggests in her consideration of the friar disguise,[93] but Shakespeare never seems to go to an extreme view of religious life as Brown seems to imply in the particular case of the Duke. In fact, as Peter Milward suggests, there is reason to believe that Shakespeare indeed had a rather sacramental (Catholic) view of religious life, based on the evidence from his plays.[94]

There is no denying that Measure for Measure is a potential gold mine for any psychoanalytic critic because

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[93]Rosalind Miles, The Problem of Measure for Measure: A Historical Investigation (New York: Barnes, 1976) 17.

[94]Peter Milward finds much consistency in Shakespeare's religious view that is deeply rooted in Christian tradition--a Catholic tradition in Milward's opinion: See his Shakespeare's Religious Background (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973), especially the chapters on "Catholic Clergy" (68-84) and "Theology" (246-276).

of its distinctly conflicting qualities in structure and characterization, but so far, psychoanalytic attempts to explain the Duke's behavior in terms of "doubles," "masochistic sadism," "voyeurism," etc., remain extreme and, therefore, unconvincing in most cases.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

Criticism goes out of date quickly, but recently, a feminist critical approach to Shakespeare has developed rapidly in a close alliance with historical, or socio-political feminist movements--especially since Juliet Dusinberre published the first book of the feminist criticism of Shakespeare, Shakespeare and the Nature of Women (1975). Dusinberre's basic assumption that women are equal to men but their roles have been restricted and stereotyped[95] is of course common to any feminist criticism of literature, but her perspective is emphatically historical when she interprets Renaissance humanism and Puritanism as crucial movements in support of feminist ideology or ideals. The objectives of the feminist criticism are later summed up broadly by the three editors of The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism (1980)[96]: (1) to

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[95]In her Shakespeare and the Nature of Women (New York: Barnes, 1975), Dusinberre sums up her feminist assumption: "the struggle for women is to be human in a world which declares them only female" (3).

[96]"Introduction," The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare, eds. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: U. of Illinois P, 1980)

"liberate Shakespeare's women from the stereotypes to which they have too often been confined"; (2) to "examine women's relations to each other"; (3) to "analyze the nature and effects of patriarchal structures"; and (4) to "explore the influence of genre on the portrayal of women" (4). The critical methodology adopted by feminist criticism may vary, however, from historical or psychoanalytic to a combination of two or more perspectives. Psychoanalytic criticism frequently has shown its close affinities to feminism, and, as the editors of The Woman's Part point out, the persistent theme of psychoanalytic feminists appears to be male folks' "inability to reconcile tender affection with sexual desire and their consequent vacillation between idealization and degradation of women."[97]

In the previous chapter, I have already reviewed some feminist critics without categorizing them as feminists because of their original contributions in psychoanalyzing the Duke's character rather than their feminist viewpoint. For example, I find Skura's focus on the Duke as an absconding ego or person of irresolution more significant

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[97]The Woman's Part, 9.

than her regarding him as an inadequate male or a man with "incomplete bosom." This same respect applies to several others, including Sundelson (focusing on the Duke's sadistic impulses in tyrannizing others), Brown (analyzing the Duke's acts of a "well-guarded perversion" comparable to erotic satisfaction sought by medieval flogging priests), Williamson (seeing Shakespeare's "concessions" to patriarchal authority in the behavior of the Duke), etc.

Unfortunately, some outspoken feminist critics, who have discussed Shakespeare's plays, have not paid much attention to the Duke of Measure for Measure,[98] but there are a couple of critics I wish to include for my reviewing at this point because their feminist outlook is more distinguishable than their other perspectives, psychological or literary.

For instance, Marilyn French analyzes the Duke in terms of a gender principle which divides human experience and gives purpose to it. Her basic assumption for any literary analysis is that the masculine principle--which

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[98]I am referring to feminist critics such as Irene G. Dash (Wooing, Wedding, and Power, 1981), Diane E. Dreher (Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare, 1986), Peter Erickson (Patriarchal Structure in Shakespeare's Drama, 1985), Marjorie Garber, Carol Thomas Neely, Marianne Novy, Linda Bamber, Gayle Greene, Jacqueline Rose, etc.

is predicated on the ability to kill and associated with "prowess and ownership, with physical courage, assertiveness, authority, independence, and the right, and legitimacy"--is "profoundly threatened by and antagonistic to impulses towards acceptance of simple continuation, of present pleasure, of surrender to mortality," which is the feminine principle predicated on the ability to give birth and to be identified with nature.[99]

In view of these gender principles or ideals, French finds the Duke somewhat deficient in qualities representing

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[99]Marilyn French, Shakespeare's Division of Experience (New York: Summit Books, 1981) 21. Her feministic viewpoint is evident in her theorizing about masculine as well as feminine principles. The feminist principle, she continues, has an "outlaw" aspect, representing the benevolent side of nature (nutritiveness, compassion, mercy, and the ability to create felicity) and an "inlaw" aspect, which represents the malevolent side of nature (darkness, chaos, magic, flesh, sexuality). Qualities such as "mercy, compassion, feeling, nutritiveness" are seen "connected and subordinate" to male qualities of "justice, authority, reason, and power," and together both build up society, culture, human civilization, etc. The "inlaw" principle advocates "superhuman" chaste constancy while the "outlaw" principle is prone to "subhuman" sexuality--thus females may be saints, goddesses, martyred mother or wife or whores, witches, the castrating bitch, but, French contends, they are also seen only in relation to males and the male (human) standard, for autonomy or independence is not allowed in females "because they are not seen as human, but only as parts of the dimension (nature) with or against which humans operate" (26). In the play, both Mariana and Isabella are not recognized as "human": "In Shakespeare's Vienna, the poor, the women, have no rights" (194).

the masculine principle--power, legitimacy, authority, etc.[100] Moreover, she finds the Duke to be ambiguous on the play's two main themes--sexuality and justice. The Duke seems to be possessed of a firm belief in restricting sexuality in Vienna (somewhat outrageous in his reprimand of Pompey in III.ii.), and yet he has been lax in enforcing the sex law in Vienna. In other words, Miss French charges the Duke with being "immoral" and "callous" throughout a series of actions in his attempt to administer justice. Furthermore, he is an incoherent person--his motivations and his character are simply "unintegrated." He has not just multiple roles, he is "many things": Lucio, Angelo, and the Friar are his "doubles" in different areas and he "sprawls across the play occupying all the power roles--he is an unjust justice, an irresponsible fornicator, a plotting, eavesdropping friar" (193). French comes near to condemning the Duke for not representing the male principle of power and legitimacy and not effectively incorporating what she calls the "inlaw" feminine principle of compassion, mercy, or felicity.[101] Ultimately, French

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[100]Marilyn French, Shakespeare's Division of Experience (New York: Summit Books, 1981), 191.

[101]See Note 5 for Miss French's definition of the "inlaw" female principle.

suggests, it is Shakespeare who is responsible for creating such a unintegrated person, for the dramatist appears to "lay the problem of relativity to rest" and let the audience to form their own opinion (198).

Marcia Riefer also makes her feminist viewpoint explicit by describing the Duke as a male-chauvinistic villain in an article she published in Shakespeare Quarterly (1984).[102] She finds the Duke antagonistic to the "normal" action of comedy, which is characterized by a "constant desire to bring about sexual union" (159). The Duke, she says, appears to have "a comic drive" toward union when he proposes the bed-trick, but by not admitting sexuality, the "dribbling darts of love," from which most commoners suffer, and by keeping himself aloof above those sinners and weaklings, he has denied the play the very essence of comedy. Thus, the Duke lacks qualities necessary for a satisfying resolution of comedy: he is not a "love's facilitator" but rather its "blocking agent" (160). As the protagonist, the Duke paradoxically embodies those traits characteristic of a comic antagonist, a villain, in short. Riefer points out the Duke's

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[102]Marcia Riefer, "'Instruments of Some More Mightier Member': The Contrition of Female Power in Measure for Measure," Shakespeare Quarterly 35 (1984): 157-169.

villainous self-interest is evident when, for instance, he lavishes praise on Angelo (I.i.26-41) even while knowing that Angelo has unjustly abandoned Mariana (III.i.240).

Riefer, moreover, refers to the Duke's male-chauvinistic behavior. He imposes, for instance, on Isabella, against her wishes, a role which forces her into a humiliating position "no matter how cleverly the duke may be intending to redeem her reputation" (165). The Duke's proclaimed altruism cannot be taken at face value, for Isabella has trusted the Duke, but he has spoiled her expectations as well as the audience's. Also, the Duke's male chauvinism is rather "clear" when he tells Juliet that her sin, though "mutually committed with Claudio," is "of heavier kind" than Claudio's (II.iii.26-28). Riefer says this dehumanizing of women in a world dominated by powerful men may be attributed to the dramatist himself because Shakespeare's treatment of female characters at this point in his career was "less than generous": "As Vincentio "drains" life out of Isabella and Mariana, so Shakespeare drains life out of Gertrude and Ophelia, giving them scarcely any character at all" (168).

So far, as we have seen, most feminist critics base their interpretations upon modern psychology and historical investigation of Renaissance background. But recently,

they have also been linked to more ideologically oriented critical approaches such as Marxist, Deconstructionist, or New-Historicist. Consequently, a "pure" feminist approach is seldom evident, and, thus not recognizable as a "school." It seems, rather, to be an "emphasis" or "tendency" which cuts across all critical schools. It is even impossible to say that all feminists have the same objectives. It seems ironic that some recent feminists are actually undoing what earlier feminist critics have sought to do. As one critic well observes, the direction of the recent "New Feminism" has been to "escape the proto-feminist / patriarchal polarity" and instead to "investigate the often contradictory, competing play of cultural texts," which seem to conclude that "woman's part, and the man's part, are hardly essential and stable categories of identity."[103]

One intellectual source for feminist critics to strengthen their theoretical basis has been Marxist ideology, and this is understandable because both feminists and Marxists perceive women as a victimized social class throughout human history. Criticism on Shakespeare with

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[103]Claire McEachern, "Fathering Herself: A Source Study of Shakespeare's Feminism," Shakespeare Quarterly 39 (Fall 1988): 270-71.

various Marxist perspectives has existed since Karl Marx himself used some passages from Shakespeare's plays to support his theory of capitalism. In his Political Economy and Philosophy, Marx quotes extensively from Timon of Athens on the power of gold in order to explain his socio-economic assumptions about capitalist society in which workers are mere commodities. Kenneth Muir believes Marx owes more than lip service to Shakespeare for his thinking on capital:

> . . . Shakespeare was one of the spiritual godparents of the Communist Manifesto. Marx would doubtless have become a Communist even if he had never read Timon of Athens, but his reading of that play helped him to crystallize his ideas.[104]

Paul N. Siegel, a critic of Marxist persuasion, also asserts that Shakespeare's plays, such as The Merchant of Venice and Timon of Athens, helped Marx define a capitalist view of human society and denounce the capitalists of Shakespeare's time: Marx perceives Shylock, for instance, to be "typical of the capitalist who recognizes no other

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[104]Kenneth Muir, "Timon of Athens and the Cash-Nexus," The Singularity of Shakespeare and Other Essays (N.Y.: Barnes, 1977) 75.

nexus between man and man than naked self-interest."[105]

Critics like Robert Weimann and Raymond Southall maintain Marxist historical perspectives in their studies on Shakespeare and his time although their focus of attention is more literary than ideological. Weimann, in his attempt to view Shakespeare with an accurate historical perspective, proposes to "reconstruct the economic conditions, the social status, and the moral assumptions, and the literary tastes of the typical representatives of Shakespeare's audience" since he believes Shakespeare's work reflects the transitional nature of his age, a period of time when the new economic forces of the middle class were transforming the existing feudal economic system of old nobility and when the Tudor monarchy maintained its precarious balance by adopting a new policy contradictory to its feudal monarchism and the old order.[106] Raymond Southall also observes that Shakespeare's plays, such as Troilus and Cressida, have enough symptoms about Shakespeare's time to suggest that the idea of ancient

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[105]Paul N. Siegel, "Marx, Engels, and the Historical Criticism of Shakespeare" in his Shakespeare's English and Romantic History Plays (London: Associated UP, 1986) 24.

[106]Robert Weimann, "The Soul of the Age: Toward a Historical Approach to Shakespeare" in Arnold Kettle, ed. Shakespeare in a Changing World (New York: International Publications, 1964) 23.

order was crumbling to the roots of Elizabethan society because of the new economic forces of the middle class.[107]

As far as Measure for Measure is concerned, it has not been the focus of as much attention for Marxist critics as it has been for the recent New Historicist critics, who, though different in basic critical assumptions, inherited their ideological perspectives from Marxist criticism. However, a few Marxist criticisms on the Duke that exist are important for us since they offer a fresh angle of vision on this difficult Shakespearean character. Raymond Southall, in his comment on the Duke, describes him as a spokesman of the "unified" feudal Catholic conception of Grace in contrast to Angelo's and Lucio's "seeming" and distorted concept of Grace representing the new capitalistic Protestant ethic.[108] Southall is not far removed from Kenneth Muir, another critic with a Marxist view, who still recognizes the play's Christian focus on the Duke by interpreting his theatrical manipulation as

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[107]Raymond Southall, Literature and the Rise of Capitalism (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1973), 71.

[108]Raymond Southall, "Measure for Measure and the Protestant Ethic," EIC 11 (1961): 10-33.

"the intervention of the Divine in human affairs."[109]

Paul Siegel, a Marxist critic denying any Christian reference for the meaning of the play, says that the words of the play's title--"measure for measure"--suggests an idea of "retaliation" more than anything else and that the whole play is "an elaborate working-out of retaliation." Siegel believes that the Duke's strategy of retaliation against the forces of injustice, represented by the hypocrite Angelo, the slanderer Lucio and the murderer Barnardine, follows "the law of comic justice"; and his mercy granted to the sinners is not a Christian mercy which disregards justice.[110]

Siegel further argues that the Duke's strategy is explicitly that of falsehood for falsehood, measure for measure: his plottings in disguise to counter Angelo's "hypocrisy, his mask of righteousness to hide his evil-doing," his sentence of "whipping and hanging" for Lucio's verbal slanders against him, and his "limited" pardoning of Barnardine (for his "earthly faults" only) after nine years of imprisonment--all these measures would have been

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[109]Kenneth Muir, "Measure for Measure" in Twentieth Century Interpretations of Measure for Measure (Englwood Cliffs: Prentice, 1970) 20.

[110]Paul Siegel, "Measure for Measure: The Significance of the Title," SQ 4 (1953): 317-20.

considered appropriate retaliations in the minds of Elizabethans (319-20). Siegel believes the Duke himself speaks of such a non-Christian strategy he seeks to carry out in III.ii.:

> Craft against vice I must apply.
> With Angelo tonight shall lie
> His old betrothed but despised;
> So disguise shall, by the disguised,
> Pay with falsehood false exacting,
> And perform an old contracting.
> (III.ii.291-96)

However logical and persuasive in explaining the Duke's strategy in terms of Marxist "retaliation," Siegel fails to recognize an overwhelming amount of Christian references the Duke as friar makes that may contradict his Marxist view. I suspect, however, that Siegel, a perceptive critic with a considerable knowledge of Renaissance culture and history, may be simply adopting a viewpoint alternative to any other "provincial" perspectives peculiar to the western world--especially Christian, in this brave new world of atheism and individual freedom.

Terry Eagleton also gives a similarly perceptive reading of Measure for Measure in his book, Shakespeare and

Society (1967).[111] He discusses the play in terms of a conflict or struggle between public law and private passion. Public law, in his Marxist view, is "the pattern of social responsibility" which bring men into social relationship and community, a kind of communication, like language, through which "men externalize their private experience, making it open to public judgement and response" (71). Being a member of society is, therefore, defined by keeping its laws. He, therefore, argues that characters of the play, like Claudio, Isabella, Angelo, and Lucio, are shown to have no proper social identities, for they are separated from their pattern of social responsibility which is the law of Vienna, and the law of Vienna, since it has not been used publicly, has become dead, for "private experience without social verification is dead" (73).

Eagleton further argues that the Duke, as ruler, is committed to a responsibility of changing the identities of these characters whose communications in both law and language have broken down. The Duke epitomizes the law because he represents "the whole man, the man of integrity . . . whose public presence, in language and action, will

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[111]Terence Eagleton, Shakespeare and Society (New York: Schocken Books, 1967) 71.

be a real, authentic expression of himself, without jar or dislocation" (77). The Duke is "a man who has ever striven to know himself, and knowledge of self, for him, involves knowledge of others: a man comes to know himself as he learn to know others" (83). And, the Duke's relationship to Angelo is spoken of as "an ideal model of all relationship" because it reflects the relationship of "reciprocity or responsibility" that Christians believe exists between God and man--"man is both himself and God's, fully free yet fully responsible" (77). Eagleton accurately brings out the evidence of such a model relationship in the play: the Duke, like God, "metaphorically" remakes Angelo in his own image, and the deputization of his power upon Angelo is even referred to as his figure being stamped on Angelo (81).

Most Marxist critics and leftist feminist critics have, from their belief in cultural materialism, rejected the "old" view of Renaissance humanism and Renaissance history, which recognizes the continuity of historical process from the medieval period into the Renaissance. In this respect, Marxist critics have close affinities with a current critical movement called "new historicism" especially since the 1980's. Like the Marxist critics before them, the Mew Historicist critics--Stephen

Greenblatt, Jonathan Dollimore, Jonathan Goldberg and Leonard Tennenhouse, etc.--tend to view the Renaissance as a period of transition, uncertainty and discontinuity, thus directly opposing the "old" view held by such critics as Tillyard and Josephine Bennett. Tillyard's basic theoretical assumption in his most popular work, The Elizabethan World Picture, is that the Elizabethan view of social hierarchy and world order is a natural outcome of the medieval world view. And, Bennett's Jamesian social hierarchy reflects the medieval feudal hierarchy of social "stations."[112] Moreover, the new historicists have rejected the basically Christian view of man held by the older generation of historical critics--man possessing "a trans-historical core of being": for the new historicist critics, man is nothing but a product or "a construct of comprehensive historical and social processes"; and, they believe, therefore, any interpretation of Shakespeare is "a product of his history" and a synthesis of the configurations of the present.[113] For example, Jonathan

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[112]Josephine Walters Bennett, Measure for Measure as Royal Entertainment (New York: Columbia UP, 1966).

[113]For more explanation about theoretical assumptions of the New Historicist critics, see Jean E. Howard, "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," ELR 16 (1986): 16-21.

Dollimore interprets Measure for Measure in terms of its ideological content, such as "consolidation" or "subversion" or "containment,"[114] but, in order to substantiate his argument, he stresses its historical "contexts" such as "the economic and political system of Elizabethan and Jacobean England" or "the particular institutions of cultural production (the court, patronage, theatre, education, the church)" as well as the "contexts" of its critical history through which "Shakespeare's text is reconstructed, reappraised, and reassigned."[115]

Dollimore proposes a radical reading of Measure for Measure which "insists on the oppressiveness of the Viennese State and which interprets low-life transgression as positively anarchic, ludic, carnivalesque--a subversion from below of a repressive official ideology of order."[116] He argues that the "subversive" sexual offenders in the

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[114]Dollimore defines "consolidation" as the ideological means whereby a dominant order seeks to perpetuate itself, "subversion" as the subversion of that order, and "containment" as the containment of ostensibly subversive pressures--See Dollimore's "Introduction: Shakespeare, cultural materialism and the new historicism" in Political Shakespeare, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 10.

[115]Political Shakespeare, viii.

[116] Dollimore, "Transgression and Surveillance in Measure for Measure" in Political Shakespeare, 73.

play definitely have a positive effect on the authority because they can be "demonized as a threat to law" and used as a pretext for a "renewed surveillance by the State" and for the persecutions of any political dissidents and deviants at the higher level who are the real threat to monarchism (73). Corruption in Vienna is political rather than sexual, which is "symptomatic of an impending dissolution of social hierarchy" at all levels of society; but only the offenders in low-life are used as scapegoats to reinstate the authoritarian policy. Suppression in the play is, thus, aimed less at regulating sexual vice than at controlling the criminal underworld, which can create "domestic problems" or civil strife if agitated by a group of dissident aristocrats (74).

Dollimore says that the Duke in the play represents this purposely contradicting ruler of a Renaissance type--by fostering the image of "kindly father" and letting his subjects take advantage of his kindness (I.iii.23) and then becoming a Machiavellian who brings them under control with his "almost paranoid surveillance" and tyrannizing tactics. He argues that disorder and corruption generated by the Duke's own misrule and unjust law (III.ii.6-8) are conveniently and "ideologically displaced on to the ruled" but the severity of law is practically aimed at "a hostile

fraction of the ruling order"(78), for it is Angelo's transgressive desire which is potentially "the most subversive" and threatening "to discredit authority" (84). The Duke's use of religious disguise is not to be interpreted favorably as a theatrical convention but as "a strategy of tyrannical repression"; it is used to reinstate a religious kind of subjection in the State (81).

The Duke's integrity that is spoken of in the play--"a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier" (III.ii.140-42)--also has "a pragmatic and ideological intent" because public integrity, displayed in the form of reputation, "legitimatizes authority," and authority makes it a priority "to lie about integrity when the ends of propaganda and government require it" (IV.ii.77-83). The Duke at the play's close, however, embodies "a public reconciliation of law and morality" because his authoritarian measure is, to some extent, "put into abeyance" by the Duke himself--through his personal intervention and integrity and through his "princely prerogative of exercising mercy" (83). In the final analysis, Dollimore concludes, no law is repealed or discredited, nor is authoritarianism cancelled at the play's ending. The Duke's final resolution is, therefore, nothing but "a fantasy resolution" of his own fears--"a

fear of escalating disorder among the ruled, which, in turn, intensifies a fear of impotency in the rulers." Therefore, this resolution can be looked upon as "neither radical nor liberating . . . but rather conservative and constraining" (84).

Similarly, Leonard Tennenhouse, basing his own "new historicist" premise on Michel Foucault's notion of display as a form of power, believes that Measure for Measure begins by opposing a centralized political hierarchy (monarchism) to a decentralized one (deputies), but that the dramatic conflicts are resolved in favor of "an argument for absolutism."[117] The Duke in the play is, then, one key figure who represents the best form of political power, which is absolute monarchism. He is the true monarch who even in disguise acts out of selfless desire for the good of the state. As it turns out eventually, he can single-handedly "bring Angelo to justice, rescue Claudio, protect Isabella, enforce the pre-nuptial contract between Angelo and Mariana, and punish Lucio" (143).

There are problems with this Duke, Tennenhouse

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[117]See Leonard Tennenhouse, Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres (New York: Methuen, 1986) 14-15; and his article "Representing Power: Measure for Measure in its Time," in The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Norman: Pilgrim Books, 1982) 143-45.

continues. The power of the Duke is chiefly exercised by his "craft" or art of substitution in order to restore order to his state without changing the law or any traditional values. He substitutes the head of the dead pirate for that of Claudio, thus fulfilling the law without violating justice. The bed trick is designed to protect the institution of marriage and to uphold moral value without violating social rules. Tennenhouse believes Shakespeare, here, "problematizes" the comic resolution of the play because the marriage matches that rescue the play "from its tragic possibilities" do not offer us "the gratification of those unions which romantic comedy concludes" (147). The reason for this dissatisfaction, he says, is that while in romantic comedy, erotic desire is a "humanizing force that mitigated the rigidity of the law;" it has become, in Measure for Measure, "a dehumanizing force that looks to the law to make it humane and sociable" (147). Thus, when Vincentio goes into disguise, we plunge into "a world of arbitrariness, where the traditional differences between truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, justice and tyranny are near to breaking down" (146). Tennenhouse regards the Duke's craft as his ability to create differences where boundaries have dissolved: the Duke in disguise suffers a kind of

degradation, as he is fooled by Angelo and insulted by Lucio, and yet what comes out of such mocking in the play is our attention to the very nature of royal power, and in subjecting it to human limitations, he exalts the authority of the Duke. Angelo, his substitute duke, is the first to recognize the Duke as a "power superior in kind to any social institution" (143).

Tennenhouse further argues that the play portrays the power of the monarch as that of the patriarch, both being distributed on the basis of lineal descent (150). The monarch also reserves the power to give women in marriage, for the regulation of marriage is what maintains the boundaries between aristocracy and gentry, governs the distribution of wealth, and therefore insures the continuity of power within the families--this, of course, is what the Duke is doing at the end of the play (151). Tennenhouse also suggests that behind the play is hidden King James' wish that he, like the Duke, be regarded not as a substitution but as a restoration of the monarchy to a patriarchy and suggests further that the disguised trickster Duke, a transitional figure between the "the displaced or supplanted father of romantic comedy" and "the restored father of dramatic romance," marks also James's transitional status which must go through a process of

degradation and humiliation in order to be exalted and restored (154).

Both Dollimore and Tennenhouse focus on the Duke's disguised action as a "representation" of the political strategies favored by a Renaissance ruler like King James, but a more complicated New Historicist argument about "representative" aspects of the Duke has been advanced by Jonathan Goldberg in his article "Shakespeare Inscriptions: the Voicing of Power"[118] as well as in his book, James I and the Politics of Literature.[119] Interpreting Measure for Measure as a play about "substitution, replacement--and, thus, re-presentation," Goldberg views its Duke as "a figure of representation" with respect to both King James's political power and Shakespeare's own theatrical power.

More specifically, Goldberg believes Shakespeare has created a "divided" or "dual" role in the Duke that represents his own "powers as playwright as coincident with the powers of the sovereign"--that is, both dramatist and monarch representing each other in the single person of the

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[118]Jonathan Goldberg, "Shakespearean inscriptions: the voicing of power" in Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, eds. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Methuen, 1985) 116-137.

[119]Jonathan Goldberg, James I and the Politics of Literature (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983).

Duke. The Duke is not only a "double" character himself, but he casts other characters into doubling, substitutive roles as well. In the play's opening scene, the Duke speaks of "unfolding" himself in Escalus in learning and knowledge of government, and then, commissions Angelo to represent the Duke himself; thus, Escalus and Angelo represent the Duke's doubling as well as divided self.[120]

Goldberg argues that the exercise of sovereign power (and dramatic power) depends upon the enactment of substitutions.[121] As the play opens, Angelo is empowered with "a royal stamp": the Duke has "lent him our terror, dressed him with our love" (I.i.19)--in other words, Angelo can enact the same power as the Duke, being a coin stamped with the Duke's figure. Sovereign power, real and stamped, thus "sustains the exchange system of society, the endless re-figuration of the king in representative acts of substitution" (232). Goldberg points out, however, the substitutions within the play are not exact duplications but a series of "analogies" in representation:

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[120]Goldberg, James I, 232.

[121]Goldberg discusses MM as a drama of substitution and replacement in his other articles also--for example, in his "Shakespearean Inscriptions: the voicing of power" in Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, eds. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York: Methuen, 1985) 116-137.

> Hence, at the end of the play, Angelo is in Claudio's position, having repeated his crime (so, too, have Lucio and Elbow, both virgin violators), and the Duke appears to be in Angelo's place, offering redemption to Isabella in exchange for sexual favors.(235)

Even the Duke's retirement has a representative purpose--to rule in absence, through others and in disguise. Although Lucio accuses the Duke of having no interest in running the government, delegating all responsibility to others, the Duke does not "retire to country pleasures": rather, the Duke's "presence-in-absence figures a mode of power" which is "the central stance of absolutism necessary to maintain prerogatives and the secrets of state" (235). The Duke, Goldberg says, is not all-powerful, however: Lucio's accusations have force, and the Duke's plots cause us discomfort and strain our credulity, too. Yet, the Duke even asserts control over what he cannot control: "His withdrawal figures his inability and his disinclination to enact his powers; yet, his power lies in withdrawing" (235).

Goldberg further argues that the Duke's use of a double points to the very nature of the absolute ruler--his separateness from the state he rules. When Escalus and Angelo attempt to send the Duke (Friar Lodowick) to prison

in Act V, the Duke in disguise protests that the Duke has no power over him:

> The Duke
> Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he
> Dare rack his own: his subject am I not,
> Nor here provincial. My business in this state
> Made me a looker-on here in Vienna. (V.i.311-15)

In Goldberg's opinion, the Duke's "self-referentiality" here suggests not only his being self-divisive ("his subject am I not") but also his "divine" status ("a looker-on")--a stance assumed by a divine (a friar) but more specifically by King James in his claim to a ruler's divine right. Thus, Goldberg contends that although neither the dramatist nor the king is on stage, the Duke in Measure for Measure represents them both, the clearest emblem for the relationship of literature and politics in the Jacobean period (239).

Goldberg, as well as Dollimore and Tennenhouse, makes a rigorously logical argument about the Duke as a figure of representation from the new historicist viewpoint, a composite viewpoint, by the way, that includes historical, ideological, and psychoanalytical perspectives. But the problem with Goldberg's interpretation and the other new historicist critics' interpretations is that they all overemphasize a logical construction of ideological content

in a work of dramatic art that cannot easily yield to such an attempt either logically or ideologically. Measure for Measure has invited diverse responses from critics of all ages partly because it has failed their "logical" expectations about its dramatic movement (plot), its characters, and its styles and tones. Making logical sense out of the drama needs not be to streamline "circumstantial evidence" (ideological, psychological, historical) in and outside of the play to prove logically what is essentially an ideological viewpoint, as these new historicists seem to be doing. If Shakespeare had any such intention for political or ideological representation in this play, he would have taken better care of his material and skills (as explicitly as in any political propaganda) since he is a dramatic artist of consummate imagination capable of doing it ("How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!" MND, V.i.22).

Also, the new historicists' conception of human nature and human values are fundamentally incompatible with Shakespeare's basically Christian conception of human nature and human values. Any correct understanding of Shakespeare's characters, good or bad alike, must begin on this Christian premise. If a new historicist critic perceives man as nothing but a product of complex social

and historical processes, his analysis of Shakespearean characters would be limited to the degree that they understand Shakespeare's basically Christian view of man as possessing a trans-historical, immaterial core of being from which emanate trans-historical, immaterial values such as good and evil, a mixture of both, mercy, humility, love and faith that look through death. The new historicist critic would turn most of these into commodities of rhetoric, and therefore makes a big lie out of Shakespeare when, for instance, he makes an exquisite rhetoric through Hamlet:

> What a piece of work is a man!
> how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties!
> in form and moving how express and admirable!
> in action how like an angel! in apprehension
> how like a god! the beauty of the world!
> the paragon of animals! (Hamlet, II.ii.315-20)

As far as Duke Vincentio and Measure for Measure are concerned, Dollimore, Tennenhouse, and Goldberg seem to be deeply indebted to psychoanalytic critics not only for their terminology but their pattern of interpretation. The Duke's or King James's going through "degradation" and "exaltation" in rulership is similar to a psychoanalytically suggested pattern of "dismemberment and reconstruction" (Sundelson); the Duke's representation of

"presence-in-absence" as mode of power is similar to a psychoanalytic view of the Duke as "a powerful but essentially empty father" or patriarchal authority (Williamson, Sundelson); and the Duke's strategy of substitution and replacement is also psychoanalytically explained in terms of "decomposition--splitting, doubling, and multiplication" (Rogers). There is nothing particularly original about the new historicist methodology, then, if it has been in use for sometime by the critics of other approaches--historical, ideological (Marxist), as well as psychological.

CHAPTER VII

AN APOLOGY FOR A DIALOGIC VIEW OF THE DUKE

I

Various "provincial" approaches to the Duke, as reviewed in the previous chapters, no doubt have deepened our knowledge and enlarged our artistic understanding of this character; but at the same time, the continuous proliferation of conflicting interpretations about the same character could mean some inherent problems either with the critics' focuses or with the dramatist's artistic intention or his creative process.

One must rule out the possibility of any problem originating from Shakespeare's dramatic intention or creative ability because Measure for Measure has always been popular with Shakespearean spectators. However illogical it may sound, the fact that the play has been adapted and altered ever since the beginning of the Restoration confirms tellingly its enormous popular appeal to the spectators regardless of the play's troublesome critical history. Sir William Davenant, in editing the play's first adaptation in 1661-2, added more lines to the

Duke's speeches and stylized them for contemporary appeal to his audience at Lincoln's Inn Fields; consequently the Duke is made into an austere "neo-classical" ruler type.[122] Thus, popular adaptations of the play, like changing critical trends, reflect a certain measure of cultural as well as literary provincialism, but the important thing to remember here is that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the dramatist's artistic intention or creativity, for the play has always been popular with the spectators regardless of editorial changes made to it.

It is mainly by the critics, then, that Measure for Measure as well as its Duke has been problematized with their critical viewpoints that are basically provincial in nature. Ironically, critics of all persuasions have fallen into traps of their own logical thinking or their own provincial viewpoint, frequently leading to extreme conclusions, which our common sense or intuitive sensibility tend to reject. Thus, the genre critics, by defining the Duke's role in terms of the play's genre

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[122]Rosalind Miles, The Problem of Measure for Measure: A Historical Investigation (New York: Barnes, 1976) 97. For more information on adaptations of Shakespeare, see Alfred Harbage's Sir William M. Davenant: Poet Venturer, 1601-1668 (New York: Octagon, 1971) 251-67 and Christopher Spencer's introduction to Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1965) 1-36.

characteristics, have come to a conclusion that the Duke is a minor character (Chapter II): a "puppet-like mechanical Duke" with a purpose to modulate the problematic movement of the plot in a "problem comedy" (Lawrence), a "commentator" remaining outside the mainstream of action (Campbell, Krieger, Stevenson), a "shifty" minor character (Lascelles), an "artistic failure" (Tillyard), or at best "a convenient stage machine" qualified with moral ambiguity (Schanzer). All these genre critics seem to ignore the telling fact that the Duke delivers more speech lines than any other major character in the play.

The historical critics share the genre critics' intense interest in dramatic convention, but we are inclined to discredit any historical interpretation of the Duke if it turns him into a weak character or a "type" character that he is not. Indeed, most historical critics I have reviewed do just that, viewing the Duke either as a conventional allegorical type or as a type of a Renaissance ruler (Chapter III): an "Incarnate Lord" patterned after a medieval "Atonement" story (Battenhouse), a Spenserian-type "Truth and Humility" unmasking the "False Authority" of Angelo (Bradbrook), an Elizabethan brand of allegorical "Perfect Man" (Bryant), a Renaissance ruler type who begins with bad rule but steps "gracefully into

the role of . . . good ruler" (Pope), a character modelled on King James and his political beliefs (Stevenson), or a thematic "mediator" type adapted from a folkloric motif of "the Disguised Ruler" of sixteenth century drama (Lever).

While both genre critics and historical critics have overemphasized the Duke's conventional or historical references, the New Critics seem to ignore the same altogether. Instead, they rely on their methods of analysis for "imaginative interpretations" of the play. Dissociating their literary analysis from past convention and historical reference, they focus on "internal evidence" from the play and come to an "imaginative" conclusion quite opposite to that of the genre or historical critics--that the Duke is a "major" or "key" character or a hero (Chapter IV): a Christ-like allegorical character, as "Enlightened Ethic" (G. W. Knight), or an all-pervasive character with a double role as "power divine" and "stage director" (Kirsch), or a "temporal" Christian ruler who plays multiple roles in order to lead the other characters of "moral powerlessness" to a Pauline justification (Haskin), a character representing the dramatist's and the audience's "finesse" or "subtleness" in moral choice (Leavis), "a detached symbol of truth" providing impartial solutions to

complex moral problems (Traversi), or "an uncorrupted standard of worth" to other imperfect human beings in the play (Ornstein).

Most psychological critics seem to express their opinions in one big chorus (Chapter V): that the Duke is psychologically abnormal, whether he is "repulsive" (Hawkins), or "nihilistic" (Wheeler), or a "splitting father-figure" (Williamson), "an absconding ego" (Skura) or a "ghostly father" figure (Sundelson) or flogging masochist (Brown).

Marxists, Feminists, and the New-Historicists have turned a complex Elizabethan drama like Measure for Measure into a drama of socio-political ideology and placed the Duke in the battle front of ideological confrontations (Chapter VI): thus, the Duke is seen to take "retaliatory" measures (Siegel), or consolidate his power by containment (Dollimore), or "represent" absolute monarchism (Tennenhouse), or take a political strategy of "degradation" in order to bring about "exaltation" (Goldberg). Most of these critics turn their literary analysis of the Duke into an intense ideological argument or a case study for their viewpoint from cultural materialism.

All the critical approaches we have seen so far are

conditioned by a heavy dose of cultural provincialism, particularly that of post-Hegelian dialectic methodology whose obsession with logicality or "scientific analysis" has gone simply far beyond the limits of our common sense for character analysis. Continuing proliferations of conflicting "logical explanations" have left me in a state of Wordsworthian suspicion that this Duke is a victim of "dissections," thus becoming "sicklied o'er" with pale casts of "scientific analysis." Indeed, the Duke has been already made into a sick character, critically speaking, by today's rampant theoretical divarication--psychoanalytic, feminist, Marxist, neo-historical, deconstructionist, metadramatic, or whatnot. Have we not had too much of either logical acceptable or unacceptable explanations which have blurred, rather than clarified, the image of this Duke? Today, in criticism, we are left with a far more elusive Duke than what audiences have known for generations--a theatrically successful Duke that Shakespeare might perhaps have intended him to be.

II

What we need is an alternative approach to account for the Duke's theatrical success, a new way of accounting for the apparent contradictions in his behavior as a character according to some unified principle of interpretation other than those logical approaches I have reviewed so far. It does not require us to rely on "logical" methods of analysis to understand the Duke's personality and action. Perhaps an intuitive mode of analysis, particularly the East Asian kind, may be the key to a correct understanding of the Duke as he really is.

At this point I would like to introduce the notion of yin-yang as way of introducing Duke Vincentio as a dialogic character or as a character of simultaneous "tragicomicality." The principle of yin-yang, as in a commonly seen emblem of tae-geug [ ], meaning "grand-extremes," symbolizes both dialogic tension and dialogic harmony simultaneously. The two identical shapes, each composed of one big half circle with two small half circles, make up a perfect circle containing two dynamic "contraries" in perfect harmony without creating any

friction between them. One of them has a dark shade, called yin, and the other has a light shade, called yang. Putting the two together, then called yin-yang, immediately creates the dialogics of tension and harmony, a "tragicomicality" in a dramatic sense, as the emblem of identical shapes but contrasting shades clearly suggests. I do not believe any pairing of English equivalents will create quite the same meaning as yin-yang because word compoundings like "negative-positive," "female-male," "light-dark," "thesis-antithesis," or even "centrifugal-centripetal" may suggest some inherent logical confrontation, mutually exclusive in force, as if yoked together by violence.

Now, this yin-yang principle can be used to describe a perfectly balanced man, especially a man of high position who can be a mirror for his people. Lao Tse, the Chinese philosopher of Taoism, describes the Perfect Man in terms of this dialogical principle:

> He [the Perfect Man] does not display himself,
> therefore he is conspicuous;
> he does not praise himself,
> therefore he is illustrious;
> he does not praise himself;
> therefore his merit is recognized.[123]

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[123]Quoted from Toshihiko Izutsu, Sufism and Taoism (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984) 458.

Toshihiko Izutsu describes Lao Tse's own personality in similar terms:

> It is extremely interesting to notice in this respect that a man like Lao-tzu who develops, on the one hand, a sophisticated metaphysics of the Way and describes the ideal man as an absolutely unworldly-minded man living high above the noise and fuss of everyday life, shows himself so keenly interested in the art of ruling an empire. For Lao-tze, . . . the Perfect Man is at once a philosopher and a politician.[124]

In Elizabethan society where Christian beliefs or Christianized Greek ideologies have settled for centuries, an image of the perfect man or the ideal ruler should, of course, be described in terms of its Christian tradition with an Elizabethan flavor, not a Lao Tsean yin-yang spice. The image of a dialogically balanced man or ruler in Shakespeare's dramatic world should reflect the complexity of the emotions of the Elizabethans who had very complex or unusual emotions in life.

However, artistic envisioning about man or self-dramatizations in terms of dialogical tension and harmony are not something unfamiliar either in western literature today or in Shakespeare's drama, although a dialogic mode of thinking may not be so current or even "traditional" as

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[124]Toshihiko Izutsu, Sufism and Taoism, 458.

it seems with the East Asian frame of mind. Donne has used the concept of microcosm and macrocosm to express dialogic tension and harmony in his poetic self-dramatization--for instance, in "The Sun Rising."[125] The key concept running through George Herbert's emblem poems is also one of dialogic tension and harmony, especially in his "relational thinking" about man's relation to God.[126] In a similar way, Robert Browning creates dialogic tension and unity in his dramatic monologues, offering his dialogic vision of the

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[125]In "The Sun Rising," there seems to exist a charming sort of dialogic tension and harmony between the lovers "in bed" which "no season knows" and the busy, "unruly" sun (the world) which moves in "hours, days, months, which are the rags of time, and also between the poet and his love ("She's all states, and all princes I"). Moreover, the poet holds the center of cosmic consciousness in his dialogical relationship to both the sun and his love: he is a symbolic sun making the sun run busy (carpe diem) or a "true" ruler of cosmic consciousness with respect to both the sun (the world) and his love ("the King will ride")--see the poem "The Sun Rising" and notes in The Songs and Sonets of John Donne [sic], ed. Theodore Redpath (London: Methuen, 1966) 10-11.

[126]For instance, "Easter Wings" depicts the poet's relationship to God as a dialogic one: one must be "most poor" to restore his "wealth and store" in and through God. See the arrangement of words in this emblem poem in Mario A. Di Cesare, ed. George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets (New York: Norton, 1978) 16-17. Camille Wells Slights, in "Casuistry in The Temple," examines Herbert's habit of thinking about the universal God in terms of particular, tangible manifestations of it in everyday life--see The Casuistical Tradition in Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, and Milton [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981]. 183-246.

self merging into some distant Renaissance personages in "Fra Lippo Lippi" or "Andrea del Sarto."[127] In the twentieth century, we still run across a similarly dialogic concept in Yeats' doctrine of the mask or in Bakhtin's linguistic theory of dialogism.[128]

A mystic like Bede Griffiths, a British Benedictine philosopher living in India, believes that this dialogic mode of thinking was once quite traditional in the West as a way of attaining "cosmic self-consciousness" but was "lost" during the Renaissance period; thus he pleads for a return to the "old" intuitive way of thinking:

> We're getting back to the old idea of the microcosm and the macrocosm--that the cosmos is reflecting itself in us, this vision that was lost in the Renaissance, when the split took place between the human person as an observer,

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[127]William Clyde DeVane, ed. The Shorter Poems of Robert Browning (New York: Appleton, 1934) 84-93 (notes, 345-47) and 149-154 (notes, 355-356).

[128]Mikhail Bakhtin's linguistic dialogism comes both from his life-long habit of thinking in terms of 'self-ness' and 'otherness' and from the doctrine of trans-substantiation which has provided him a crucial concept of 'logosphere'--a space where language and the mind, in their search for proper meaning, are engaged in a "contest between centrifugal forces that seek to keep things apart..., that increases difference and tend toward the extreme of life and consciousness, and centripetal forces that strive to make things cohere, to stay in place, and which tend toward the extreme of death and brute matter and consciousness" (from Michael Holquist, "Answering as Authoring: Mikhail Bakhtin's Trans-linguistics," Critical Inquiry 10 [1983] 309; italics mine).

separated from the material universe outside himself.[129]

In a study of Shakespeare's soliloquies, Wolfang Clemen refers to soliloquy as a dramatic technique, "whereby monologue becomes dialogue, the speaker being split into selves which are in conflict with one another."[130] Clemen perhaps overemphasizes the "split" in self-consciousness. There are, of course, some Shakespearean soliloquies--like those soul-searching ones by Macbeth or Brutus--in which the self is "at war with itself" or in a state of dialogic tension without any promise of dialogic harmony, but we must remember that the speakers of these soliloquies are heroes of rebellion against their rulers, thus making their self-conflict appropriately intense.

But T. S. Eliot is perhaps more accurate than Clemen in seeing the self-consciousness and self-dramatization of the Shakespearean hero as means of conceptualizing "things as they are not" and transmuting "personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something

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[129]Renee Weber, Dialogues with Scientists and Sages: The Search for Unity (New York: Routledge, 1986) 164.

[130]Wolfgang Clemen, Shakespeare's Soliloquies, trans. Charity Scott Stokes (New York: Methuen, 1987) 6.

universal and personal."[131] Eliot here, however, does not suggest any intuitive mode of conceptualizing the dialogic nature of things in the speakers's mind. Yeats is perhaps closer than Eliot to Shakespeare's vision of man in terms of "relational thinking"[132] though expressed in poetical terms: "Man is in love and he loves what vanishes." For, Shakespeare's vision at a deeper level is always concerned with the "intimate unity in man himself," as Peter Milward points out.[133]

In Shakespeare's plays like Measure for Measure and Hamlet there is often produced the effect of what I would call "tragicomicality" as a result of relational thinking in terms of dialogical tension and harmony. But this content of relational thinking, tragicomicality, may not evoke any "tragicomical" feelings or thoughts in the

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[131]T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, 117, 119.

[132]Michael Holquist, tracing Bakhtin's dialogism to a Kantian distinction between dan (things, what is out there) and zadan (what is conceived in the mind), describes an dialogic mode of thinking or "relational thinking" as an intuitive mode of synthesis, a simultaneous transformation of the two extreme poles of being, which makes "enormous leap from dialectical partitive thinking, which is still presumed to be the universal norm." See his biographical work, Mikhail Bakhtin (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984) 8.

[133]Peter Milward, Shakespeare's Religious Background (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973) 274.

conventional dramatic sense of the term. It may be more of a transcendental or intuitive kind, such as a sudden release of a tragic tension at one level giving rise to the rippling effect of dialogical harmony at another level. It is like a rippling left behind after a frog has jumped into a pond of water, as Basho, a seventeenth-century Japanese poet,[134] has caught so well its metaphysical implications of either total tragic or total comic possibilities depending on how one looks at the frog's simple act of jumping or physical disappearance. In Measure for Measure, the Mariana-Isabella bed trick or Lucio's unhooding of the Duke (a sudden physical removal of the Duke's "friar habit") has a dramatic potential for either totally tragic or wholly comic possibilities, but each dramatic incident resolves itself into a ripple of tragicomicality, and thereby into something "rich and strange" at the level of cosmic consciousness--all primarily because of the Duke's own dialogical character.

This crucial relationship between the type of Shakespeare's dialogical thinking and the outcome of "tragicomicality" can be further illustrated through the

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[134]"The old pond--a frog leaps in, and a splash" [fruike ya / kawazu tobikomu / muzu no oto]--from Makoto Ueda, Matsuo Basho (New York: Twayne, 1970) 53.

example of Hamlet. Hamlet says at one moment that there is nothing either good or evil in this world but "thinking makes it so." In saying this, Hamlet seems more concerned about a dialogic way of perceiving good or evil than about the reality or existence of each absolute value. There seems no doubt in Hamlet's mind about the existence of good and evil out there (the dan), either in ghostly form or in human form.[135] But what he perceives as "good" or "evil" inside his conscious mind (zadan) depends purely on his thinking process.

Now, there are no logical processes or dialectical steps by which something good can be conjured up from something bad, or by which something serious or tragical can be figured out from something light or comical, and vice versa. It has got be an intuitive processing of polarizing, alternating, assimilating, or arraying the content value of thinking into either good or evil, comic or serious, before it can be pronounced "good" or "bad"

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[135]This concept of 'out there' (the dan or the macrocosm in my term) includes, of course, the "inside" of the human mind or consciousness, whereas 'that which is conceived' (the zadan or, still better, the microcosm) includes 'out there' only optionally or dialogically in a conceptualization process, and therefore can be either separated from (or paired with, or assimilated into, or nothingized by) the dan, 'out there' (the last verb is of my coining).

since, as Hamlet says, "thinking makes it so"--perhaps without having to prove it logically as such.

Anyhow, Hamlet seems to be a good practitioner of this relational thinking since it is effectively used to create our dramatic sense of "tragicomicality" in his conversations and speeches, often with punning words with dialogic meanings of cosmic dimension. His handling of Polonius seems to be a pointed example. At one meeting with Polonius Hamlet points to a forming "cloud" in airy nothing and invites Polonius to identify (or imagine) it in shape of different animals like a camel, a weasel, or a whale (Hamlet, III.ii.392-99). There exists a dialogic relationship between the cloud (the dan, a thing out there) and the different shapes of the animals (the zadan, things conceived in the mind), but if Hamlet's thinking turns those different animal shapes into human values in terms of good and evil (if thinking makes it so), possibilities of tragic or comic implications for any characters in animal shape increase in leaps and bounds to a dialogical extreme.

If Hamlet conceives his father as the "good" Hyperion, his uncle king as an "evil" satyr or a calf (evil still), with what value would he qualify the "rat" in Polonius (Hamlet, III.iv.23), thinking in terms of good and evil?

I suspect that Hamlet, this charming Renaissance prince who can identify an angel in human "form and moving," has found nothing worthy ("a ducat") to be either good or bad in Polonius in relation to Hamlet's own great enterprise. However, Hamlet's perceiving of nothing of value in Polonius is giving a dramatic pretext and need for getting rid of him off stage, for he, this "rash, intruding fool," may create some unnecessary comic complications, a stumbling block, in the course of Hamlet's serious pursuit of a calf (Claudius).[136] Thus, Hamlet's thinking and accidental killing of Polonius transform the dramatic significance of Polonius into something rich and strange, into the dimension of tragicomicality, a status implying "a hire" rather than a damnation for this character of comic transparency.[137] So Polonius, at the moment of his tragicomical death, has finally entered into a state of dialogical equilibrium of both the serious and the comic,

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[136]As Falstaff does in his dialogic relationship to Prince Hall, but Falstaff is not in a drama of tragedy.

[137]In his Renaissance Minds and Their Fictions: Cusanus, Sidney, Shakespeare, Ronald Levao says, "With the death of Polonius, Hamlet's roles as moral teacher and antic becomes indistinguishable. His pretensions untouched by Polonius' corpse at his feet ("I took thee for thy better"), Hamlet presents notable images of virtue--the portraits of his father and his uncle" (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985). 352.

signifying something at last. And the "brute part" in Hamlet's thinking is catalytic to this strange transmutation of Polonius's status. Thus, Shakespeare, by dramatizing Hamlet's theory of "thinking-makes-it-so," has well documented the Elizabethan habit of relational thinking: good can be evil, comic can be serious, and vice versa, depending on how you think on each.

Duke Vincentio of Measure for Measure is very similar to Hamlet and Polonius in terms of relative thinking and tragicomical implications in his character behavior. Dialogic elements that make up the Duke's personality and his behavior have been well explained by many critics and need not be repeated here, but I need to analyze his dialogical behavior to some extent in order to be able to show how those dialogical elements are creating dialogic tension and harmony both for himself and for the play's tragicomical action.

The Duke is a dialogic character. As suggested earlier, he is at once both politician and philosopher. In a dialogic sense, he is a perfectly balanced man fit to be an ideal ruler. In the Shakespearean context, he is a perfect Renaissance ruler, embodying within himself simultaneously both shrewd Machiavellian politician and true Christian philosopher. The disguise, the unhooding

of the disguise, the bed-trick, etc. are only catalytic dramatic means or "helpers" to expedite whatever business he has at hand as politician or philosopher, but his essential dialogic identity remains the same throughout the play.

From the very beginning of the play, we discover in him a shrewd, legalistic politician as well as a contemplative, religious philosopher. His being like this gives us mysterious feelings about his identity when he decides to leave his rulership to assume the life of a friar, especially when he gives conflicting reasons for his actions, secular or religious. The lawlessness in Vienna is getting out of control, and should be his concern both as its ruler (the duke) and as its spiritual leader (the friar).

As a civil ruler, he seems to have no weakness in his personality or in his political measures from the first moment we encounter him. Considering the suddenness of his political action, which amounts roughly to today's martial law, he demonstrates a shrewd and precise ability to control his administration. He delegates his authority to two able administrators in his dukedom, Angelo and Escalus. Angelo, his chief deputy, carries out a swift campaign against sexual vice, and he proves terribly successful.

Houses of prostitution in the back streets of Vienna are plucked down, and any violators of the laws and statues are promptly arrested, tried, and sentenced to prison terms or to death.

Angelo's strict and "bureaucratic" political stance has, of course, a lot to do with his precise character trait, but it is not a deviation at all from what he is actually commissioned to do--that is to enforce the law and thereby to restore law and order in Vienna. The Duke believes that laws are "needful" for all his people and should be "threatening" or terrible to any violators (I.iv.20,24). No "evil deeds," he confesses to Friar Thomas, can "have their permissive pass / And not the punishment" (I.iii.38). This legalistic attitude of the Duke is shared by Angelo, who gives it a fuller expression:

> I not deny
> The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
> May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two
> Guiltier than him they try. What's open made
> justice,
> That justice seizes: what know the laws
> That thieves do pass on the thieves? 'Tis
> very pregnant,
> The jewel that we find, we stoop and take't
> Because we see it; but what we do not see
> We tread upon, and never think of it (II.i.18-26).

And, moreover, Angelo is given the full legal power by the Duke; "be thou at full ourself" (I.i.44) to "enforce and

qualify the laws (I.i.66)" as the deputy thinks it fit to do: "Mortality and mercy in Vienna / Live in thy tongue and heart" (I.i.45-46). And Angelo is carrying out his mission exactly within the limits of the laws in Vienna as well as his deputized authority. Claudio gives his testimony to Angelo's measure of success when he confesses that Angelo's "demigod Authority" is striking violators of law like the "words of heaven" (I.ii.124,126). Angelo is, of course, aware of the insolence of his government that takes "to prey" on whom it will, but what he has been asked to do so publicly is really irrelevant to what stealer or "thief" of law he can be in private, as the just quoted comment of his about legal justice clearly suggests. Besides, the Duke already knows the "brute part" of Angelo--not just "precise" but "seeming" as well--and the Duke seems to have known Angelo's character quite thoroughly when saying,"There is a kind of character in thy life, / That to the observer doth thy history / Fully unfold" (I.i.28-30; italics mine). When the Duke asks Escalus what he thinks of deputizing Angelo, Escalus answers without hesitation that if anyone is qualified at all for that job, it is Lord Angelo. Now, where can the Duke find a more appropriate deputy than Angelo in order to swiftly restore law and order in Vienna, a city bubbling with social

corruption?

By commissioning Angelo to strictly enforce the laws, the Duke, however, has not forgot to install a safety valve system of checks and balance, of "seasoning justice with mercy," for he also commissions Escalus as a "secondary" deputy. Escalus, whose name means a "scale" of balance, softens Angelo's severity in administering legal justice, especially in some individual cases like those involving Pompey, Froth-Elbow (II.i) or Mistress Overdone (III.ii), whose muddling or extenuating circumstances may have to be sugar-coated with some administrative gestures of mercy. Escalus fills in the space where Angelo has left off in the Duke's political enterprise of great pitch and moment. Escalus must be the Duke's own "leavened and prepared choice," too, for enforcing the laws without qualifying their good intent is "surely for a name" (I.ii.173) or, in itself, to "bite the law by the nose" (III.i.109), which is just as empty and useless as the total negligence of the law (unscoured armor hung on the wall [I.ii.171]).

Furthermore, the Duke's political instinct for perfection is all the more clear when he tells Friar Thomas that his motive for leaving Vienna is not to hurt his political reputation ("my nature never in the fight / To do it slander" [I.iv.42-43]) but that he nonetheless wants

to do surveillance over Angelo's administration, to "behold" his "sway" in the "ambush" of the Duke's name (I.iv.43, 41). In a sense, the Duke is a Machiavellian perfectionist--thoroughly balanced in judgment and shrewdly pragmatic in political maneuvering.

Now turning to the Duke as a philosopher---I must say at once that he is truly a Christian contemplator. This aspect is so fundamental to the Duke's being human that we must consider his assuming a friar's vocation not just as a familiar dramatic convention of the disguise but as a means to realize his potential self (the "ideal" or real man) in the "habit" of a friar, as opposed to his political self (the "appearance" man). Roughly speaking, the dialogic relationship of the Duke's contemplative self to his political self is what Yeats' inner self is to his social self, called "mask." The Duke's way of dramatizing his contemplative self in the person of friar is not unlike Yeats' dialogical dramatizing of the self. Yeats, who had a deep understanding of an East Asian dialogical way of self-dramatization through Japanese Noh plays,[138] has devised a ceremonious as well as "sacred" image of the self. Richard Ellman explains Yeats' dialogical conception

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[138]Komesu, Okufumi. The Double Perspective of Yeats' Aesthetic (Totowa: Barnes, 1984) 122-42.

of the self as follows:

> But Yeats's doctrine assumes that we face with a mask both the world and the beloved. A closely related meaning is that the mask includes all the differences between one's own and other people's conception of one's personality. To be conscious of the discrepancy which makes a mask of this sort is to look at oneself as if one were somebody else. In addition, the mask is defensive armor: we wear it, like the light lover, to keep from being hurt. So protected, we are only slightly involved no matter what happens. . . . Finally, the mask is a weapon of attack; we put it on to keep up a noble conception of ourselves; it is a heroic ideal which we try to live up to. As a character in The Player Queen affirms, 'To be great we must seem so. Seeming that goes on for a lifetime is no difference from reality.'[139]

Although Ellman barely touches upon Yeats' yin-yang way of perceiving the self (the missing link is "dialogic harmony"), the dialogical aspects of the self are clearly emphasized here. Yeats' self-dramatization points at the two extremes which give the self a dialogic tension. On the one hand, the self is very "selfish" to create the second self (the social self) to mask the differences between one's own and other people's conception of one's personality because its true motive is to fog over the self, whether in affirming or denying the self. On the other hand, the mask itself can be a magic mirror for the self, reflecting a noble image of the self, which is "a

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[139]Richard Ellman, Yeats: the Man and the Masks (New York: Macmillan, 1948) 172-3.

heroic ideal which we try to live up to."

Although some Shakespearean ruler characters seem to put on this sort of mask to some degree,[140] Duke Vincentio's self mask is distinctly different from the others. Compare the conception of the self, for example, between Macbeth, who discovers that the heroic ideal he has tried to live up to is just "a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage" (Macbeth, V.v.24-5), and Duke Vincentio, who, in spite of people's slandering him and his deep disillusionment about his own people, seems to show, nonetheless, an affirmation of the "noble" conception of the self:

> O Place and greatness! millions of false eyes
> Are stuck upon thee: volumes of report
> Run with these false and most contrarious quests
> Upon thy doings: thousand escapes of wit
> Make thee the father of their idle dreams
> And rack thee in their fancies (IV.i.60-65).

In spite of the people's "false eyes," "idle" talk, and fanciful rumors about him, the Duke himself seems to be acutely aware ("stuck upon thee") of the truthfulness of

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[140]The Yeatsean "masks" some Shakespearean ruler characters are wearing would appear more revealing if one could attempt to title each mask, so to speak: Brutus, "Royal Republican"; Henry V, "Beggars' Ceremony"; Richard II, "Woeful Crown"; Othello, "Destined Monist"; Lear, "Furious Glory," Macbeth,"Kingly Nothing," etc.

his own quest or "doings" as against their "false and most contrary quests." Part of the reason that the Duke feels this way about his people is that there is a big difference or discrepancy not just between people's conception of the Duke and his own conception of the self but also between the Duke's own dialogical "selves"--between the politician and the philosopher within the Duke's own personality. It is not the "brute part" of the Duke that condemns the people's way as being "false"; it is rather a philosopher's stone in that brute part that is able to diagnose "their way" as always being false. As a "Christian" philosopher, Duke Vincentio loves his people but he must also hate their "falsehood" and their worldly ways.

From early on in the play, even before leaving his seat of rulership, the Duke demonstrates himself to be a philosopher. Most of the philosophizing he does to others throughout the play--whether in the scene of appointing Angelo to deputyship or in the scene of spiritually preparing Claudio for death--relates to himself as well. The reason why his speeches often sound like riddle or social comments is that he philosophizes his thoughts in

expression; it is a form of masking himself.[141]

The Duke's quest for his "nobler" self properly begins with his political decision to leave his secular rulership and to seek his "religious" life, to use his "other" talent. At the very moment he commissions Angelo (the Duke is not a friar yet), he philosophizes about what Christian life should be like--using one's talent in the service to others. He tells Angelo:

> Thyself and thy belongings
> Are not thine own so proper as to waste
> Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
> Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
> Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'Twere all alike
> As if we had them not (I.i.30-36).

The Duke gives this kind of speech as his rationale for deputizing Angelo, but his elaboration on the talent here has a distinct mark of self-dramatization. The speech, given at a moment just before his going into "religious life," also applies to his own quest for exercising his religious talent. If the Duke can let Angelo try a ruler's crown, wouldn't it possible for the Duke himself try a

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[141]Or one can look at the Duke's comment not unlike some kyogen (wild words) which Arthur Waley describes as "secular entertainments given to relieve the strain of long religious ceremonies" in his The No Plays of Japan (London: Allen & Unwin, 1921) 18.

friar's habit?

There are some signs that the Duke may be fit for a religious life. His speech about the talent shows that he can be quite contemplative, even introspective if we can take it as a speech of self-dramatization. He loves people, as he says and as he proves in the course of the play's action. Perhaps, most importantly, although he is able to conduct himself well before the crowd, he does not like public ceremonies:

> I love the people,
> But do not like to stage me to their eyes:
> Though it do well, I do not relish well
> Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
> Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
> That does affect it (I.i.68-73).

When the Duke masks himself in the friar's habit, he proves himself a good friar, as if his mask self would be able to say, "Seeming that goes on for a lifetime is no difference from reality."[142] The Duke's "mysterious" disappearing, as Lucio alludes to it, is not mysterious at all if we understand the Duke's envisioning himself in practicing his talent of religious life. In this respect, it does not matter for this Duke's "other" self as the

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[142]See this quotation in the context of what Ellman says above, 180.

friar how much people express their wishful thinking about the "cause of his withdrawing," for this nobler self--the contemplative, the religious, the humble Christ-like "heroic"--can tolerate all the slings and arrows of outrageous human life. This is why the Duke can take so much of what can be considered face-slapping from Lucio, and yet not punish him as much he deserves for slandering a ruler.

The Duke's personal comments on other characters and on the state of the affairs must also be understood as coming from this nobler Christian philosopher self. Thus what Lucio perceives as normal social / sexual disease in Vienna ("sound as things that are hollow" [I.ii.56]) becomes in the Duke's philosophical perception the state of the fallen world. Vienna's corruption epitomizes the world-at-large as it is. When Escalus asks the Duke-Friar about news from abroad ("What news abroad i' the world?"), the Duke, who has not been outside Vienna, gives a much more philosophical answer than is expected of him:

> There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure; but security enough to make fellowships accursed; much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news. (III.ii.240-243)

It is this philosophizing Duke who admits his great fault as a ruler--to let weeds of evil grow in his own dukedom of Vienna, to let "liberty" pluck "justice by the nose" and to let "all decorum" go astray, to let injustice flourish not for a short period of time but for nineteen years! ("for this nineteen years we have let slip" [II.iii.21]). If Angelo is "an idle spider" for only this Isabella or that Mariana, the Duke's idleness is a more pregnant, "heavier" kind because, as Ulysses eloquently says, when "power" and "degree" are "shak'd," the whole society will get "sick" and make "a universal prey, / And last eat up himself" (Troilus and Cressida, I.iii.101-3, 123-4).

But at the same time the Duke the philosopher is well aware how easily he or Angelo or, for that matter, any man can "let slip," for man's capacity to sin is boundless:

> O, what may man within him hide,
> Though angel on the outward side!
> How many likeness made in crimes,
> Making practice on the times,
> To draw with idle spiders' strings
> Most ponderous and substantial things!
> (III.ii.285-290)

In this respect, Lucio's lack of respect for any political authority is justifiable, and all his talk about the Duke is not bad at all. Also, we cannot dismiss what Lucio says

about the Duke simply as a lie or slander against him. If the Duke can believe, to some degree, what Lucio says about Angelo's abstinent behavior (about which the Duke also mentions to Friar Thomas), is there any reason to disbelieve all Lucio says about the Duke's "dark deeds," including "some feeling of the sport" in womanizing?

However, we can believe the Duke also when he says that he now has a "complete bosom" capable of standing "the dribbling darts of love" (I.iii.2-3). We encounter this philosopher's bosom in the Duke-Friar actually railing against Pompey, "a wicked bawd," ("Canst thou believe thy living is a life, / So stinkingly depending? [III.ii.7-8]) and advising him to "Go mend, go mend" (III.ii.8). So, it is natural for this Christian philosopher in the ruler to confess to Friar Thomas:

> How I have ever loved the life removed
> And held in idle price to haunt assemblies
> Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps.
> (I.iii.8-10)

Although the Duke as a friar tells Lucio that he (as ruler of Vienna) wishes to be remembered as a perfect politician ("a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier," III.2.154), he has always had an inclination for contemplative life. Therefore, Escalus is not exaggerating at all when he

regards the Duke as "One, that above all other strifes / Contended especially to know himself" (III.ii.245-6)--an image of the perfect Christian philosopher in the Duke.

It is this side of the Duke (Christian philosopher) that allows him to extend himself to dialogic extremes. The kind of "tragicomicality" which we sense in the Duke, as I have defined earlier, comes from the dialogic distance we feel between the politician and the philosopher in his character behavior and action, all the more so because he is so sincere and so thorough in both. This Duke in the "friar's habit" allows himself to be a truly humble Christian in front of the rude, slandering Lucio who persecutes him verbally, to the point of being ridiculously comical at times. When Pilate and the crowd verbally abuse Jesus and make a fool out of him, it is of course tragic in any human sense of the term. But when this Christian Duke is verbally abused and made into a fool ("a very superficial, ignorant, unweighting fellow" [III.ii.146]), our sense of him is more comical than either tragical or ironical not just because the Duke cannot reveal his political self but mainly because we know him to be contrary. It is comical that the Duke's "precise" administrative ability (the other "talent") is used for a bed-trick to trap Angelo for non-political reasons.

But if we look at the Duke simultaneously as the politician and the philosopher, the overall impression is that of tragicomicality. He has serious purposes in both his political and religious intentions. During the action of the play, he achieves what he has intended to do in both areas. In his public life, social reformations are being carried out briskly in all facets of society in Vienna. From a political perspective, this "bureaucratic" government of Angelo, which is the reality of the Duke's conception, would have nothing but happy results, all comic possibilities--an ideal one, if the Duke's intention is "to rule." It is Duke Vincentio's "New Deal" working, being both visionary and pragmatic. A few innocent "thiefs" like Claudio and the bed-tricked "Angelo" may be sacrificed, and yet laws and statues can pick up "jewels" (Angelo sees this possibility). If Vincentio is willing to make his "New Deal" investment on a continuing basis, Vienna itself may turn into a Promised Land or a utopian society.

But the Duke's philosopher self seems to have a different vision of this "heroic" political dream-reality. This other self sees introspectively only emptiness or "airy nothing" in his "mask" or social self. From the perspectives of a Christian philosopher, there is no heroic ideal that the second self (mask) can live up to, for even

if human society is perfect, it is perfect in the sense the Houyhnhnms' society is perfect. Viennese society, or the world-at-large, may be plentful in "grains" of all kind (high culture and material civilization) but those grains "issue out of dust," out of "baseness" (III.i.21,15), which shall return to dust. And human life in this kind of society is neither life nor death, but "an after-dinner's sleep / Dreaming on both" (III.i.33-34). And time itself, grains of sand, will prove any man a "death's fool" (III.i.11). From the perspectives of the philosopher Duke, life in Vienna has only tragic implications.

Since the Duke has both tragic and comic visions within himself, it can be said that he is composed of dialogical elements. But <u>how</u> are they balanced? Is the philosopher self balanced with the political self on the same scale, the way Escalus balances Angelo on the same political level? I do not think so. Earlier I have mentioned dialogical tension and dialogical harmony. Within the Duke's being, the one self's dialogical relations to the other self is that of a frog's jumping to the ripples. Either one of the Duke's selves can be a frog or ripples, or "the mask" for each other.

The moment the politician Duke jumps into a "New Deal" campaign, he has created dialogical tension for the

philosopher Duke, who in turn activates dialogical harmony. Characters who feel the impact of this dialogical tension sown by the political Duke also reap the impact of dialogical harmony cherished by the philosopher Duke. This is why most characters in this play display tragicomicality of some sort. Structurally, dialogic tension created at one level (secular or political) is resolved by dialogic harmony at another level (spiritual or philosophical). This is why tragicomicality in this play is so peculiar. The political campaign has an auspicious beginning but turns into a fiasco. The perfect politician in the Duke may ask himself, "Where did I mess up? I did it again. For twenty years now."

But at the philosophical level, the play can be said to have begun with a "tragic" beginning, so to speak, (because the law is severe, and no one can be spared by the strict legal justice the political duke and Angelo are seeking), but changed into a happy ending (marriage unions and temporary unity in compassion). The philosopher in the Duke may tell his political self, "See, I told you, your way wouldn't work," but the same philosopher may tell "itself," "At least, I won this time." Thus, tragicomicality in this play is something strange and yet rich--a transcendental tragicomicality in the sense that

dialogic tension begun at the political level is resolved in dialogic harmony at the philosophical level. The Duke holds the center of this tragicomicality, like a frog watching the ripples of his own creation.

Lucio's sudden stripping of the Duke's friar habit, however, makes this philosophizing self in exile return to the secular world of Vienna, to his political self in real society, in which he has to rule. His short journey or quest for the spiritual meaning of human life has ended. In this respect he is like Prospero, who returns to the real world, which in fact turns out to be a brave new world with "such people" in it--a world of dialogical people like pairs of Angelo and Lucio, Pompey and Escalus, Provost and Barnardine, Isabella and Mariana, all modeled after the Duke's own political self and philosophical self--all happy in their own way. For humanity and human values are constantly in a state of dialogical fluctuations (justice and mercy or happiness and sorrow, etc.). But as Hamlet seems to think what one makes of the dialogical nature of the things in this world depends a lot on how one thinks: thinking still "makes it so."

Shakespeare, a man Johnson calls "a faithful mirror

of manners and of life,"[143] dramatizes the world as it is, whether in Measure for Measure or Hamlet or any other of his plays. His world is depicted essentially as a world of dialogic tension and harmony, a world in which "comic" or "natural" people like Polonius or Claudio are punished for just being close to a "serious" Claudius or "demigod" Angelo, who take their "counterfeit" authority seriously and turn it into a comic fiasco. It is a world in which only a "comic" Ophelia, being mad, is apprehended as Hamlet's true love, and perhaps as a "true" woman also because Ophelia herself, more than Gertrude, epitomizes Hamlet's dialogic conception of the woman ("Frailty, thy name is woman"); and it is a world where "true" Mariana is enticed into a trap (the bed-trick) and must live with Angelo since her honor is really at stake now.

The fallen, imperfect world of Shakespeare's human drama is still a perfect world in the dialogical sense because, though a world of many sounds and furies, it can be transformed into a world of human possibilities and opportunities through which human beings can "be perfect" as God is perfect. It is the only world where human beings can be made of such stuff as faith, hope, and love. In

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[143]Johnson, "Preface" I:viii.

Measure for Measure the Duke epitomizes this possibility of becoming a perfect man. Despite all the dramatic confusions, sounds and furies in display, the Duke embodies, within himself and in his action, the dialogical nature of human life--prosaic and poetic, personal and universal, unbearable and yet truly livable, or "tragicomical" in one word. The Duke's world presents, after all, this world of human possibilities, to which Francis Thompson would address poetically "Oh, world invisible we view thee . . . O world unknowable we know thee"[144] or to which Miranda would declare more dramatically, "O brave new world, / That has such people in't" (The Tempest, V.i.184-5).

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[144]Francis Thompson, "The Kingdom of God." The Poems of Francis Thompson. Ed. Terence L. Connolly. New York: Century, 1932. 123.

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