

"H A T E - M A N T I M O N"

"H A T E - M A N T I M O N"
A S T U D Y O F M I S A N T H R O P Y
I N
S H A K E S P E A R E ' S P L A Y S

BY
MARYANN RUTH LISK, M.A.

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University
January, 1977

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1974
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: "Mate-Man Timon": A Study of Misanthropy in
Shakespeare's Plays

AUTHOR: Maryann Ruth Lisk, B.A. (Trent University)
M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Berners W. Jackson

NUMBER OF PAGES: viii; 306.

ABSTRACT

In recent years it has been generally accepted that the difficulties in the text of Shakespeare's Timon of Athens arise primarily from the fact that for some reason or other Shakespeare left the play unfinished. Although critics have advanced several theories, some biographical and some dramatic, to explain why Shakespeare might have abandoned the play, none of these explanations sufficiently considers the formidable problems surrounding the dramatic presentation of misanthropy. Because the unqualified hatred of mankind is an emotion which most human beings find repugnant, it is difficult to present a genuine misanthrope as a sympathetic character. For this reason the most successful dramatic presentations of misanthropy, such as Molière's *Alceste* or Menander's *Dyskolos*, have allowed the audience the chance to ridicule the misanthrope even while it sympathizes with some of his condemnations of humanity. This tendency was particularly intense in the early seventeenth century, when the story of Timon, the arch-misanthrope, was commonly used as a cautionary example of degenerate behaviour. Shakespeare's problems would have been further increased by the fact that misanthropy finds expression chiefly through words rather than through deeds, and thus does not easily lend itself to a theatrical presentation. Because the misanthrope normally reveals his hatred of mankind in long tirades; and because his condition is not subject to change or development, there is always the danger that a play containing such a character will degenerate into a static series of abusive debates.

This danger is especially prevalent when, as in the case of Shakespeare's Timon, the misanthrope becomes the central figure.

This thesis examines Shakespeare's depiction of misanthropy in the light of Elizabethan attitudes and practical stage considerations. In the first two chapters, I study sixteenth and early seventeenth-century treatments of misanthropy and the Timon story in an effort to discover what preconceived ideas an Elizabethan audience might have brought to Shakespeare's play. I have discovered that a significant number of didactic writers vigorously condemned misanthropy, either as a beastly vice born of envy, or as a symptom of insanity. So intent were they on censuring Timon's behaviour, that they frequently altered Plutarch's account of the Timon story to depict the arch-misanthrope as an active seeker after man's destruction. By contrast, the period's literary works tended to depict the misanthrope as a figure of fun, either by exposing him to direct ridicule, or by associating him physically or metaphorically with the figure of the Renaissance Fool. The third chapter introduces two non-Shakespearean stage misanthropes, Bohan from Greene's James IV, and the protagonist of the anonymous Timon Play, and examines the difficulties surrounding their presentation. In the fourth chapter I discuss Shakespeare's use of misanthropy as a character trait in several figures who are not themselves misanthropes. Chapters five and six deal with two Shakespearean comic misanthropes, Jaques from As You Like It and Thersites from Troilus and Cressida, and examine the ways in which Shakespeare has surmounted the theatrical problems outlined earlier. Finally, I offer a detailed study of Timon of Athens, to show how Shakespeare attempts to build up sympathy for

Timon in the first three acts through the behaviour of the Athenians, the comments of Flavius and Apemantus, and the Alcibiades subplot; and then counts on this buildup of sympathy to carry through to the end of the play. I conclude, however, that for all its subtlety of construction, Timon of Athens fails as a tragedy, primarily because of the intransigence of its subject matter. I believe that my approach should prove useful to a more detailed understanding of the play's dramatic structure.

PREFACE

All references to Shakespeare's plays are taken from The Complete Pelican Shakespeare, Alfred Harbage (gen. ed.), Baltimore: Penguin, 1969. I have checked disputed passages against the readings of several modern editors, as well as the text of the First Folio, and whenever such a passage affects my interpretation, I have duly noted it and stated my own preference.

Wherever possible I have quoted from original editions or facsimiles, and in all these quotations I have endeavoured to preserve the original spelling and punctuation. However, for the convenience of my typist I have silently regularized the use of "u" and "v"; and "i" and "j", and I have substituted normal lettering for the script "s" and the superscript "m" and "n".

Because I have found it necessary to limit bibliographical listings to those works actually cited in the dissertation, I wish to acknowledge my debt to the wide-ranging field of Shakespearean scholarship, and more specifically, to all those who have paid particular attention to Timon of Athens. While it is impossible to detail the specific contributions each of these scholars has made to this study, I am well aware that my own discoveries would have been impossible without them.

Finally, I wish to thank my Supervisor, Dr. Berners W. Jackson, whose patience and encouragement have been instrumental in bringing this thesis to its completion. I would also like to express my appreciation

to my typist, Miss Laurie Scott, and my proof-reader, Mrs. Marjorie Scott, •
for their meticulous preparation of this manuscript.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	vi
I INTRODUCTION	1
II DIDACTIC BACKGROUND	14
III SATIRISTS AND FOOLS: LITERARY BACKGROUND	35
IV TWO NON-SHAKESPEAREAN STAGE MISANTHROPEs	70
V MISANTHROPY AS A CHARACTER-TRAIT	116
VI JAQUES	144
VII THERSITES	180
VIII TIMON	213
IX BIBLIOGRAPHY	298

I

INTRODUCTION

The critical history of Shakespeare's Timon of Athens is chiefly distinguished by its many attempts to explain the play's apparent failure as a tragedy. Admittedly, Timon has had its staunch admirers, some of whom make rather strange bedfellows. Karl Marx was attracted to Timon's bitter denunciations of the corrupting power of gold,¹ while satirist Percy Wyndham Lewis sided with the protagonist against the monstrous ingratitude of men:

In Timon's case this picture (of Timon as a spendthrift) is entirely ignored; and in place of it a violent and mournful despair rises from a great nature full of generosity in a time of awakening and immense astonishment at the vileness of the world--which takes everything and gives nothing, whose nature is poorer than any dog's, on whom no reliance can be placed, and on whom all love or compassion is only wasted.²

In recent years the play's most eloquent advocate has been Professor G. Wilson Knight,³ who sees Timon as "the flower of human aspiration" whose betrayal at the hands of an ungrateful world parallels the betrayal of Christ. Professor Knight looks upon the play as the culmination of Shakespeare's tragic vision:

The profoundest problems of racial destiny are here symbolized and fought out. In no other play is a more forceful, a more irresistible mastery of technique--almost crude in its massive, architectural effects--employed. But then no play is so massive, so rough-hewn into Atlantean shapes from the mountain rock of the poet's mind or soul, as this of Timon. . . .For this play is Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, Othello, King Lear, become self-conscious and universal: it includes and transcends them all: it is the recurrent and tormenting hate-theme in Shakespeare, developed, raised to an infinite power, presented in all its tyrannic strength and profundity, and--killed. . . .Our vision thus with infinite care and every possible device focused, we await the onrush of a passion which sums in its torrential

energy all the lesser passions of those protagonists foregone. Timon is the totality of all, his love more rich and oceanic than all of theirs, all lift their lonely voices in his universal curse. Christ-like, he suffers that their pain may cease, and leaves the Shakespearian universe redeemed that Cleopatra may win her Antony in death, and Thaisa be restored to Pericles.⁴

The majority of critics, however, have been somewhat less enchanted by the play, and while they acknowledge that it contains moments of greatness, they find it lacking in the tragic intensity of Hamlet, King Lear, or even Coriolanus. At least part of the problem lies in the apparently unfinished state of the text. While many scenes appear to have been carefully thought out and constructed, others show evidence of carelessness or the absence of revision. One of the more blatant instances of this carelessness occurs late in Act IV, when Apemantus announces the imminent arrival of two characters who do not put in an appearance for another one hundred ninety lines (IV,iii,239). Similarly, much of the verse has a certain roughness about it which suggests that Shakespeare might have intended to recast his ideas at a later date. This excerpt from the Steward's soliloquy in IV,ii, affords an excellent example:

Alas, kind lord,
He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat
Of monstrous friends: nor has he with him to
Supply his life, or that which can command it.
I'll follow and inquire him out.
I'll ever serve his mind with my best will:
Whilst I have gold, I'll be his steward still.
(IV,ii,44-50)

Characters such as Ventidius, who rouse the audience's interest at the beginning of the play, are inexplicably dropped, and their places are taken by unidentified Lords. The connection between the primary action of the Timon story and a subplot involving the banishment of Alcibiades

is never sufficiently explained. These and other instances of authorial carelessness have led a great many critics to the conclusion that Timon of Athens has survived as an unfinished draft.⁶ Such a conclusion has naturally led to speculation on the reasons why Shakespeare might have left the play unfinished, and these have ranged all the way from suggestions of a nervous breakdown⁷ to assertions that Shakespeare erred in his choice of subject-matter.⁸ Of those who do not subscribe to this theory, many critics have sought to justify the play's apparent roughness as the result of Shakespeare's endeavour to create in Timon an experimental form of drama unlike that of the plays with which it is usually compared. One theory holds that Timon of Athens was designed as a type of morality-play, with Timon himself cast in the role of Ideal Bounty disillusioned by reality, and Alcibiades as the Humanum Genus figure whose realistic approach to the world's treachery leads to the restoration of harmony.⁹ Another, first developed by O. J. Campbell, treats the play as a tragic satire, whose features more closely resemble those of Troilus and Cressida or Jonson's Volpone. Campbell suggests that Shakespeare turned to a satiric treatment when he found the Timon story unsuitable for tragedy,¹⁰ and later abandoned it for the more promising subject-matter of Coriolanus.¹¹ He finds the play unappealing in that it evokes feelings of terror and absurdity which do not bring about a satisfactory catharsis.¹² More recently, Alice Lotvin Birney has revived this theory by citing Timon as an excellent example of what she calls satiric catharsis, the purging of hatred and censure through the action of the drama.¹³ Using a strange chemical analogy, Dr. Birney summarizes the play's structure in this way:

Illusion plus disillusion in the presence of the catylitic satirist (Apemantus) yields the tragic satirist (Timon)¹⁴

and then goes on to demonstrate the way in which Timon's actions evoke the proper feelings of catharsis:

The play ends with a reconciliation of elements, a purification through sacrifice, a cure after an intensified infection. It becomes Timon's life-mission--working from the example of Apemantus--to whip up man's hatred for himself and his institutions, to spread the disease, as it were, of his misanthropy. In doing so he makes himself the nexus of the hatred-censure syndrome and his martyrdom(!) allows a cure of the play's symbolic society to begin.¹⁵

This very ingenious argument exemplifies the tendency on the part of many literary critics to formulate theories that do not pay sufficient attention to the play's effect on a theatre audience, most of whom have not been so fortunate as to have read the play beforehand, or studied contemporary scholarly opinions. To gain a complete impression of the problems surrounding Shakespeare's Timon it is therefore necessary to glance briefly at its stage history.

So far as we know, Timon of Athens was never acted during Shakespeare's lifetime, or at any time before the closing of the theatres in 1642. Throughout the Restoration and eighteenth century the play enjoyed a certain amount of popularity through the adaptations of Thomas Shadwell (1678), James Love (1768), Richard Cumberland (1771) and Thomas Hull (1786). Each of these adaptations reveals a desire to smooth out the roughness of Shakespeare's version to tone down the bitterness of Timon's misanthropy and to make the subject-matter conform to contemporary dramatic fashions. Shadwell's dedication to the Duke of Buckingham nicely reflects the freedom with which these "improvers" approached Shakespeare's text:

I am now to present Your Grace with this History of Timon, which you were pleased to tell me you liked, and it is the more worthy of you, since it has the inimitable hand of Shakespeare in it, which never made more Masterly strokes than in this. Yet I can truly say, I have made it into a Play.¹⁶

Shadwell lessens the impact of Timon's misanthropy by cutting some of his more scurrilous outbursts, and by adding a love-plot in the form of two mistresses, one true and one false, between whom Timon must choose. Having chosen the wrong one, Timon abandons himself to despair, only to be redeemed by his faithful lover, Evandra, who follows him into the wilderness and dies by his side. The role of Alcibiades is greatly expanded, and those of the Steward and the cynic Apemantus diminished. As Francelia Butler points out in her summary of the adaptation, Shadwell's approach to the Timon story ignores much of the intensity that had marked Shakespeare's treatment:

While making changes in the structure which may well be considered sound dramaturgy from the neoclassical point of view, Shadwell is not concerned with the possible deeper meanings of the play. Rather, his objectives seem to be: making the play more of a domestic tragedy (by reducing Timon from an ideal figure to an ordinary man): spicing the play with light contemporary satire of women: . . .making thrusts at heroic poetry: . . .and indulging in political criticism. . . .¹⁷

Love's adaptation leaves out many of Shadwell's interpolations, and furthers the process, begun by Shadwell, of sentimentalizing Timon's misanthropy. This process is completed in Cumberland's version, where Timon is given a faithful daughter, whom Alcibiades loves and wins. In sharp contrast to Shakespeare's stark ending, Cumberland treats his audience to a truly heart-rending death scene in which the unhappy misanthrope pronounces a blessing on the pair before dying in his daughter's arms.¹⁸ In each of these adaptations the idea of poetic

justice is sharply emphasized through the agency of the Alcibiades subplot, until, in Cumberland's version, each of the false friends is shown to suffer for his ingratitude. As the following excerpt points out, the changes made by Cumberland and his predecessors merely reflect the taste of the period:

The altered play is a completely different work, but the eighteenth century was not prepared to accept the Timon Shakespeare gave them. The ending of Cumberland's alteration is full of reassurance, promising not only the continuity of life in the young lovers, but rejecting the cynicism toward all human relationships in which Shakespeare's Timon had persisted. Cumberland's play is not thought-provoking, but it is comforting. Audiences have always enjoyed being comforted.²⁰

The nineteenth century saw the restoration of Shakespeare's Timon to the English stage, in notable performances by Edmund Kean in 1816, and Samuel Phelps in 1851.²¹ Yet neither in that century nor in this has the play achieved any degree of popularity. Indeed, it ranks only slightly above Titus Andronicus as the least-produced of Shakespeare's tragedies. Over the past twenty years the play has undergone two significant productions in England, one in 1956 which starred Ralph Richardson, and another in 1965 with Paul Scofield in the title role. In this country the Stratford Festival has produced Timon only once in 1962, with John Colicos as Timon.²² Its director, Michael Langham, looked upon the play as an illustration, of "amongst other things. . .the hideous dangers of materialism",²³ and set about to emphasize this aspect by producing the play in modern dress. Timon and his guests appeared in evening dress in the opening scenes, while for the last two acts the misanthrope was clad only in a tattered shirt and trousers. Alcibiades and his soldiers were dressed as Castro-like guerrillas, while Apemantus

took on the appearance of a hard-bitten newspaper reporter. Langham completed the updating of the play with a jazz score by Duke Ellington, sound effects and a twist-like dance called the Skillipoop, performed at Timon's feast by ladies clad in Dior evening gowns.²⁴ Although the production seems to have been a success, particularly in its 1963 revival at Chichester, I would suggest that it reflected a feeling on the part of a contemporary director that Shakespeare's play had to be "dressed up" and "made relevant" before an audience of today would find it acceptable.

This somewhat random survey of the play's critical and stage history leads inevitably to the conclusion that, despite all the different attempts to re-define it or justify its roughness, Timon of Athens lacks the appeal of other Shakespearean tragedies, chiefly because of the nature of its protagonist. By choosing Timon, history's first and greatest misanthrope, to be the subject of a tragedy, Shakespeare attempted to dramatize a state of mind which by definition is repugnant to virtually every human being. While some might pity a man on account of the circumstances which brought about his misanthropy, or even admire his fearless denunciation of human wickedness, the misanthrope's wholesale repudiation of mankind tends to evoke a contemptuous or derisive reaction. As a result, a misanthropic character is better suited to a comic treatment, where the audience is given the chance to laugh at his outlook even while it acknowledges the merits of his case against mankind. Such a treatment occurs in Molière's play, Le Misanthrope. Time and again the misanthropic Alceste vigorously indicts society for its hypocrisy and frivolousness, and in nearly every case his indict-

ments are borne out by the behaviour of his fellow characters. Yet in the end Alceste becomes a ridiculous figure whose stubborn refusal to tolerate human frailty is contrasted to the more humane views of his friend Philinte, the one character whose virtues are rewarded with success in love. In a perceptive analysis of the alienation produced by two dramatic presentations of misanthropy, Paul G. Zolbred summarizes the problem in this way:

In their high-minded scorn . . . [they] are heroic, for they hate the right things: perfidy, hypocrisy, inconsistency. But these things they hate are the abstract products of vices. And [they] make the mistake of also hating the people who practise these vices, which is where their heroism ends. They cannot endure the imperfections of human beings. Like Don Quixote, they are admirable when they express their ideals, but they are frustrated and appear foolish when they try to convert these ideals into deeds.²⁵

Zolbred's conclusion inadvertently touches upon another, more practical consideration, for in attempting to convert his ideals into deeds, the misanthropic also tends to become theatrically boring. Since the essence of drama is conflict, there would, at first glance, appear to be little difficulty in dramatizing misanthropy, for the misanthrope is clearly in conflict with the whole of mankind. Yet a dramatist who seeks to build a play round a confirmed misanthrope soon faces the problem of integrating the character into a suitably varied dramatic action. For one thing, the misanthrope is primarily a static figure who expresses his hatred in long denunciations of human perfidy. Moreover, his repudiation of mankind is so absolute that it rules out the possibility of further character development, such as a growth of self-knowledge or the achievement of a more balanced perspective on the world. Consequently, the playwright must find some way of preventing his play

from degenerating into a boring series of long-winded declamations, or a chain of repetitious episodes in which various specimens of humanity are brought onstage to suffer the misanthrope's abuse. Naturally, the difficulties increase when, as in the case of Timon, the misanthrope becomes the centre of attention. Unless they are successfully overcome, these dramaturgical problems will combine with the audience's predisposition towards hostility to destroy any chance of a sympathetic reaction.

In this thesis I propose to examine Shakespeare's treatment of misanthropy in Timon of Athens in the light of the conclusions I have just drawn. In the first two chapters I outline Elizabethan attitudes to misanthropy and to the Timon story as they appear in contemporary non-dramatic sources. I indicate that the story of the arch-misanthrope was undoubtedly familiar to a significant proportion of Shakespeare's audience, since it appeared in a wide variety of works. I also conclude that the average man's natural predisposition towards hostility was at that time intensified by an overwhelming tendency to treat misanthropy as a morally reprehensible attitude or a symptom of insanity. In an age which looked upon the Timon story as an outstanding example of human beastliness, any attempt to treat the character sympathetically obviously faced formidable difficulties. I also examine an interesting tendency on the part of a few Elizabethan writers to ridicule the misanthrope's outlook by associating him either literally or metaphorically with the character of the Fool. This connection appears most vividly in the work of Robert Armin, the actor for whom Shakespeare created the roles of Feste, Lavatch and Lear's Fool. The third chapter examines two non-Shakespearean plays that contain misanthropes, Greene's James IV and

the anonymous Timon Play. Although neither can be called a dramatic masterpiece, they both contain interesting examples of the problems facing the playwright who seeks to bring a misanthrope onstage. In the fourth chapter I glance briefly at a number of Shakespearean characters who exhibit misanthropic traits but whose function in their respective plays makes their behaviour acceptable. Chapters V and VI deal with two instances of the successful integration of misanthropic characters, Jaques in As You Like It, and Thersites in Troilus and Cressida. In both cases the misanthrope receives a predominantly comic treatment, and occupies a subordinate position as a commentator on the primary action. Finally, I provide a detailed study of Timon of Athens, in an attempt to show that Shakespeare has made every effort to overcome the difficulties of presenting the arch-misanthrope as a tragic protagonist. Although I find his treatment of the Timon story unique among contemporary Renaissance depictions of misanthropy, I conclude that the play remains a dramatic failure.

NOTES

¹Karl Marx, "The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society," Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, tr. Martin Milligan, New York: International Publishers, 1964, pp. 166-8.

²Percy Wyndham Lewis, The Lion and the Fox, London: Harper, 1927, pp. 209-10.

³G. Wilson Knight, "The Pilgrimage of Hate: An Essay on Timon of Athens", The Wheel of Fire 4th ed., London: Methuen, 1960, pp. 207-39.

⁴Knight, The Wheel of Fire, p. 236.

⁵For a detailed but somewhat disorganized compilation of Timon criticism, see Francelia Butler, The Strange Critical Fortunes of Shakespeare's Timon of Athens, Ames, Iowa: University Press, 1966. More concise summaries are to be found in the introductions to the New Cambridge Timon, ed. J. C. Maxwell, Cambridge: University Press, 1957, and the Arden Timon, ed. H. J. Oliver, London: Methuen, 1963. I have also found a most useful, if more selective, critical survey by Maurice Charney in Shakespeare: Select Bibliographical Guides, Oxford: University Press, 1973, pp. 224-31.

⁶The most detailed account of this theory occurs in an article by Una Ellis-Fermor, "Timon of Athens: An Unfinished Play", Review of English Studies, XVIII (1942) pp. 270-83. Her theory has now won general acceptance among the play's present-day editors, and has completely superseded earlier theories of divided authorship.

⁷E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems, Oxford: Clarendon, 1930, Vol. I, p. 482.

⁸F. P. Wilson, Elizabethan and Jacobean, Oxford: Clarendon, 1946, p. 117.

⁹A. S. Collins, "Timon of Athens: A Reconsideration", Review of English Studies XVII, (1946) pp. 96-108. The theory seems to wrench the play out of focus by exaggerating the role of Alcibiades out of all proportion to its appearance in the text.

¹⁰O. J. Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire, Oxford: University Press, 1943, p. 168.

¹¹Campbell, p. 196

¹²Campbell, pp. 192-3.

¹³Alice Lotvin Birney, Satiric Catharsis in Shakespeare, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, pp. 122-40.

¹⁴Birney, p. 124.

¹⁵Birney, p. 137.

¹⁶Thomas Shadwell, The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-Hater, London: J. M. for Henry Herringman, 1678. Sig. A₂^v-A₃^r, Facsimile of Birmingham Shakespeare Library copy, London: Cornmarket Press, 1969.

¹⁷Butler, p. 133.

¹⁸Richard Cumberland, Timon of Athens, Altered from Shakespear, London: for the Proprietors of Shakespeare's Works, 1771. Facsimile of Birmingham Shakespeare Library copy, London: Cornmarket Press, 1969.

¹⁹Thomas Hull's version was never published.

²⁰George C. Branam, Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956, p. 170.

²¹Oliver "Timon of Athens on the English Stage" New Arden Timon Appendix D, p. 152.

²²This production was taken to Chichester, England the following year.

²³Speech by Michael Langham to the Canadian Club, Montreal, Monday, February 3, 1964.

²⁴For the Chichester revival, Langham added further topicality to the play by setting it in the post-Suez Middle East, and including Bandits dressed as Bedouins and an Orthodox priest in full regalia.

²⁵Paul G. Zolbred, "Coriolanus and Alceste: A Study in Mis-anthropy", Shakespeare Quarterly, XXIII no. 1 (Winter, 1972) p. 57.

II

DIDACTIC BACKGROUND

The Renaissance view of human nature has become such a familiar theme of scholarly research and appraisal¹; that I will offer here only a brief summary of its essential features as a foundation for a discussion of contemporary attitudes to misanthropy. To put it simply, man was seen as a being of contradictions. On the one hand, he was a creature of supreme dignity and apparently limitless potential, God's last and greatest creation, made in His own image and placed on earth to rule all other creatures and to glorify his Maker. Possessing the divine gift of a rational soul, he occupied a place only slightly inferior to that of the angels in a universe that was seemingly designed expressly for his benefit. As one contemporary source emphatically put it:

There is nothing more certaine than this, that all things whatsoever either the eye can behold, or the eare heare, were created for the benefit, profit, and use of man, and that he was made excellent above all things to rule over them.²

Indeed, as the following extract rather ingeniously demonstrates, man was thought to embody within himself all the characteristics of this universe:

Man in this world is, as he were the center or epitome of all creatures: For severall creatures live in severall elements, as water-fowles and fishes in the water, Birds in the ayre, Beastes upon the earth. But man enjoyes all these: with his head hee lookes up to Heaven, with his minde he lookes into Heaven, with his feet hee walkes upon the earth, his armes keepe the ayre, as the bird flyes, with his eyes hee contemplateth heaven and earth, and all sublunarie things, hee hath an essence as other bodies: produceth his seede as Plants, his bones are like stones, his blood like the springs in the channels

of the earth, his hayre like the grasse the ornament of the earth, &cc., hee lives like a Plant, flourisheth as a Tree . . . Beside, some creatures are onely, as Starres: some are and live, as Plants: some are, live, and have sense, as Beastes: some under standing, as Angels: all these concurre in man. . . .3

In short, this optimistic view of man praised him as the divinely-appointed heir to limitless knowledge:

I let no man to sing, and set forth the praises and greatnesse of the Spirit of man: the capacitie, vivacitie, quicknesse thereof: let it be called the image of the living God, a taste of the immortall substance, a streame of the Divinitie, a celestiaall ray, whereunto God hath given reason as an animated steme to move it by rule and measure, and that it is an instrument of a compleat harmonie: that by it there is a kinde of kindred betwixt God and man, . . . to be brief, that there is nothing great upon the earth but man, nothing great in man but his spirit: if a man ascend to it, he ascendeth above the heavens.⁴

However, the Renaissance also held another view of mankind, a view based upon the teachings of orthodox Christianity. Because he had wilfully disobeyed God's commands, Adam caused humanity to lose all but a vestige of its reasoning ability, and subjected himself and his descendants to a multitude of corrupting passions. This degeneration of postlapsarian man became a favourite theme of several Renaissance moralists, and it commonly took the form of a systematic survey of human misery from cradle to grave--a survey which demonstrated the many ways in which man had become worse off than the beasts.⁵ Here the idea of man's potential greatness was used merely to heighten the magnitude of his degeneration. Hence, the Renaissance view of human nature involved a curious juxtaposition of these two contrasting opinions, often in the same work. From this juxtaposition man emerges at best as a creature of bewildering complexity:

Man is a creature of all others the most hard to be sounded and knowen, for he is the most double and artificiall, covert and counterfeit, and there are in him so many cabinets and

blind corners, from whence he comes forth sometimes a man, sometimes a satyre: . . . all his carriage and motion is a perpetuall race of errours: in the morning to be borne, in the evening to die: sometimes in the racke, sometimes at libertie: sometimes a god, sometimes a flie: hee laughs and weeps for one and the same thing: he is content and discontent: he will, and he will not: and in the end he knowes not what he will: now he is filled with joy and gladnesse that he can not stay within his owne skinne, and presently he falleth out with himselfe, nay dares not trust himselfe. . . . 6

Sir John Davies' poem Nosce Teipsun best reflects the ambivalent view of humanity held by so many of the period's moral philosophers.

I know my Bodi's of so fraile a kinde,
As force without, feavers within cann kill:
I know the heavenly nature of my minde,
But, tis corrupted both in wit and will:

I know my Soule hath power to know all things,
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all:
I know I am one of Natures litle kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a paine, and but a span,
I know my Sense is mockt with every thing:
And to conclude, I know my selfe a Man,
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing.⁷

But if they tended towards pessimism in their view of man's nature, Elizabethan moralists never went so far as to condemn humanity outright. The reason was simple: to do so would have been blasphemous. The degeneration brought about by the Fall did not erase the fact that man was formed in God's image. Therefore, if one were to hate man, he would be indirectly expressing a hatred of God Himself. Moreover, man's reasoning powers had survived the Fall, and, though severely diminished and beset by the conflicting passions of the will, they still enabled him to aspire to the divine goodness which it was his very nature to desire.⁸ Hence it was necessary, as the following passage points out, to judge humanity according to its potential rather than its performance:

Hee that desireth to know the use of any instrument, as of a saw, he must not judge of it by the rust that hath eaten into it, or that it is defaced, or broken by some chance, but by the whole teeth, scoured cleane, and fit to cut, even as it came out of the artificers shop. So likewise must wee judge of a man; not esteeming his end, and greatest good, of his blindnes, of his ignorance, of his wickednesse, and such like that are come upon him: but of the excellencie, of the goodnesse, of the brightnesse, wherewith he was at the first endued of the Creator.⁹

Finally, and most important, the entire doctrine of Christ's atonement for man's sin rested upon the assumption that for all his many faults, mankind was still accounted worthy of divine grace. Consequently, even the most severe indictments of human degeneration were tempered by the assertion that they were designed not to condemn man outright, but to remind him of his utter helplessness without divine grace. Perhaps the best example of this occurs in the works of Montaigne. Wherever his true sympathies lay, he nevertheless justified his clever and far-reaching attack on human vanity wholly in terms of orthodox Christian sentiment:

The meanes I use to suppress this frenzie, and which seemeth the fittest for my purpose, is to bruze, to crush, and trample this pride and fiercenesse of man under-foote: and violently to pull out of their hands, the silly weapons of their reason, to make them stoop, and bite and snarle on the ground, under the auctoritie and reverence of Gods Majestie. 10

Of all prominent Renaissance thinkers, only Machiavelli was prepared to go any further in his denunciation of man, and the furor raised by his views only testifies to their uniqueness.

Renaissance moralists reinforced this religious argument with appeals to the ancients to show that man was by nature a creature who found it impossible to survive without the company of his fellows.

Citing Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and others, they pointed out how human

love begins with the self and radiates outward through the various ties of family and country to a general love of all mankind.¹¹ The

French writer Nicolas Coeffeteau explains it this way:

Above all they [men] have an inclination to love their like, being a thing which nature teacheth us deeply, that resemblance ingenders Love, not onely among men, but also among other creatures. . . . Such power hath resemblance to unite affections, the which we must beleve is most powerful in man, who can have no sweeter conversation then with his like. The reason why every man loves his like, is, that man loving passionately above other things, loves consequently any thing that hath corresponcy [sic] with him: so as respecting him whom he loves as another himselfe, hee cannot but bee inflamed with this consideration.¹²

Furthermore, as that champion of Anglicanism, Richard Hooker, demonstrates, there is no earthly substitute for human companionship:

Betweene men and beastes there is no possibilitie of sociable communion: because the welspring of that communion is a naturall delight which man hath to transfuse from himselfe into others, and to receive from others into himselfe, especially those things wherein the excellencie of his kinde doth most consist. The chiefest instrument of humane communion therefore is speech, because thereby we impart mutually one to another the conceiptes of our reasonable understanding. And for that cause seeing beastes are not hereof capable, for as much as with them wee can use no such conference, . . . it is of Adam said that amongst the beastes Hee found not for himselfe any meete companion. ¹³

Thus contemporary treatises on human conduct stress the need for man to live within the bounds of a civil society and to do all that is in his power to help his fellows. A most succinct example of this idea is to be found in the little work entitled The Dignitie of Man, written by Anthony Nixon and published in 1612. This book, which takes the form of a catechism, and is obviously intended for a wide reading public, contains all the Elizabethan commonplaces concerning mankind and his proper earthly conduct. After asserting man's twofold duty towards God

and his neighbor, Nixon outlines the latter in this way:

Q Towards our Neighbour, what?

A To love him as wee love our selves: For Duty is the end whereunto Vertue tendeth: All things are made for Man, and Man for the benefite of Man: Hee liveth most happily who (as little as may bee) liveth to him selfe.¹⁴

Other writers enlarge upon this theme, pointing out that man's love for his fellows is one of the chief distinguishing features between humanity and the beasts. Sir Francis Bacon in his essay "Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature" is most emphatic on this point. Though he recommends a certain degree of caution in the bestowing of generosity, he states:

Take Goodnesse in this sense, the affecting of the weal of men, which is, that the Grecians call Philanthropia. . . . This of all vertues is the greatest: being the Character of the Deity: and without it, man is a busie, mischeevous, wretched thing: no better then a kind of vermine.¹⁵

This philanthropy not only distinguishes man from the animals: but also prompts him towards a life of ideal virtue. The following entry in Robert Cawdery's Treasurie or Storehouse of Similes reflects the contemporary belief in its power:

Like as pride oppresseth love, provoketh disdain, kindleth malice, confoundeth Justice, and at length subverteth states: Even so Humanitie stirreth up affection, augmenteth amitie, maintaineth love, supporteth equitie, and most soundly preserveth Cities and Countries.¹⁶

Consequently, the truly virtuous man was obliged to remain among his fellow beings if only as an example to them of the proper way to live:

And because he knoweth that he is not borne to himselfe alone, but to civill societie and conversation, and to the good of others, as well as of himselfe, he therefore doth his endeavour with all care and dilligence so to carry himselfe in words and deeds, as he might be a patterne and example to others of seemly and vertuous speeches and honest actions, and do them all the good he could in reducing them to a good and commendable forme of life.¹⁷

Indeed, as the following extract from Edward Topsell's The House-Holder or Perfect Man (1610) demonstrates, the achievement of human perfection is impossible without the involvement of society.

There be foure things whereby a man is declared a perfect man: First, Wisdom, whereby he teacheth himselfe and others. Secondly, Government, whereby he ruleth himselfe and others. Thirdly, Frugality and Labour, whereby he provideth for himselfe & others. Fourthly, Liberality and Mercie, whereby he feedeth himselfe and others. All these make a perfect man, and without them, our perfection is imperfection and lamenesse.¹⁸

In short, Elizabethan moralists firmly believed that the maintenance of man's proper temporal conduct depended upon his willingness to live with and for his fellow beings. Their position is neatly summarized in this extract from the 1570 edition of Dominic Mancin's Mirour of Good Maners:

We be not borne onely for our private profite,
But eche man is bounde another for to succour,
For as prudent Plato playne doth recorde and write,
One man for another is borne, every houre
And time to be ready, refusing no labour
To comfort, to counsell and succour one another,
Both true, glad and ready as brother unto brother.

Unreasonable beastes ofte times do this same,
Then muche more shoulde man to man be profitable,
Or els if he be not he greatly is to blame:
That is a foule vilayne and churle abominable
Whiche to his own person is onely charitable,
And on his onely profite doth onely muse and thinke,
Caring for none other whether they flete or sinke.¹⁹

In the preceding discussion I have set out to establish two facts: first, that whatever they had to say about its faults, Renaissance moralists acknowledged the inherent worth of humanity: and secondly, that they looked upon man as a creature born to live within a society and to contribute actively to the well-being of his

fellows. These facts obviously influenced Renaissance attitudes to any individual who refused to abide by such conventional beliefs. Such an individual was Timon of Athens, history's first known misanthrope.

English dictionaries of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries define a misanthrope as "he who hateth man", or "he that hateth man's company".²⁰ Most of them illustrate their definition with a reference to the story of Timon Misanthropos. Since nearly all contemporary references to misanthropy do the same, it becomes impossible to discuss Renaissance attitudes towards the misanthrope without mentioning Timon. Indeed, as the following discussion will demonstrate, the average Elizabethan's impression of a misanthropic character stemmed entirely from what he knew about the career of its namesake.

The standard Elizabethan version of the Timon story is derived from this extract from Plutarch's Life of Marcus Antonius:

This Timon was a citizen of ATHENS, that lived about the warre of PELOPONNESUS, as appeareth by Plato and Aristophanes comedies; in the which they mocked him, calling him a viper, and malicious man unto mankind, to shunne all other mens companies, but the companie of young Alcibiades, a bolde and insolent youth, whom he would greatly feast, and make much of, and kissed him verie gladly. Apemantus wondering at it, asked him the cause what he ment to make so much of that young man alone, and to hate all others: Timon answered him, I doe it said he, because I know that one day he shall doe great mischief unto the ATHENIANS. This Timon sometimes would have Apemantus in his companie, because he was much like of his nature & conditions, and also followed him in manner of life. On a time when they solemnly celebrated the feasts called CHOAE AT ATHENS, . . .and that they two then feasted together by themselves, Apemantus saied unto the other: O, heere is a trim banquet Timon. Timon answered againe, yea, sayd he, so thou wert not heere. It is reported of him also, that this Timon on a time (the people being assembled in the market place about the dispatch of some affaires) got up into the pulpit for orations, . . . and silence being made, every man listning to heare what he would say, because it was a wonder to see him in that place, at length he began to speake in this

manner. My Lordes of ATHENS, I have a litle yard in my house where there groweth a figge tree, on the which many citizens have hangd themselves: & because I meane to make some building on the place, I thought good to let you all understand it, that before the fig tree be cut downe, if any of you be desperate, you may there in time goe hang your selves. He died in the citie of HALES, and was buried upon the sea side. Now it chanced so, that the sea getting in, it compassed his tombe round about, that no man could come to it; and upon the same was written this Epitaphe:

Heere lyes a wretched corse, of wretched soule bereft,
Seeke not my name: a plague consume you wicked
wretches left.

It is reported, that Timon himself when he lived made this Epitath: for that which is commonly rehearsed was not his, but made by the Poet Callimachus:

Heere lye I Timon who alive all living men did hate,
Passé by, and curse thy fill: but passé, and stay
not heere thy gate.²¹

I have quoted this well-known extract in its entirety because these four episodes that demonstrate the extent of Timon's misanthropy reappear time and again in the works of Elizabethan moralists to reinforce their condemnation of such behaviour. Moreover, these writers occasionally made significant changes in these episodes--changes that may well have affected their readers' idea of the arch-misanthrope.

From what has been said earlier about the Renaissance belief in the value of human society, the misanthrope obviously stood condemned for his solitary habits. While they acknowledged its value as a help to the proper contemplation of virtue, most writers contended that the voluntary retirement from human society was both dangerous and unhealthy. For one thing, it was often a symptom of melancholy, and the indulgence of it only worsened the disease. In Stephano Guazzo's Civile Conversation a physician diagnosing a young gentleman's illness explains the effects of solitariness this way:

Your evill commeth of the false imagination you have by meanes

whereof . . . with pleasure, you purchase your death. . . . For, thinking to receive solace by meanes of a solitarie life, you fill your selfe full of ill humors, which take roote in you, and there lie in waite readie to search out secrete and solitarie places conformable to their nature, & to flie all mirth and companie: and as hidden flames by force kept downe are most ardent, so these corrupt humors, covertlie lurking, with more force consume, and destroie the faire pallace of your mind.²²

Persisting in the habit deprives man of his humanity:

For some by remaining inclosed in their voluntarie prisons, become ill favoured, leane, forlorne and filled full of putrified blood: by meanes whereof, their life and manners come to corruption. Insomuch that some take after the nature of savage beasts.

And therefore it may justlie be sayd, that who so leaveth the civile societie to place himselfe in some solitarie desert, taketh, as it were, the forme of a beast, and in a certaine manner putteth upon himselfe a brutish nature.²³

In The Anatomie of Melancholy Robert Burton is even more specific in linking the indulgence of solitariness with the development of misanthropy:

These wretches degenerat from men, and from sociable creatures, become beasts, monsters, inhumane, ugly to behold, Misanthropi: they do even lothe themselves, & hate the company of men, as so many Timons. Nebuchadnessars: by too much indulging to these pleasing humors, and through their owne default.²⁴

As Roger Baynes points out in The Praise of Solitarinesse (1577), only the truly wise man may profit from solitariness, and in doing so he does not absent himself totally from human fellowship, but cultivates instead a withdrawal of the mind for the contemplation of goodness. All other forms of voluntary withdrawal lead only to the fostering of malignant thoughts.²⁵ To quote Guazzo again:

And hereof we have to conclude, that even as he which abandoneth **(the)** active life, to imbrace the contemplative, meriteth praise: so he which being in the active life refuseth companie, not upon anie honest occasion, but either for the hate he beareth to men, either through lazy slouthfulnesse, either through distrust in

himselpe, or for some other defect, shrinketh aside into solitarinesse, is greatlie to bee reprehended.²⁶

Naturally enough Timon was often used as an example of what men became through a life of solitariness. The previously quoted extract from Burton's Anatomie of Melancholy linked his name with that of Nebuchadnezzar, the Biblical King of Babylon who lived as a beast for seven years.²⁷ William Painter's account of Timon in The Pallace of Pleasure is even more unflattering:

All the beastes of the worlde, do applye themselves to other beastes of theyr kind, Timon of Athenes onely excepted, . . . because hee was a man but by shape onely, in qualities, hee was the capitall enemie of mankinde, which he confessed franckely utterly to abhorre and hate. He dwelt alone in a little cabane in the fields not farre from Athenes, separated from all neighbours and company: he never wente to the citie, or to any other habitable place, except he were constrayned: he could not abide any mans company and conversation: he was never seen to goe to any mannes house, ne yet would suffer them to come to him.²⁸

Painter then goes on to cite Timon's reply to Apemantus as further proof of Timon's beastly solitariness:

Wherein he shewed how like a beast (in deede) he was. For he could not abide any other man, beinge not able to suffer the company of him, which was of like nature.²⁹

Most other works follow substantially the same pattern. There is, however, one interesting exception in Baynes's Praise of Solitarinesse, where the author uses the Timon story to prove the impossibility of complete withdrawal from human society:

So that a wiseman oughte by no meanes to banyshe thys comfortable friendshippe from his Solitarie dwelling, neither may he if he woulde, for friendship creepeth, I know not by what meane, unto the secrete dealings of all kinde of people, . . . for though some man may be found of nature so savage, that he abhorreth all company, as at Athenes one Timon was so reported, yet can he not endure to be still alone, but that, either one or another he must needly have, to whome he may utter the crookednesse of his nature.³⁰

But most other references follow Painter's lead in stressing the brutish effects on the misanthrope of his self-imposed isolation. At best, this idea receives only passing attention in the classical original, where there is no mention of Timon's living in the midst of a wilderness among wild animals. It seems that in their efforts to show the solitary Timon as a creature deprived of all humanity, Renaissance moralists were content to make the necessary changes in Plutarch's story.³¹

It goes without saying that the misanthrope was also roundly cursed for his bitter unqualified hatred of mankind. Except where it was righteously directed against vice, the emotion of hatred was generally held to be a purely destructive feeling, utterly useless to the promotion of virtue. As the following quotation demonstrates, this was thought to be particularly true of the hatred of men.

As kites or Ravens can neither more or lesse hurt a living Body, but work their tyranny on the dead: So hee that hateth any Man, lookes onely upon his dead Vices, and never lifts up an eye to his good and vertuous Actions. 32

For this reason The French Academie contains this warning against believing in the views of philosophers like Heraclitus and Democritus who adopted a misanthropic outlook:

The opinions of these philosophers . . ., who being destitute of the light of God, and of true religion have no other foundation but their owne humane and weake discourses, are to be rejected for inclosing all mankind in such a vile and abject estate.³³

Another writer specifically warns princes against misanthropy for very practical reasons:

And even as love is very requisit in a prince, so say I also that hatred doth well become him. I meane not the hating of

any particular person, or of all in generall, after the maner of Timon of Athens, who naturally did hate all men, . . . for such kind of hatred is dangerous in a prince, by reason of his overgreat power, which would be the cause of the destruction of infinit men.³⁴

Several moralists sought to undermine the misanthrope's viewpoint by ascribing it either to a disease of the mind or to some highly suspect personal motive. As I mentioned earlier, the disease of melancholy was frequently cited as a cause of misanthropy. Analyses of the disorder appear in numerous medical treatises on the subject, among the most succinct of which is this extract from Coeffeteau's Table of Human Passions:

Melancholly Hatred growes from the great aboundance of adust choller, the which doth so torment and agitate those miserable wretches which are afflicted therewith, as they abhorre all the honest pleasures of life, fly the light of men, and wish evill unto themselves, for as they cannot indure to bee seene, neither will they speake to any man, but seeke deserts & solitary places, where they confine themselves, and consume themselves with the discontent and Hatred they beare to mankind: like unto that cursed Athenian, who had conceived such a mortal Hatred against all men, as he imagined it was not in his power to binde his fellow Citizens unto him more strictly, but in planting of trees which might serve them as Gibbets to hang themselves.³⁵

From this sort of analysis Timon and his kind emerge as mentally deranged victims of melancholy fantasies, to be looked upon with wonder and abhorrence. Those who believe him to be sane preferred to depict the misanthrope as a malignant being consumed with pride, envy or both. The twisted pride of misanthropy is described in an extract from a 1630 treatise on courtesy by Richard Brathwait. In recommending discretion in the choice of friends, Brathwait gives this description of what he calls "Timonists":

These for the most part are Male-contents, and affect nothing

less than what is generally pleasing. . . . For disposition they are like the Antipodes unto us, opposing themselves directly against us in all our courses. . . . For they imagine, there can be no truth, but what they professe. They proclaime defiance to the world, saying: Thou miserably deluded world, thou embracest pleasure, wee restraine it. Thou for pleasure dost all things, wee nothing. . . . Such was this Timon from whose name wee entitle these frowning friends, who can hardly be true friends to any, being so opposite and repugnant to all. . . . Unfit therefore was this Timon for the Acquaintance of man, who profest himselfe so mortall and irreconcilable an enemy to the sociablest and entirest Acquaintance of man.³⁶

References to the misanthrope's envious nature are more plentiful.

Thomas Rogers, for instance, offers this description of those affected by "ill wyll":

And those which are affected with this qualitie, as they hate all men, so are they loved of none: and as they can take no delight at anies welfare, so for their crooked and overthwart dealings, none taketh pleasure in them. One may easily knowe them, for they are in lookes grimme, in talke snappishe, in behaviour uncivile, and in opinion perverse. Such were doggish Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Timon of Athens, uncivile persons: and for their straunge manners, termed haters of men.³⁷

Rogers later cites an incident out of Plutarch to show the extent of Timon's envy.

Amongst all envious persons . . . none hath bene so much reprehended for the same as was Timon of Athens. For he coulde away with none, but onely with Alcibiades: and being asked of Apemantus why enviying [sic] all others, he so favoured him, answered, that therefore he did love and accompt of him, because he perceived the disposition of Alcibiades to be such as he should in tyme be a scourge to the Athenians. . . . And, as he was, so are all they which are envious, they can lyke of none but such as are causers, and helpers to bring those which are at rest, and as it were in felicitie, into miseries.³⁸

Another writer cites an apocryphal incident from Timon's life to demonstrate the same point:

Envy and hate doe commonly goe together: so that Timon who envied good men, because they were so good, beeing asked, why he hated all men; answered, I hate all wicked men, because

of their wickednesse, and I hate all other men, because they hate not the wicked.³⁹

Whatever passion was thought to have overcome his reason, the misanthrope made himself abhorrent to the Renaissance moralist because he strayed from the ideal of moderation into extremes of hatred. To quote a contemporary essayist:

Man is allowed onely the middle way, he strayest when he affects extremes, his Errour is punished with Deformity, whatsoever he performeth thus becomming disgraceful and unseemly.⁴⁰

Perhaps it is for this reason that many writers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries seemed prepared to go to all lengths to picture the misanthrope as a freak of nature.

This brings me to a most interesting development in the fortunes of the Timon story during the sixteenth century. From the previous discussion it is clear that certain writers of this period re-interpreted incidents from the classical original to fit their conception of Timon's character. Rogers' version, for example, takes the incident of Timon's relationship with Alcibiades from Plutarch, but surrounds it with an interpretation that is entirely the author's own. But there is one episode from Plutarch that underwent an even more significant change at the hands of several well-known Renaissance writers, and that is the story of Timon's fig tree. In the extract from Plutarch quoted earlier in the chapter, (pp.21-22) the misanthrope's behaviour reveals little more than foul-tempered eccentricity. The tree chanced to grow on his property, and many Athenians happened to have used it as a gallows. Timon's announcement to the assembled people does not involve actual persuasion, for he merely advises those who intended to hang themselves to do so

quickly before he cuts down the tree. But John Alday's 1581 translation of Pierre Boaistuau's Theatrum Mundi contains quite a different account:

And not sufficed to have man only in horror, & detestation, & to fly their company, as the company of a fierce or cruel beast, but in forsaking them, he sought their ruine, & invented all the meanes he could to extinguish humane kind. In consideration whereof, he caused many Gibettes to be reared in his Garden, to the ende that the dispaired and those that are wearie of their lyves, shoulde come thether to hang themselves.⁴¹

Barckley's Discourse contains the same version, virtually word for word.⁴²

The French Academie improves on the story by suggesting that Timon's efforts met with success:

Timon the Athenian detesting . . . the imbecilitie of mans nature, used & imploied all his skill to perswade his countrymen to abridge and shorten the course of their so miserable life, and to hasten their end, by hanging themselves upon gibbets, which he had caused to be set up in great numbers, in a field that he bought for the same purpose, unto whose perswasions many gave place.⁴³

Coeffeteau's 1621 version of the story, quoted earlier in this chapter, reverts to the fig tree of the original story, but asserts that Timon owned a considerable number of them, and alleges that he purposely planted them for the convenience of any Athenians wishing to hang themselves. The result of these changes was the presentation to the Elizabethan reader of a considerably more sinister Timon than the surly but essentially passive figure of Plutarch. Indeed, in his diligent efforts to bring about the suicide of his fellow citizens, he reminds one of the figure of Despair in Spenser's poem, The Faerie Queene.⁴⁴

This interpretation of Timon's character was probably just as widespread, as Plutarch's if one is to judge by the popularity of the works in which it appears. For not only does it occur in the moral discourses just cited: it may also be found in certain of those collections of literary,

historical and moral commonplaces that appeared in print around the end of the sixteenth century. For example, The French Academie's version of the story crops up in a 1599 collection of this sort called Wits Theater of the Little World.⁴⁵ Another example occurs in Bel-vedere or The Garden of Muses (1600) in the chapter "Of Man and Men".

Timon was call'd the enemy to men,
And would perswade them to destroy them-selves.⁴⁶

Since, as I said before, the figure of Timon was undoubtedly synonymous for most Elizabethans with their idea of the misanthrope, I would suggest that any writer who wished to make use of a misanthrope could count on the presence of this concept in the minds of his readers.

To judge from the preceding account, the Elizabethan reading public must have been thoroughly familiar with the story of Timon, for in one way or another it made its appearance in a wide variety of popular works. Accounts of his misanthropy figured not only in discourses on moral philosophy and treatises on conduct, but also in medical works, conversational aids, commonplace books, literary anthologies, and even books of rhetoric.⁴⁷ Moreover, a great many of the works in which it appeared were, according to the frequency of their publication, among the most popular books of the age. It is therefore reasonable to assume that sooner or later the figure of the arch-misanthrope would attract the attention of poets and dramatists, many of whom abandoned the serious, didactic approach of the moralists for the more subtle and potentially devastating weapon of laughter.

NOTES

¹For a more detailed discussion of this subject see T.J.B. Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man, 2nd ed. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1949.

²Pierre de la Primaudaye, The French Academie, fully finished in foure bookes, London: J. Legate for T. Adams, 1618, p. 10. This popular reference work of moral philosophy was first published in 1577. An English translation of Part I by T. B[lowes] appeared nine years later, and went through five editions to 1614. The second part appeared in two editions, while Part III was published separately only once before this collected and augmented edition of 1618.

³W[illiam] B[asse] and E.P., A Helpe to Discourse or a Miscelany of Merriment, . . . London: Bernard Alsop for Leonard Becket, 1619, pp. 10-11. This work consists of a series of questions and answers on a multitude of subjects. By its very nature as an apparent conversational aid it provides a valuable guide to the conventional wisdom of the period. It went through thirteen editions to 1638.

⁴Pierre Charron, Of Wisdome, Three Bookes, tr. Samson Lennard, London: For Edward Blount and Will Aspley, c1606, p. 65.

⁵For a fine example of this kind of summary see Nicholas Breton, A Dialogue . . . Upon the Dignitie or Indignitie of Man, London: T. C. for John Browne, 1603. This book takes the form of a discussion between three philosophers on the worth of humanity. Two of the philosophers adopt extreme views: the one, that man is totally worthy of praise, and the other, that he is an utterly abject creature. The third then offers the solution that man has the potential for both, depending on whether or not he follows his God-given reason.

⁶Charron, p. 137. Like many other Renaissance moralists, Charron was capable of entertaining both this view and the one outlined earlier without attempting to reconcile the apparent contradiction.

⁷Sir John Davies, Nosce Teipsum, I "Of Humane Knowledge", London: Richard Field for John Standish, 1599, p. 8. Facsimile of Huntington Library ed. The Poems of Sir John Davies, introd. Claire Howard, New York: Columbia University Press, 1941, p. 120.

⁸La Primaudaye, pp. 12-13, 301-2.

⁹Sir Richard Barckley, A Discourse of the Filicitie of Man or his Summum Bonum, 2nd ed., London: For William Ponsonby, 1603, p. 279. This work first appeared in 1598, and was published six times to 1617.

¹⁰Michel de Montaigne, The Essaies or Morall Politicke Discourses, tr. John Florio, London: Val Sims for Edward Blount, 1603, p. 257.

¹¹For example, see Thomas Rogers, A Philosophical Discourse Entituled the Anatomie of the Mind, London: I. C. for Andrew Maunsell, 1576, ff. 84^v-85^r: 89^r-V: 162^v.

¹²Nicholas Coeffeteau, A Table of Human Passions with Their Causes and Effects, Edward Grimestone, London: Nicholas Okes, 1621, pp. 139-40. For a similar explanation see Thomas Wright, The Passions of the Mind in Generall, 2nd ed., London: Valentine Simmes for Walter Barre, 1604, pp. 216-17. Written in 1597, this work went through five editions to 1628.

¹³Richard Hooker, Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie, London: John Windet, 1604, Book I section 10, p. 74.

¹⁴Anthony Nixon, The Dignitie of Man, London: Edward Alde, 1612, p. 4.

¹⁵Sir Francis Bacon, Essaies, Religious Meditations, Places of perswasion and diswasion, London: for John Jaggard, 1612, sig. H4^v.

¹⁶Robert Cawdrey, A Treasurie or Storehouse of Similes, London: Thomas Creede, 1600, pp. 393-4. This simile appears under the heading "Humanitie or Gentlenesse".

¹⁷Ludowick Bryskett, A Discourse of Civile Life . . ., London: For Edward Blount, 1606, p. 208.

¹⁸Edward Topsell, The House-holder or Perfect Man, 2nd ed., London: For Henry Rochyt, 1610, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹Dominic Mancin, The Mirour of Good Maners Containing the Foure Cardinal Vertues, tr. Alexander Barclay, London: John Cawood, 1570, f. C₂^v.

²⁰Definitions of "misanthrope" and "misanthropy" appear in the following dictionaries: Sir Thomas Elyot, Bibliotheca Eliotae . . . Enriched and More Perfectly Corrected by Thomas Cooper, London: T. Berthelet, 1548; Thomas Cooper, Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Britannicae, London: For Henry Wykes, 1565; John Florio, A Worlde of Wordes, London:

M. Bradwood for Edward Blount, 1598; H[enry] C[ockeram], The English Dictionarie or an Interpreter of hard English Words, London: Edmund Weaver, 1623.

²¹Plutarch, Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, tr. Thomas North, 2nd ed. London: Richard Field for Bonham Norton, 1595, pp. 1001-2. This popular work went through eight editions and issues between 1579 and 1628.

²²Stephano Guazzo, The Civile Conversation . . ., tr. George Pettie, London: Thomas East, 1586, f.3^v.

²³Guazzo, ff. 4^v-9^v.

²⁴Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy . . ., Oxford: John Lichfield and James Short for Henry Cripps, 1621, Part I, Sec. 2, Memb. 2, Subsec. 6, sig. H₃^R.

²⁵Roger Baynes, The Praise of Solitarinesse . . ., London: Francis Coldocke and Henry Byneman, 1577. Here is another work that consists of an argument between three philosophers, two of whom affect extreme views, while the third advocates the more moderate outlook.

²⁶Guazzo, f. 19^v.

²⁷Daniel 4.

²⁸William Painter, The Pallace of Pleasure, London: Thomas Marshe, 1566-7, The XXVIII Novell, ff.54^R-55^R.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Baynes, p. 74.

³¹The only basis for the assumption that Timon lived among beasts appears to be a chance remark in Lucian's dialogue Timon, where the misanthrope resolves that his life should be solitary "like that of wolves". (Lucian of Samosata The Dialogue of Timon, tr. Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. VI, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 272.) Actually, Lucian's Timon lived as a farm labourer. Moreover, since no English translation of the dialogue appeared in the sixteenth century, the reference would be familiar only to those who had access to the original Greek, or to Latin or French translations.

³²Pedro Mexia, et al., The Treasure of Auncient and Moderne Times, tr. Thomas Milles, London: W. Jaggard, 1613, p. 45.

- ³³La Primaudaye, pp. 14-15.
- ³⁴Jacques Hyrault, Foliticke, Moral and Martial Discourses, tr. Arthur Golding, London: Adam Islip, 1595, p. 69.
- ³⁵Coeffeteau, pp. 192-3. For similar accounts see Laurentius Lemnius, The Touchstone of Complexions . . ., tr. Thomas Newton, London: Thomas Marsh, 1581, f. 143^R; and Timothy Bright, A Treatise of Melancholy, London: John Windet, 1586, pp. 98-9, 108.
- ³⁶Richard Brathwait, The English Gentleman . . ., London: John Haviland for Robert Bostock, 1630, pp. 204-6.
- ³⁷Rogers, ff. 4^V-5^R.
- ³⁸Rogers, f. 46^R-^V.
- ³⁹Thomas Gainsford, The Rich Cabinet . . ., London: I. B. for Roger Jackson, 1616, f. 41^V.
- ⁴⁰Sir William Come-Waleys the Younger, Essayes, London: For Edward Mottes, 1600, f. M7^R.
- ⁴¹Pierre Boiastuau, Theatrum Mundi: The Theatre or rule of the world . . ., tr. John Alday, London: Thomas East for John Wright, 1581. p.3.
- ⁴²Barckley, pp. 362-3.
- ⁴³La Primaudaye, p. 14.
- ⁴⁴Book I Canto VII.
- ⁴⁵Robert Allot, Wits Theater of the Little World, London: I. R. for N[icholas] L[ing], 1599, f. 233^V.
- ⁴⁶Bel-vedere or The Garden of the Muses, comp. John Bodenham, London: F. K. for Hugh Astley, 1600, p. 104.
- ⁴⁷Thomas Wilson, The Art of Rhetorique, London: George Robinson, 1583, ed. G. H. Mair, Oxford: Clarendon, 1909, p. 55.

III

SATIRISTS AND FOOLS: LITERARY BACKGROUND

Allusions to Timon and to misanthropic habits occur frequently in the satirical poetry of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For example, this epigram from John Davies' Scourge of Folly (1611) derides the idiocy of an individual who has affected a Timon-like love of solitariness:

Menus delights in solitary Cells,
And places most remote from all repaire,
He loves to live where Desolation dwels,
And loaths the Sunne for lightning of the aire.
Its true indede (obscur'd) he haunts the hole
Which no man will come nere but such a Foole.¹

Another epigrammatist lampoons the bitter railing of "a second Diogenes":²

Because Diogenes on rootes did feed,
Philosophaster turnes Diogenes:
Observes his dyet, and doth still proceed
To imitate that Cynicks bitternes.
Calls each man knave he meets, but be it knowne,
That title he doth give them, is his owne.
Why doth he feed on rootes continually?
Faith will you know, it is the cheapest dyet.
Why doth he taxe mens vice so bitterly?
Because the world should judge he doth defye it.
Well this Philosopher deserves reward,
Let him be judg'd by John in Paules churchyard.³

Specific allusions to Timon reveal that the arch-misanthrope's story was one which the Elizabethan satirical poet expected his readers to know. For instance, two versions of Timon's epitaph appear in sixteenth-century collections of epigrams. The earlier of the two, published in 1577, is borrowed directly from Painter:

My wretched caitiffe daies,
Expired now and past
My carren corps enterred here,
Is graspt in grounde:

In weltryng waves of swellyng seas by sourges cast;
 My name if thou desire,
 the Gods thee doe confounde.⁴

A second, more original version, published in 1598, depicts the arch-misanthrope as a pitiable figure whose wretchedness in death is heightened by the fact that only by dying has he managed to obtain men's good will. The grim irony of the epigram brings out the futility of Timon's attitude.

Here I lie sealed under this stone,
 Deathes loathsome prisoner, lifes castaway.
 Which when I lived was loved of none,
 Nor lovely to any as all men can say.
 Now all men for dying doe love me, though ill,
 I would not revive to loose their good will.⁵

In addition to these specific treatments of the "historical" misanthrope, several short poems contain casual allusions to Timon as a personification of the most extreme human discontent. A fine example of this occurs in one of Everard Guilpin's epigrams which ridicules the discomfiture of a young fop who got his new shoes dirty:

Fine spruce yong Pansa's growne a malcontent,
 A mightv malcontent though young and spruce,
 As heresie he shuns all merriment,
 And turn'd good husband, puts forth sighs to use,
 Like hate-man Timon in his Cell, he sits
 Misted with darknes like a smoaky roome,
 And if he be so mad to walke the streetes,
 To his sights life, his hat becomes a toombe. . . .⁶

Roger Sharpe uses the same idea when describing a "variable humorist" whose moods veer unpredictably from one extreme to the other:

Now hee's extreamely merrie, and anon
 He prooves a Timon, all his mirth is gone:⁷

Finally, Samuel Rowlands begins his comic poem "The Melancholie Knight" with an allusion to Timon which quickly establishes the pose of the

down-at-heels narrator:

Like discontented Timon in his Cell,
 My braines with melancholy humers swell,
 I crosse mine armes at crosses that arise,
 And scoffe blinde Fortune, with hat ore mine eyes:
 I bid the world take notice I abhorre it,
 Having great melancholy reason for it.⁸

After this portentous beginning Rowlands quickly sets about to lampoon the Knight's misanthropy by showing it to be the product of an empty purse and idle, tobacco-filled daydreams.

In all these allusions we find the same association between misanthropic attitudes and melancholia that appears in so many of the more serious prose works of the period. But the overall tone here is much lighter and more fraught with laughter. In every case the misanthrope is associated with some ridiculous figure whose hatred of the world stems from the most trivial motives. I would suggest that the image of "hate-man Timon in his Cell" loses much of its ferocity in the eyes of readers who so often saw it lampooned in this way. A further point emerges from an examination of the way in which Timon's name is introduced into each poem. In every case the figure of the arch-misanthrope enters the poem as part of a simile or metaphor, and in no instance is the comparison a lengthy one. As every reader knows, such figures of speech will have no effect unless the point of comparison is absolutely clear. It stands to reason, therefore, that any Elizabethan poet who introduced such an allusion did so on the assumption that his readers were perfectly familiar with Timon's story and would respond accordingly to even the most cursory mention of his name.

This assumption might help to shed some light on a most puzzling

use of the misanthrope's name in another of Thomas Bastard's epigrams:

Timon is sicke of seven which deadly be,
 And yet not like to die for ought I see.
 He hath the foggie sinn of Ale and cakes.
 He hath the sinn of lace and fustniapes [sic],
 He hath the seeing sinn the heartes great'st woe,
 And yet he hath the sinn, of winken to.
 He hath the sparrowes sinn, & these which follow,
 He hath, he hath, the redd sinn and the yellow.⁹

There are two possible ways of interpreting this poem, depending on who is taken to be the "Timon" Bastard satirizes. On the one hand, the epigram might refer to the misanthrope himself, for Bastard was clearly familiar with the story, as his previously quoted "Epitaphium Timonis" proves. If this is the case, Bastard would appear to be indicting Timon for the sins which led to his disillusionment and subsequent misanthropy, since there is little in the Athenian's life as a man-hating hermit to justify these accusations. Given this interpretation, Bastard's epigram may be one of those rare Elizabethan works which focuses on Timon's days of prosperity, a characteristic it shares with the anonymous Timon comedy and with Shakespeare's play. On the other hand, the object of Bastard's satire might well be a contemporary figure whose identity is now lost to us, but whom the poet chose to ridicule under the name of Timon. But this name does not commonly appear as a pseudonym for a satiric butt; in fact, so far as I can determine, this is the only time it appears as such in Elizabethan satiric poetry. Whatever the interpretation, the implicit moral is the same: namely, that a character who is guilty of all Seven Deadly Sins can hardly assume the right to attack the depravity of his fellows. But here the moral rests upon the assumption that whoever the object of satire was, he must have

been enough of a misanthrope for Eastard to call him Timon, and thus to make the point of his epigram abundantly clear to his readers.

Consequently, the difficulty over "Timon's" identity does not detract from the poem's significance as an indirect attack on misanthropy and a noteworthy instance of the way in which Elizabethan poets relied on their readers' familiarity with the Timon story.

For a more complex and significant indictment of misanthropy it is necessary to examine the response to certain recurring themes in Elizabethan formal satire.¹⁰ In theory, two principles distinguish the satirist's tirades from the railing of a genuine misanthrope. First, although the satirist feels compelled by righteous indignation to launch a savage verbal attack upon the knaves and fools of his world, he protests, like Jaques, that he hates the vice rather than the individual who practices it. One of John Marston's satires makes this point most explicitly:

Preach not the Stoickes patience to me,
 I hate no man, but mens impietie.
 My soule is vext, what power will'th desist?
 Or dares to stop a sharpe fangd Satyrlist?
 Who'le coole my rage? whole stay my itching fist,
 But I will plague and torture whom I list?
 If that the three-fold walls of Babilon
 Should hedge my tongue, yet I should raile upon
 This fustie world, that now dare put in ure
 To make JEHOVA but a coverture,
 To shade ranck filth, . . . ll

Secondly, the principal aim of satire is supposed to be a constructive one, for the satirist professes to correct human vice and folly by depicting them in all their ugliness. He must therefore write on the assumption that men are capable of good, and will strive to attain it once they have been shown the evil of their ways. But in actual practice

Elizabethan formal satires appeared to stress the bitter attack rather than the reformatory purpose. While they paid lip service to satire's legitimate aims, satirists like Marston, Hall, Guilpin and Wither devoted much of their time to abusive outbursts that would have done credit to Timon or Apemantus. As one modern critic has put it:

What had been a literary fad based on a classical tradition was twisted into a savage renunciation of humanity itself. . . The erring were not educable, for error was the condition of their being: [the satirist's] aim was not to ridicule them back into their primal virtue, but to 'snarl, rail, bark, bite' at their vileness. 12

Nowhere was this misanthropic outlook more vividly expressed than in the satires of John Marston. In his second collection, entitled The Scourge of Villainie (1598), Marston lashed out at all mankind with a violence born of an apparent misanthropic despair. The world of these satires is peopled exclusively with depraved monsters totally incapable of reformation. Under these circumstances, asks Marston, how can any satirist refrain from snarling at the world?

What Academicke starved Satyrist
 Would gnaw rez'd Bacon, or with inke black fist
 would tosse each muck-heap for som outcast scraps
 Of halfe-dung bones to stop his yawning chaps?
 Or with a hungry hollow halfe pin'd jaw
 Would once a thrice-turn'd bone-pick'd subject gnaw
 When swarmes of Mountebancks, & Bandeti
 Damn'd Briareans, sincks of villanie,
 Factors for lewdnes, brokers for the devill,
 Infect our soules with all polluting evill. 13

Satire VII of this collection, "A Cynicke Satyr", displays Marston's satiric persona in his most Timon-like vein. The poem opens with a familiar Shakespearean echo:

A Man, a man, a kingdome for a man.
 Why how now currish mad Athenian?

Thow Cynick dogge, see'st not streets do swarme
 With troupes of men? No, no, for Circes charme
 Hath turn'd them all to Swine: I never shall
 Thinke those same Samian sawes authenticall,
 But rather I dare sweare, the soules of swine
 Doe live in men, for that same radiant shine,
 That lustre wherewith natures Nature decked
 Our intellectuall part, that glosse is soyled
 With stayning spots of vile impietie,
 And muddy durt of sensualitie,
 These are no men, but Apparitions,
Igenes fatui, Glowormes, Fictions,
Meteors, Ratts of Nilus, Fantasies,
Colosses, Pictures, Shades, Resemblances. 14

As this extract shows, Marston develops his theme in the form of a conversation between the disillusioned satirist and a more optimistic companion. While his observations are doomed to overwhelming defeat, this companion voices the average man's reaction to such misanthropic outbursts by calling the satirist a "currish mad Athenian", a term that might equally well apply to Timon as to Diogenes.¹⁵ The satirist's reply leaves the reader in no doubt about his wholesale disgust with humanity. By alluding to Circe, the mythical enchantress who transformed Ulysses' men into swine, Marston emphasizes man's bestiality in a manner reminiscent of Apemantus' remark, "The strain of men's bred out / Into baboon and monkey" (I, i, 248-9). The satirist next turns his attention to individual specimens of depravity. All the conventional satiric butts are represented here, from the be-ribboned fop and lecherous old man to the pox-eaten braggart soldier. In each case the companion attempts to silence the satirist's misanthropic tirade by pointing to an example of apparent virtue, only to be routed by the satirist's exposure of the monstrosity that lurks beneath the fair outward show. After several such instances Marston's satirist reiterates his bleak view

of the world in defiance of his companion's optimism:

Now raile no more at my sharpe Cynick sound
 Thou brutish world, that in all vilenes drown'd
 Hast lost thy soule, for naught but shades I see,
 Resemblances of men inhabite thee. 16

The satire concludes with a vivid development of an idea mentioned near the beginning of the poem--the idea that man through his own sin has deprived himself of the reasonable faculty which made him human. As with so much else in this collection, Marston conveys the sentiment through a startling image of dirt:

Sure I nere think those axioms to be true,
 That soules of men, from that great soule ensue,
 And of his essence doe participate
 As't were by pipes, when so degenerate,
 So adverse is our natures motion,
 To his immaculate condition:
 That such foule filth, from such faire purity,
 Such sensuall acts from such a Deity,
 Can nere proceed. But if that dreame were so,
 Then sure the slime that from our soules doe flow,
 Have stopt those pipes by which it was convai'd,
 And now no humane creatures, once disrai'd
 Of that faire jem.
 Beasts sence, plants growth, like being as a stone,
 But out alas, our Cognisance is gone. 17

Here is misanthropy at its most corrosive, a total negation of the concept of man as the epitome of all created things. To heighten the sense of despair the satirist has even included himself among the host of reasonless beings. The poem thus ends on a note of utter pessimism with the companion silenced by the satirist's apparently overwhelming proof of mankind's degeneration. It was a position that did not go unchallenged.

Two courses lay open to those wishing to reply in kind to the satirists' misanthropic outbursts. The first and most obvious was that

of counter-accusation. By lashing out so indiscriminately at his fellow men, the satirist naturally exposed himself to the serious charge of detraction. This universally despised practice was regarded by Elizabethans as a perversion of the divine gift of speech. Charron best expresses this idea in a warning against harshness of discourse:

But above all it must never be offensive, for speech is the instrument and fore-runner of charitie, and therefore to use it against it, is to abuse it, contrarie to the purpose of nature. All kind of foule speech, detraction, mockerie, is unworthie of a man of wisdome and honour. 18

Consequently, writers were quick to pounce upon any self-proclaimed castigatour of human viciousness and to discredit his accusations by accusing him of detraction. Guazzo, for example, dwells upon the pitiful condition of those who exhibit their own baseness by railing at others:

I meane by ill, all those who without feare, without shame, without anie respect or differe[n]ce, whet their tongues to rent a sunder, and impaire in all their talke both publicke & private, the good name of others, sparing none, either present or absent. But these same, while they recount other mens faultes, doe many times more offend the mindes of the hearers than those which doe commit them. And though they . . . are knowne for infamous persons, yet forasmuch as they utter their venime openlie and flatly, they ought . . . rather to be pittied than blamed: for that they shew plainlie, that their evill speaking is derived from their owne corrupt nature, not from the parties of whome they speake ill. By reason whereof, their wordes are not much credited, and in my opinion, they doe nothing else but raise a dust to doe out their owne eies: for in accusing others, they condemne themselves, and where they woulde have men thinke them to be Catoes, they shew themselves Momes, Beastes, and not to be borne withall. 19

Other writers responded more bluntly. In a poem entitled The Anatomie of Basenesse (1615) John Andrewes offers this description of the railer:

So strange is the distraction of this Tom
of Bedlam, that all places, times, and men
without distinction seeme alike: for when
The furious rayling fit comes on him, from

His stinking stomacke, hee'le belch forth such geere,
 -- such filth: and with such violence, as though
 he meant to cast his rotten garbage: so
 He joyes to make his loathsomnesse appeare. 20

Andrewes declares that the foul-mouthed habits of this character arise out of a cowardly, servile nature:

This (what shall I terme him?) will devoure your bread,
 call you his master, crouch with cap in hand,
 professe he falls, if you shall faile to stand;
 Yet curse you living, joy when you are dead.

He'le be the Herald of your Infamy,
 and scandalize your worth, though you have bred
 him to the shape of man even from a shred,
 This is a blacke-one, full of trechery. 21

An earlier poem called "The Whipping of the Satyre" (1601) specifically denounces this same sort of misanthropic railing as it appeared in the works of contemporary satirists. Here one "W.I." vigorously refutes the conventional claim of the satirist to be a healer of mankind's ills by asserting that the proposed cure is far worse than the original sickness:

What though the world was surfeted with sinne,
 And with the surfet dangerously sicke,
 And with the sicknesse had miscarried bene:
 Must it of force his filthy phisicke licke,
 Who little knowing what it ought to have,
 For purging pilles, a pild purgation gave? 22
 (ll. 1-6)

He then makes the same accusation as Guazzo and Andrewes by portraying the satiric railer as a contemptible figure befouled with the same dirt he slings so enthusiastically at others:

Behold, thou misconceyving Satyrist,
 The quiffing ale-knight hath a reeling pace:
 The Cobler alwaies shews a durtie fist:
 Who lives a Smith must needs besmere his face.
 Then know, thou filthy sweepe-chimney of sin,
 The soyle thereof defiles thy soule within.
 (ll. 7-12)

In the final stanza "W.I." urges the satirist to abandon his misanthropic attitude and leave the judgement of mankind to Christ, to whom the power rightly belongs. Otherwise, he warns, the satirist may suffer the fate of Lucifer, whom he imitates in his arrogance:

Leave that ambition, that ledde yee away,
To censure men and their mis-governement,
Judging the world before the latter day,
As though ye would the Sonne of God prevent:
Leave it I say, and lay it quite aside.
How can men rise, sith Angels fell, by pride?
(ll. 13-18)

All these direct attacks follow a similar pattern in their denunciation of satiric misanthropy. They question the satirist's motives for abusing humanity by accusing him of detraction. They assert that his condemnations are prompted by his own twisted pride and contemptible nature. They revile him for his frequent use of coarse invective and suggest that the filth which he appears so fond of hurling at others sticks more to himself than to the objects of his attack. Within limits this direct form of condemnation proved to be a most effective weapon in the hands of poets and dramatists alike.

But it does have its limits. For one thing, these attacks frequently descend to the level of scurrility they seek to condemn. A particularly vivid instance of this can be seen in the previously-quoted excerpt from The Anatomie of Basenesse (pp. 43-44), where Andrewes portrays the loathsomeness of the railer through a revolting image of filthy vomit--an image that rivals even some of Marston's more disgusting passages. This tendency to use the satirist's own verbal weapons obviously leaves poets like Andrewes and "W.I." open to the same accusations of detraction and coarseness with which they attempt to

discredit the satirist. Moreover, the serious didactic tone adopted by these rebuttals lends an undue significance to the objects of their denunciation. The potentially more devastating weapon of laughter is nearly always ignored. Finally, a straightforward condemnation of satiric railing does not lend itself to any particularly subtle or extended literary treatment. After all, a writer can only heap so much abuse upon a subject before becoming repetitious or boring. There was, however, a small body of works which sought to discredit the misanthropy of satiric railers like Marston by subjecting it to a more ironic scrutiny. Instead of setting up the satiric railer as an object of abuse, these works ridicule his pretensions to superior wisdom by associating him either literally or metaphorically with a figure around whom a wealth of ideas concerning wisdom and folly had gathered. This figure was the Renaissance Fool.

Renaissance attitudes towards Fools and folly involve a curious blend of seemingly irreconcilable ideas.²³ On the one hand, the Fool was often depicted as the epitome of unsocial and ungodly behaviour, an example of conduct to be shunned by all right-thinking men. This view had its roots in Biblical writings, specifically the Book of Ecclesiastes, and was further developed in the literature of medieval Europe.²⁴ By far its most popular and influential expression is to be found in Sebastian Brant's Narrenschiff first published in 1494, and quickly translated into several European languages. In England this work became popular through Alexander Barclay's adaptation of 1509 entitled The Shyp of folys of the worlde Here individuals from all walks of life are awarded the Fool's cap and bells and packed off to the ship for every imaginable kind

of stupidity or viciousness. Barclay's exhortation to his readers makes it abundantly clear that his collection of Fools must serve as a warning to all to avoid emulating their antics:

But ye that shal rede this boke: I you exhorte.
 And you that are herars thereof also I pray
 Where as ye knowe that ye be of this sorte:
 Amend your lyfe and expelle that vyce away.
 Slomber nat in syn. Amende you whyle ye may.
 And yf ye so do and ensue Vertue and grace.
 Wythin my Shyp ye get no rowme ne place. 25

This attitude is very much in evidence a century later, particularly in the works of didactic writers. At best the Fool is depicted as a figure to be pitied for his mental deficiency; at worst, he epitomizes all that man can become once he allows his will to dominate his reason. Stories of Fools' silly behaviour sometimes appear in these works as emblems of specific human faults. In his ponderously didactic book The Householder Edward Topsell relates an anecdote about a nobleman's fool who obstinately persisted in taking sticks from the bottom of a woodpile even after he was shown he could get them more easily from the top. Topsell uses the story to point out man's incurable stubbornness and his insistence upon tending exclusively to inferior worldly matters.²⁶ By contrast, Samuel Purchas' wide-ranging history of man stresses the pitiable condition of an individual whose lack of reason provokes laughter in others:

It is a pleasanter discourse of Joy and Laughter,
 but what greater miserie then to be a common Foole,
 to procure others laughter by our Folly? Such men
 are Naturall Fooles, and such Fooles are Naturall
 Men, the indignation of Angels, the laughter of
 Devils. in beholding such madde Courses and Chases
 as we take & make to please our deluded Fancie. 27

To these writers and others like them folly was the direct opposite to

reason and wisdom, and was therefore to be rejected without exception. While a man might tolerate or even pity a genuine Fool, he should find no merit whatever in such a person's behaviour or conversation, and under no circumstances should he imitate either of them. This thumb-nail sketch of the Fool by Nicholas Breton best summarizes the "proper" sense of righteous contempt with which the truly wise man should look upon all fools, whether "natural" or "artificial":

A Foole is the Abortive of wit where Nature had more power than Reason, in bringing forth the fruit of imperfection, his actions are most in extremes, and the scope of his braine is but Ignorance: onely Nature hath taught him to feede, and Use to labour without knowledge: Hee is a kind of shadow of a better substance, or, like the Vision of a Dreame, that yeelds nothing awake: . . . His exercises are commonly divided into four parts, Eating and Drinking, Sleeping and Laughing: four things are his chiefe Loves: a Bawble and a Bell, a Coxecombe and a Pide-coate: Hee was begotten in unhappinesse and dies but in forgetfulnesse. In summe, he is the shame of Nature, the trouble of Wit, the charge of Charity, and the losse of Liberality. 28

Yet along with the censure there existed that much-discussed concept of wise foolishness which has led one critic to assert that the Fool became the sixteenth century's primary literary spokesman.²⁹ The history of the wise Fool has been thoroughly explored in the works of Enid Welsford, Barbara Swain and William Willeford, all of whom have traced his development from ancient folklore, Biblical exhortations and medieval attitudes towards mental illness. To summarize briefly, the Fool's pretensions to wisdom are based on the idea that mentally deficient individuals sometimes utter penetrating truths about the world around them through some accidental or divinely-inspired process. More-

over, these people were privileged to speak without offence because their imbecility freed them from responsibility for their words and actions. Probably the best contemporary description of this privilege is to be found in the words of Erasmus' Folly:

But some will saie, trowth maie not at all tymes be spoken, and therefore are these wysemen so eschewed, because without respecte they speake franckly. . . . And yet we see, that of fooles oftetymes, not onely true tales, but evin open rebukes are with pleasure declared. That what woorde comyng out of a wyse-mans mouthe were an hangyng mattier, the same yet spoken by a foole shall much delight evin hym that is touched therewith. Suche a lively grace to content men hath veritee, as longe as it be mixed with naught els that maie offend. But without offence to dooe the same the goddes have graunted to fooles onely. 30

But since his profoundly wise sayings were inseparable from his non-sensical words and behaviour, the Fool became in the hands of several Renaissance authors an ideal vehicle for sustained ironic commentary upon the subtle distinctions between the wise man and his "foolish" brother. As Barbara Swain has remarked in her study of medieval and Renaissance Fools, this ambiguous figure in cap and bells was used for a time as "a . . . symbol of man's weakness and strength" while 'folly' served" . . . as an explicit term for the characterization of human nature."³¹ Erasmus' Praise of Folly offers the finest instance of this sort of commentary. By putting his encomium into the mouth of Folly, Erasmus constantly plays upon the confusion between truth and jesting, so well, in fact, that the reader is not always certain where the one ends and the other begins. Amid this confusion Erasmus deftly points out and deflates the pretensions of supposedly wise men in several walks of life, from the pretentious scholar to the sordid

merchant. The figure of the Fool thus becomes a most suitable persona behind whose mask the subtle artist might ridicule his fellow man effectively and with impunity. Depending on whether he subscribed to Brant's view of folly or to Erasmus', the wise man greets the Fool's sallies with either lofty contempt or tolerant amusement. Yet as the object of a Fool's ridicule he becomes part of the confusion. If he censures the Fool, he stoops to folly himself in failing to detect the serious meaning behind the jest, and if he is amused, he becomes one with the Fool in his laughter. The reader is always led to ask who is really the wiser. As Willeford points out in his study, it is precisely this confusion between sense and nonsense, wisdom and foolishness, that lends the ambiguous figure in motley his peculiar effectiveness.³²

Obviously a misanthropic railer might find the Fool's ability to ridicule men with impunity a most congenial mask for a wholesale attack on human wickedness. Yet there is an unmistakable difference between a Fool's ridicule and a misanthrope's condemnation. While his analysis of human vice or stupidity may be just as pointed, and his ridicule just as devastating, the Fool is never prompted by anger, envy, disillusionment, or any of the motives commonly ascribed to the misanthrope. The Fool cannot hate his fellow men since his imbecility, whether real or assumed, by convention precludes such an emotion. Instead, he speaks the "truth" about men because, to quote Folly once more:

whatsoever he hath in his thought, that sheweth he
also in his countenance; and expresseth it in his
talke. 33

In other words, the Fool attaches no more importance to the truths he utters than to the nonsense with which it is mixed. His ridicule of humanity thus has no conscious purpose behind it since he is supposed to be unaware of its significance. The misanthrope can make no such claim for his utterances.

Yet the treatment of a misanthropic character as a type of Fool offers a number of interesting possibilities to the writer, and several examples of such characters appear in the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Sometimes a writer plays upon the various meanings of the word "fool" by applying it to an individual who assumes the Fool's privilege in order to give rein to his corrosive hatred. In a work entitled The Hospitall of Incurable Fooles (1600) Tommasso Garzoni has this to say about such a character:

Those insolent sorte, who rashly and licentiously proceeding, usurpe a libertie to offende others, either in wordes or deedes, they thinking the whole world to be their owne, and that with this abused libertie, they may at their pleasure, bandie against everie one, are in fewe wordes termed unbridled fooles, like an horse, having naturally inserted in them indomptable mindes, and insolent shamelesse dispositions, neither can you with fitter epethites more aptly describe the qualitie of this foolish crewe, who kicke and wince with their heeles forward, behinde, and on all sides at every one they meete withall. . . .

Neither belongeth there any thing more to these fooles, but that a good hempen halter so gagge their throates, as that they may no more bee able to vomite foorth such acerbitie and bitternes, which so hard against their wils they keepe enclosed in their brests. 34

Garzoni's denunciation plays upon both meanings of the word, and thereby doubly condemns the pretensions of the misanthropic railer. First, his

behaviour clearly shows him to be the sort of Fool with whom Brant manned his snip. Indeed, the entire format adopted by Garzoni resembles the Narrenschiiff, in that it consists of a series of character portraits of people whom Garzoni considers to be fit inhabitants of a hospital for incurable fools. Secondly, his usurpation of the Fool's privilege of free speech reveals the misanthropic railer to be a creature inferior even to the figure he seeks to emulate, for he is incapable of achieving the genuine Fool's carefree detachment and his resulting ability to speak without giving offense.

Although Garzoni's use of the Fool motif is subtle and entertaining, it does not allow for any extended literary development, for like the direct condemnations of misanthropy discussed earlier, it depends for its effect wholly upon straightforward authorial commentary. Once he has expressed his opinion of the railer, Garzoni drops the subject, and proceeds to a description of his next patient. In contrast to this technique, there existed the possibility of presenting the misanthrope directly to the reader and allowing him to speak and act for himself. A few Elizabethan non-dramatic writers attempted this technique and improved upon it by endowing the misanthrope with the trappings of a genuine Fool. He engages in conversation with a "normal" representative of humanity who acts as his "straight man", to feed him lines and to provide him with sufficient opportunity to display his aversion to mankind. In the end, however, the misanthrope suffers an abrupt and ignominious dismissal at the hands of his companion, whose more balanced view of human society proves to be more acceptable. The best example of this technique is to be found in the work of Robert Armin.

Robert Armin³⁵ probably joined Shakespeare's company late in 1599, and it is generally assumed that the parts of Touchstone, Feste, Lavatch, Thersites and Lear's Fool were all specifically created for him. His assumption of these parts may well have been more than coincidental, for, as his own writings show, Armin was keenly interested in the figure of the wise Fool. Indeed, John Davies' tribute to him in The Scourge of Folly (1611) indicates that Armin's contemporaries closely associated the actor-writer with the role he so often played. Dedicated "To honest-gamesome Robin Armin/ That tickles the spleene like an harmles vermin", Davies' epigram begins by praising Armin for his ability to play the Fool without becoming one:

Armine, what shall I say of thee, but this,
Thou art a foole and knave? Both? fie, I misse,
And wrong thee much, sith thou in deede art neither,
Although in shew, thou playest both together. 36

After elaborating upon the well-known metaphor of the world as a stage, Davies finishes by commending the judicious mixture of wisdom with merriment which he asserts will gain Armin a favourable review in Heaven:

So play thy part, be honest still with mirth:
Then when th'art in the tyring-house of earth,
Thou being his servant whome all kings do serve,
Mayst for thy part well playd like praise deserve,
For in that tyring-house when either bee,
Y'are one man's men, and equall in degree.
So thou, in sport, the happiest men dost schoole--
To do as thou dost,- wisely play the foole. 37

Armin himself offers a similar description of his Fool's role in his earliest work, Quips Upon Questions (1600). This little book takes the form of a series of questions, supposedly thrown at the jester from the audience, together with Armin's ad libbed replies, and brief quips designed to summarize both. At one point Armin is supposedly asked

"why he plays the foole". In his reply Armin first distinguishes between the player and his part, and twits the supposedly wise questioner for failing to make the same distinction. Moreover, he asserts that the "Fool" displays a greater wisdom by profiting from the "wise" questioner's foolish desire to see him perform.

True it is, he playes the Foole indeed:
 But in the Play he playes it as he must:
 Yet when the Play is ended, then his speed
 Is better than the pleasure of thy trust:
 For he shall have what thou that time hast spent,
 Playing the Foole thy folly to content.

. . .

Say I should meete him, and not know his name,
 What should I say, Yonder goes such a foole?
 I, fooles will say so: but the wise will aime
 At better thoughts: when reason still doth rule.
 Yonder's the merry man, it joyes me much.
 To see him civill, when his part is such. 38

In the clinching quip Armin stresses the traditional confusion between wisdom and folly, at the expense of all those who consider themselves to be wise:

A merry man is often thought unwise
 Yet mirth in modesty's lovde of the wise:
 Then say, shoulde he for a foole goe?
 When he's a more foole that accountes him so.
 Many men descant on another's wit,
 When they have lesse themselves in doing it. 39

Elsewhere Armin points to the Fool's ability to utter wisdom unintentionally even as he provokes laughter in the wise:

Fooles questions reach to mirth, leading wisdom
 by the hand as age leads children by one finger,
 and though it houlds not fast in wisdom, yet it
 points at it. 40

This interest in Fools and folly led Armin to publish a collection of anecdotes about six "naturals" whose words and antics offer a valuable

glimpse into the life of the Elizabethan household Fool. This work, entitled Foole Upon Foole or Six Sortes of Sottes, first appeared in 1600, and underwent a second printing five years later. In 1608 Armin enlarged and revised the work and re-issued it under the title A Nest of Ninnies. Armin's most significant addition was an allegorical framework to link the six Fool-biographies. It is within this framework that he employs a most interesting treatment of misanthropy as folly.

In Quips Upon Questions Armin briefly glances at the subject of misanthropy in his response to a question about a barking dog. Asked "why barks that Dogge?" he frames an answer in which two individuals use the trivial query as an excuse to moralize upon human nature. The first adopts the typical misanthrope's view by comparing man unfavourably with the dog. Not only, he asserts, is man's wrath more furious: but his skin is also far less valuable than the dog's once he is dead. His companion, whose nature is rather more philanthropic, severely reprimands him for these inhuman sentiments:

Thou that will make comparisons so odious,
As twixt a Christian and a barking Curre,
I hold thy wit to be no whit commodious,
But to be scrapt out like a parchment blurre:
 That loving Dogges, and senselesse like as they,
 Naught fits thee, but their barking in the way. 41

In the quip Armin ridicules both characters for extracting so much sententious morality out of a silly question:

One to offende in asking such a question,
Th'other defende and choke in his digestion:
Well reasoned both two fooles, and if you marke,
Both wanting wit, better be Dogges, and barke. 42

Judging from the tone of the quip, I think that Armin considered the

misanthrope's outbursts too contemptible to be worth any reply. In A Nest of Ninnies his treatment is more extended and subtle. Two allegorical figures converse upon the lives of the six Fools from Armin's collection. The first of these figures is the World, depicted as a flighty, but good-natured young woman who feels the need of some serious moral instruction after a long spell of frivolity:

The World, wanton sick, as one surfetting on sinne (in morning pleasures, noone banquets, after riots, night moriscoes, midnights modicoms, and abundance of trash trickt up to all turbulent revellings) is now leaning on her elbow, devising what doctour may deliver her, what phisicke may free her, and what antidotes may antissipate so dangerous a dolemma. . . .
(p. 5)

To cure her soul's hangover she goes to the cell of a "philosopher" called Sotto. Armin's description of this character deftly combines misanthropic traits with the attributes of the Fool:

. . . Away she flings--and whither thinck you?-- . . .
but, of all, into a philosophers cell who, because he was alwayes poking at Fortune with his forefinger, the wise wittely namde him Sotto, as one besotted--a grumbling sir: one that was wise enough, and fond enough, and solde all for a glasse prospective, because he would wisely see into all men but himselfe, a fault generall in most: but such was his, who thus busied, was tooke napping by the weale publike. . . .
(pp. 5-6)

Like Timon, Sotto avoids the company of men, and spends his time denouncing human weakness. Yet his very name instantly identifies him as a Fool. Furthermore, Armin's tone exhibits a humourous contempt for Sotto's wilful blindness to his own faults. The same mixture of qualities is evident in Sotto's conversation. His reply to the World's initial greeting is Timon-like in its surliness:

Mistresse (sayes Sotto) I will not say welcome, because you come ill to him that would bee alone: but, since you are come,

looke for suche entertainment as my folly fits you with, that is, sharp sauce with bitter dyet: no sweetnes at al, for that were to mingle your pills with sugar: no, I am all one, winter in the head, and frost in the foot: no summer in me but my smiles, and that as soone gone as smiles. The bauble I play with is mens estates, which I so tumble from hand to hand, that, weary with it, I see (gluttingly and grievedly, yet mingled with smiles too) in my glasse prospective what shall become of it.

(p. 6)

Here again Armin stresses Sotto's unwillingness to endure company, and his apparent enjoyment of discoursing upon human degeneration. Yet at the same time Sotto refers to his bitter attitude as his "folly", and talks of men's estates as his "bauble", the Fool's conventional play-thing. Having promised the World "bitter dyet", Sotto proceeds to show her each of the six Fools in his telescope, tell his story, and then moralize upon the anecdotes. His attitude is one of self-righteous condemnation:

But marke me and my glasse: see into some (and in them thy selfe) whom I have discride, or describde, these sixe parts of folly in thee: thou shalt see them as cleare as day, how mistie thy clouds be, and what rancknesse raines from them.

(p. 6)

The incongruity here of a Fool condemning his own kind is, I think, quite intentional. Armin seems to be poking just as much fun at the misanthropic Fool's sententiousness as he does at the World's light-headedness. Thus, while many of Sotto's criticisms are indeed valid, he is still shown to be ridiculous in his moralistic pose. For example, in telling the story of the fat Fool, Jamy Camber, Sotto relates how the Fool made a wager with a sea captain during a storm. If the ship's company were drowned, Jamy was to have the ship, and if they survived, the captain was to have Jamy's chain. (p. 18) Here is Sotto's moral:

By the foole is meant all fatnesse: by the king, Nature,
 that nurst him: by the nobles, such as sooth him: and by the
 ship, thee [the World] in which many dangers are floating,
 through the sense of sinne: and so, if life were awarranted
 focles, fat ones, rich ones, would give the chaine of their
 soules, that is linked to salva [t] ion, onely to inherit
 this earth in thy company: when earth, though it bee heaven
 to hell, by reason of the paines, yet the comparison averts:
 it is hell to heaven in respect to pleasures.

(pp. 25-6)

It is impossible to take such nit-picking morality very seriously,
 and I would suggest that Armin did not intend it to be taken so. Rather,
 he encourages his readers to laugh at this pretentious misanthropic
 fool who extracts moral lessons out of triviality much as the character
 in the quip extracted a moral from a silly question about a dog. He
 further emphasizes Sotto's ridiculous behaviour by means of several
 derogatory epithets. Surely a writer who calls one of his characters
 "our philosophical poker", (p. 16) "the poking art's maister", (p. 17)
 "currish criticke", (p. 32) and "the crooked stick of liquish [who] . . .
 wipes his rheumy beard and smites his philosophical nose" (p. 49) can
 hardly have expected his readers to accept that character's viewpoint
 without question. Finally, Sotto receives a most ignominious rebuff
 for his pains at the hands of the World who has listened with increasing
 annoyance to his strictures. Several times during their conversation she
 winces at Sotto's barbed comments, but conquers her displeasure for the
 sake of curing her disease. After the tale of Lean Leonard she even
 pleads for greater tolerance, and sets forth what I believe to be Armin's
 assessment of such misanthropic censure as Sotto has to offer:

Sooth, thou saist true, there are such nicks in mee, but I
 know not how to mende: I am willing, but flesh is weake;
 prethee be more sparing, carpe not, confound not, hope the
 best amendment may come. Frethee goe in, furnish thy sallet:

these hearbs already are savory, and I picke out to my appetite, and though I bee not altogether pleased, yet am I not quite past patience: I will endure, for that disease that festers so much receives cure gladly, though it come with exceeding paine, yet so much the profit by how much the perplexities, cries cure to the danger.

(p. 34)

By frankly acknowledging her faults and promising amendment as she patiently listens to Sotto's carping criticism, the World displays a more balanced and appealing view of human nature. She will endure Sotto's misanthropy for the grain of truth it contains, but she makes it clear that she will neither accept it completely nor put up with it indefinitely. Yet Sotto continues with his gibes until he at last provokes his companion to reply in kind:

But let me tel ye this, by the way, World: there are knaves in thy seames, that must be ript out. I, sayes the World; and such, I feare, was your father.

(p. 55)

This brings on a verbal combat in which Sotto is soundly defeated:

Well, the World so buffeted the cinnicke at his owne weapon, that he playes with her, as weake fencers that carries flesh up and downe for others to dresse. Such was the cinnicke, onskillfull in guips [sic] and worldly flaunts, rather to play with short rods, and give venies till all smarte againe: not in the braines, as the World did, but in the buttocks, as such doe, having their joses displaid, making them expert till they cry it up in the top of question.

(p. 55)

Armin sees to it in his concluding remarks that neither the World nor his readers waste much sympathy upon the disgruntled misanthrope:

Our sullen cinnicke sets by his glasse in malice, knits a betill brow till the roome grew darke again, which the wanton World seeing, flings out of his cell, like a girle at barley brake, leaving the last couple in hell, away she gads, and never looke behinde her. A whirlwinde, sayes the cinnicke, goe after! -- is this all my thanks? -- the old payment

still! -- will the World still reward mortality thus? -- is vertue thus bedridden? -- can she not helpe herselfe? and lookes up to heaven, as hee should sav, some power assist! But there he sat, frotting in his owne grease, and, for ought I know, nobody came to help him.

(p. 56)

Armin's treatment of Sotto provides for a more subtle and sustained depiction of the misanthrope in a distinctly literary setting. Instead of piously warning his readers against the evils of Sotto's attitude, Armin permits the character to reveal himself through his own words and actions, as he confronts a representative of "normal", imperfect humanity. In this confrontation the extreme censure of the one is measured against the obvious flaws of the other, to show that, while the misanthrope's comments are valid up to a point, they ultimately prove to be so exaggerated that they become ridiculous. Thus, instead of provoking the reader's aversion, Armin seeks to elicit his laughter. The same consideration governs Armin's use of the Fool motif. By characterizing Sotto as a Fool, Armin exploits the traditional confusion between wisdom and folly, and thereby prompts his readers to greet Sotto's misanthropy with a mixture of amusement and thoughtfulness. All this makes Armin's framework in A Nest of Ninnies a far more significant addition to the work than all previous critics have considered it to be.⁴³

Another interesting variation on this Fool motif ridicules the misanthrope's pretensions to wisdom by confronting him with a genuine Fool. Convinced of his superiority, the misanthrope rails against the evils of men at the Fool's prompting, only to fall victim to his own conceit and to the Fool's ironic remarks. In the end he is shown to be more foolish than his "natural" companion. Outside the drama this

situation is most cleverly presented in a short satire entitled "Wise Innocent", which forms part of a collection of satires attributed to Thomas Middleton. The poem takes the form of a confrontation between a misanthropic satirist and an "innocent" whom he attempts to use as a theme for his railing commentary. It begins in a conventional fashion with the satirist hailing his intended victim on a supposedly crowded street. Under normal circumstances this greeting is purely rhetorical, for the satirist does not expect an answer, but uses the salutation as a means of introducing his subject. Here, however, the Fool retaliates, and it soon becomes apparent that he is more than a match for the misanthrope:

"Nay for an Innocent ho: what a pure foole?"
 "Not so (pure asse)" "asse, wher we[n]t you to schoole?"
 "With Innocents", "that makes the foole to prate:"
 "Foole will you say?" "yes the foole shall ha[ve] te."
 (ll. 1-4)⁴⁴

The Fool's choice of epithet is an apt one for the misanthrope, since it associates him with a creature particularly noted for its limited intellect, bad temper, and loud, unpleasant bray. The misanthrope's reply (ll. 2-3) indicates that aside from being somewhat taken aback by the Fool's unexpected rejoinder, he remains totally unaware of his companion's insult, and dismisses it as senseless "prating". The Fool responds with a little tongue-in-cheek flattery, and angles for a tip, much as Feste does in Twelfth Night.⁴⁵ Upon learning that he will only receive the name of "Fool" from his companion, he retaliates with some effective mimicry:

"Wisdome what shal he have?" "the foole at least:"
 "Provinder for the Asse ho: stalk up the beast."
 (ll. 5-6)

Once again the misanthrope ignores the implications of these remarks and merely expresses surprise at hearing a Fool rail. His response implies that such language does not sit well with folly. The Fool answers with another pointed insult and asserts that he acts as a model for the wise man:

"What shall we have a railing Innocent?"
 "No gentle gull, a wise mans president." [precedent]
 (ll. 7-8)

Here again, the Fool's choice of epithet is singularly apt, for at the same time as he asserts his own superior wisdom, he twits the misanthrope for behaving like a "gull" or sampleton. In view of the misanthrope's apparent failure to see the point of his companion's gibes, the Fool's estimate seems more than justified. The next six lines depict the misanthrope's unsuccessful attempt to rid himself of his troublesome partner:

"Then forward wisdom, "not without I list,"
 "Twentie to one this foole's some Satirist,
 Still doth the foole haunt me, fonde foole be bon,"
 "No I will stay, the foole to gaze upon"
 "Well foole, stay stil," "stil shall the foole stay? no,"
 "Then pack, simplicitie," "good Innocent, why so?"
 (ll. 9-14)

Quibbling on the word "precedent", the misanthrope sarcastically invites the Fool to "go before" him, and tries to excuse his discomfiture by assuming that his companion is really another satirist masquerading as a Fool. But the Fool will not be dismissed so easily, and once more turns the tables on his "wise" companion by addressing him as a Fool. He follows this with a clever quibble in which he answers the misanthrope's command to remain "still" (motionless) by refusing to remain "still" (silent). When the bemused misanthrope demands to know the reason for

his conduct, the Fool counters with a direct condemnation of misanthropy:

"Nor go nor stay, what will the foole do then?"
 "Vexe him that seemes to vexe all other men."

(ll. 15-16)

He implies that a man who stoops to the folly of abusing his fellow human beings deserves the constant companionship of a Fool: indeed, he might well benefit from it. The misanthrope's answer is a conventional one, familiar to all readers of satire. He asserts that in the face of such widespread depravity he cannot help but rail:

It is impossible, streames [that] are bard their course,
 Swel with more rage, & for more greater force:
 Until their full stuff gorge a passage makes
 Into the wide mawes of more scopious lakes:
 Spight me: not spight it selfe can discontent,
 My steeled thoughts, or breed disparagement:
 Had pale fac't coward feare bene resident
 Within the bosome of me Innocent:
 I would have housde me from the eyes of ire,
 Whose bitter spleen vomits forth flames of ffire.

(ll. 17-26)

Complacently defying all attempts to curb him, he scornfully dismisses the idea of moderation as mere cowardice. The Fool quickly and effectively deflates this self-righteous pose by switching roles with the misanthrope. Not only does he repeat his assertion that the misanthrope is an ass: but he also compounds the insult by offering his companion a tip for his entertaining performance:

"A resolute Asse, oh for a spurring Rider,
 A brace of Angels:" "what is the foole a briber?"

(ll. 27-8)

The remainder of the poem consists of an elaboration upon the comparison between the railing misanthrope and an ass:

"Is not the Asse yet wearie of his load?"
 "What with once bearing of the foole abroad?
 Mount againe Fools:" "then the Asse will tire

And leave the Foole to wallow in the mire.
 Dost thou think otherwise? good Asse the[n] be go [ne]."
 "I stay but till the Innocent get on."
 "What will thou needs of the foole bereave mee?
 Then pack good foolish Asse, & so I leave thee."
 (ll. 29-36)

In the sense that he attempts to curb the misanthropic satirist's violent outbursts and provoke him to make himself seem ridiculous, the Fool becomes the "spurring rider" of his asinine companion. Wishing to regain control of the situation, the misanthrope dares the Fool to "mount again" for another exchange of insults, but the Fool declines, suggesting that his bad-tempered friend will probably leave him to wallow in a "mire" of scurrilous abuse. The poem's closing lines complete the reversal of roles between the two characters, as the Fool summarily dismisses the misanthrope, just as the latter had tried to dismiss him several lines earlier. The reader is left with the distinct impression that the "innocent" is by far the wittier of the pair.

Middleton drives home his point by means of a short epilogue, the only time he does so in the entire collection. Once more he ridicules the extreme behaviour of the self-proclaimed "wise" misanthrope by stressing his transformation into folly's beast of burden:

Thus may we see by folly of the wise.
 Stumble and fall into fooles paradise:
 For jocund wit of force must jangling bee,
 Wit must have his will and so had hee,
 Wit must have his will, yet parting of the fray,⁴⁶
 Wit was enjoyned to carrie the folle away.

The satire ends with the Latin tag "Qui Color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo." (One who was white is now the opposite of white.).

The "wise" misanthrope has shown himself to be a fool, while the more humane Fool has displayed unlooked-for wisdom.

Both Armin's Nest of Ninnies and Middleton's "Wise Innocent" use the Fool motif as a means of creating an ironic response to the misanthrope's unqualified hatred of mankind. Significantly, their approach involves the creation of a dramatic situation in which the misanthrope confronts another representative of humanity and reveals his attitude through his words and actions. Instead of intervening directly, as the didactic writers had done, to let the reader know what he should think of the character, Armin and Middleton maintain an ironically detached perspective by allowing the misanthrope to speak and act for himself. Such a technique clearly offers a more subtle and thought-provoking analysis of misanthropy, in that it invites the reader's laughter at the same time as it prompts him to consider the ironic confusion between wisdom and folly which forms the central thematic design of both works. More important, its dramatic potential makes this technique of depicting misanthropy a useful vehicle for adapting the character for presentation on the stage. It is therefore hardly surprising that the best known examples of the Fool motif should occur in the works of Shakespeare.

NOTES

¹John Davies of Hereford, The Scourge of Folly, London: E.A. for Richard Redner, 1611, pp. 29-30.

²The surly figure of Diogenes the Cynic was a familiar one to the Elizabethans, and his behaviour was often associated with that of Timon. For a detailed examination of the subject see an unpublished dissertation by Peter Pauls, Shakespeare's TIMON OF ATHENS: An Examination of the Misanthrope Tradition and Shakespeare's Handling of the Sources, University of Wisconsin, 1969, DA 69-9713.

³Roger Sharpe, More Fooles Yet, London: For Thomas Castleton, 1610, sig. E₂^r.

⁴Timothy Kendall, Flowers of Epigrammes out of Sundrie the moste Singular Authours Selected . . ., London: John Shepperd, 1577, fol. 70^a.

⁵Thomas Bastard, Chrestolecos: Seven bookes of Epigrames . . . London: Richard Bradocke for J.B., 1598, pp. 19-20.

⁶Everard Guilpin, Skialethia or A Shadowe of Truth in certaine Epigrams and Satyres, London: I.R. for Nicholas Ling, 1598. Reprinted Literati from the British Museum copy (C.40.b. 54) under the title Skialethia 1598, Oxford: University Press for the Shakespeare Association, 1931, sig. B₄^r.

⁷Sharpe, sig. B₁^v.

⁸Samuel Rowlands, "The Melancholic Knight", London: R.B. for George Loftus, 1615, p. 1.

⁹Bastard, p. 120.

¹⁰I have based my discussion of Elizabethan formal satire upon the following works: Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, chaps. 1 and 2. and O.J. Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, San Marino, University of California Press, 1933.

¹¹John Marston, The Scourge of Villainie, London: I.R. 1598/9, reprinted literatin from the Bodleian Library copy (8^oL550 B.S.) Bodley Head Quarto XIII ed. G.E. Harrison, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1925, p. 18. Satire II, ll. 5-15.

¹²Herschel Baker, The Dignity of Man: Studies in the Persistence of an Idea, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard U.P., 1947, p. 52.

¹³Marston, Satire III, ll. 111-120.

¹⁴Marston, Satire VII, ll. 1-16.

¹⁵The epithet refers, of course, to Diogenes' reputation as a cynic (dog).

¹⁶Marston, Satire VII, ll. 139-142.

¹⁷Marston, Satire VII, ll. 188-201.

¹⁸Charron, p. 548.

¹⁹Guazzo, ff.27^V-28^R.

²⁰John Andrewes, The Anatomie of Basenesse, or the Foure Quarters of a Knave, London: For Richard Redner, 1615, sig. E₁^V.

²¹Ibid.

²²W.I. The Whipping of the Satyre, London: for John Flasket, 1601, sig. B₇^V-B₈^R. All other references to the poem are taken from this edition.

²³There are several helpful works on the subject of the Fool. The most comprehensive of these is Enid Welsford's excellent study The Fool: His Social and Literary History, 2nd. ed. London: Faber, 1968. A more psychoanalytical approach to the examination of the Fool's enduring appeal is to be found in The Fool and His Scepter, by William Willeford, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern U.P., 1969; while Fools and Folly During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance by Barbara Swain, New York: Columbia U.P., 1932 offers a concise analysis from a more literary viewpoint. Other related works containing helpful chapters on the subject of folly include the following: Walter Kaiser, Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1963, pp. 1-18; Sebastian Brant, The Ship of Fools, tr. Edwin H. Zeydel, New York: Columbia U.P., 1944, pp. 8-14; and Robert H. Goldsmith, Wise Fools in Shakespeare, Liverpool: University Press, 1958, pp. 1-15.

- ²⁴Swain, pp. 2-3.
- ²⁵Sebastian Brant, The Shyp of Folys of the Worlde, tr. Alexander Barclay, London: Richard Fynson, 1509. Facsimile of an 1874 reprint ed. T. H. Jamieson for the Advocates' Library. 2 Vols. (Edinburgh, William Patterson). New York: AMS Press, 1966, Vol. I, p. 2, ll. 15-21.
- ²⁶Topsell, p. 61.
- ²⁷Samuel Purchas, Purchas His Pilgrim: Microcosmos or the Historie of Man, London: W.S. for Henry Fetherstone, 1619, p. 220.
- ²⁸Nicholas Breton, The Good and the Badde, or Descriptions of the Worthies and Unworthies of This Age, London: George Purstone for John Budge, 1616, p. 23.
- ²⁹Kaiser, pp. 3-4.
- ³⁰Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folie tr. Sir Thomas Chaloner, ed. Clarence H. Miller for The Early English Text Society, E.E.T.S. no. 257, Oxford: University Press, 1965, pp. 49-50.
- ³¹Swain, p. 2.
- ³²Willeford, p. 26.
- ³³Erasmus, p. 49.
- ³⁴Tommaso Garzoni, The Hospitall of Incurable Fooles, London: Edmund Ballisant for Edward Blount, 1500, p. 125.
- ³⁵The best account of Robert Armin's life and works is to be found in Charles S. Felver's book Robert Armin, Shakespeare's Fool, Kent State University Bulletin V, Kent, Ohio: University Press, 1961. Muriel Bradbrook has also dealt with Armin's works and his possible influence on the writing of Twelfth Night in Chapter IV of Shakespeare the Craftsman, London: Chatto & Windus, 1969, pp. 49-74.
- ³⁶Davies of Hereford, Scourge of Folly, p. 60, ll. 1-4.
- ³⁷Ibid. ll. 23-30.
- ³⁸Robert Armin, Quibs Upon Questions, ed. Frederic Ouvry, London: Privately printed, 1375. Attributed to John Singer. ff. C₁^v-C₂^v.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Robert Armin, A Nest of Ninnies . . ., London: T.E. for John Deane, 1608. Reprinted under the title Fools and Jesters With a Reprint of Robert Armin's Nest of Ninnies, ed. J.P. Collier, London: For the Shakespeare Society, 1942. p. 48. All further references to this work are taken from this edition.

⁴¹Armin, Quips, sig. A₄^V.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Felver, p. 74, and Bradbrook, p. 71. Both these and other commentators on Armin's work dismiss the framework as a bit of tedious, irrelevant allegory.

⁴⁴T.M. [Thomas Middleton], Micro-Cynicon, Sixe Snarling Satyres, London: Thomas Creede for Thomas Bushell, 1599, ff. C₅^V-C₇^R. All references to the poem are taken from this edition. Quotation marks are mine.

⁴⁵III, i, 42-51: and V, i, 24-35.

⁴⁶This line is emended by hand to read "Wit had his will. . .".

IV

TWO NON-SHAKESPEAREAN STAGE MISANTHROPEs

So far, this discussion has concentrated exclusively on non-dramatic material in an effort to determine what attitudes an Elizabethan playgoer might have brought to a stage representation of misanthropy. To judge from the many and varied works in which they appear, the Timon story and other examples of misanthropy were familiar subjects to sixteenth and seventeenth-century readers. Moreover, the general tone of contempt and ridicule that accompanies the bulk of these references suggests that a theatre audience of this period would probably have been prepared to react most unsympathetically to any character who, like Timon, professed an unalterable hatred of mankind. It is now time to consider the problems surrounding the dramatic presentation of misanthropy, and to examine a few non-Shakespearean examples.

It would appear that a sympathetic treatment of misanthropy on the Elizabethan stage was virtually out of the question. Accustomed to the moral precepts of The French Academie and other works, the average playgoer would have expected to see the misanthrope condemned as a dangerous lunatic or contemptuously dismissed as an object of ridicule. Yet the character can be useful in a dramatic presentation. The misanthrope's tendency to rail furiously against the evil of mankind makes him most suitable as a means of exposing the folly or vice in other characters. His violent outbursts cut through pretense in a dramatically arresting fashion to force themselves upon the audience's attention by their sheer vitality. But however much he appeared to be telling the

truth about a play's characters or events, Elizabethan moral and literary conventions demanded the misanthrope's ultimate dismissal, in order that a saner, more balanced view of humanity might triumph. Any dramatist who attempted to defy such a well-established prejudice risked confusing or alienating his audience.

Nor was this the only problem. The inclusion of a misanthrope among the play's characters brings about a singular difficulty in the maintenance of adequate theatrical action. Because his view of the world is so extreme and inflexible, the misanthrope is by his very nature incapable of change or development. The dramatist can bring such a character on stage to denounce humanity, and then perhaps confront him with another figure who opposes his view. But once he has caused the pair to trade insults, and perhaps blows, there is little more he can do with them. Indeed, too extended a debate will seriously hinder the unfolding of the plot. A good example of this problem, and of a means of avoiding it, occurs in a brief exchange between Duke Senior and Jaques in As You Like It. Fresh from his encounter with Touchstone, Jaques longs for the Fool's privilege of free speech so that he might rail at mankind with impunity:

Invest me in my motley, give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

(II, vii, 58-61)

In the ensuing dialogue the Duke takes the conventional stand of the misanthrope's attacker by accusing Jaques of hypocrisy:

Duke: Fie on thee! I can tell what thou
wouldst do.
Jaques: What, for a counter, would I do but good?

Duke: Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin.

For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
 As sensual as the brutish sting itself;
 And all th'embossed sores and headed evils
 That thou with licence of free foot hast caught,
 Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.

(II, vii, 62-9)

In the face of these accusations Jaques resorts to the misanthropic satirist's usual defence -- a defence that sounds just as unconvincing here as it does in the prefaces to Hall's or Marston's satires:

Why, who cries out on pride
 That can therein tax any private party?
 Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea
 Till that the weary very means do ebb?
 What woman in the city do I name
 When that I say the city woman bears
 The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?
 Who can come in and say that I mean her,
 When such a one as she, such is her neighbour?
 Or what is he of basest function
 That says his bravery is not on my cost,
 Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits
 His folly to the mettle of my speech?
 There then, how then, what then? Let me see wherein
 My tongue hath wronged him. If it do him right
 Then he hath wronged himself. If he be free,
 Why, then my taxing like a wild goose flies
 Unclaimed of any man.

(II, vii, 70-87)

Since further extension of the debate would only slow down the action without contributing anything else to the development of either character, Shakespeare brings the episode to an abrupt close with Orlando's sudden entrance (II, vii, 88). Obviously this problem becomes more acute if the misanthrope occupies a central role which keeps him on stage for much of the time. Because this character's contribution to the play is essentially verbal, the dramatist must find some way of providing effective stage movement. Otherwise his play can easily degenerate into a series of repetitive debates which may produce some pointed satire, but

affords very little in the way of theatrical spectacle.

Clearly the successful presentation of misanthropy on the Elizabethan stage required considerable care and subtlety on the part of the dramatist. On the one hand, he had to strike a balance between exploiting the misanthrope's obvious possibilities as a satiric commentator, and subjecting him to the ridicule and contempt that conventional morality demanded. At the same time, he had to fit this character into the play in a manner that would enhance rather than impede the course of the action. Two plays of the period used genuine misanthropes in ways which illustrate some of the pitfalls I have just discussed. The first, Robert Greene's James the Fourth, employs a world-hating recluse as the choric presenter of a play-within-a-play. The second, the anonymous Timon Comedy, brings the arch-misanthrope on stage as a protagonist. Neither of these plays ranks among the best the Elizabethan stage has to offer; indeed, they contain much that can only be ascribed to sheer ineptness or carelessness. Nevertheless, they do provide a valuable indication of the problems that Shakespeare was later to face in his attempts to dramatize similar material.

The Scottish History of James the Fourth (1590-91)¹ appears to contain the earliest representation of misanthropy on the English stage. The play consists of two distinct plots: the better-known central episode of the Scottish king, and a framework-plot which introduces and comments on the primary action. The leading character of this frame-plot is Bohan, a Scots nobleman whose experiences in life have so disillusioned him that he shuns all human society and lives in his own grave. Prompted by an encounter with Oberon, King of the Fairies, Bohan presents the

story of the Scottish court as a dramatized illustration of the human viciousness which has brought about his alienation. During the course of the play both he and Oberon reappear from time to time to comment on the action and provide interludes of music and dancing.² At the end Oberon thanks the Scot for the entertainment and leaves him to be sung to sleep, still confirmed in his misanthropic outlook.

It is not easy to tell just how seriously Greene meant his audience to take Bohan's avowed misanthropy, for its presentation is neither profound nor consistent. The basic difficulty arises out of an apparent uncertainty on Greene's part over whether the character should function as a comic butt or as a valid choric commentator. On the one hand, the Induction so clearly brands the man-hating Scot as a figure of fun, that an audience would find it most difficult to treat his self-justification with any seriousness. On the other hand, there is nothing in the main plot to suggest that Greene used it to "send up" Bohan's misanthropy. As a result, the characterization of Bohan is merely confusing. Instead of striking the necessary balance between seriousness and ridicule, Greene attempts to exploit both possibilities, changing suddenly from one to the other. A close examination of the play will reveal the many problems this attempt creates for a theatre audience.

The play opens with a revealing bit of stage business which the 1598 Quarto prints as follows:

Musicke playing within.
Enter After Oberon[n], King of Fayries, an Antique,
who dance about a Tombe, plac't conveniently on
the Stage, out of the which, suddainly starts up as
they daunce, Bohan a Scot, attyred like a ridstall
man, from whom the Antique flyes. Oberon Manet } 3

Textual critics have pointed out that the descriptive nature of these directions indicate they are of a literary rather than a theatrical origin, and are therefore very likely to have been Greene's own.⁴ If this is the case, they offer a valuable clue about what the playwright intended as the vital first impression Bohan was to make upon the audience. I would suggest that two of these directions ensure that the impression will be a comic one. First, Bohan must appear suddenly from the last place one would expect such an entrance. Moreover, he breaks up a dance of Antics, grotesque figures who perform in an exaggerated and ludicrous manner, as their name suggests. One can easily imagine the startled laughter produced by Bohan's unexpected leap from the tomb, and the farcical disarray of the antics as they flee in panic, leaving a diminutive Oberon to confront the angry misanthrope. The next thing to catch the playgoer's eye would undoubtedly be Bohan's costume. This brings up the interesting problem of determining exactly what impression Greene wished to convey when he stipulated that Bohan was to be "attyred like a ridstall man". His use of so specific a term seems to indicate that he had a definite costume in mind, and that he expected the audience to be immediately familiar with it. So far the most logical explanation of the term is that set forth in a series of articles that appeared in The Modern Language Review between 1934 and 1949. They conclude that "ridstall" is a corruption of "Redesdale", a town on the Anglo-Scottish Border, and that Greene therefore meant Bohan to be dressed like a Border reiver.⁵ According to the evidence of a recent Border historian, the misanthrope's costume would thus consist of a jack or quilted coat of stout leather, breeches, leather riding boots,

and a bowl-like steel helmet.⁶ Later developments require that he be armed with a sword, probably the "Skottische short sworde" common on the Border at that time.⁷ If this reading is correct, it is possible to speculate on contemporary reaction. Certainly the issue of Border lawlessness was a prominent one in the early 1590's, as Elizabeth I's government vainly sought ways of controlling the many families, both English and Scottish, who made the area a virtual no-man's-land. Understandably, contemporary sources reveal that the southerner held a very low opinion of the Borderer. The historian, Fraser, sums it up this way:

Barbarous, crafty, vengeful, crooked, quarrelsome, tough, perverse, active, deceitful--there is a harmony to be found about the adjectives in travellers' descriptions and official letters. In general it is conceded that the Borderers, English and Scottish, were much alike, that they made excellent soldiers if disciplined, but that the raw material was hard, wild, and ill to tame.⁸

More specific references point to the fact that to a Londoner of the early 1590's, the term "Redesdale man" was synonymous with "thief". The most familiar of these is Thomas Wilson's statement in the popular Arte of Rhetorique:

Neither is he onely knowne universally to bee naught, but his soyle also (where he was borne) giveth him to bee an evill man: considering he was bredde and brought up among a denne of Theeves, among the men of Tinsdale & Riddesdale, where pillage is good purchase, and murthering is compted manhood.⁹

This is by no means an isolated reference. A historical document of 1547 names the town in much the same context:

The chief dales are Tynedale and Redesdale, a country that William the Conqueror did not subdue,

retaining to this day the ancient laws and customs.

. . .These Highlanders are famous for thieving, they are all bred up and live by theft. They come down from these dales into the low countries, and carry away horses and cattle so cunningly, that it will be hard for any to get them or their cattle, except they be acquainted with some master thief, who for some money may help them to their stolen goods or deceive them.¹⁰

Still another, more humorous account comes from the memoirs of the sixteenth-century preacher Bernard Gilpin. On one of his preaching tours of the North he stopped at Redesdale, where he found the church had neither minister, bell, nor book. Moreover, the inhabitants were totally unaccustomed to hearing sermons. When Gilpin preached against the evil of stealing, an eighty-year-old man shouted from the congregation, "Then the deil I give my sall to, but we are all thieves."¹¹ Of course, so precisely-defined a character as an inhabitant of Redesdale could hardly have been presented solely through costuming, unless the Elizabethans were aware of some details of dress now lost to us. It seems more likely that Greene used the phrase in his directions to the theatre company to ensure that the misanthropic Scot would appear as an uncouth, ferocious-looking figure immediately recognizable as a Borderer. By doing so I would suggest that he was counting on the audience to react humorously to this outlandish figure, since he could rely on both a well-established prejudice against the Borderer and the city-dweller's habitual scorn of the "uncivilized".

Bohan's confrontation with Oberon, which takes up almost the whole of the Induction, heightens the comedy of his first appearance. For one thing, he speaks with an exaggerated Scots dialect:

Bohan: Ay say, what's thou?

Oberon: Thy friend, Bohan.

Bohan: What wot I or reck I that? Whay, guid man,
I reck no friend, nor ay reck no foe: al's
ene to me. Git thee ganging, and trouble not
may whayet, or ay's gar thee reckon me nene of
they friend, by the mary mass sall I.

(Induction: 1-6)

Significantly, Bohan's dialect becomes much less apparent later in the Induction, and disappears almost completely in the Choruses. But its liberal use in the play's opening lines constitutes still another attempt by Greene to extract as much humour as possible from the misanthrope's initial appearance. The comic development continues, as Bohan attempts to take more positive action against his intruder. When his threats and insults fail to drive him off (Induction, 6-22), Bohan resorts to violence, only to find that Oberon has caused his sword to stick in its sheath. His uncouth ferocity turns quickly to perplexity and amusing frustration, as he tugs away at the enchanted weapon while Oberon stands calmly by:

Oberon: Why, stoical Scot, do what thou darest to me:
here is my breast, strike.

Bohan: Thou wilt not threap me: this whinyard has
garred many better men to lope than thou. . . .
But how now? Gos sayds, what, will't not out?
Whay, thou witch, thou deel! Gad's fute, may
whinyard!

(Induction: 23-8)

Oberon taunts the misanthrope and provokes yet another torrent of dialect abuse:

Oberon: Why pull, man: but what an'twere out, how then?

Bohan: This, then: thou wert best be gone first; for
ay'll so lop thy limbs that thou's go with
half a knave's carcass to the deel.

(Induction: 29-32)

He then permits Bohan to draw his sword and dares him to use it, where-

upon Bohan finds, to his dismay, that he is under still another spell:

Oberon: Draw it out. . . . Now strike, fool, canst
thou not?

Bohan: Bread ay Gad, what deel is in me? Whay,
tell me, thou skipjack, what art thou?

(Induction: 33-6)

At this point the actor playing Bohan must in some way make his "enchanted" condition clear to the audience, presumably by acting as if he were paralyzed once he has drawn the sword. Moreover, the position would likely be an exaggeratedly awkward one to suit the comic distress implicit in the dialogue. My guess is either that Bohan is left with his sword arm stuck in the air, or bowed down to the ground by a weapon that suddenly becomes too heavy to lift. Whatever the case may be, the character must, according to Oberon's next speech, remain in this position for some time:

Nay, first tell me what thou wast from thy birth,
what thou hast passed hitherto, why thou dwellest
in a tomb and leavest the world: and then I will
relcase thee of these bonds: before, not.

(Induction: 37-40)

I have dealt at considerable length with the first forty lines because their action and dialogue are vital to the establishment of Bohan's character in the minds of the audience. As I have tried to point out, every part of this initial confrontation with Oberon defines the misanthrope as a comic figure whose hatred of mankind is seriously undermined by the circumstances under which the audience first meets him. So vivid is this first impression that it would be very difficult to allow for a more sympathetic portrait of Bohan at a later point in the play. Yet this is precisely what Greene seeks to bring about in the next part of the Induction. Bohan grudgingly obliges Oberon with an

account of the many disappointments in his life which have prompted him to abandon the world in disgust (Induction: 41-75). His autobiography contains many of the familiar satiric condemnations of the follies of court, country and city life, and ends with an equally conventional display of world-weariness:

. . .In seeking friends, I found table-guests to eat me and my meat, my wife's gossips to bewray the secrets of my heart, kindred to betray the effect of my life: which when I noted--the court ill, the country worse, and the city worst of all--in good time my wife died-- . . .leaving my two sons to the world and shutting myself into this tomb, where if I die, I am sure I am safe from wild beasts: but whilst I live, cannot be free from ill company. Besides, now I am sure, gif all my friends fail me, I shall have a grave of mine own providing. That is all.

(Induction: 64-74)

Under other circumstances the spectacle of a disillusioned man driven to seek shelter in his own grave from the world's wickedness might evoke considerable pathos. Furthermore, the nicely-balanced phrasing of Bohan's self-portrait gives the actor an excellent opportunity of catching the audience's attention, and even of winning its sympathy. But here the impact of Bohan's account is seriously undermined by the fact that he remains under Oberon's "spell" until he has finished telling of his wretched life. The comic possibilities which Greene has successfully exploited in the first part of the Induction now make it most unlikely that the audience will react to Bohan's autobiography without at least some skepticism.

Bohan's autobiography marks a turning point in Greene's handling of the misanthropic presenter. Throughout the confrontation with Oberon, Bohan appears exclusively as an uncouth, ferocious hermit whose rough dialect, outlandish costume and futile attempts at violence create

an entertaining farcical interlude. But from line forty onward, he ceases to be an active character, and assumes instead the role of a presenter or master of ceremonies. Once Oberon has released him from the spell, Bohan displays only one more short outburst of comic ferocity when he threatens his two sons with death if they chatter as they dance for Oberon's entertainment (Induction: 85-90), and then sends them out into the world (Induction: 95-7). Thereafter he functions solely as a commentator who introduces the main plot and reappears from time to time to point out particularly glaring instances of man's treachery. Certain changes in Bohan's manner of speaking reflect this shift in presentation. As I mentioned before, Greene's use of the heavy Scots dialect gradually disappears after line forty, recurring only in occasional words and phrases during the rest of the frame-plot. More important, the prose of the Induction gives way to the more dignified medium of verse in all the Choruses. These changes reflect a significant shift in the dramatist's concept of Bohan's misanthropy. From exploiting its humorous potential Greene turns to a much more favourable presentation which stresses a lofty contempt for the world's vanity and an acceptance of death's inevitability. Unfortunately, he brings about the change so abruptly, and with so many inconsistencies, that he destroys the unity of the play.

Greene sets the tone for the misanthrope's elevated status in Bohan's introduction to the main plot:

Now, king, if thou be a king, I will show thee
 whay I hate the world by demonstration. In the
 year 1520 was in Scotland a king, overruled with
 parasites, misled by lust, and many circumstances
 too long to trattle on now, much like our court

of Scotland this day. That story have I set down. Gang with me to the gallery, and I'll show thee the same in action by guid fellows of our countrymen: and then when thou seest that, judge if any wise man would not leave the world if he could.

(Induction: 105-13)

Bohan reiterates this idea several times in the Choruses. At the end of Act I, for example, he directs Oberon's attention back to the play with this speech:

Then mark my story, and the strange doubts
That follow flatterers, lust, and lawless will:
And then say I have reason to forsake
The world and all that are within the same.
Go shroud we in our harbour, where we'll see
The pride of folly, as it ought to be.

(Chorus I: 10-15)

His spiritual preparation for death is most prominent in his responses in the Additional Choruses to Oberon's dumb-shows. In Chorus VI he applauds a show portraying the fall of Semiramis in this way:

I see thou hast thine eyes,
Thou bonny king, if princes fall from high:
My fall is past, until I fall to die.

(Chorus VI: 13-15)

Bohan's remarks on the other two dumb-shows exhibit a similar pre-occupation with his own readiness for death. To the story of Alexander's visit to Cyrus' tomb he replies:

What reck I then of life,
Who makes the grave my home, the earth my wife.

(Chorus VII: 8-9)

while he draws this conclusion from the account of the murder of King Sesostris:

How blest are peur men, then, that know their graves!

(Chorus VIII: 7)

Greene brings the two themes together in Bohan's final speech:

Thou nill me stay: hail then, thou pride of kings!
 I ken the world and wot well workly things.
 Mark thou my jig, in mirkest terms that tells
 The loath of sins and where corruption dwells.
 Hail me ne mere with shows of guidly sights:
 My grave is mine, that rids me from despites.
 Accept my jig, guid king, and let me rest:
 The grave with guid men is a gay-built nest.

(Chorus V: 3-10)

What is more, Oberon seems wholly to approve of Bohan's misanthropy, so long as it is not directed towards him. He states in the Induction that he has come to reward the misanthrope for withdrawing from society:

Bohan: . . . Now, what art thou?
Oberon: Oberon, King of Fairies, that loves thee
 because thou hatest the world; and to
 gratulate thee, I brought those Antics to
 show thee some sport in dancing, which thou
 hast loved well.

(Induction: 76-9)

He enlarges upon this idea at the end of the play's first act as he accepts Bohan's thanks for an interlude of dancing:

I tell thee, Bohan, Oberon is king
 Of quiet, pleasure, profit, and content,
 Of wealth, of honour, and of all the world:
 Tied to no place, yet all are tied to one.
 Live thou in this life, exiled from world and men,
 And I will show thee wonders ere we part.

(Chorus I: 4-9)

In the Additional Choruses, (note 2) Oberon takes a more active part in the illustration of worldly vanity by presenting three dumb-shows, each of which portrays the miserable fate of a once-great ruler. His commentary on the second of these shows, the visit of Alexander the Great to Cyrus' tomb, strongly re-affirms Bohan's contemptus mundi:

Cyrus of Persia,
 Mighty in life, within a marble grave
 Was laid to rot: whom Alexander once
 Beheld entombed, and weeping, did confess

Nothing in life could 'scape from wretchedness:
Why then boast men?

(Chorus VII: 2-7)

Finally, at the close of the play, Oberon thanks Bohan for the entertainment and leaves the Scot, confirmed in his misanthropic outlook, to be sung to sleep in his tomb by the fairies of his train (Chorus V: 11-14). By having Oberon support Bohan's distaste for human society Greene may have been trying to make him more believable as the presenter of a moral tale. Far from achieving his object, he undermines the credibility of both characters.

The chief difficulty with the interior plot is a simple one: the outcome of Bohan's story flatly contradicts all the commentary of the framework. From Bohan's introduction an audience is led to expect a bitter tale of mankind's treachery, but what it gets is a conventional tale, lifted from a novella by Giraldi Cinthio, about a lustful king and his loyal wife. James, King of Scotland, has no sooner married Dorothea, daughter to the King of England, than he falls madly in love with Ida, a beautiful and chaste young Scotswoman (I, i, 1-157). Overpowered by his lust, he falls easy prey to the wiles of the parasite Ateukin, who promises to win Ida's love for him (I, i, 158-278). Ateukin soon gains complete control of both King and country, to the disgust of James's rightful counsellors, whom the King tyrannically banishes from Court (II, ii). When Ida rejects his suit, James is persuaded to rid himself of Dorothea (II, ii, 155ff.), and plots with Ateukin to have her killed. Warned of the plot, Dorothea flees the court disguised as a boy (III, iii), but Ateukin's hired assassin catches up with her in the forest and wounds her, leaving her for dead (IV, iv, 38-59). At once disaster overtakes

James in the form of an English invasion to revenge Dorothea's supposed murder, and the news that Ida has married another. But Dorothea has been rescued by a Scottish knight (IV, iv, 60-70), who cures her and then at her urging produces her in the nick of time to avoid a battle between the armies of the two kings (V, vi, 97ff). Dorothea's unswerving loyalty overcomes all difficulties. Ateukin is disgraced, James repents of his folly and returns to Dorothea, the two kings are reconciled, and the play ends on a note of rejoicing. For added variety there is a comic subplot involving the antics of Ateukin's knavish servants, a minor crisis of mistaken identity when the wife of Dorothea's rescuer provokes her husband to jealousy by falling in love with the Queen on account of her male disguise, and a few courtship scenes between Ida and her lover Eustace. In short, Bohan's illustration of human depravity turns out to be a conventional romantic comedy which contains, as one commentator has remarked, enough material to fit out three or four mediocre Elizabethan plays.¹² While it does present some notable examples of wickedness and knavery, the happy ending, in which loyalty and love are rewarded and the erring King repents of his folly, would hardly drive anyone to abandon the world.

Nor is this the only difficulty about the play. To complicate matters still further, Greene has adopted a curious time scheme which permits characters from the framework plot to take up an active role in the main story. In the Induction, Bohan makes it clear that he is presenting a tale from the past:

In the year 1520 was in Scotland a king, overruled
with parasites, misled by lust, and many circumstances
too long to trattle on now, much like our court of

Scotland this day. This story have I set down.

(Induction: 106-10)

Yet the bulk of the main plot's comic material is provided by the misanthrope's two sons, Nano the dwarf and Slipper, a loutish clown. As I mentioned earlier, these two characters appear briefly in the Induction to dance for Oberon's entertainment, and are then sent away by their father to seek their fortunes in the world of men:

Now get you to the wide world with more than my
father gave me: that's learning enough, both kinds--
knavery and honesty: and that I gave you, spend at
pleasure.

(Induction: 95-7)

In addition, Oberon blesses them in a way that foreshadows their re-appearance in the main story:

Nay, for their sport I will give them this gift:
to the dwarf I give a quick wit, pretty of body,
and awarrant his preferment to a prince's service,
where by his wisdom he shall gain more love than
common. And to loggerhead your son I give a
wandering life, and promise he shall never lack;
and avow that if in all distresses he call upon
me, to help him.

(Induction: 98-104)

True to Oberon's predictions, Nano becomes the loyal servant of Queen Dorothea, while Slipper takes up a post as one of Ateukin's dishonest henchmen. Bohan, the presenter, neither controls their actions nor seems aware of their fate. At the end of Act IV, for example, Oberon predicts that Slipper's knavery will bring about his death, and promises to rescue him when the occasion demands. Bohan displays a consternation that is uncharacteristic of a presenter who is supposed to know the outcome, and has to be reassured once again that all will be well:

Oberon: . . . And yon laddie, for his sport he made
Shall see, when least he hopes, I'll stand his friend,

Or else he capers in a halter's end.

Bohan: What, hang my son? I trow not, Oberon:
I'll rather die than see him woebegone.

. . .

Oberon: Bohan, be pleased, for, do they what they will,
Here is my hand, I'll save thy son from ill.
(Chorus IV: 8-14)

Oberon keeps his promise in V, vi, when he and the Antics interfere in the story to save Slipper from the gallows. To complicate matters still further, Greene has Ateukin express awareness of Bohan's existence when he asks Nano whether the dwarf was "the old stoic's son, that dwells in his tomb" (I, ii, 119).

Attempts to discover a coherent thematic design behind these contradictions have not been particularly convincing. The play's most recent editors, J. A. Lavin and Norman Sanders, both see the outcome of the Scottish plot as Greene's deliberate repudiation of Bohan's misanthropy. By allowing the interior story to defy all the efforts of its supposed creator to make it an example of man's wickedness, Greene asserts the triumph of human love over all obstacles. Consequently, Bohan's pessimistic speeches and Oberon's dumb-shows become hollow, futile admonitions beside the main plot's exaltation of love and loyalty. While they agree that Greene dismisses Bohan's misanthropy, the two editors adopt slightly different views of the relationship between the presenter and his "jig". Lavin sees the relationship in terms of a simple contrast:

Despite the misanthropy of Bohan, and Oberon's approval of that attitude in the framework, and despite their contention that the plot of the play supports such a view of the world, the play itself points quite a different moral. Human love is seen as the power which can overcome fortune and restore the natural order in both the individual and

the realm. . . . Notably, the ubi sunt and momento mori themes of the three dumb-shows presented by Oberon, do not correspond to the outcome of the play proper: the lesson they teach about worldly pomp is only relevant in a general way to a tragi-comedy concerning flattery and lust, in which the king survives to live happily. . . . The dumb-shows illustrate human folly; in the play itself folly is redeemed.¹³

Sanders adopts a more complicated outlook in an attempt to explain the apparently telescoped time scheme:

In dramatic terms what is happening here is that Bohan is giving the world he has quitted a second chance for the real-life audience. . . . As the action progresses we see that, in this second-time-round, Virtue triumphs and the end is happy. . . .¹⁴

A third view, recently put forward in an article by A. R. Braunmueller, allows somewhat greater validity to Bohan's outlook by maintaining that the attitudes expressed in the framework and interior plot qualify each other. Braunmueller argues rather ingeniously that Greene has deliberately provided two irreconcilable concepts of human nature and manipulated them through the skilful use of theatrical illusion, so that neither should dominate the play's overall thematic design:

To achieve its full effect, the play must end with a contradiction between its courtly interior and misanthropic circumference. Slightly skewed conventionalities at James IV's court criticize their "inventor" Bohan no less than his philosophy and dour certainty emphasize their superficiality. Greene's fluid use of theatrical illusion gives form to this diversity and echoes in dramatic technique its challenge to convention. By exaggerating the play's literariness, by turning conventional situations upside-down, by erecting a complicated set of theatrical illusions, Greene argues that complex human emotion cannot be simplified through dramatic and romantic commonplaces.¹⁵

The trouble with all these interpretations is that they evolve more from the study than from the theatre. To argue, as Lavin does,

that Greene uses the main plot to expose the futility of Bohan's misanthropy does not sufficiently account for the fact that the play ends with his apparent justification. Rather than witnessing the misanthrope's utter rout in the face of overwhelming proof of the existence of human love, the audience last sees Bohan rewarded for his presentation. It would require considerable ingenuity from both director and actors to make a rejection of misanthropy explicit on the stage without cutting this final Chorus. Similarly, Sanders' idea of a double time scheme is not one that can easily be presented in the theatre, for it would take a playgoer of extraordinary mental subtlety merely to infer from the inconsistencies that Bohan was giving the world a second chance. Finally, if Greene's intention was to qualify his audience's impressions of human emotion, as Braunmueller suggests, he has attempted it in a manner that would surely confuse any theatregoer who had not been so fortunate as to read the play before going to see it. Instead of trying to find coherence in the play, I would suggest that Greene's attempt to capitalize on several theatrical fashions has resulted in the creation of interesting but inferior drama. Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than in the treatment of his misanthrope. Faced with the choice of exploiting the character's comic possibilities or using him as an effective commentator, Greene seeks to make the most of both. As a result there occurs a sudden and confusing shift in Bohan's character halfway through the Induction in order that the ridiculously uncouth figure of the opening lines might become the more dignified presenter of the interior story. Then, having used the misanthrope to launch the play, Greene appears to have lost

interest in him, and neglected to reconcile his attitude with the optimism of his "jig". Thus the characterization of Eohan provides an outstanding example not only of the possible uses of a misanthrope on the stage, but also of the pitfalls awaiting a playwright who tries to exploit such a character without sufficiently accounting for the moral and dramatic problems misanthropy inevitably presents to his audience.

History has not been kind to the anonymous Timon Play. First, it has survived in a single manuscript copy that offers no external clues to its authorship, date, or circumstances of production, and so far no-one has managed to unearth any contemporary references to its existence. More important, its closeness in time to Shakespeare's Timon of Athens, and the many puzzling similarities between the two plays, have prompted its few commentators to concern themselves exclusively with assessing its possibilities as a Shakespearean source.¹⁵ Often assuming that the Bard could not possibly have borrowed from so inferior a work, these commentators have ransacked the Timon Play's text for topical allusions, echoes from well-known plays, professional jargon, and any other references that might prove its author either copied from Shakespeare or wrote his play for a performance that Shakespeare could not have seen. About the content itself they say little, apart from the assertion that it does not merit discussion. While it would be absurd to hail this play as a neglected masterpiece, I would suggest that it is worth far closer scrutiny than it has so far received. Whether it preceded or followed Shakespeare's Timon, this work is the

only other attempt to adapt the well-known Timon story to the demands of the English Renaissance stage. It is therefore possible to examine the way in which another playwright approached the two problems of the audience's built-in antipathy to the misanthrope, and the character's theatrical inflexibility. As this discussion will show, the playwright adopts a conventional solution to both problems by treating the misanthrope as a comic butt, and by surrounding the main story with a wealth of minor incidents and characters. The fact that his attempt is a failure makes the Timon Play no less interesting as a reflection of contemporary attitudes both to misanthropy and to Timon.

The play opens with a debate between Timon and his steward, Laches, over the proper use of Timon's considerable wealth. Having just collected the rents, Laches counsels his master to hoard his "sacks filled with goulden talents" (I, i, 3)¹⁷ against the dangers of poverty:

Let your chests be the pryson,
Your locks the keeper, and your keyes the porter,
Otherwise they'le fly away, swyfter then birds or
wyndes.
(I, i, 6-8)

But Timon rejects this advice as mere avarice, choosing instead to lavish his money on all who seem to need it:

I will noe miser bee.
Flye, gould, enjoye the suns beames! 'tis not fitt
Bright gould should lye hidd in obscuritie:
I'le rather scatter it among the people:
Let poore men somewhat take of my greate plenty:
I would not have them greive that they went empty
From Timons threshold, and I will not see
My pensive freinds to pyne with penurie.
(I, i, 9-16)

When Laches persists with his advice, Timon violently denounces his

prudence as the offspring of a servile mind, and threatens him with dismissal if he utters another word on the subject:

I'st even soe, my learned counsaylor?
 Rule thou this howse, be thou a cittizen
 Of Athens: I thy servant will attend:
 Thou shalt correct me as thy bond slave: yes,
 Thou shalt correct me, Laches: I will beare
 As fitts a slave. By all the gods I sweare,
 Bridle thy tounge, or I will cutt it out,
 And turne thee out of dores.

(I, i, 28-35)

Finally he orders the reluctant steward to "bestowe/The streetes with Gould" (I, i, 50-51), and leaves the stage, complacently assured that his bounty has earned him the gods' favour:

The noyse ascends to heav'n: Timons greate name
 In the gods eares resounds, to his greate fame.
 This I heare willinglie: and 'tis farre sweeter
 Then sound of harpe, or any pleasant meetre:
 I, magnified by the peoples crye,
 Shall mount in glorye to the heavens high.

(I, i, 55-60)

To appreciate this scene's impact upon a seventeenth-century audience, it is necessary to understand something of conventional views on the proper definition of liberality. Elizabethan didactic writers defined liberality as the judicious use of man's God-given riches for the support of his fellows,¹⁸ and hailed it as one of the virtues essential to a true gentleman. Indeed, many writers asserted that without it no rich man could be counted a gentleman, since genuine nobility revealed itself in a greater willingness to give than to receive bounty:

[Noble men] ought also practyse . . . liberality. For nothing more purchaseth mens favoure and frendshyppe, whose prayse, as it ought bee common to all riche: so is especially most proper to Noble men. For . . . a Noble courage accompteth hit more happie, to help, then bee holpen: and to bee a gever then taker, . . . yea, rather reckneth hit a shame, and staine to his honor to take: glorious to geve.¹⁹

Yet these same writers unanimously insisted that discretion must always accompany the exercise of liberality. They carefully distinguished between liberality, the measured display of generosity towards deserving men, and prodigality, the indiscriminate lavishing of gifts upon all and sundry, a practice they held to be as damnable a fault as the deadly sin of avarice. To be truly liberal, a rich man had to learn to avoid the excesses of the miser and the spendthrift, and to bestow his money wisely only on those whose genuine need and worthiness merited his bounty. As one contemporary writer put it:

. . . If God blesse thee plentifully with riches and possessions, hoard it not nigardlie, nor spend it prodigallie, but bee beneficiall to others, and use liberalitie to those that lacke and deserve well of thee . . . , yet with this consideration, that thou spare at the brimme, least whilest thou shouldest poure out a pinte, there run forth a pottle, & let the old proverbe never fal out of thy mind; . . . It is too late to spare when all is out.²⁰

While avarice and prodigality were equally condemned, many Elizabethan courtesy-writers concerned themselves more often with the latter, possibly because it constituted a greater danger to a wealthy and generous man. These writers laid down a series of rules whose observance would prevent a rich man from overstepping the bounds of liberality. First, and most important, a truly liberal man should always consider both the appropriateness of his gift and the worth of the intended recipient, for this more than anything else distinguished his display of bounty from that of the prodigal. This rule involved a thorough examination of all the circumstances surrounding a proposed act of generosity:

You aske me with what observations we ought to give

when we give any thynge. Whereunto I answeare, that in administringe liberalitie all men are tyed to these foure respectes: to consider wel what we give, to knowe to whome we give, to understande the cause why we give, and to have regarde to the time when we give, for it is needefull to judge and weigh the value and qualitie of our gift, lest we give lesse than to suffice [the] necessitie of him to who[m] we give: to know to who[m] we give least there bee no merit, nor just necessitie in [the] perso[n]: to examine well the occasion why we give, to the end [that] it be for good respect: and above al, who observes not the tyme, gives perhaps to no fruit or commoditie of hym [that] receiveth: for that who gives out of these conditions, gives not in true liberalitie, but as the blynde man, who weening to powre drinke into hys dyshe, powreth it into [the] river which hath no neede to bee liquored.²¹

Secondly, he should never impoverish himself by his generosity, since by doing so he would deprive himself of all further opportunities to be liberal.²² Third, the hope of gain should never become the motive behind the exercise of generosity, for it utterly debased gift and giver alike.²³ Therefore, to quote a contemporary moralist, the liberal man "must not, after he hath bestowed his gifts, cast and hitt men in the teeth with them, or by his prating cause the remembrance of his gifts to perish".²⁴ By adhering to these rules a wealthy man might rest secure in the knowledge that he exercised his bounty with the measured judgment that was the hallmark of true liberality:

Nor should your bountie (like the sunne) runne round
and shine on all alike, though (like the beames,)
The same should seldome in the eclipse be found:
truest Bountie lives betweene extreames.²⁵

To judge from their frequent occurrence in moral treatises, courtesy-books and proverb collections, these "rules for giving" were undoubtedly common knowledge to a considerable number of seventeenth-century playgoers. Such an audience would therefore be most unlikely

to greet Timon's philanthropy with much sympathy, for in the short space of sixty lines he manages to break most of them. His lavish, ill-considered display of generosity, and his apparent inability to distinguish between prudence and avarice, characterize Timon as a creature of extremes whose pride and folly demand harsh punishment. Not only does he neglect to guard his wealth against the dangers of overspending: he wilfully prevents his steward, the servant charged with husbanding his revenue, from carrying out his appointed duties. He violently reacts against any advice that contradicts his own desire for lavish display. His commands to Laches at the end of the scene indicate that Timon shows concern neither for the amount of his gift nor for the worthiness of its recipient. Moreover, he acts entirely out of a desire to be praised by his fellow citizens:

It is to me a tryumph and a glorye,
That people fynger poynt at me, and saye,
This, this is he that his lardge wealth and store
Scatters among the comons and the poore:

(I, i, 43-6)

His complacent assertion that he enjoys divine favour reveals a pride that borders on blasphemy, and ensures that Timon is headed straight for a reversal of fortune. I would suggest that in view of Timon's extreme folly, this reversal is intended to be comic, since most Elizabethans would be unlikely to waste much sympathy on such a wilful prodigal.

If the opening scene establishes Timon as a potential gull, the second confirms him in this role by introducing the first of his parasitic friends. In an age which held friendship with all men to be impossible, a man who sought indiscriminately after friends was

often likened to "the unchast woman, who joying herselfe with many, hath no one assured lover",²⁶ and like such a woman, he often attracted the worst sort of companions. Therefore Elizabethan moralists counselled their readers to extend friendship only to those whose merit they have carefully tested:

It is not good . . . to receive and admit of friends over-lightly and over-soone, nor to set our mindes and knit our affections to those that come next hand, and present themselves first, ne yet love those incontinently that seeke us and follow us, but rather seeke after them and follow them our selves that are worthy of friendship: . . . and even so it is not alwaies decent & good to entertaine into our familiaritie one that is readie to embrace and hang about us: but rather such ought we our selves affectionately embrace whom we have tried to be profitable unto us, and who deserve that we should love and make account of them.²⁷

In this scene it beccomes abundantly clear that Timon makes no such trial of his friends. The impoverished gallant Eutrapelus bursts in upon Timon and his steward with a call to extravagance:

By Venus' lappe I sweare, thou seem'st to mee
To bee too sadd. Why walk'st thou not the streetes?
Thou scarce art knowne in tenn tavernes yett:
Subdue the world with gould.

(I, ii, 5-8)

However, it becomes immediately apparent that Eutrapelus has come to Timon for money, for he is pursued by the creditor Abyssus, who refuses to be put off by his threats and insults:

Pay what thou ow'st, Eutrapelus,
Thou from my clamour never shalt goe free:
Where e're thou go'st I still will followe thee,
An individuall mate: when thou shalt dyne,
I'le pull thve meate out of thie very mouth:
When thou wilt sleepe, I'le flye about thy bedd,
Like to a nyght mare: no, I will not lett
Thyne eyes to slumber or take any rest.

(I, ii, 23-30)

Eutrapelus turns out to be the familiar down-at-heels braggart of Jacobean city comedy. His high-flown, affected language, stuffed with classical epithets contrasts sharply with Abyssus' straightforward replies to reveal the cowardice behind his empty threats:

Eutr: By greate Bellonas sheild, by th'thunderbolt
 Of Panomphaean Jove, by Neptunes mace,
 By the Acroceraunian mountaines,
 And by the glistering jermes of thye redd nose,
 Goe hence, or els I'le crush thee like a crabb.
 Looke to thy selfe, thou damned usurer:
 Looke to thy selfe: I gyve thee fayre warning.
Abys: Thou shalt not fright me with thye bugbeare wordes:
 Thye mountaines of Acroceraunia,
 Nor yett thy Panomphaean Jove I ffeare:
 I aske what is my owne.

(I, ii, 43-53)

His attempt to stand upon his gentility when Abyssus continues to press him appears ridiculous under the circumstances:

Thou lozz, thou stock, thou Arcadian beast,
 Know'st thou not what 'tis to be honored?
 Is't not a credit and a grace to have
 Me be thy debtour?

(I, ii, 54-7)

Finally, the playwright reinforces this unfavourable portrait by means of an aside from the reliable commentator, Laches:

Leave him not, Abyssus.
 Oh, how I long for the confusion
 Of this same rascall that confounds our howse!

(I, ii, 57-60)

All this acts as a prelude to Timon's first public act of generosity. Timon has remained almost completely silent to this point, responding only briefly to Eutrapelus' questions. Eutrapelus now turns to him and asks for the whopping sum of four talents,²⁸ and affectedly dismisses it as "a little goulden dust" (I, ii, 64-6). Timon's reply amply demonstrates his recklessness and gullibility:

Yea, take ffyve: while I have Gould,
 I will not see my ffreinds to stand in neede.
 (I, ii, 66-7)

Eutrapelus' effusive gratitude betrays a willingness to offer Timon
 the flattering worship that prompts his generosity:

Heroicke spiritt, I will thee adore,
 And sacrificc to thee in ffranckinsence!
 (I, ii, 68-9)

Furthermore, the next few lines make it clear that Eutrapelus has no
 intention of using the money to pay his debt, for he puts Abyssus off
 with a promise and turns immediately to talk of wine and women (I, ii,
 79ff). Once again the playwright uses Laches to voice the conventional
 reaction to such an outrageous display of prodigality:

I scarcelye am my selfe, I am starke madd:
 The gods and goddesses confound this scabb!
 (I, ii, 70-71)

Thus, although Timon himself has very little to say in this scene, the
 dramatist directs the audience's sympathy away from him by beginning
 to surround him with a collection of knaves and flatterers, and by
 showing, both through his own actions and Laches' comments, that Timon
 cannot distinguish between their pretence and genuine friendship.

This pattern is repeated several times throughout the play,
 as more flatterers arrive to devour Timon's wealth. The first of
 these, the fiddler Hermogenes, gains Timon's favour with a song about
 the love of Venus and Mars (I, v, 27-48), and immediately turns on his
 former benefactor Eutrapelus:

Sirra, I must cast of thy company:
 (He shewes his Gould, given by Timon.)
 Thou are noe fitt companion for me:
 Thy face I knowe not: thou three farthing Jack,
 Gett fellowes like thye selfe: this, this is it

(Shewes his gould againe)

Makes mee a noble man.

(I, v, 103-8)

Again in this scene the playwright uses Laches as a means by which the audience can assess Timon's behaviour. When the steward expresses his contempt of Hermogenes (I, v, 51-4), Timon invites the fiddler to strike him, and even goes so far as to hold Laches when Hermogenes' cowardice causes him to hesitate (I, v, 55-75). He then commands Laches to wait upon Hermogenes (I, v, 73-80), and when Laches presumes once again to caution his master against extravagance, Timon angrily orders him from the house. The final exchange between the two reveals Timon at the height of his folly, as he wilfully rejects the one character who feels a genuine concern for him:

Lach: Spend and consume: gyve gould to this, to all;
Your ritches are immortall.

Tim: I'll pull thve eyes out, yf thou add one word.

Lach: But I will speake: yf I were blynd, I'de speake.

Tim: What, art thow soe magnanimous? Be gone:

The dore is open: freeze or sweate, thou knave:
Goe, hang thie selfe.

(I, v, 84-90)

With the dismissal of Laches, Timon is left entirely at the mercy of the parasites, whose number is increased by the addition of Demeas, a knavish orator whom Timon rescues from imprisonment, (II, iv), and two characters from the sub-plot, the rich young idiot Gelasimus, and the lying traveller Pseudocheus. Supported by Timon's wealth, this group carries on a continuous round of drunken revelry which, by the end of Act II, reduces Timon to the status of a lawmaker among roisterers. His concern for the proprieties of getting drunk is a far cry from his previously-expressed ideals of generosity:

That this our computation may have
 A prosp'rous evente, wee will and commaunde
 Whole hogshedes to bee empt'ed, platters fill'd:
 None to depart, unles hee first obtayne
 Leave of the prince: wee also doe enacte
 That all holde up their heades, and laughe aloude,
 Drinke much at one draughte, breathe not in their drinke,
 That none goe out to pisse, that none doe spew
 In any corner. Hee that shall offende
 In any one of these shall weare infixt
 Uppon his hatte an asses eares, and drinke
 Nothing but soure wine lees for three daies space.
 (II, v, 71-82)

Although Laches manages to re-enter Timon's service by disguising himself as a soldier (II, ii), he no longer rebukes his master directly. However, his asides still help to influence the audience's reaction to his fellow characters. When, for example, the orator Demeas vows eternal friendship to Timon (II, iv, 58-59), Laches' comment sounds an ominous note of warning:

This vowe, O Jove, remember! Let him feele,
 If hee bee false, the strengthe of thy right hande!
 (II, iv, 70-71)

The playwright also gives Laches a soliloquy in the middle of Act III, when, after delivering Timon's offer to marry the miser's daughter Callimela without a dowry, he sorrowfully predicts his master's inevitable fall, prays for his conversion, and asserts his own fidelity:

Soe are my masters goods consum'd: this way
 Will bring him to the house of poverty.
 O Jove, convert him, leaste hee feele to soone
 To muche the rodde of desp'rate misery.
 Before his chests bee emptied, which hee
 Had left by his forefathers fill'd with golde!
 Well, howsoever fortune play her parte,
 Laches from Timon never shall departe.
 (III, ii, 55-62)

But none of Timon's actions to this point promise anything but a continuation of his folly. Having attracted the worst sort of companions,

he now proves himself just as foolish in his choice of a bride, as he falls madly in love with Callimela, a woman who makes it perfectly clear that she goes to the highest bidder:

Who doth possesse most golde shall mee possesse:
 Let womans love bee never permanent.
 (III, ii, 31-2)

With this proposed wedding the dramatist sets the stage for Timon's loss of wealth, the desertion of his friends and his subsequent conversion to misanthropy.

Timon's decline into poverty occurs very suddenly in this play, when a shipwrecked sailor bursts into the midst of Timon's wedding feast with the news that all his ships have gone down (III, v, 66-75). Immediately the parasites begin to desert him, led by Callimela, who aptly summarizes their attitude:

I loved Timon riche, not Timon poore:
 Thou art not now the man thou wast before.
 (III, v, 83-4)

Timon's reaction to all this is typically extreme, and couched in language that is difficult to take at all seriously:

Great father of the gods, what wickednes,
 What impious sinne have I committed?
 What, have I piss'd uppon my fathers urne?
 Or have I poyson'd my forefathers? what,
 What, what have I deserv'd, an innocent?

O Jove, O Jove,
 Have I thy altar seldome visited?
 Or have I beene to proud? or yet deny'd
 To succour poore men in necessity?
 Not this, nor that: yee gods have vow'd my fall:
 Thou, thou hast vow'd it, Jove: against mee, then,
 Discharge whole vollies of thy thunderclapps,
 And strike mee thorough with thy thunderbolte,
 Or with a sodeine flashe of lighteninge
 Destroy mee quicke from thy supernall throne!
 I knowe not how to suffer povertie,

Who have soe oft reliev'd the poore with golde.
 (III, v, 138-55)

Moreover, his previous conduct makes these protestations of innocence sound hollow and foolish. Because the dramatist has depicted Timon so unsympathetically in the first half of the play, his attempt here to portray Timon's mental anguish at the loss of his wealth and the desertion of his friends falls flat. Not even Laches' apparent concern (III, v, 134-7) can counteract the impression that Timon's disillusionment is just as ridiculous as his former complacency.

The fourth act depicts Timon's final conversion to misanthropy when, after suffering utter rejection at the hands of his erstwhile friends, he invites them to a feast of stones painted to resemble artichokes (IV, v), beats them out of his house, and proclaims his intention to live apart from mankind. Once again the pathos of Timon's disillusionment is seriously undermined by ridiculous extremes of language and actions more suited to farce than to potential tragedy. In the first scene, for example, Timon meets Eutrapelus and Demeas, who first pretend not to know him (IV, i, 2-3), and then laugh at his discomfiture (IV, i, 33-9). In the soliloquy that follows (IV, i, 40-62) Timon again expresses his anger in language out of all proportion to the occasion. Instead of rousing sympathy for his plight, this speech, with its echoes of The Spanish Tragedy, lends an affected quality to Timon's disillusioned pose:

Rushe on me heav'n,
 Soe that on them it rushe! Mount Caucasus
 Fall on my shoulders, soe on them it fall!
 Paine I respecte not. O holy Justice,
 If thou inheritte heav'n, descende at once,
 Ev'n all at once unto a wretches hands!
 Make mee an arbiter of ghosts in hell,
 That, when they shall with an unhappy pace

O Titan, seest thou this, and is it seene?
 Eternall darknes ceaze uppon the day!
 Yee starres, goe backward! and a fearefull fire
 Burne up the articke and antarticke pole!
 Noe age, noe country yeelds a faithfull friende.
 A cursed furie overflows my breast:
 I will consume this cittie into dust
 And ashes! where is fire? Tysiphone.
 Bring here thy flames! I am to mischiefe bente;
 These naked handes wante but some instrumente.

(IV, iii, 72-81)

When the "philosophers" try to calm him with platitudes about the virtue of patience in adversity (IV, iii, 85-106), Timon beats them and chases them offstage. Their parting remarks are entirely in keeping with the episode's primarily farcical tone:

Speus: Oh, oh!
 Oh! dost thou buffet a philosopher?
Stil: O, I am holy! oh, withdraw thy handes!

How doth thy heade, Speusippus?

Speus: It doth ake
 As well posterioristically
 As prioristically. Let us hence,
 Least hee againe assault us with his fistes.
 (IV, iii, 113-23)

At this point Laches enters in search of his master, and as usual the playwright attempts to emphasize Timon's misery through the steward's comments:

My masters voyce doth ecchoe in my eares:
 How full of fury is his countenance!
 His tongue doth threaten, and his hearte doth sighe:
 The greatnes of his spirit will not downe.
 (IV, iii, 133-36)

But neither Laches' concern nor Timon's subsequent laments can adequately counteract the farcical material in the rest of the scene. Because he has concentrated so much on the silliness of Hermogenes and the philosophers, the dramatist fails to build up any sympathy for Timon's miserable con-

dition. As Timon and Laches leave to prepare for the mock-banquet (IV, iii, 145-52) the audience's attention is directed more towards the anticipation of the parasites' discomfiture than to a concern over the possible deterioration of Timon's mind.

These expectations are fully met in the banquet scene, for the playwright focuses attention primarily on the behaviour of the parasites, who come swarming back, greedy for the promised food, and yet half afraid that Timon might be angry at their recent display of ingratitude:

Is hee madde? wee knew him not this morning:
 Hath hee soe soone forgotte an iniury?
 (IV, v, 11-12)

After ironically praising their loyalty, (IV, v, 97-103), Timon furiously turns on his erstwhile friends, throws the stones painted to resemble artichokes at them, and beats them from his house (IV, v, 125-40).

Like Scene iii, this episode is primarily farcical, because the dramatist has concentrated mainly on the disordered scrambling and plaintive laments of the parasites:

Dem: O my heade!
Herm: O my cheekes!
Phil: Is this a feaste?
Gelas: Truly, a stony one.
Stil: Stones sublunary have the same matter with the heavenly.
 (IV, v, 129-33)

Moreover, Timon's curses are again so bombastic that they appear ridiculous:

The pox goe with them:
 And whatsoe're the horridde sounding sea
 Or earthe produces, whatsoe're accurs'd
 Lurks in the house of silent Erebus,
 Let it, O, let it all sprawle forth here! here,
 Cocytus, flowe, and yee blacke foords of Styx!
 Here barke thou, Cerberus! and here, yee trocpes
 Of cursed Furies, shake your firy brands!

Earth's worse than hell: let hell chaunge place with earth,
And Plutoes regiment bee next the sunne!

(IV, v, 146-56)

His subsequent decision to become a misanthrope and Laches' vow of fidelity sound equally unconvincing, for whether he intended to or not, the playwright has so exaggerated both speeches that they lack genuine human feeling:

Laches: Will this thy fury never bee appeas'd?

Timon: Never, never it; it will burne for ever:

It pleases mee to hate. Goe, Timon, goe,

Banish thyselfe from mans society;

Farther than hell fly this inhumane city:

If there bee any exile to bee had,

There I will hide my heade.

[Exit.]

Laches: Ile follow thee through sword, through fire,
and deathe:

If thou goe to the ghosts, Ile bee thy page,

And lacky thee to the pale house of hell:

Thy misery shall make my faith excell.

[Exit.]

(IV, v, 157-67)

Thus, although he devotes an entire act to Timon's disillusionment and transformation, the playwright does not succeed in generating any sympathy for the protagonist. Indeed, he seems more interested in exploiting the act's comic potential than evoking a heartfelt concern over Timon's plight. Timon, the savage misanthrope, is just as ridiculous as Timon, the fatuously generous reveller. His transformation brings neither a growth of self-awareness nor even any particular anguish. The process of disillusionment serves merely as a vehicle for a series of farcical scenes in which the parasites' antics are really the central attraction. Even Laches' declared fidelity fails to arouse a sympathetic response since it so clearly lacks a suitable motive. All that has changed in the course of the fourth act is Timon's relationship to the other characters. Whereas the first three acts depicted him as a gull,

the last two show him to be a railer. Instead of drunken revelry and boasts about his generosity, we now have stone-throwing and curses.

Act V deals with Timon's entire career as a misanthrope, from his first appearance as a labourer to his final attack on the parasites, who come flocking back to him upon learning that he has discovered more gold. The second scene demonstrates the extent of Timon's misanthropy through a confrontation with Laches which results in the steward's conversion. What might have been a forceful dialogue turns out to be more of the same bombastic utterance. Once more Timon's outbursts lack power and conviction. He responds to Laches' demonstration of faithfulness with the same old classical epithets:

If thou wilt follow me, then chainge thy shape
 Into a Hydra that's in Lerma bred,
 Or some strange monster hatcht in Affrica;
 Bee what thou art not, I will hugg thee then:
 This former face I hate, detest, and fyve.

(V, ii, 13-19)

When Laches reveals his true identity, Timon remains unmoved, and accepts the steward's company only on condition that the two of them should have nothing to do with each other:

Thou hast prevayled, be thou then my mate:
 But thou must suffer me to hate thee still:
 Touch not our hand: and exercise this spade
 In the remotest part of all the ground.

(V, ii, 38-41)

The scene closes with the newly-converted Laches joining his master in a perverted prayer for the destruction of the world:

Laches: Lett sees of bloudshedd overflow the earth!
Timon: Men, woemen, children perish by the sword!
Laches: Lett ffunerall follow funerall, and noe parte
 Of this world ruyne want!
Timon: Lett greife teeme grieife,
 And let it be a punishment to lyve!

Laches: Lett harvest cease!

Timon: Lett rivers all wax drye,
The hunger pyned parent eate the sonne,

Laches: The sonne the parent!

Timon: All plauges [sic] fall on this generacion,
And never cease! . . .

(V, ii, 45-46)

The sudden conversion of Laches to misanthropy is, next to the ending, the most dramatically inept touch in the entire play, for there is nothing in the previous relationship between Timon and his steward to provide a motive for Laches' transformation. I would suggest that the episode illustrates the playwright's lack of interest in the actual character of the misanthrope. Instead of examining the internal processes that lead to misanthropy, he seems more intent on exploiting its outward manifestations. To be more specific, it is not the deterioration of Timon's mind, or the motives behind Laches' unexpected conversion that matter to this dramatist. Rather, it is the outward display of cursing and hostility which receives the most attention. Since this display might become more spectacular with the addition of a second misanthrope, then the only logical choice for the role is Laches. Moreover, the episode gives the dramatist an opportunity to associate Laches with Timon's subsequent attack on the parasites.

The return of the false friends is heralded in the third scene by Timon's sudden discovery of gold (V, iii). Interestingly enough, it is Laches, not Timon, who sees the hoard as a means by which the misanthrope can avenge himself upon the parasites:

Under bright Gould publique revenge doth lurke:
Keep it, yf you are wise, keep it, I saye:
Thus maist thou be reveng'd of thy false freinds,
Exterminating them owt of thie dores.

(V, iii, 33-6)

The parasites are soon back in force, led by Hermogenes and the two foolish philosophers (V, iv). Once more, the primary interest in this and the following scene lies in the antics of the parasites as they vie with one another for Timon's favour and a share of the gold:

Callimela: My Timon, my husband!

Philargurus: My sonne in lawe!

Hermogenes: My Maecenas!

Eutrapelus: My protector!

Demeas: My sublunary Jupiter!

Stilpo: Plato in his Acrostikes saith, it is better
to give than receive.

Speusippus: Neither doth Aristotle dissent from Plato
in his first of the Metaphysicks, the last text save one.
(V, v, 135-50)

Timon responds predictably with a torrent of curses and physical abuse:

Why vexee yee mee, yee Furies? I protest
And all the gods to witnessse invoke,
I doe abhorre the titles of a friende,
Of father, or companion. I curse
The ayre yee breathe: I lothe to breathe that aire:
I grieve that these mine eyes should see that sunne,
My feete treade on that earthe yee treade upon.
I first will meete Jove thundring in the clouds,
Or in the wide devouring Scylla's gulfe
Or in Charybdis will I drowne myselve,
Before Ile shew humanity to man.

[He beates them with his spade.]
(V, v, 159-69)

Once more Laches takes the initiative and drives the parasites back to Athens, leaving Timon alone on the stage. (V, v, 170-87). The dramatist now faces the obvious problem of what to do with the misanthrope at the end of the play. Because he is writing a comedy, it would hardly do to have Timon die as he does in most versions of the story. Instead, he provides an epilogue in which suddenly, and for no apparent reason, Timon promises to renounce his misanthropy if the audience applauds the play:

I now am left alone: this rascall route

Hath left my side. What's this? I feele throughout
 A sodeine change: my fury doth abate,
 My hearte growes milde, and laies aside its hate.
 Ile not affect new titles in my minde,
 Or yet bee call'd the hater of mankinde:
 Timon doffs Timon, and with bended knee
 Thus craves a favour,- if our comedie
 And merry scene deserve a plaudite,
 Let loving hands, loude sounding in the ayre
 Cause Timon to the citty to repaire.

(Epilogue, 1-11)

This more than anything else in the play demonstrates that the playwright was not particularly concerned with the idea of a consistent portrayal of misanthropy. Since conventional attitudes demanded that a misanthrope should either relent or suffer humiliation at the hands of a more balanced character, his choice was to some extent dictated by circumstances. However, this cannot excuse the weakness of the ending. In catering to audience prejudice the dramatist has merely disposed of Timon instead of adequately concluding this depiction of his career.

So far, I have concentrated primarily on the play's treatment of the Timon story, in an effort to show how the dramatist has depicted him as a comic butt whose disillusionment is richly deserved, and whose misanthropy is not treated at all seriously. However, a survey of the entire play reveals another important point. Instead of focusing on the character of Timon, or even on his relationship to the parasites, the playwright has chosen to use the Timon story as a sort of peg on which to hang a bewildering array of subordinate actions and characters. First, there is a clearly-defined sub-plot involving Gelasimus, a rich and incredibly stupid young heir who falls victim to the tricks of Pseudocheus, a bogus traveller. By flattering him and enticing him with tales of life in the Antipodes, Pseudocheus induces the young man to part

with all his wealth in exchange for the flying horse Pegasus. As Gelasimus waits booted and spurred in a meadow outside Athens, his page arrives with a cap with ass's ears from the traveller, who has left town. There appears to be some attempt at drawing a parallel between the careers of Gelasimus and Timon. Both are immensely wealthy men whose gullibility attracts parasites. Both compete for the favours of Callimela. Both lose everything through their inability to distinguish between true and false friendship, and both end up digging for their food. However, the parallel is never explicitly drawn, and for the most part the two plots exist independently of one another, crossing only at those points where Gelasimus and Pseudocheus join Timon's retinue. In addition to this sub-plot there are a number of subsidiary actions which occupy at the most a scene or two. For example, two short scenes are devoted to the antics of Grunnio, a hungry servant of the miser Philargurus, who sneaks into Timon's house in the hope of snatching a bite to eat (III, iv and IV, iv). Besides the characters already mentioned, the playwright has included a lecherous old nurse, a country bumpkin, a saucy page-boy and assorted servants. Many of their actions have little or nothing to do with the main plot. Obviously all this diversity results in a very loosely-constructed play in which the story of Timon often fades into the back-ground. The dramatist is thus freed of the necessity to offer a detailed and dramatically believable depiction of Timon's progress towards misanthropy. However, by adopting this solution he sacrifices dramatic quality to theatrical expedience. In The Timon Play, individual scenes and minor characters are more memorable than the protagonist.

NOTES

¹Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the play are taken from the Revels edition by Norman Sanders (London: Methuen, 1970). Sanders provides an excellent summary of the scholarly arguments which surround the problem of the play's date (pp. xxv-xxix).

²The frame-plot consists of an Induction and seven Choruses, four of which occur after each of the first four acts. The position of the remaining three is a matter of conjecture. While the 1596 Quarto places them after Act I, there is no internal evidence to indicate they actually belong there in performance, and most modern editors prefer to place them at the end of the play. Sanders argues most convincingly that each of the Additional Choruses was designed to comment on a particular scene, and then goes on to suggest that they bear the closest relationship to I, i; I, ii and III, ii, respectively (notes, pp. 128-32). He also asserts that the final thirteen lines of the third Additional Chorus constitute a separate Chorus which should follow Act V, since it provides a fitting ending for the play.

³Robert Greene, The Scottish History of James the Fourth... London: Thomas Creede 1598. 1-5. Oxford: University Press for the Malone Society, 1921.

⁴Sanders, Greene's James IV, pp. lvii-lviii.

⁵The opinion was first put forward by W. L. Renwick ("Greene's 'Ridstall Man'", MLR XXIX, 1934, p. 434.). He argued that the Londoner of 1590 probably did not distinguish between English and Scots Borderers, and that the lonely, uncivilized area provided an appropriate background for Bohan's professed wish to withdraw from humanity. In an article under the same title (MLR XXX, 1935, p. 437), Herbert G. Wright supports Renwick's view by citing an incident in William Bullein's Dialogue bothe pleasaunt and reitifull ... against the Fever Pestilence (1564) in which an Englishwoman mistakes the speech of a Redesdale inhabitant for Scottish. But the most convincing proof of contemporary attitudes to Redesdale appears in J. C. Maxwell's article ("Greene's 'Ridstall Man'", MLR XLIV, 1949, p. 58-9). Maxwell cites the extract from Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique, mentioned on p. 8 of this chapter, as proof that Bohan was meant to evoke a familiar character-type to an Elizabethan audience.

⁶George MacDonald Fraser, The Steel Bonnets: The Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers, London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1971, pp. 86-7.

⁷Fraser, p. 89.

⁸Fraser, p. 43.

⁹Thomas Wilson, The Arte of Rhetorique, London: George Robinson, 1583, ed. G. H. Mair, Oxford: Clarendon, 1909, p. 93.

¹⁰cf. Fraser, p. 44.

¹¹q. from A. L. Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England, New York: Harper & Row, 1965, p. 15.

¹²A. R. Braunmueller, "The Serious Comedy of Greene's James IV", ELR

¹³Robert Greene, The Scottish History of James the Fourth, ed. J. A. Lavin, London: Benn, 1967, introd., p. xxi.

¹⁴Sanders, p. liii.

¹⁵Braunmueller, p. 350.

¹⁶The most complete account of existing criticism on the Timon Play can be found in a recent article by James C. Bulman Jr., "The Date and Production of Timon Reconsidered", Shakespeare Survey, XXVII, (1974) pp. 111-127. As Mr. Bulman points out (p. 111), the two plays share far too many incidents and characters for their relationship to have been accidental. Both, for example, devote most of their space to a portrait of Timon in his prosperity, and both contain a faithful steward who remains loyal to Timon after his conversion to misanthropy. Each uses the incident of the mock banquet. If one accepts the theory that Shakespeare wrote Timon of Athens around 1605-7, it seems likely that the Timon Play appeared within five years of it. This would give it a date of either 1600-1 or 1610-11, depending on which of the two appeared first. It seems to me that since most of the evidence for the later date is based on a prejudiced assumption that Shakespeare did not use such wretched material, I find no reason to suggest that the Timon Play could not have appeared around the turn of the century. Moreover, there is much in the play to support the idea, first put forward by Muriel C. Bradbrock, that the Timon Play was probably written for the Christmas revels at one of the Inns of Court ("The Comedy of Timon: A Revelling Play of the Inner Temple", Renaissance Drama IX, 1966, pp. 83-103). Bulman supports and develops this theory by examining the abundance of legal jargon, satire of lawyers and comic scenes apparently designed to appeal especially to worldly young law students (pp. 114ff.). He disagrees,

however, with her rather arbitrary conclusion that the anonymous playwright derived his subject from Shakespeare, and argues instead for a date of 1601-2, basing his conclusion on several striking parallels between the Timon Play and Jonson's comical satires (pp. 120-26). If this is the case, then the Timon Play might well have been put on at the Inns of Court around the same time as Twelfth Night and Troilus and Cressida, thus giving Shakespeare the chance both to see it and use it, as a source for Timon of Athens.

¹⁷Anon., Timon: A Play, ed. Alexander Dyce, London: for the Shakespeare Society, 1842. All references to the play come from this edition. The line numbering is my own.

¹⁸See, for example Nixon, p. 105, and Politephua, Wits Commonwealth, comp. Nicholas Ling, London: I.R. for Nicholas Ling, 1598, fol. 75^V.

¹⁹Lawrence Humfrey, The Nobles, or Of Nobility, London: Thomas Marshe, 1563, fol. 8^V.

²⁰Barckley, Discourse, p. 539.

²¹Geoffrey Fenton, Golden Epistles, Conteyning Varietie of Discourse Both Morall Philosophicall and divine. London: Ralph Newberie, 1582, p. 114.

²²See for example Richard Dallington, Aphorismes Civill and Militarie, London: For Edward Blount, 1613, Aphorism XXVIII, Book II, p. 133.

²³Humfrey, fol. 2^R.

²⁴William Vaughan, The Golden Grove . . ., London: Simon Stafford, 1600, sig. H₃^V-H₄^V.

²⁵Andrewes, sig. C₃^V.

²⁶Cawdrey, p. 286. The same simile occurs in Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury, by Francis Meres, London: P. Shott for Cuthburt Burnie, 1595, fol. 119^V.

²⁷Plutarch, The Philosophie Commonlie Called The Morals, tr. Philemon Holland, London: Arnold Hatfield, 1603, p. 226, ll. 11-21.

²⁸The Attic talent was generally considered to have the value of more than half a hundredweight of silver. According to Terrence Spencer, ("Shakespeare Learns the Value of Money: The Dramatist at Work on Timon of Athens", Shakespeare Survey VI, 1953, pp. 75-6), the modern English equivalent would probably be about £500. If the 1953 pound were taken to be worth around \$3.00, the Attic talent would be equivalent to approximately \$1,500 in Canadian funds. Eutrapelus is therefore asking Timon for a loan of \$6,000 or more.

MISANTHROPY AS A CHARACTER-TRAIT

So far I have sought to provide a detailed study of Elizabethan attitudes to misanthropy as they appear in the period's reading material and dramatic output, in an effort to determine exactly what ideas Shakespeare might have expected his audience to bring to a play about the world's greatest man-hater. From the evidence presented here it is possible to make several assumptions. First of all, the number and variety of works that allude to misanthropy and the Timon story make it most likely that at least the literate portion of the audience would have been most familiar with both subjects. Accounts of Timon's deeds are to be found in some of the most popular books of the age, and appear in every kind of work from medical treatises to books of rhetoric. Secondly, most of the audience would probably expect to see an unsympathetic treatment of Timon or any other character who professed to hate the whole of mankind. Without exception contemporary accounts looked upon misanthropy as a totally unacceptable attitude that transformed a man into a beast and rendered him unfit to play his God-given role in the world. The misanthrope was either to be pitied as the victim of a serious mental disorder brought on by melancholy, or condemned and shunned as a wilful or affected lover of solitude and a shirker of his obligation to help his fellow human beings. Naturally Timon became the epitome of all that was most hateful in misanthropy, and in some instances the account of his life was altered from the source in Plutarch to make him a sinister advocate of suicide. While the didactic authors adopted

a tone of ponderously righteous condemnation, writers of literature often treated the misanthrope as a figure of fun, whose protestations of universal hatred sprang from the most absurd causes, and whose extreme behaviour demanded ridicule. In addition to exposing the misanthrope to outright derision, a few of these authors resorted to a more subtle method of ridicule by describing a misanthropic character as a type of Fool, or by associating him with a genuine Fool to the latter's advantage. This association of misanthropy with folly appears most prominently in the work of Robert Armin, whose connection with Shakespeare made it most likely that the latter was familiar with his ideas. All this would seem to indicate that Shakespeare had to contend with a deep-rooted prejudice against the misanthrope, a prejudice that would make it extremely difficult for any playwright to attempt placing a character such as Timon at the center of a tragedy. An examination of the dramatic material reveals the additional difficulty of generating a sufficient amount of action around a character whose role is essentially verbal. Clearly Shakespeare faced serious problems, and it is entirely due to his outstanding skill as a dramatist that his treatment of the misanthrope succeeds as well as it does. The remainder of this study will consist of an examination of just how Shakespeare sought to deal with these problems, first by using misanthropic behaviour as a character trait in figures who are not themselves misanthropes, and secondly by creating genuine misanthropes within three very different plays.

One of the more obvious places to look for misanthropic behaviour would appear to be the words and actions of Shakespeare's

more outstanding villains. Time and again these characters base their actions on an attitude to life that scornfully repudiates normal human values and holds the rest of mankind in contempt. Indeed, in its crudest form the villain's misanthropic outlook sometimes finds expression through a perverse delight in bringing misfortune upon his fellows. Such is Aaron the Moor's account of his misdeeds in Titus Andronicus:

Lucius: Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?

Aaron: Ay, that I had not done a thousand more,

Even now I curse the day, and yet I think
 Few come within the compass of my curse,
 Wherein I did not some notorious ill:
 As kill a man, or else devise his death:
 Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it:
 Accuse some innocent, and forswear myself:
 Set deadly enmity between two friends:
 Make poor men's cattle break their necks:
 Set fire on barns and haystacks in the night
 And bid the owners quench them with their tears.
 Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves
 And set them upright at their dear friends' door
 Even when their sorrows almost was forgot,
 And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,
 Have with my knife carved in Roman letters
 'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'
 But I have done a thousand dreadful things
 As willingly as one would kill a fly,
 And nothing grieves me heartily indeed
 But that I cannot do ten thousand more.

(V, i, 123-44)

The same attitude appears in a subtler form in the soliloquies of Richard of Gloucester, later Richard III. Towards the end of Henry VI Part Three Richard asserts his isolation from the rest of mankind together with his rejection of those bonds of love and affection which govern the lives of his fellows. Shakespeare closely associates these feelings with Richard's physical deformity. Having just murdered King Henry in a most cold-blooded fashion, the hunchback regales the audience with a detailed account of his abnormal birth, and interprets each detail as a justifica-

tion for his behaviour:

Down, down to hell, and say I sent the thither, . . .
 I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear
 Indeed 'tis true that Henry told me of:
 For I have often heard my mother say
 I came into the world with my legs forward.
 Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste
 And seek their ruin that usurped our right?
 The midwife wondered, and the women cried,
 'O, Jesus bless us! He is born with teeth!'
 And so I was; which plainly signified
 That I should snarl and bite and play the dog.

(V, vi, 67-77)

He then goes on to repudiate filial duty and human affection as qualities unfit for his unique nature:

Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
 Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.
 I have no brother, I am like no brother:
 And this word 'love', which greybeards call divine,
 Be resident in men like one another,
 And not in me. I am myself alone.

(V, vi, 78-83)

The same idea recurs in the opening lines of Richard III, where Gloucester once again cites his deformity as a sufficient excuse for isolating himself from the pleasures that delight other men:

I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
 Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
 Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
 And that so lamely and unfashionable
 That dogs bark at me as I halt by them--
 Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
 Have no delight to pass away the time,
 Unless to see my shadow in the sun
 And descant on mine own deformity.
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
 I am determined to prove a villain
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

(I, i, 18-31)

All Richard's subsequent actions reveal the extent of his self-imposed

alienation, as he successfully eliminates all those to whom he owes loyalty or affection. His soliloquies and asides indicate a cynical disregard for his fellow men and the values by which they live. Nowhere is this attitude more vividly demonstrated than in his reaction to his mother's blessing:

Duchess of York: God bless thee, and put meekness in thy
breast,

Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

Richard: Amen. [Aside] and make me die a good old man!

That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing;

I marvel that her grace did leave it out.

(II, ii, 107-11)

Only near the end of the play, as he wakes from a nightmare brought on by his own troubled conscience, does Richard consider the fearful implications of his isolation:

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.

Richard loves Richard: that is, I am I.

Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:

Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why--

Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?

Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good

That I myself have done unto myself?

O no! Alas, I rather hate myself

For hateful deeds committed by myself.

I am a villain. Yet I lie, I am not.

Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,

And every tongue brings in a several tale.

And every tongue condemns me for a villain.

I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;

And if I die, no soul will pity me.

And, wherefore should they, since that I myself

Find in myself no pity to myself?

(V, iii, 183-204)

Although this moment of self-accusation is a brief one, Shakespeare effectively uses it to display the extent of Richard's loss of humanity. While this in no way diminishes the extent of his villainy in the eyes of the audience, it does mark the climax of Richard's progress towards

complete aloneness, as the world of men he had contemptuously rejected at the beginning of the play is now shown to be totally beyond his reach. As one critic has put it:

What distinguishes him is that he is set apart from the rest of mankind, first by his malformed body, which is the outward sign of a malformed soul, and second by his thorough-going individualism. Order and society are nothing to him: he is the first of those Shakespearean villains who refuse to be a part of the order of nature and who refuse to see the interconnections between the various spheres of Nature's activity. He is, to use the old mistaken etymology of the word, ab-hominable, cut off from the rest of mankind.¹

The villainy of Don John in Much Ado About Nothing has similar misanthropic overtones. Like Richard, Don John seeks to assert his total isolation from the rest of mankind and his contempt for all forms of social contact:

I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests: eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure: sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business: laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

(I, iii, 11-16)

But Don John's misanthropic utterances contain a petulant exaggerated quality more in keeping with his role as a comic villain. When, for example, he is cautioned against rousing his brother's suspicion by his unsociable behaviour, he responds by striking a pose:

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog: therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking.

In the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to
alter me.

(I, iii, 24-33)

Such a pose obviously has its ridiculous side, as *Beatrice* wittily points out in the following scene:

How tartly the gentleman looks! I never can see
him but I am heartburned an hour after.

(II, i, 3-4)

Moreover, Don John's actual intrigues turn out to be as ridiculous as the motives that prompted them. Although he resolves to "build mischief" at every turn, it is Borachio who initiates both plots against Claudio and carries out the second, while Don John merely follows his directions. Then, having done his worst, the Bastard disappears from the play, and is not even considered important enough at the end to bring about any more than a momentary interruption of the revelry with the news of his capture (V, iv, 122-5). Thus, while Shakespeare indicates that Don John's attitude springs from a wilful dislike of his fellow men, he does not treat the character with sufficient depth to allow his avowed misanthropy to be taken at all seriously. For the working out of the various intrigues in Much Ado About Nothing it is enough that Don John should decide to behave like a villain. Too much concern over why he does so would exaggerate his importance out of all proportion to the small part he actually plays.

Edmund and Iago, Shakespeare's most sophisticated and complex villains, display their contemptuous disregard for human values primarily through their actions towards individuals, rather than in any prolonged discussion of their attitude towards mankind in general. Edmund, for example, indulges only once in a denunciation of human foolishness, when

he scornfully dismisses the idea that men's dispositions might be influenced by the stars:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behavior, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars: as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star.

(King Lear, I, ii, 115-124)

The rest of this soliloquy, like the others in the scene, deals with Edmund's sense of grievance at the limitations his bastardy has imposed on him, and his determination to usurp his legitimate brother's privileges. Similarly, Iago is not given many opportunities to generalize upon human nature. In Act I of Othello he proclaims his scorn for the virtue of loyalty by likening it to the dumb obedience of a beast:

You shall mark
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave
 That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
 Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
 For naught but provender: and when he's old, cashiered.
 Whip me such honest knaves! Others there are
 Who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty,
 Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves:
 And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
 Do well thrive by them, and when they have lined their coats,
 Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul;
 And such a one do I profess myself.

(I, i, 44-55)

But for the most part it is necessary to judge the attitude of both these characters from their actions. Edmund's plots against Edgar and Gloucester clearly reveal his contempt for the bonds of filial love and

duty, while his relationship with Goneril and Regan exhibits an utter disregard for the ideals that govern normal human relations. Moreover, Edmund appears to consider such ideas to be fit only for credulous fools. After gulling both Gloucester and Edgar, he gloats over his success by ridiculing his victims' goodness:

A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy.

(King Lear, I, ii, 172-5)

In the same way Iago's plot against Othello rests on his contempt for the bonds of marriage and friendship, and a total disbelief in the existence of human goodness. To him, the love between Othello and Desdemona is merely "sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian" (I, iii, 352-3), and while he indicates that he is perfectly aware of their virtuous qualities, he regards them merely as naive fools, fit only for exploitation:

Cassio's a proper man . . .
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected--framed to make women false.
The Moor is of free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are.

(I, iii, 386-96)

Bernard Spivack's excellent study of Iago gives what is perhaps the aptest summary of this villain's outlook on mankind:

He is homo emancipatus a Deo, seeing the world and human life as self-sufficient on their own terms, obedient only to natural law, uninhibited and uninspired by any participation in divinity. In addition to his animal nature, man possesses the equipment of will and reason with which to fulfil or regulate his natural appetites. He is the king of beasts, crowned by his superior faculties. And

society, by the same token, is the arena of endless competition, more or less organized, between the appetites of one man and another, success attending him who knows "how to love himself", and how to manipulate the natures of other men.²

In short, both Iago and Edmund, like other Shakespearean villains, deliberately isolate themselves from the rest of humanity through their efforts to undermine and destroy those values that form the basis of human fellowship. It is possible to detect in their behaviour towards their victims a general contempt for all that is good in mankind.

This is not to say that any of these characters is a genuine misanthrope. On the contrary, Shakespeare makes it abundantly clear that the primary characteristic of all his villains is an overpowering self-regard which permits them to derive great pleasure from the ease with which they manipulate their victims. Iago, for example, frequently gloats over the success of his schemes to discredit Cassio and destroy the love between Othello and Desdemona:

Divinity of hell!

When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

(II, iii, 333-45)

Richard of Gloucester shows the same self-regard after he has successfully wooed Lady Anne under the most difficult circumstances:

Was ever woman in this humor wooed?
Was ever woman in this humor won?
I'll have her, but I will not keep her long.
What? I that killed her husband and his father

To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
 With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
 The bleeding witness of my hatred by,
 Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
 And I no friends to back my suit at all
 But the plain devil and dissembling looks?
 And yet to win her! All the world to nothing!

My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
 I do mistake my person all this while!
 Upon my life, she finds (although I cannot)
 Myself to be a marv'illous proper man.
 I'll be at charges for a looking-glass
 And entertain a score or two of tailors
 To study fashions to adorn my body:
 Since I am crept in favor with myself,
 I will maintain it with some little cost.

(I, ii, 227-59)

Moreover, none of the villains act the way they do simply out of a dislike for humanity. Rather, their cynical disregard of human values permits each of them to seek the destruction of others in order to gain the object of his desire, whether it be a crown, the land and title of a legitimate brother, or the downfall of an imagined rival. What is significant about the misanthropic actions and utterances of these Shakespearean villains is the way in which they illustrate how such behaviour can be used to depict a character without causing the difficulties that surround the dramatic presentation of a genuine misanthrope. First, the problem of overcoming the audience's antipathy obviously will not arise here, since the villain is supposed to arouse this feeling. Secondly, the primarily verbal quality of misanthropy does not hinder the development of dramatic action when misanthropy is used as a character-trait of a villain, because villainy always finds expression in some form of active behaviour. For example, Richard of Gloucester immediately follows his repudiation of human love with a plan to destroy all those who bar his succession to the throne, and sets about

at once to carry out his plot:

Clarence, beware. Thou keep'st me from the light:
 But I will sort a pitchy day for thee:
 For I will buzz abroad such prophecies
 That Edward shall be fearful of his life:
 And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.

(3 Henry VI, V, vi, 84-8)

Similarly Iago and Edmund nearly always follow their comments upon the credulous stupidity of their victims with details of the next stage of their intrigues. Thus Shakespeare can use suggestions of misanthropy to enhance the portrayal of these villains without encountering the difficulties that attend the depiction of a genuine misanthrope.

Oddly enough, some of the most memorable instances of misanthropic behaviour in all Shakespeare belong to one of his most sympathetically-conceived protagonists. Rejected by his daughters and turned out to face the storm on the heath, King Lear dwells constantly on the darker side of human nature. The sight of Edgar disguised as a poor naked beggar prompts him to tear off his own clothes, since he now views them as vain trappings that cover the miserable reality of man:

Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou
 ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the
 sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's
 three on's are sophisticated. Thou art the thing
 itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a
 poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off,
 you lendings! come, unbutton here.

(King Lear, III, iv, 97-103)

But his most vivid denunciations of human nature occur in the fourth act, when, at the height of his madness, he comes upon Edgar and the blind Gloucester. Lear's description of women's hypocrisy and lechery rivals anything to be found in the utterances of a confirmed misanthrope like Timon or Thersites:

Behold yond simp'ring dame,
 Whose face between her forks presages snow,
 That minces virtue, and does shake the head
 To hear of pleasure's name.
 The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't
 With a more riotous appetite.
 Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
 Though women all above.
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
 Beneath is all the fiend's.
 There's hell, there's darkness, there is the
 sulphurous pit: burning, scalding, stench,
 consumption. Fie, fie, fie! pah! pah! Give me an
 ounce of civet: good apothecary, sweeten my
 imagination.

(IV, vi, 117-130)

Soon afterwards he seizes upon Gloucester's blindness as an excuse to comment on the corruption of a world in which it is impossible to distinguish between the lawgiver and the offender:

Lear: What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears. See how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in thine ear; change places and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glou: Ay, sir.

Lear: And the creature run from the cur. There thou mightst behold the great image of authority-- a dog's obeyed in office.
 Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
 Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thy own back.
 Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
 For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.
 Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;
 Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
 And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
 Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.
 None does offend, none-- I say none! I'll able 'em.
 Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
 To seal th'accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes
 And, like a scurvy politician, seem
 To see the things thou dost not.

(IV, vi, 148-69)

Obviously such wholesale condemnations of mankind from the protagonist have to be treated in a way that permits the audience to make allowances

for the speaker, and Shakespeare brings this about by stressing Lear's madness and the pity it arouses in the other characters. During the storm scenes Gloucester and Kent constantly lament the King's pitiable state, while Edgar is hard put to maintain his disguise in the face of Lear's distracted ramblings:

My tears begin to take his part so much
They mar my counterfeiting.

(III, v, 59-60)

In the fourth act Shakespeare prepares the audience for Lear's entrance with a short scene in which Cordelia sadly describes his condition:

Alack, 'tis he! Why, he was met even now
As mad as the vexed sea, singing aloud,
Crowned with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,
With bardocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo flow'rs,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn.

(IV, iv, 1-6)

And this is the way Lear enters to utter his condemnation of mankind (IV, vi). Throughout the scene Gloucester and Edgar act as a pitying audience to the King's distracted speeches, and the spectacle of the mad Lear attempting to comfort the blind Gloucester (IV, vi, 173ff.) creates almost unbearable pathos. Moreover, Shakespeare ends the scene with the arrival of Cordelia's servants to bring Lear back to sanity and the reconciliation with Cordelia that follows immediately afterward (IV, vii). In this way Shakespeare never allows Lear's misanthropic utterances to become anything more than the outpouring of a tortured mind pushed to madness by the cruellest disillusionment. Rather than arousing repugnance, Lear's misanthropy prompts the audience to feel the sorrow expressed by one of Cordelia's servants:

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king.

(IV, vi, 200-201)

A far more enigmatic display of misanthropic behaviour can be found in the words and actions of Shakespeare's so-called "wise Fools". In an earlier chapter³ I described the way in which the Renaissance Fool, with his privilege of unlicensed speech and his ability to utter the most unpleasant truths under the guise of laughter, became in the work of Erasmus and others a figure ideally suited for pointing out and ridiculing the faults of mankind. Whether this figure is seen as a genuine imbecile whose wisdom was unconscious, or as a sane man consciously adopting the Fool's motley as a disguise, his criticism evades judgement because by convention it is impossible to separate it from the nonsense that surrounds it. Whoever censures the Fool for his abuse stoops to folly himself for taking too seriously the utterances of a supposed "natural", while those who are merely amused by his sallies reveal themselves to be fools for failing to detect the serious meaning behind his jests. As a result the Fool proved to be most useful in the drama as an ironic commentator on the folly and corruption of his world, and Shakespeare's Fools provide the most subtle examples. Feste, Lavatch and Lear's Fool⁴ all comment with varying degrees of bitterness on the stupidity and wickedness of their fellow men, and their comments are indispensable in shaping the audience's reaction to characters and events in their respective plays. In each case their misanthropic remarks take the form of witticisms in which abuse and foolery become indistinguishable from each other. While these remarks escape censure because of the Fool's real or supposed imbecility, it becomes abundantly clear that any

spectator who fails to see the truth behind the fooling is himself a fool.

Feste, the musical jester of Twelfth Night, is one of the more genial of Shakespeare's Fools, in that he criticizes mankind in a tone of wry amusement. Shortly after his first appearance, for example, he attempts to regain Olivia's favour with a display of his "wit", and in doing so he subtly hits out at human imperfection, when he proves by way of a syllogism that man is incapable of true repentance:

Bid the dishonest man mend himself: if he mend, he
is no longer dishonest: if he cannot, let the
botcher mend him. Anything that's mended is but
patched: virtue that transgresses is but patched
with sin, and sin that amends is but patched with
virtue. If that this simple syllogism will serve,
sc; if it will not, what remedy?

(I, v, 40-46)

Later Feste becomes an ironic spectator at the midnight carouse of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew (II, iii). Although he says little in the way of condemnation, and even takes part in the baiting of Malvolio, he appears to preserve a certain detachment that helps to emphasize the foolish antics of the two drunken knights. In the following scene (II, iv) he moves on to Orsino's court, where, after entertaining the Duke with a melancholy love song, he seizes the opportunity to ridicule his host's lovesick posturing and changeability:

Now the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor
make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy
mind is a very opal. I would have men of such
constancy put to sea, that their business might be
everything, and their intent everywhere, for that's
it that always makes a good voyage of nothing.

(II, iv, 72-7)

At his next appearance Feste takes up the question of the distinction

between wisdom and folly in a conversation with Viola. Referring to himself as a "corrupter of words", he sardonically remarks upon man's ability to pervert language:

Clown: You have said, sir. To see this age! A sentence is but a chev'ril glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turned outward!

Viola: Nay, that's certain. They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.

Clown: I would therefore my sister had no name, sir.

Viola: Why, man?

Clown: Why, sir, her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them.

Viola: Thy reason, man?

Clown: Truth, sir, I can yield you none without words, and words are grown so false I am loath to prove reason with them.

(III, i, 11-24)

He then deftly turns the tables on Viola with a general comment on the world's folly which includes her among the universal brotherhood of Fools:

Viola: I saw thee late at the Count Orsino's.

Clown: Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun; it shines everywhere. I would be sorry, sir, but the fool should be as oft with your master as with my mistress. I think I saw your wisdom there.

(III, i, 37-40)

In the brief soliloquy that marks Feste's exit, Viola shows herself to be the only character in the play wise enough to place the Fool's ironic jesting in its proper perspective:

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of wit.
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons, and the time:
And like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labor as a wise man's art:
For folly that he wisely shows, is fit:
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.

(III, i, 58-66)

Her perceptiveness contrasts sharply with the complacent or contemptuous attitude of other characters such as Malvolio, Orsino and Olivia, who look on Feste as a source of amusement or irritation. Her soliloquy may also be Shakespeare's way of indicating to the audience that Feste is using the Fool's privilege as a cover for his wit. In two subsequent appearances Feste again takes every opportunity at his disposal to remark on some aspect of human hypocrisy. As he puts on the disguise of Sir Thopas the curate, he comments wryly on the appropriateness of the clergyman's gown as a costume in which to deceive his fellow man:

Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in't,
and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in
such a gown.

(IV, ii, 4-9)

Later he uses Orsino's greeting as the excuse for an ironic discussion on the falseness of friends:

Duke: I know thee well. How dost thou, my good fellow?

Clown: Truly, sir, the better for my foes, and the worse
for my friends.

Duke: Just the contrary: the better for thy friends.

Clown: No, sir, the worse,

Duke: How can that be?

Clown: Marry, sir, they praise me and make an ass of me.

Now my foes tell me plainly I am an ass; so that by my foes,
sir, I profit in the knowledge of myself, and by my friends
I am abused: so that, conclusions to be as kisses, if your
four negatives make your two affirmatives, why then, the
worse for my friends, and the better for my foes.

(V, i, 9-21)

When Orsino misses the point and applauds the jester's verbal agility, Feste drives home the significance of his comment by means of a not-so-subtle insult:

Duke: Why, this is excellent.

Clown: By my truth, sir, no, though it please you
to be one of my friends.

(V, i, 22-4)

In the end he is left alone on stage to close the play with a song. Like the rest of the music in Twelfth Night this song contains a curious blend of merriment and melancholy, and, like many of Feste's comments throughout the play, it mixes sense with nonsense so thoroughly that it becomes impossible to distinguish between them. On the one hand, anyone who attempted too serious an interpretation would appear to be an even greater fool than the singer. Yet the suggestion of bitterness which pervades the song causes the play to end on a distinctly minor key, perhaps to remind the audience that Iilyria's merry characters do have their darker side.

In All's Well That Ends Well the comedy takes a decidedly bitter turn, and Lavatch, the play's jester is easily the most unpleasant of Shakespeare's Fools. Described by his mistress the Countess as "a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave" (I, iii, 53-4), Lavatch devotes much of his talk to a cynical description of the universal lechery in men that makes a mockery out of marriage. At his first appearance, for example, he seeks the Countess' permission to marry "Isbel the woman" (I, iii, 16-19), and cites his lust as the most compelling reason for taking the step. Shakespeare intensifies the distasteful quality of this Fool's cynicism by endowing him with a distinctly theological turn of phrase:

Countess: Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

Lavatch: My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

Countess: Is this all your worship's reason?

Lavatch: Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

Countess: May the world know them?

Lavatch: I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are, and indeed I do marry that I may repent.

(I, iii, 27-37)

In the same way Lavatch remarks bitterly on the value of human friendship by suggesting that it leads inevitably to cuckoldry, and by asserting that unfaithfulness in marriage observes no denominational boundaries:

Y'are shallow, madam, in great friends: for the knaves come to do that for me which I am aweary of. He that ears my land spares my team and gives me leave to in the crop, if I be his cuckold he's my drudge. He that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood: he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood: he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend: ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are [i.e., cuckolds], there were no fear in marriage: for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysan the papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one-- they may jowl horns together like any deer i'th' herd.

(I, iii, 40-52)

He then uses the Countess' demand that he summon Helena as the starting-point from which to launch an attack on women's incontinence:

An we might have a good woman born but or every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out ere 'a pluck one.

(I, iii, 81-4)

The Fool's talent for coining witty comparisons becomes in the mouth of Lavatch a means of reflecting further on the more sordid aspects of human relations:

Countess: Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

Lavatch: As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, or your French crown for your taffety punk, or Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hold, the cuckold to

his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling
 knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth;
 nay, as the pudding to his skin.

(II, ii, 19-36)

Near the end of the play, Lavatch once again calls upon the language of the Bible to express a pessimistic outlook on the human condition, as he ironically justifies to Lafew his profession of service to the Devil:

I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire, and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. But sure he is the prince of the world; let his nobility remain in's court: I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter. Some that humble themselves may, but the many will be too chill and tender, and they'll be for the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

(IV, v, 44-51)

Yet for all this vividly-expressed misanthropy, Lavatch does not play as important a part as Shakespeare's other Fools; nor does his jesting contribute so significantly to the shaping of the audience's reaction to characters or events. His conversations with the Countess, Parolles and Lafew have little to do with the events of the plot, but function instead as brief pauses in the action in which the characters involved listen for a while to his bitter witticisms and then dispatch him on some errand while they turn their attention back to more important matters. As a result, Lavatch is not usually onstage for the unfolding of events, and offers little in the way of direct commentary on characters and episodes. Rather, his misanthropic utterances act as an elaboration upon the already-established mood of cynical disillusionment surrounding the human relationships of this play. While the removal of

Lavatch would certainly diminish the impact of All's Well That Ends Well, it would not alter it.

Such is definitely not the case with Lear's Fool, seemingly the most misanthropic of Shakespeare's jesters. From the moment he enters to offer Kent his coxcomb for serving a powerless man (I, iv, 90-95), until he disappears unaccountably from the play (III, vi, 99) the Fool offers a continuous stream of bitter reflection on human depravity. Several characteristics help to set this Fool apart from Shakespeare's other examples of the type. Obviously, as the participant in a tragedy, he arouses quite different emotions from those created by a comedy like Twelfth Night or even All's Well That Ends Well. One hardly needs a Fool here to qualify the merriment or darken the mood. Moreover, Shakespeare has chosen to depict this Fool as a man genuinely "touched" with some form of mental weakness. Unlike Touchstone, Feste and Lavatch, whose jesting appears to be the result of a conscious effort, and whose actions are those of a completely independent man who has adopted the motley as a professional habit, Lear's Fool displays a childlike dependence on his master, while his jests, though just as pointed, do not seem nearly so studied. Finally, the misanthropy of Lear's Fool operates not only on the audience but also on Lear himself, for much of what the Fool has to say about the depravity of mankind bears directly on the situation in which the King finds himself after the division of his kingdom and the banishment of Cordelia. Using his privilege as protection, the Fool calls upon all the conventional jesting tricks at his disposal to remind Lear constantly of his monstrous blunder and its inevitable consequences. At the same time, however,

Shakespeare uses the Fool's own loyalty in such a way as to provide the audience with a subtle contradiction of the misanthropic outlook he seems to advocate. It is through this contradiction and a deliberate confusion between the ideas of wisdom and folly that the dramatist hints at a more positive view of humanity--one that will ultimately lead to the healing of Lear's diseased fancy.

From the moment of his first entry the Fool dwells constantly on the idea that human loyalty is practised only by imbeciles like himself. Having just witnessed Kent's punishment of Oswald for impertinence to the King, he "rewards" the disguised nobleman by offering his coxcomb and remarking that anyone who takes Lear's part against his powerful daughter is worthy of this badge of folly:

Fool: Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent: Why, fool?

Fool: Why? For taking one's part that's out of favor. Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly. There, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will. If thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.

(I, iv, 92-9)

Like most of his misanthropic jests, this comment of the Fool's has a double application. On the one hand, the Fool reflects bitterly on a world where loyalty and gratitude are qualities fit only for such as himself, and where true wisdom lies in currying favour with those in power. At the same time it becomes clear to the audience that such folly is morally preferable to the "wisdom" of following the Fool's advice. This idea reappears at greater length in the next act, when, after repudiating Goneril and seeking hospitality from Regan, Lear

and his company discover Kent has been set in the stocks for again quarreling with Oswald. As the King goes off in a rage to seek his daughter, the Fool remains behind to gibe at the disgrace of his fellow servant:

We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no laboring i'th'winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men, and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following. But the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again, I would have none but knaves follow it since a fool gives it.

(II, iv, 65-73)

The double-edged significance of the Fool's remark rests on a quibble upon the distinction between the words "fool" and "knave", and between "wisdom" and "folly".⁵ The Fool seems to be advocating a totally misanthropic outlook in which disloyalty and favour-seeking bring rewards, while fidelity results in suffering and disgrace. Furthermore, the events of the play appear to prove him right, when the "wisdom" of followers like Edmund and Oswald brings them power and wealth, while the folly of Lear's adherents causes them unbearable suffering. As one critic has pointed out,⁶ the characters who follow the Fool's advice literally are those whose total lack of "fellow-feeling" renders them incapable of seeing anything in it but the most profound logic. Such a one is Goneril, who repeatedly chides her husband with the name of fool on account of his feeling for Lear's wrongs, and Edmund, who dismisses his brother's trustful nature as foolishness. Yet once again the Fool's own actions belie his apparent misanthropy, for he does not follow his

own advice, and warns his listeners that it is only fit for knaves. This brings up the question of the distinction between "knave" and "fool". The Fool is not the only one to quibble on the distinction. Goneril had previously sent him packing after Lear with the accusation that he was "more knave than fool" (I, iv, 305). Used in this way, the word "knave" applies to a character whose words and actions spring from malice, hypocrisy, viciousness, or some other morally damnable quality. Because his deeds arise from conscious motives, a knave is judged to be morally culpable, unlike the Fool, whose conduct theoretically escapes censure because it has no conscious purpose behind it. Thus, by advising only knaves to follow his misanthropic advice, Lear's Fool ironically condemns it, and sets up his own conduct, and that of the disgraced Kent, as the epitome of true wisdom.

The short song with which the Fool rounds off his advice to Kent drives this point home in a further confusion between wisdom and folly, knavery and foolishness:

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
 And follows but for form,
 Will pack when it begins to rain
 And leave thee in the storm.
 But I will tarry; the Fool will stay,
 And let the wise man fly.
 The knave turns Fool that runs away;
 The Fool no knave, perdy.

(II, iv, 74-81)

Once more the song has both a general and a particular application, in that it reflects both on general human wickedness and on Lear's own predicament. By asserting his own fidelity the Fool repudiates the knavish wisdom of characters like Edmund for the wiser folly of Kent and Cordelia. As a result he is forced to follow his master into the

storm, and to participate in Lear's suffering and madness.

The Fool has many other things to say about man's hypocrisy, greed and viciousness, and their effect on those who, like his master, choose to deny their existence. He offers, for example, a vivid indictment of men's tendency to favour a pleasant falsehood over the unpleasant truth when he likens the former, and by implication Goneril, to a foul-smelling bitch that is allowed to remain by the fire while the superior dog, truth, is beaten away:

Truth's a dog must to kennel: he must be whipped out,
when the Lady Brach may stand by the fire and stink.
(I, iv, 105-7)

Later, he sings a song about the mercenary quality of filial love and gratitude:

Fathers that wear rags,
Do make their children blind.
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, thou arrant whore,
Ne're turns the key to the poor.
(II, iv, 46-51)

As Lear descends into madness and takes up the misanthropic commentary himself, the Fool's remarks become less frequent and pointed, until he departs from the play for good at the start of the journey towards Dover. Significantly his departure coincides with the re-entry of Cordelia and the prospect of reconciliation between Lear and his banished daughter. Having helped to force Lear into a realization of his tragic folly by constantly reminding him of the ingratitude and wickedness to which his actions have exposed him, the Fool is dropped from the play in order to pave the way for the King's regeneration.

The character of Lear's Fool thus provides the audience with a

fascinating paradox. On the one hand, Shakespeare uses him as the mouthpiece for much of the play's indictment of human nature, with the result that he seems to be the most obviously misanthropic of all Shakespeare's clever jesters. On the other hand, his obvious devotion to Lear, and the suffering he endures because of it make him a telling contradiction of that indictment. Charles Felver has perhaps best expressed this paradox in his summary of the Fool's dramatic function:

The saving grace of the Fool's laughter serves to heighten the poignancy of Lear's tragic folly, while simultaneously asserting the basic dignity of the human being who, when he remains faithful and loving despite misfortune, becomes something more than a poor, bare, forked animal. 7

The three character-types examined here reveal the extent to which misanthropic behaviour can serve as a useful means of shaping an audience's reaction both to the character concerned and to his surroundings. In each case Shakespeare has avoided the difficulties involved in the dramatic presentation of misanthropy by making it only one of a number of complex traits which together form the essence of a particular character. As a result the audience is not prompted to react unfavourably, nor is the possibility of action impaired, since other considerations, particularly the conventional demands of the character's role, tend to lessen the impact of the misanthropic behaviour. The difficulties remain, however, when a professed dislike of mankind dominates all other characteristics. It is now necessary to examine Shakespeare's attempt to meet this challenge in the creation of three very dissimilar misanthropes.

NOTES

¹Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man, p. 72.

²Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, p. 424.

³See Chapter II, pp. 46ff.

⁴While Touchstone obviously belongs to this group, I wish to discuss him in association with my analysis of Jaques in the next chapter.

⁵cf. Welsford, pp. 253ff.

⁶Welsford, pp. 258-60.

⁷Felver, p. 81.

VI

JAQUES

At first glance As You Like It seems to provide a highly improbable setting for a misanthrope. Although the play begins with scenes of filial treachery and tyrannical misgovernment, Shakespeare never allows the mood to become too oppressive. The gay banter of Rosalind and Celia, Touchstone's witticisms, and Le Beau's pretentious absurdity all combine to alleviate the sense of danger at the court, while Orlando's sturdy courage and the loyalty of old Adam are more than a match for Oliver's scheming. More important, the Forest of Arden, where the exiled nobles "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world" (I, i, 110-11), remains constantly in the background as a potential refuge for all the endangered characters. At the beginning of the second act the scene shifts to this forest world, and except for three brief interruptions, the remainder of the action unfolds under its predominantly benign influence. Once in Arden the characters forget their former danger, and devote their attention to love and good fellowship. After a series of light-hearted encounters, feasts, debates and disguisings, matters sort themselves out to everybody's satisfaction, the villains repent, the Duke and Orlando regain their lost rights, and four pairs of lovers are united in a delightful scene of harmonious gaiety. Yet together with his first visible presentation of the forest world Shakespeare introduces the spectacle of the misanthrope, Jaques, gloomily meditating on the evil of human society as he contemplates the plight of a wounded stag (II, i, 25-63). In keeping with the predominantly

light-hearted mood of this play, Jaques' misanthropy is relatively mild, in that his dislike of humanity takes the form of a melancholy cynicism rather than a vicious outpouring of hatred and scorn. He is also treated with considerable tolerance by the other characters. Instead of being driven ignominiously from the stage, like Thersites, or dying alone, like Timon, in a self-imposed exile, Jaques retires voluntarily from the final scene, still on the best of terms with his fellow exiles. Yet the atmosphere of good-natured fun which surrounds his misanthropic utterances should not obscure the fact that Jaques is given some of the best-remembered lines in the entire Shakespeare canon. Moreover, his very presence, independent of any hint from the play's source,¹ would seem to indicate that his role in As You Like It is far more significant than that of a comic butt whose pessimism is so ludicrously out of place in Arden that it creates amusement rather than the customary antagonism.

One of the surest indications of the fascination of Jaques' role is the disproportionate amount of attention it has received from the critics. Much ink has been spilt in recent years in an attempt to discover the cause of his pessimism and to establish his function in so apparently incongruous a setting. Because of several references in the play to Jaques' melancholy, many scholars have ransacked Elizabethan psychological works for evidence on which to base a diagnosis of his condition.² In one of the earliest articles on the subject,³ E. E. Stoll argues that Jaques conforms to the so-called "malcontent type" described in many contemporary works, and most forcefully dramatized in the character of Malevole from Marston's play The Malcontent. Such a

character assumes a bitterly cynical attitude towards man and society, usually because that society has ignored his merits and neglected to award him the distinction he feels he deserves. His displeasure takes the form of a scornful castigation of his fellow creatures:

When the malcontent turned his jaundiced eyes upon man and his concerns, he inevitably poured vials of bitter scorn upon everything that he saw. Sometimes his discontent took the form of brooding hatred of the corruption which he saw poisoning the very springs of life. Sometimes he fell into a macabre mood, in which his gloom was seasoned with a kind of sneering amusement at human futility. Then he found relief in sportive jesting at the fools about him.⁴

Needless to say, this description appears excessively harsh when applied to Jaques. There is nothing in the play to indicate that Jaques is discontented with his lot among the exiles in Arden: indeed, he refuses at the end to join the court when the Duke regains power. Moreover, the resemblance between Jaques and the genuine malcontent Malevole breaks down upon closer examination. Whereas Malevole actively plots the overthrow of his enemies and himself takes part in the intrigue, Jaques seldom takes any action whatever. Indeed, the only task he undertakes in the entire play occurs when he interferes in the wedding plans of Touchstone and Audrey (III, iii). I would therefore suggest that Jaques conforms more closely to the essentially passive character of the misanthrope than to that of the active malcontent. As one critic has put it:

The malcontent is more actively an agent of evil than the misanthrope: the misanthrope relieves himself chiefly through words: the malcontent plans actions . . . against the order of society.⁵

Another commentator has sought to explain Jaques' behaviour as the out-

come of his travels. Citing the character's own remarks on the subject and Rosalind's response to them (IV, i, 10-34), he argues that Shakespeare intended Jaques to represent a typical Italianated Englishman who had picked up several obnoxious affectations, including a disposition towards melancholy, during his travels on the Continent.⁶ Although this view is an interesting one, it seems to me rather strange that a dramatist of Shakespeare's ability would choose to base his character portrait on a relatively unimportant conversation that does not take place until the fourth act. Furthermore, such a topical interpretation as this one seems out of place among a cast of straightforward types, and simply does not do justice to the impact of Jaques on the average playgoer. This is not to say that attempts to explain the character of Jaques in terms of Renaissance psychology are totally valueless, for they often contribute significantly to an understanding of Shakespeare's techniques of characterization by showing what opinions and prejudices he might have exploited. But too rigid an application of contemporary psychological principles, or, for that matter, any sort of historical detail, to a literary or dramatic creation fails to take into account its imaginative and timeless qualities. E. E. Stoll best sums up the issue this way in his eloquent and often humorous protest against the antiquarians' approach to Jaques:

It is not merely that this method is difficult and exacting. It is not dramatic or poetic; it is not imaginative and emotional as drama and poetry should be.⁷

Having said all this, I may seem to be committing the same kind of error by suggesting that Jaques be considered as a misanthrope. Yet it seems to me that such an approach is justifiable as a concept readily

understood by Elizabethan and modern playgoers alike. Moreover, one need only look to the play for all the necessary evidence. Jaques professes a dislike for his fellow men, and wherever possible he shuns their company. Whether alone or in the society of others, he continually rails against human folly and vice. His role is almost exclusively verbal, in that he constantly speaks of his aversion to human society but takes no action against his fellows. Although in the end he grudgingly pronounces a blessing on the Duke and the newly-married couples, he refuses to take part in the merry-making and retires to the Duke's cave with the intention of going off to lead a life of contemplation. Having thus established my reasons for calling Jaques a misanthrope, I wish now to examine Shakespeare's presentation and use of so unlikely an inhabitant of Arden.

The first important thing to note about Jaques' misanthropy is that it belongs entirely to the forest world. Jaques is not introduced until the beginning of Act II, at the point where most of the action at the usurper's court has been completed, and he does not appear onstage until after Orlando's departure for Arden (II, v). The scenes which most vividly depict the injustice and ingratitude Jaques deplures take place before Shakespeare makes him known to the audience. The play opens with Orlando's complaint against his brother's unjust treatment (I, i, 1-23), his quarrel with Oliver, and Oliver's plot to have his brother killed by the wrestler Charles. Oliver's soliloquy at the end of the scene emphasizes that his treachery stems entirely from hatred of his brother's goodness:

I hope I shall see an end of him: for my soul, yet

I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet
 he's gentle, never schooled and yet learned, full
 of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved;
 and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and
 especially of my own people, who best know him,
 that I am altogether misprised.

(I, i, 151-7)

Later the servant Adam reiterates this idea, as he warns Orlando to
 flee Oliver's house:

Why are you virtuous? Why do people love you?
 And wherefore are you gentle, strong and valiant?
 Why would you be so fond to overcome
 The bonny prizer of the humorous Duke?
 Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.
 Know you not, master, to some kind of men
 Their graces serve them but as enemies?
 No more do yours. Your virtues, gentle master,
 Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.
 O, what a world is this, when what is comely
 Envenoms him that bears it!

(II, iii, 4-15)

Similarly Rosalind is banished from Duke Frederick's court only
 because he thinks she is too good. Even before the event takes place
 the courtier Le Beau predicts that Rosalind's virtue will cause her
 trouble:

But I can tell you that of late this Duke
 Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece,
 Grounded upon no other argument
 But that the people praise her for her virtues
 And pity her for her good father's sake:
 And on my life, his malice 'gainst the lady
 Will suddenly break forth.

(I, ii, 258-64)

This prediction is soon confirmed by Duke Frederick, as he abruptly
 rejects Celia's plea for mercy:

She is too subtile for thee: and her smoothness,
 Her very silence, and her patience,
 Speak to the people, and they pity her.
 Thou art a fool. She robs thee of thy name,
 And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous

When she is gone.

(I, iii, 73-8)

The first act thus presents a society where virtue is rewarded with evil, and where acts of kindness, like Le Beau's timely warning to Orlando, must be done in secret for fear of retaliation by those in power. By contrast, the Forest of Arden appears as a haven of freedom and good fellowship. Shakespeare gives the initial description of this forest world to the unsentimental wrestler Charles, perhaps to heighten its impact:

They say he is already in the Forest of Arden,
and a many [sic] merry men with him: and there
they live like the old Robin Hood of England.
They say many young gentlemen flock to him every
day, and fleet the time carelessly as they did
in the golden world.

(I, i, 107-11)

The dominant impression left by Charles's description is one of youth, free living, and a goodness that recalls the mythological Age of Innocence--a far cry from the situation at Oliver's house and Frederick's court. This impression remains in the background throughout the first act until Rosalind's sudden banishment prompts Celia to think of Arden as a refuge for them both from Duke Frederick's tyranny (I, iii, 103). The mere mention of the name Arden seems to raise the spirits of both girls, who eagerly turn their attention to plans of escape. The scene ends on an optimistic note with Celia's assertion that their flight to the forest will bring them to a better life:

Now go in we content
To liberty and not to banishment.

(I, iii, 133-4)

In this way Shakespeare leads the audience to look upon the Forest of

Arden as a delightful place where the tyranny of the usurper's court can be forgotten, and where the new exiles will lead a carefree life in the company of those already within its confines. It is here that he first introduces the figure of Jaques.

Shakespeare's initial presentation of Jaques is dramatically unusual, in that it provides the audience with a lengthy description of what promises to be an important character four scenes before that character himself appears on stage. Moreover, it coincides exactly with Shakespeare's first visible depiction of the forest world. Although the overall mood of the scene is relaxed and light-hearted, there are definite indications that life in the forest is not quite so carefree as the first act might have led one to believe. Duke Senior speaks of the biting wind and cold which, though more palatable than the flattery of courtiers, still causes him considerable discomfort. As more than one critic of the play has pointed out, the Duke often appears to be trying hard to convince himself that he is better off in Arden than he was in his lost dukedom. This seems particularly true of the latter half of his speech, where he extols the virtue of making the best of misfortune:

Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

(II, i, 12-17)

Furthermore, the Duke is quite aware that his own well-being involves the necessity of preying upon the deer, "the native burghers of this desert city" (II, i, 23). This idea leads the First Lord to think of Jaques, whom he has just seen meditating upon the plight of a wounded stag

(II, i, 25-66). Given their context, it is impossible to take Jaques' remarks very seriously. First of all, there is the punning reference in the character's name to a jakes or privy--a quibble that hints none too subtly at one possible response to his cynical attitude. Secondly, there are the images conjured up by the description itself. After the vivid instances of cruelty and injustice depicted in the first act, the spectacle of this solitary figure, stretched out at his ease under an oak tree by a babbling brook, with herds of deer leaping by every so often, severely undermines the moralistic tone of his reflections on human ingratitude. There is, after all, something rather ludicrous about a man who talks to himself in the middle of a forest with only a wounded deer for company. Whatever truth his remarks might contain drops from sight as a result of the self-conscious manner in which Jaques uses the stag's plight as an excuse to coin "a thousand similes" (II, i, 45):

First, for his weeping in the needless stream:
 "Poor deer," quoth he, "thou mak'st a testament
 As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
 To that which had too much." Then, being there alone,
 Left and abandoned by his velvet friend:
 "'Tis right," quoth he, "thus misery doth part
 The flux of company." Anon a careless herd,
 Full of the pasture, jumps along by him
 And never stays to greet him: "ay," quoth Jaques,
 "Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens,
 'Tis just the fashion: wherefore do you look
 Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?"
 Thus most invectively he pierceth through
 The body of the country, city, court,
 Yea, and of this our life, swearing that we
 Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,
 To fright the animals and to kill them up
 In this their assigned and native dwelling place.

(II, i, 46-63)

Finally, the First Lord's narrative is clearly designed to entertain the

Duke and to divert his attention from melancholy thoughts about his exile. The Duke's response indicates that the story has indeed amused him, for he immediately sets off to find the solitary misanthrope, remarking as he leaves on the pleasure to be gained from provoking Jaques to rail:

Show me the place.
I love to cope him in these sullen fits,
For then he's full of matter.

(II, i, 66-8)

It is obvious that Shakespeare means the audience to consider Jaques primarily as a figure of fun, one who carries his dislike of company to ridiculous extremes and chooses the most incongruous setting in which to launch his diatribe against human ingratitude. It is thus prepared to react with amusement when the misanthrope finally appears in person.

Yet for all its foolish affectation, Jaques' railing does contain an element of truth. The events of the first act have shown that men do behave unjustly to one another, and, as the Duke has indicated earlier, even the supposedly ideal life of Arden does not rule out suffering. Shakespeare underlines the significance of these ideas in the next three scenes. From the light-hearted goings-on in Arden, the action shifts momentarily back to Duke Frederick's court, where the discovery of Celia's flight has raised the threat of pursuit and capture against both the women and Orlando (II, ii). The sense of danger intensifies in the following scene, when Adam warns Orlando of his brother's plot against his life. The mood here is one of dejection. Orlando's sadness and perplexity as he contemplates the thought of exile provide a sharp contrast to the optimism of Rosalind and Celia

under similar circumstances:

What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food,
Or with a base and boist'rous sword enforce
A thievish living on the common road?
This I must do, or know not what to do;
Yet this I will not do, do how I can.
I rather will subject me to the malice
Of a diverted blood and bloody brother.

(II, iii, 31-7)

Even old Adam's unwavering loyalty cheers him only slightly, as the two prepare to set out for an unknown destination:

O good old man, how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for need!
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion,
And having that, do choke their service up
Even with the having: it is not so with thee.
But, poor old man, thou prun'st a rotten tree
That cannot so much as a blossom yield
In lieu of all thy pains and husbandry.
But come thy ways, we'll go along together,
And ere we have thy youthful wages spent,
We'll light upon some settled low content.

(II, iii, 56-68)

Although Adam ends the scene on a more optimistic note with another declaration of loyalty (II, iii, 69-76), he does little to dispell the feeling of uncertainty. The action then moves back to Arden and to the arrival of the first of the new exiles. Clearly Rosalind and Celia do not at first discover their new surroundings to be as promising as they had hoped. Celia is utterly worn out (II, iv, 9), while Rosalind and Touchstone both display a marked lack of enthusiasm for the beauties of the forest world:

Rosalind: Well, this is the Forest of Arden
Touchstone: Ay, now am I in Arden, the more fool I.
When I was at home, I was in a better place, but
travellers must be content.

(II, iv, 13-16)

With the arrival of Corin and Silvius the mood lightens, as Rosalind turns to musing upon her love, and Touchstone indulges in a bit of parody (II, iv, 40-57), until Celia intervenes to remind them of her desperate condition:

I pray you, one of you question yond man
If he for gold will give us any food.
I faint almost to death.

(II, iv, 58-60)

Even Corin, for all his generous offer of help, reveals that the pastoral world too has its share of selfish and inhospitable men:

Fair sir, I pity her,
And wish, for her sake more than for mine own,
My fortunes were more able to relieve her:
But I am shepherd to another man
And do not shear the fleeces that I graze.
My master is of churlish disposition
And little reckes to find the way to heaven
By doing deeds of hospitality.

(II, iv, 70-77)

The exiles' prospects improve only when they offer to buy the sheepcote and employ Corin themselves. Clearly it is not so much the forest as the proffered friendship of one of its inhabitants that turns Arden from a hostile desert into a haven for Rosalind and Celia.

Although a director might find it convenient to change the order of these scenes by placing the first two before the introduction of Duke Senior and his followers,⁸ I would suggest that Shakespeare purposely created this particular sequence of events to emphasize that the Forest of Arden is only as benign as the natures of its inhabitants. Arden is a refuge to Duke Senior and his men because they have made it one by virtue of their good fellowship. Amiens makes this point clear early in the first scene, when he remarks to the Duke:

Happy is your Grace
 That can translate the stubbornness of fortune
 Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

(II, i, 18-20)

By following this scene of well-being attained through human fellowship with three instances in which this contact is threatened, Shakespeare brings home to the audience that the new exiles will experience only uncertainty and discomfort until they discover the friendship necessary to transform the Forest of Arden into a pleasant world. In all this the misanthrope Jaques plays an interesting role. On the one hand, his ridiculously affected pose as the castigator of human evil helps to lighten the mood, particularly when his examples are contrasted with the more immediate suffering of Orlando, Rosalind and Celia. On the other hand, he functions throughout the second act as a reminder that the carefree life of the Arden outlaws is not so ideal as it seems to be at a distance. Altering the order of these scenes so that Jaques' appearance comes hard on the heels of his introduction will underscore the absurdity of his remarks at the expense of their element of truth, and will thus deny the audience the opportunity of responding fully to this complex character.

The process continues in the final three scenes of the second act. Scene Five opens with the first of the play's many lovely songs, "Under the Greenwood Tree", followed by the long-awaited appearance of Jaques. Here Shakespeare once more stresses the misanthrope's absurdity, when Jaques begs Amiens for an encore in order to "suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs" (II, v, 10-11). Even his expressions of gratitude are mingled with railing and abuse:

Well then, if ever I thank any man, I'll thank you. But that they call compliment is like th' encounter of two dog-apes, and when a man thanks me heartily, methinks I have given him a penny and he renders me the beggarly thanks. Come, sing, and you that will not, hold your tongues.

(II, v, 20-25)

As his appraisal of the Duke indicates, Jaques owes much of his contentiousness to an immense vanity, so that his assertion of humility becomes laughable in its smugness:

He is too disputable for my company. I think of as many matters as he, but I give heaven thanks and make no boast of them.

(II, v, 29-32)

Yet Jaques is more than just a comic butt. For one thing, he scores a laugh himself at the expense of Amiens and the others when he explains to the curious men gathered round him that the word "duc dame" is "a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle" (II, v, 52). Moreover, the verse he adds to the song offers a more cynical view of the man who forsakes a life of comfort in order to pursue an idealistic vision:

If it do come to pass
That any man turn ass,
Leaving his wealth and ease
A stubborn will to please,
Duc dame, duc dame, duc dame,
Here shall he see gross fools as he,
An if he will come to me.

(II, v, 44-50)

Although this outlook is clearly unacceptable to the audience, and is contradicted by the obvious well-being even of Jaques himself, it does provide a nice balance to the pretty but equally excessive idealism of the first two verses. Silly as he may be, Jaques once more helps to qualify the sense of total felicity suggested by the song and the preparations for the banquet. Shakespeare follows this scene with the

arrival in the forest of the last of the new exiles, Orlando and Adam, who discover a world far removed from the carefree setting described in Amiens' song. Deprived for the moment of the fellowship that makes the forest habitable, they see nothing in Arden but a barren desert whose bleakness and hostility exhausts the old servant and drives Orlando to desperation:

If this uncouth forest yield anything savage, I
will either be food for it or bring it as food
to thee.

(II, vi, 6-7)

His behaviour in the following scene reveals the extent of his desperation, when, with drawn sword, he rudely disrupts the convivial atmosphere of the Duke's banquet (II, vii, 87). The first one to answer his threats is Jaques, who responds to the danger with a show of cool defiance:

Orlando: Forbear and eat no more!

Jaques: Why, I have eat none yet.

Orlando: Nor shall not, till necessity be served.

Jaques: Of what kind should this cock come of?

(II, vii, 88-91)

By contrast the Duke appeals to Orlando's gentler side and offers hospitality, prompting him to reply in a tone of gratified surprise. Orlando's words clearly indicate the way in which his isolation from society has coloured his view of the forest:

Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you,
I thought that all things had been savage here,
And therefore put I on the countenance
Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are
That in this desert inaccessible,
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;
If ever you have looked on better days,
If ever been where bells have knolled to church,
If ever sat at any good man's feast,

If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear
 And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,
 Let gentleness my strong enforcement be;
 In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.

(II, vii, 106-19)

Significantly, Orlando makes his plea in the name of human fellowship,
 and the Duke responds in kind:

True is it that we have seen better days,
 And have with holy bell been knolled to church,
 And sat at good men's feasts, and wiped our eyes
 Of drops that sacred pity hath engend'red;
 And therefore sit you down in gentleness,
 And take upon command what help we have
 That to your wanting may be minist'red.

(II, vii, 120-26)

Reassured by the prospect of fellowship, Orlando goes off to fetch Adam,
 thus setting the stage for Jaques' powerful depiction of the Seven
 Ages of Man.

The "Seven Ages" speech is without doubt one of the finest
 statements on man's insignificance in the whole of English literature.
 More than anything else in the play it establishes Jaques as a memorable
 character, and often wins the actor playing him a round of show-
 stopping applause if he has rendered the speech at all effectively.
 There is a danger, however, in giving this speech too much prominence,
 for audiences and readers alike have too often regarded it as an
 isolated anthology-piece rather than an integral part of the play's
 overall design. On the purely functional level it allows Orlando
 enough time to leave the scene and return with Adam. More important,
 Shakespeare has placed it in a context which neatly undermines its
 thematic impact. As I have just pointed out, Orlando finds safety and
 comfort in the Duke's proffered friendship. Moreover, he unselfishly

goes to help his servant before relieving his own wants. (II, vii, 127-33). Jaques ignores this gesture, and chooses instead to improvise upon the Duke's sympathetic reaction to the spectacle they both have just witnessed:

Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy:
This wide and universal theatre
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play in.

(II, vii, 136-9)

At the end of the speech, Shakespeare even more eloquently contradicts Jaques through the entrance of Orlando and Adam, whose previous conduct totally belies the misanthrope's description of extreme old age:

Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

(II, vii, 163-6)

Consequently, Jaques' speech appears in context to be more of a momentary diversion than an effective commentary on the previous or subsequent action. This is not to say that the speech has no thematic significance. Indeed, it is far too powerful an utterance to dismiss as a clever improvisation. I would suggest instead that Shakespeare again uses the misanthrope's vision, to qualify a scene of rejoicing-- in this case the rejoicing prompted by Orlando's reconciliation with the forest world. The dramatist thereby asserts that only the friendship and hospitality of the Duke and his followers prevents this vision from coming true. The same idea recurs in the song which closes the act. The words convey a strange mixture of high spirits and sober reflection on human failings:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
 Thou art not so unkind
 As man's ingratitude:
 Thy tooth is not so keen,
 Because thou art not seen,
 Although thy breath be rude.
 Heigh-ho, sing heigh-ho, unto the green holly.
 Most friendship is faining, most loving mere folly:
 Then, heigh-ho, the' holly,
 This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky
 Thou dost not bite so nigh
 As benefits forgot:
 Though thou the waters warp,
 Thy sting is not so sharp
 As friend rememb'ed not.
 Heigh-ho, sing, &c.

(II, vii, 174-90)

Like the "Seven Ages" speech, Amiens' song helps to cover a pause in the action during which time the Duke can discover Orlando's identity. Moreover, Shakespeare has similarly placed it between two actions that contradict its message. But the song also reiterates the most important theme of the second act. The life of the Arden exiles is most jolly only because they themselves have made it so through their unfeigning friendship. This fellow-feeling has the capacity to transform the hostile forest into a benevolent world both for them and for the two groups of new refugees from the usurped dukedom.⁹ Most important, their fellowship makes the misanthropy of Jaques an object of amusement rather than a disturbing truth.

The beginning of the third act marks a significant change in the play's mood. There is a brief return to the usurper's court (III, i), chiefly to account for Oliver's subsequent arrival in the forest, but from this point on the threat from outside is apparently forgotten until the final scene. Similarly, the threatening side of Arden drops from

view as its inhabitants settle down to a life of carefree pleasure, and turn their minds once more to thoughts of love. I would suggest that this change evolves logically out of the re-establishment of fellowship in Act II. Faced with the sudden upheaval of exile and the dangers of the initially hostile forest, Rosalind and Orlando spared hardly a thought for the mutual attraction that sprang from their first meeting in Act One. But once they have regained the security of membership in a society, Orlando starts festooning the trees with love-poems, (III, ii, 1-10) while Touchstone parodies his somewhat hackneyed efforts (III, ii, 63-109) and Celia teases Rosalind about her unknown admirer (III, ii, 157ff.). Shakespeare reflects this shift in perspective through a corresponding change in the treatment of Jaques. First of all, the misanthrope's role is not nearly so prominent in the latter half of the play. He is given only five relatively brief appearances in the last three acts, and in one of these, (IV, ii), he merely introduces a song. More important, in each of his remaining appearances Jaques functions almost exclusively as a comic butt. His misanthropic outlook seems patently out of place amid the gaiety of the other characters, and during his encounters with the new inhabitants of Arden he faces some telling ridicule. The first to flout him is Orlando, whose lovesick condition makes him a most unfit companion for the solitary misanthrope. Although their spirited exchange of insults brings out the excesses in both their attitudes, Shakespeare definitely allows Orlando to get the best of the argument. Jaques appears perverse and silly when he attempts to pour scorn on Orlando's love, only to be met with Orlando's rejoinders:

Jaques: Rosalind is your love's name?

Orlando: Yes, just.

Jaques: I do not like her name.

Orlando: There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened. . . .

Jaques: You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?

Orlando: Not so: but I answer you right painted cloth, from whence you have studied your questions.

(III, ii, 251-62)

Forced grudgingly to admit defeat in their verbal joust, Jaques invites Orlando to join him in a bout of misanthropic railing:

You have a nimble wit: I think 'twas made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me, and we two will rail against our mistress the world and all our misery.

(III, ii, 263-6)

In his reply Orlando indirectly observes that a misanthropic outlook such as the one Jaques professes springs from a totally untenable pose of moral superiority:

I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.

(III, ii, 267-8)

Finally, he routs Jaques with a fresh exchange of insults which assert the superiority of love, however excessive, over his companion's unsociability:

Jaques: The worst fault you have is to be in love.

Orlando: 'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.

Jaques: By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.

Orlando: He is drowned in the brook. Look but in and you shall see him.

Jaques: There I shall see mine own figure.

Orlando: Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.

Jaques: I'll tarry no longer with you. Farewell, good Signior Love.

Orlando: I am glad of your departure. Adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.

(III, ii, 269-81)

All this takes place under the watchful eye of Rosalind, who treats Jaques to more of the same ridicule in a subsequent encounter. Replying tartly to his friendly advances, she roundly censures him for the extreme character of his professed melancholy:

Jaques: I prithee, pretty youth, let me be better acquainted with thee.

Rosalind: They say you are a melancholy fellow.

Jaques: I am so: I love it better than laughing.

Rosalind: Those that are in extremity of either are abominable fellows, and betray themselves to every modern censure worse than drunkards.

Jaques: Why, 'tis good to be sad and say nothing.

Rosalind: Why then, 'tis good to be a post.

(IV, i, 1-9)

Jaques responds by boasting about the exquisite nature of his melancholy, and once again betrays the smug complacency behind his dislike of the world:

I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation: nor the musician's, which is fantastical: nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious: nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice: nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.

(IV, i, 10-18)

Rosalind neatly deflates Jaques' claims with a few scathing remarks on the undesirable effects of foreign travel and the futility of becoming worldly-wise at the expense of one's good spirits:

Rosalind: A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad. I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's. Then to see much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

Jaques: Yes, I have gained my experience.

Rosalind: And your experience makes you sad. I had rather have a fool to make me merry than

experience to make me sad: and to travel for
it too.

(IV, i, 19-26)

The sudden arrival of Orlando puts a stop to the argument, as Jaques, understandably puzzled by the young man's greeting to what he thinks is a boy, leaves the stage with a parting shot at Orlando's formal speech:

Nay then, God b'wi'you, and you talk in blank verse.

(IV, i, 28-9)

In both these encounters Shakespeare follows a pattern which makes the most of Jaques' comic potential as a misanthrope ridiculously out of tune with his surroundings. In each case the misanthrope is confronted with a character who has experienced hardships brought on by human wickedness, and whose merriment therefore makes his sourness look even more absurd. Both Orlando and Rosalind prove to be more nimble-witted than Jaques, who is both times literally ridiculed off the stage. Yet Jaques remains totally unmoved by their taunts. So rigidly extreme is the misanthrope's outlook that no amount of ridicule can make him aware of his foolishness. This brings up the problem mentioned in an earlier chapter¹⁰ of bringing these confrontations to a dramatically satisfying conclusion before the debate slows down the unfolding of the action. Shakespeare gets round this difficulty by laying the foundation for the next part of the action while the argument is still in progress. In the first encounter, Celia and Rosalind are already onstage when Orlando and Jaques enter. At Rosalind's suggestion they hide themselves (239-40), and remain as spectators until Jaques leaves the scene. This permits the audience to anticipate the first meeting between Orlando and the disguised heroine even as it enjoys Orlando's baiting of Jaques. In the

fourth act Orlando enters to interrupt Rosalind's conversation with the misanthrope. His greeting serves a double purpose, in that it prompts Jaques' exit and creates an entertaining bit of comic business in his bewildered reaction. Shakespeare then marks the speed of the transition from the debate to the mock-courtship which follows it in Rosalind's next speech:

Farewell, Monsieur Traveller. Look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are: or I will scarce think you have swum in a gundello.

[Exit Jaques]

Why, how now, Orlando, where have you been all this while? You a lover? An you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more.

(IV, i, 30-37)

Needless to say, Jaques learns nothing from either of these debates: indeed, much of the humour in both scenes arises from the fact that he is the only one who is unaware of his absurdity. Still, neither confrontation goes beyond the bounds of good-natured raillery. Although he becomes a figure of fun, Jaques is not subjected to the physical and verbal abuse that greets other misanthropes in literature and drama. Instead, Shakespeare confronts him with more sensible characters who are amused rather than antagonized by his misanthropic outlook. Where the characters are "wise", this amusement is expressed in the form of direct censure. But Shakespeare employs a much subtler form of ridicule by linking the misanthrope with the play's second critic of human nature--the licensed Fool, Touchstone.

Shakespeare gives the audience several glimpses of Touchstone's wit well before Jaques' first appearance. He is introduced in the first

act as Duke Frederick's court jester, a man privileged by his supposed "innocence" to take liberties even with Rosalind and Celia (I, ii, 42-53). It soon becomes apparent, however, that Touchstone is far from idiotic, for he pointedly ridicules the swearing of meaningless oaths (I, ii, 57-74), and the pleasure taken by Le Beau in the breaking of ribs (I, ii, 120-25). The fact that Rosalind and Celia decide to take him along with them to Arden suggests that Shakespeare characterized him as a grown man, capable of protecting the women as well as amusing them. Once in the forest, he helps to lighten the initial despondency of the exiles, and ridicules the lovelorn excesses of both Silvius and Rosalind with his reminiscences about his passionate affair with Jane Smile. Here, as elsewhere, Touchstone effectively criticizes the follies of others through pointed but good-humoured parody:

I remember, when I was in love I broke my sword
upon a stone and bid him take that for coming a-night
to Jane Smile: and I remember the kissing of her batler,
and the cow's dugs that her pretty chopt hands had milked:
and I remember the wooing of a peascod instead of her,
from whom I took two cods, and giving her them again, said
with weeping tears, "Wear these for my sake.". We that are
true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal
in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly.
(II, iv, 42-51)

Thus, before bringing him into contact with Jaques, Shakespeare establishes Touchstone as a witty but sympathetic character, genuinely devoted to the two women, and, though not above making others look foolish, more amused than embittered by the folly around him. All this helps to guide the audience's response to Jaques' account of his first encounter with Touchstone. The misanthrope is greatly excited by his chance meeting, and rushes in to tell the Duke and his men:

A fool, a fool! I met a fool i'th'forest,
 A motley fool! A miserable world!
 As I do live by food, I met a fool
 Who laid him down and basked him in the sun
 And railed on Lady Fortune in good terms,
 In good set terms, and yet a motley fool.

(II, vii, 12-17)

What apparently excites Jaques is the idea that anyone in motley, the traditional dress of the feeble-minded, should have the ability to rail so eloquently. He then proceeds to give an example of Touchstone's style:

"Good morrow, fool," quoth I. "No, sir," quoth he,
 "Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune."
 And then he drew a dial from his poke,
 And looking on it with lack-luster eye,
 Says very wisely, "It is ten o'clock.
 Thus may we see," quoth he, "how the world wags.
 'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,
 And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;
 And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
 And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
 And thereby hangs a tale." When I did hear
 The motley fool thus moral on the time,
 My lungs began to crow like chanticleer
 That fools should be so deep contemplative;
 And I did laugh sans intermission
 An hour by his dial.

(II, vii, 18-33)

When the Duke enquires about the Fool's identity Jaques replies by enlarging on his talents as a railer:

O worthy fool! One that hath been a courtier,
 And says, if ladies be but young and fair,
 They have the gift to know it. And in his brain,
 Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
 After a voyage, he hath strange places crammed
 With observation, the which he vents
 In mangled forms.

(II, vii, 36-42)

This whole account reveals more of Jaques' foolishness than Touchstone's wisdom. Having previously seen the Fool in action, the audience will

hardly take his apparent misanthropy at all seriously. Moreover, the "good set terms" in which he rails are hardly the most original or moving sentiments ever uttered. The laugh appears rather to be on Jaques, who fails to perceive that Touchstone is actually mimicking him to his face. As a result, his condescending amazement that a mere Fool should be such a skilled railer backfires on him, for Shakespeare ironically points out the silliness in his complacent air of superiority.

The same criticism is brought to bear on Jaques' desire to be a Fool. Ironically, he already has his wish in part, for Shakespeare has indicated that he performs the jester's function for the Duke and his men, much as Touchstone does for Rosalind and Celia. In II, i, for example, Duke Senior derives considerable amusement from the First Lord's account of Jaques' meditation, and leaves at the end to seek further entertainment from him (II, i, 66-7). Similarly, in this scene, Jaques provides the assembled company with a little before-dinner entertainment when he tells of his encounter with the Fool. This consideration adds an ironic twist to the Duke's reply to Jaques' rhetorical request for a motley coat:

Jaques: O that I were a fool!

I am ambitious for a motley coat.

Duke Senior: Thou shalt have one.

(II, vii, 42-5)

More important, Jaques' reasons for wanting the Fool's privilege reflect a total misunderstanding of the true nature of the Fool's criticism. Throughout the play Touchstone exposes folly primarily because he finds it funny and seeks to make his companions laugh at it. Nowhere is it suggested that he consciously seeks to improve others

through his ridicule. Yet this is exactly what Jaques wishes to do, and he looks upon the Fool's motley chiefly as a protection against society's inevitable hostility:

It is my only suit,
 Provided that you weed your better judgments
 Of all opinion that grows rank in them
 That I am wise. I must have liberty
 Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
 To blow on whom I please, for so fools have.
 And they that are most gallèd with my folly,
 They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
 The why is plain as way to parish church:
 He that a fool doth very wisely hit
 Doth very foolishly, although he smart
 Within, seem senseless of the bob. If not,
 The wise man's folly is anatomized
 Even by the squand'ring glances of the fool.
 Invest me in my motley, give me leave
 To speak my mind, and I will through and through
 Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world,
 If they will patiently receive my medicine.

(II, vii, 44-61)

This speech is especially ironic in that Shakespeare has put one of his two major descriptions of licensed jesting¹² into the mouth of the character least capable of truly appreciating the art. For although Jaques readily understands that a Fool can utter the most unpleasant truths with impunity, his misanthropic nature prevents him from realizing that the Fool's primary function is to make men laugh. In short, Jaques shows himself to be unworthy of the Fool's privilege because he lacks a proper sense of humour. Moreover, the last four lines of his speech indicate that Jaques consciously affects a position of superiority over those he intends to castigate. This is something Touchstone never does. Even in his debate with Corin (III, ii, 1-83) the Fool asserts his superiority in such a way as to make the audience laugh more at him than at the honest shepherd. Jaques' holier-than-thou attitude prompts the

Duke to accuse him of hypocrisy:

Duke Senior: Fie on thee! I can tell what thou
wouldst do.

Jaques: What, for a counter, would I do but
good?

Duke Senior: Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding
sin.

For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
As sensual as the brutish sting itself:
And all th'embossed sores and headed evils
Which thou with licence of free foot hast caught,
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.

(II, vii, 62-9)

Jaques defends himself with the conventional reply of the railing satirist, the assertion that he seeks to chide the sin rather than any particular sinner:

Let me see wherein
My tongue hath wronged him. If I do him right,
Then he hath wronged himself. If he be free,
Why, then my taxing like a wild goose flies
Unclaimed of any man.

(II, vii, 83-7)

His reply does little to clear him of the Duke's accusations, and nothing at all to justify his ambition to be a Fool, and Shakespeare brings the stalemated argument to an end with the arrival of Orlando.

The next logical step for the dramatist is, of course, to bring the Fool and the misanthrope together onstage. Shakespeare does this twice in the play, once in the third act and again in the concluding scene. In the first instance (III, iii) the misanthrope witnesses the Fool's mock-pastoral wooing of the goatherd Audrey, and intervenes to "save" him from an ineptly-conducted marriage ceremony. The entire scene offers the audience a telling instance of Jaques' humorlessness and lack of perception. He responds to Touchstone's clever puns and literary allusions with a sententious aside:

Touchstone: I am here with thee and thy goats, as
the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was
among the Gotns.

Jaques: (Aside) O knowledge ill-habited, worse than
Jove in a thatched house!

(III, iii, 5-8)

Later, when Jaques steps from his hiding-place, Touchstone greets him with several marks of condescension which the misanthrope does not appear to notice. Although extravagantly polite, the Fool deliberately forgets Jaques' name and then urges him to put his hat back on, in much the same way as Hamlet speaks to Osrlic:

Good even, good Master What-ye-call't. How do you, sir? You are very well met. Goddild you for your last company: I am very glad to see you. Even a toy in hand here, sir. Nay, pray be covered.

(III, iii, 64-7)

In his behaviour towards Touchstone Jaques reveals that he considers himself intellectually superior to the Fool, and feels duty-bound to save this "innocent" from making an irresponsible match. Intent on this mission, he entirely misses the rich humour of Touchstone's replies:

Jaques: Will you be married, mctley?

Touchstone: As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires; and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling.

Jaques: And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush like a beggar? Get you to church, and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is. This fellow will but join you together as they join wainscot; then one of you will prove a shrunk panel, and like green timber warp, warp.

(III, iii, 68-77)

Although Touchstone good-naturedly complies with Jaques' demand, he reveals in an aside that he was quite aware of what he was doing:

I am not in the mind but I were better to be

married of him than of another; for he is not like to marry me well; and not being well married, it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife.

(III, iii, 78-81)

As the couple leave the stage to be counselled by Jaques, the audience remains in no doubt as to who has proved himself the greater innocent.

In the final scene Jaques introduces Touchstone to the Duke, and complacently acts as his "straight man" for the entertainment of the assembled company (V, iv, 35-101). Here Shakespeare uses the Duke as a more perceptive foil to the misanthrope. Whereas Jaques is still convinced of his superior wisdom, and condescendingly attempts to put the Fool through his paces for everyone's amusement, the Duke realizes that Touchstone is really the one in control. Jaques first introduces his protégée in an offhand way, much as one might speak of a precocious child or a freak:

Good my lord, bid him welcome. This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest. He hath been a courtier, he swears.

(V, iv, 39-41)

Touchstone takes up the game, and provides Jaques with just the sort of social criticism he wants to hear:

If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

(V, iv, 42-6)

This remark introduces Touchstone's account of the seven causes of quarrelling (V, iv, 47-97). Throughout this interlude Jaques feeds Touchstone the proper questions, brings him back to the subject (V, iv, 64-5), and otherwise acts as if he were the one in control of the dialogue.

Yet it is clear that Jaques appears in this capacity only because Touchstone finds in him a convenient means of displaying his wit. When he considers it expedient to plead his own cause with the Duke, he breaks off his conversation to introduce Audrey and to offer a whimsical justification for his choice of so unlikely a bride:

I press in here, sir, among the rest of the country copulatives, to swear and to forswear, according as marriage binds and blood breaks. A poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humor of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will. Rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house, as your pearl in your foul oyster.

(V, iv, 53-9)

At the end of their dialogue Jaques turns to the Duke with a typically condescending appraisal of the Fool's unlikely talents:

Is this not a rare fellow, my lord? He's as good at anything, and yet a fool.

(V, iv, 98-9)

But the Duke has seen far more in Touchstone's jesting than the curiously apt ramblings of an idiot, and his reply helps to underline the misanthrope's egotistical lack of perception:

He uses his folly like a stalking horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

(V, iv, 100-101)

Touchstone's discourse on quarrelling reveals once again the fundamental differences between a Fool's criticism and a misanthrope's censure. Although he expounds on such potentially misanthropic subjects as men's quarrelsomeness, cowardice and pretentiousness, Touchstone does not resort to direct condemnation, nor does he introduce these subjects with any sense of bitterness. His aim is primarily to amuse rather than to criticize. Moreover, by including himself among the quarrellers he

frees his ridicule from the air of superiority that constantly makes Jaques sound like a hypocrite. Instead, he merely tells an ironic story in which the criticism is left for his audience to catch. The fact that Jaques does not appear capable of distinguishing Touchstone's method from his own further emphasizes his unfitness for the role of a genuine Fool.

It is evident from this study that Shakespeare has successfully brought about the effective integration of a misanthrope into the apparently incongruous setting of a romantic comedy despite the various theatrical difficulties presented by the role. Throughout the play, and particularly in the second act, the presence of Jaques paradoxically helps to underline the importance of the human fellowship that dominates the Arden world. I would even suggest that his inclusion significantly undermines the idea that there is something magic about the forest, and puts the emphasis where it belongs--on the forest's inhabitants. At the same time, Shakespeare successfully exploits the misanthrope's comic potential as a character at odds with his surroundings, and thereby satisfies his audience's demand that such a character be ridiculed. Yet this ridicule never becomes so abusive that it violates the prevailing mood of gaiety in the play. Shakespeare treats Jaques' dislike of humanity more as a silly affectation that amuses his fellows than a contemptible vice that must be forcefully censured.

This brings up the question of Jaques' final departure. As I have mentioned before, convention demanded that a misanthrope should in some way be expelled from the stage, because his extreme outlook made it impossible for him to be reconciled with his fellows. Shakespeare appears to follow this practice, in that Jaques is left out of the final

rejoicing, and leaves the stage to pursue a life consistent with his outlook (V, iv, 174-9). At the same time, he is allowed to remain on good terms with his former associates, and Shakespeare even goes so far as to put the final benediction into his mouth:

[To Duke]
 You to your former honor I bequeath;
 Your patience and your virtue well deserves it.
 [To Orlando]
 You to a love that your true faith doth merit;
 [To Oliver]
 You to your land and love and great allies:
 [To Silvius]
 You to a long and well-deserved bed;
 [To Touchstone]
 And you to wrangling, for thy loving voyage
 Is but for two months victualled. So, to your pleasures:
 I am for other than for dancing measures.

(V, iv, 180-87)

The last line of this speech symbolically depicts the extent of the misanthrope's alienation from society, for to an Elizabethan audience the figure of the dance represented that universal harmony to which all things in the world contributed. The idea receives its most extensive treatment in Sir John Davies' poem Orchestra:

The richest Jewell in all the heav'nly Treasure
 That ever yet unto the Earth was showne,
 Is perfect Concord, th'onely perfect pleasure
 That wretched Earth-borne men have ever knowne,
 For many harts it doth compound in one:
 That what so one doth will, or speake, or doe,
 With one consent they all agree thereto.

Concords true picture shineth in thys Art,
 Where divers men and women ranked be,
 And every one doth daunce a severall part,
 Yet all as one in measure doe agree,
 Observing perfect uniformitie:
 All turne together, all together trace,
 And all together honcr and embrace. 13

Nevertheless, Jaques asserts his isolation without bitterness, and is

even asked to stay. Shakespeare turns even this final gesture into a tribute to the good fellowship which has turned Arden from a desert into a happy refuge. The fact that Jaques remains unconverted does not matter: indeed, such a change would create too great an improbability. It is enough that the misanthrope should have to admit that human society is not all bad.

NOTES

¹Thomas Lodge, Rosalynde, or Euphuus' Golden Legacy, (1590)

²For examples of this sort of criticism see Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642, East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State College Press, 1951.

³E. E. Stoll, "Shakespeare, Marston and the Malcontent Type", Modern Philology, III (1905-6) pp. 281-303.

⁴O. J. Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire, Oxford: University Press, 1943, p. 143.

⁵Theodore Spencer, "The Elizabethan Malcontent," Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies, edd. James C. McManaway et. al. Washington: Folger, 1948, p. 531.

⁶Z. S. Fink, "Jaques and the Malcontent Traveller", Philological Quarterly, XIV (1935) pp. 237-52.

⁷E. E. Stoll, "Jaques and the Antiquarians", Modern Language Notes, XLV (1939), p. 82. Ironically, it was Stoll's article of 1905 that started the whole process. More recently Louise C. Turner has reinforced Stoll's argument by showing that a coherent, unified system of Elizabethan psychology did not exist. "A Caveat for Critics against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology", PMLA LXI, (1946) pp. 651-72.

⁸For example, the 1972 production at Stratford, Ontario changed the order so that all the scenes which took place at the court and at Oliver's house came at the beginning, before the action moved to Arden. This was justified on the grounds of greater convenience for the placing of stage properties.

⁹The same idea recurs in IV, iii, when Oliver tells the story of his misfortunes to Rosalind and Celia (IV, iii, 99-123). Until he repents of his past cruelty and achieves a reconciliation with Orlando, Oliver finds Arden to be full of dangers. Once he has attained this reconciliation, and established himself among the exiles, the forest becomes for him a pleasant place, full of love and good fellowship.

¹⁰See Chapter III, pp. 71-73.

¹¹Although some editions place Jaques' exit after ll. 28-9, I prefer the reading of the Pelican edition, since it permits Jaques to leave the stage pursued by Rosalind's final volley of insults. For a lengthy discussion of the merits of both readings, see H. H. Furness' *New Variorum* ed. New York: Dover, 1965, p. 213n.

¹²For the second, see Twelfth Night III, i, 58-66, in Chapter IV, p. 132.

¹³Sir John Davies, Orchestra, or A Poeme of Dauncing, London: J. Robarts for N. Ling, 1596, stanzas 109-110, Works, p. 101. For a more thorough summary of the idea of the cosmic dance see E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1963, pp. 121-9.

VII

THERSITES

The most consistently misanthropic view of human relations in the whole of Shakespeare's work can be found in the so-called "dark" or "problem" comedies.¹ In their different ways each of these comedies leaves its audience uncomfortably aware of the more unpleasant side of man's nature, and this discomfort lingers in spite of various scholarly attempts to explain it away. To put it simply, the three plays, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, and Troilus and Cressida, all depict worlds whose most outstanding inhabitants are either blatantly amoral or, for one reason or another, unpleasantly virtuous. Relationships between characters too often rest on some form of malice or deceit, and even where the outcome appears to reward the virtuous and punish the wrong-doers, the result leaves the spectator uneasy. An examination of the two most technically "comic" plays in the group, All's Well and Measure for Measure, will confirm these impressions. In both plays the "good" characters appear either pallid and wooden, or in some way morally ambiguous. In All's Well, for example, the King, Lafeu, and the Countess of Rossillion are all members of an older generation whose superior ethical standards seem to be passing away. While they each play some part in directing the audience's attitude towards characters and events, they react to the dramatic situation instead of doing much to affect it. Even Helena, the play's sympathetic and resourceful heroine, must resort to trickery to win back her husband's affections, and the strategem she employs, the famous "bed-trick", is not wholly palatable, even though

Shakespeare's use of it here does not provoke the uneasiness it creates in Measure for Measure. Moreover, while the audience can applaud Helena's ingenuity and perseverance, it might, in view of Bertram's character, be forgiven for questioning her judgement. The situation is even more difficult in Measure for Measure, where no major character is capable of engaging the audience's unqualified sympathy. Isabella's moral outlook has prompted more than one adverse response, while the Duke, whose efforts are the sole means of bringing the wrong-doers to justice, seems to act out of a questionable sense of superior virtue. To complicate matters further, the most memorable and dramatically vital characters in both plays are the least pleasant ones. In All's Well That Ends Well the best-remembered episodes focus the attention upon the cowardice of Parolles and the efforts of Bertram to lie his way out of trouble, while in Measure for Measure such matters as Angelo's positioning of Isabella, Lucio's unprovoked slander of the Duke, Claudio's cowardice in the face of death, and Pompey's cavalier approach to the law afford the greatest dramatic impact. Finally, although both these plays appear to end happily with the punishment of the evildoers and the coming together in marriage of hero and heroine, they do not leave the audience with the feeling of satisfaction imparted by similar endings to plays like Much Ado About Nothing and As You Like It. In the first place, Shakespeare indicates that for all the ignominy heaped on characters like Parolles and Pompey, the worlds they inhabit are by no means rid of their particular brand of knavery. In All's Well Parolles remains unrepentant after his humiliating exposure at the hands of the French Lords, and even resolves to earn his living in future by

exploiting his knavery:

Captain I'll be no more,
 But I will eat and drink and sleep as soft
 As captain shall. Simply the thing I am
 Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
 Let him fear this: for it will come to pass
 That every braggart shall be found an ass.
 Rust, sword! cool, blushes! and Parolles, live
 Safest in shame; being foiled, by foolery thrive!
 There's place and means for every man alive.

(IV, iii, 308-16)

His ensuing behaviour, as he begs a place of Lafew (V, ii), and silyly reveals Bertram's conduct towards Diana (V, iii, 231-66), confirms the impression that his humiliation has merely restricted the scope of his mischief-making. Much the same is true of the "low-life" figures in Measure for Measure. True, Mistress Overdone and Pompey go to prison for continuing to operate their brothel after "double and treble admonition" (III, ii, 181), while Lucio is forced to marry the whore he got with child, but there is no indication that the lechery so rife in Vienna at the beginning of the play has noticeably diminished by the end. On the contrary, Shakespeare illustrates the futility of all attempts to rid the world of this vice in a lively exchange between Pompey and Escalus early in the second act:

Pompey: Does your worship mean to geld and splay
 all the youth of the city?

Escalus: No, Pompey.

Pompey: Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will
 to't then. If your worship will take order
 for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to
 fear the bawds.

Escalus: There is pretty orders beginning, I can
 tell you: it is but heading and hanging.

Pompey: If you head and hang all that offend that
 way but for ten year together, you'll be glad
 to give out a commission for more heads. If
 this law hold in Vienna ten year, I'll rent
 the fairest house in it after threepence a

bay; if you live to see this come to pass,
say Pompey told you so.

(II, i, 217-29)

Faced with the law's punishment, the pimp merely alters his profession temporarily to that of executioner, while Lucio, the unrepentant slanderer, protests that he spoke "but according to the trick" (V, i, 499-500). To complicate matters further, the vitality of these knavish characters is often more appealing than the cold, ungenerous rectitude of the protagonists. This is particularly true in the case of Bertram in All's Well. Much of the enjoyment the audience derives from the humiliation of Parolles derives from Bertram's obvious chagrin, so that his subsequent repudiation of the parasite and his later repentance over his treatment of Helena remain suspect. Much the same principle applies to the Duke in Measure for Measure, and in particular to his reaction to Lucio's slander, for it seems to arise as much out of offended dignity as a righteous indignation directed against the evils of calumny. Lastly, the reaffirmation of the marriage-bond that gives a technically comic ending to both plays somehow fails to please, especially since nearly all the couples involved come together as a result of some form of trickery or coercion. Bertram's capitulation in All's Well comes about far too quickly to be emotionally satisfying, and consequently appears to be more an act of unconditional surrender to overpowering odds than a gesture of sincere repentance. Similarly, in Measure for Measure Shakespeare provides his audience with four couples of whom only one, Claudio and Juliet, enter into marriage by mutual consent. It is almost as if Shakespeare were deliberately multiplying the number of marriages at the end of this play to emphasize the hollowness of the comic convention.

As a result of all this, both plays leave their audiences with a disillusioning view of human nature. Although no completely evil characters like Iago or Richard III inhabit the world of these comedies, no generous and sympathetic ones, like Rosalind or Orlando, can be found either. The virtuous arouse dislike by their cold rectitude, while the more lively knaves create uneasiness by their cynical disbelief in human dignity. Mankind appears in these plays as a generally mediocre collection of individuals whose actions lack the gaiety and confidence present in the festive comedies, and whose attitudes exhibit a distressing lack of amiability. All the plays seem to lack is a professed misanthrope to make these feelings explicit.

Shakespeare makes up for this lack in Troilus and Cressida, easily the bitterest of the dark comedies. Here the dramatist presents a world where ideals of love and war are subjected to the most destructive ridicule, and where those who cherish such ideals suffer cruel disillusionment. The heroes of Homeric legend and medieval romance² become in this play an ill-assorted collection of empty rhetoricians, ineffectual schemers, chivalrous hotheads, and blustering imbeciles, while the glorious cause that brought them together degenerates into a pointless squabble over a lecherous woman whom both sides admit to be hardly worth the keeping. Both strands of the plot end on a note of futility, when Troilus' blind love turns into a equally blind rage upon his discovery of Cressida's infidelity, while Achilles' long-awaited return to the field results in the cowardly murder of Hector. Into this setting Shakespeare introduces the misanthropic figure of Thersites, who provides a running commentary on characters and events

in the Greek camp. Unlike Jaques, who appears patently out of place amid the gaiety of Arden, Thersites seems to be an appropriate vehicle for expressing the disillusionment and bitterness of the inconclusive war. Instead of "good set terms" Shakespeare puts into his mouth an endless flow of the most vicious invective, liberally interspersed with vivid images of filth and disease. Instead of treating his misanthropy with tolerant amusement, Thersites' fellow characters normally greet his railing with verbal and physical abuse. At the end of the play he is driven ignominiously from the stage, proclaiming his bastardy as he runs from the field of battle. Clearly this most disagreeable of Shakespeare's misanthropes helps to underline the bitterness which dominates the play and to influence audience reaction towards the objects of his hatred. Yet I think it is an over-simplification to think of Thersites as Shakespeare's mouthpiece, particularly since the character is subjected to as savage a denunciation as any of his fellows. To appreciate fully the complex dramatic function of this character it is necessary to give some detailed consideration both to Shakespeare's use of his source material and his method of transforming the foul-mouthed Homeric railer into a successful stage misanthrope.

Unlike Jaques, who appears to have been a wholly Shakespearean invention, Thersites occupies a well-defined position in the dramatist's primary source. The appearance and character of this venomous railer is derived from an incident in Book Two of Homer's Iliad where, during one of the Greek councils, he taunts Agamemnon and earns a beating from Ulysses. A second legend concerning Thersites tells of the way in which he met his death at the hands of Achilles after he had jeered at the

warrior's grief over killing the Queen of the Amazons.³ By the sixteenth century the name of Thersites had become a byword for physical and mental ugliness. Both Elizabethan translations of the Iliad offer vivid accounts of his repulsive appearance and unrestrained scurrility. Arthur Hall's 1581 version takes liberties with the Homeric original to stress the railer's bestiality by likening him to several of the more repugnant members of the animal kingdom:

This Thersits was a surly knave, and eke a dogged swine,
 Not knowing honour nor his god, and alwaies spent his time,
 And tooke delight to mocke and scorne, and use with trifling toyes
 Even the chiefe: and in such trickes consisted all his joyes:
 Thinking that it became him wel, when he did them contrary:
 And worse, he was the ugliest beast, that ere the earth did carry:
 It seemde Nature had sought hir wit his foulnesse for to shape:
 Ill limnde he was, and for his head, it pillde was like an Ape,
 A Crassum caput, and his eares they were an Asses last,
 His limmes gourdie, crooked, and lame: in fine, take thys at last,
 His forme was monstrous to beholde, his shape none ever had:
 He reaked not, though he were thought in trouble still to gad, . . .⁴

Hall's translation was superseded in 1598 by the publication of the first seven books of George Chapman's version, generally thought to be Shakespeare's primary source for the war-plot of Troilus and Cressida. Chapman, who is more faithful to his original, stresses in his version of the Thersites incident the railer's envy of the Greek leaders and his status as an object of hatred:

Alls sate and silent, usde their seates, Thersites sole except,
 A man of tongue, whose ravenlike voice a tuneles jarring kept,
 Who in his ranke minde cobby had of unregarded wordes,
 That rashly and beyond all rule, usde to oppugne the Lords,
 But whatsoever came from him was laught at mightilie:
 The filthiest Greeke that came to Troy, he had a goggle eye,
 Starke-lame he was of eyther foote: his shoulders were contract,
 Into his brest and crookt withall: his head was shorne compact,
 And here and there it had a hayre: to mighty Thetides,
 and wise Ulysses he retaind much anger and disease:
 For still he chid them eagerlie: and then against the state,
 Of Agememnon he would rayle: the Greekes in vehement hate,

And high disdaine conceipted him: yet he with violent throate,
Would needes upbraide the General: and thus himselfe forgot.⁵

Thersites' cowardice has its basis in his reaction to the beating given him by Ulysses as a result of his ill-timed gibes at Agamemnon. Chapman's translation gives this account of the incident and the amusement it provokes among the rest of the Greek council:

This said, his backe and shoulder blades he with his scepter
smit.
Who then shrunke round and downe his cheekes the servile
teares did flit:
The golden scepter in his flesh a bloody print did raise,
With which he trembling tooke his seat, and looking twentie
waies,
Ill favoredlie he wipte the teares from his self-pittyng
eyes,
And then though all the host were sad they laught to heare
his cries.⁶

In an age which saw physical deformity as an outward sign of mental or moral degeneracy the figure of Thersites naturally became an object of contempt. An examination of a few of the better-known works of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries turns up several references to the character, and all of them emphasize his repulsive appearance and worthlessness. Significantly several of them develop a hint from the Iliad which treats him as a rather nasty type of Fool. First of all, Thersites' name appears in a few of the period's more prominent dictionaries as the epitome of deformity. An early example, the Bibliotheca Eliotae (1548) describes him as "a prince that came with the Greekes to the seige of Troie, which in person and conditions was of all other most deformed". Henry Cockeram's English Dictionarie (1623) lists Thersites under two categories of men: "Men who are captains" and "men that are deformed". Under the first heading Cockeram describes

him as "a deformed Captaine, whose conditions answered his person: Achilles slue him with his fist", and under the second as "one that was as crabbed in person as he was Cinicall and doggish in condition".⁷ In The Art of English Poesie (1589) George Puttenham refers to Thersites in passing as "the glorious noddie, whom Homer maketh mention of", in a section dealing with the way in which the most obscure characters occasionally find their way into famous histories.⁸ A more extensive treatment occurs in Plutarch's Morales (1603), where Thersites is accorded the misanthrope's sin of envy.⁹ The railer is cited as an example to show how the hatred of good men signifies the deepest wickedness:

And the Poet Homer describing the deformitie of Thersites; his bodie, depainted his defects and imperfections in sundrie parts of his person, and by many circumlocutions, but his perverse nature and crooked conditions he set down briefly and in one word in this wise:

Wort by Achilles of all the host
And sage Ulysses he hated most.
for he could not chuse but be starke naught and
wicked in the highest degree, who was so full of
hatred unto the best men.¹⁰

Three allusions in Thomas Walkington's book The Opticke Glasse of Humors (1607) indicate that the author took it for granted his readers knew of Thersites as a foolish man noted for his empty prattle. In the first, Walkington refers to the habit of writing or speaking without study as "the picture of jangling Thersites whose words (as the Poet saith) were without measure and wit without weight. . . .", while in the second he describes a man whose wise appearance belies his true nature as a "Nestor in outwarde semblance, and yet a Thersites in his inward essence"¹¹ The third, more detailed allusion takes up the familiar theme of the

resemblance between physical deformity and mental defectiveness:

Who could not have cast Thersites his water with
but once looking upon the Urinall as we say seeing
in his body so great deformitie, hee sure would
have averred that in his soule there was no great
conformity: he had one note, especially which is a
badde signe in phisiognomy which Homer reckons as
one of his mishapes. . . . His head was made like a
broch steeple, sharpe and hie crownd, which among
all phisiognomers imports an ill affected minde. (21^V)

Finally the epigrammatist Thomas Bastard depicts the railer as an ugly
"natural":

A[1] though Thersites have a filthy face,
And staring eyes, and little outward grace,
Yet this he hath to make amends for all,
Nature her selfe is not more naturall. 12

Only one other dramatic presentation of Thersites has survived
from the sixteenth century, and that is the anonymous interlude
Thersytes, probably written for performance in a school or at court
around 1537. Although this play has little to recommend it, and bears
no resemblance either to the Homeric original or to Shakespeare's
treatment, it does offer an interesting example of popular interpretation
of the railer's character. At the outset, the playwright introduces
Thersites as a character from Homeric legend, and makes him boast of his
contrary behaviour towards the Greek leaders:

Have in a ruffler foorth of the greke lande
Called Thersites, if ye wyll me knowe
abacke, geve me roume, in my way do ye not stand
For if ye do, I wyll soone laye you lowe
In Homere of my actes ye have red I trow
Neyther Agame[m]non nor Ulysses, I spared to checke
They could not bringe me to be at theyr becke. 13

From here on all resemblance to the legendary Thersites is forgotten, for
the playwright depicts the character as a cowardly braggart who fears to
do battle with a snail because of the creature's horns, and runs to hide

behind his mother at the sight of an armed man. Yet for all its departures from Homeric legend, the play accurately reflects the widespread contempt for Thersites which influenced all Elizabethan literary and dramatic portrayals.

This extensive and varied list of illusions clearly indicates that Shakespeare had to contend with a well-established attitude towards the figure of Thersites--an attitude that would most certainly influence his own treatment of the character. An audience coming to see a play based on material from Homeric legend would probably expect to find in Thersites a deformed and ugly coward whose love of scurrility made him an object of contempt to his fellows, and whose unrestrained vituperation very often earned him physical abuse. These characteristics make him an excellent stage misanthrope, in that his role is by definition a primarily verbal one based upon a corrosive hatred of mankind. Shakespeare finds in Thersites most of the traits that Elizabethans considered to be the hallmarks of misanthropy. He expresses his hatred of men in a spectacular flow of the most vicious invective. His misanthropy seems to proceed from a consuming envy of the Greek princes, all of whom he considers to be his intellectual inferiors. At the same time the leaders treat him as a mental defective whose twisted mind has earned him the Fool's privilege of free speech. At the end of the play Shakespeare fulfils his audience's expectations by ignominiously dismissing the misanthrope from the stage. Yet within the confines of literary and dramatic convention Shakespeare has created in Thersites a figure admirably suited to bring out the pervasive sense of disillusionment which surrounds characters and events in this play. By examining his role in

detail it is possible to determine just how the playwright has used the material at his disposal to direct his audience's reaction both to Thersites himself and to the targets of his misanthropy.

Shakespeare's first significant change in the source material involves the handling of Thersites' status in the Greek camp. In The Iliad Thersites occupies a seat in the Greek council, and ridicules Agamemnon for his disastrous attempt at testing Greek morale by pretending to abandon the siege. Post-Homeric tradition even makes him the kinsman of the Greek prince Diomedes.¹⁴ His stature in Troilus and Cressida is by no means so lofty. Although he protests to Achilles that he serves "voluntary" (II, i, 91), his fellow Greeks treat him as a slave. During his initial appearance Ajax orders him to bring news of the Greeks' proclamation (II, i, 19), and beats him when he disobeys. Later Achilles sends him to Ajax with a letter inviting Hector to his tent (III, iii, 234ff.), while on another occasion Thersites bears a message to Achilles from Queen Hecuba who warns him against fighting Hector for the sake of his love Polyxena (V, i, 6ff.). After watching the revelation of Cressida's infidelity Thersites indicates that he also performs quite another sort of messenger service for the Greek camp:

Patroclus will give me anything for the intelligence
of this whore. The parrot will not do more for an
almond than he for a commodious drab.

(V, ii, 188-90)

But the most important change Shakespeare makes is to convert Thersites into an allowed Fool. Unlike Jaques, whose role as the Duke's jester is only implied, Thersites' status as a Fool, employed first by Ajax and then by Achilles, is constantly stressed throughout the second act by

several members of the Greek camp. Achilles, for example, seeks to protect the railler from the fury of Ajax by shaming the latter for allowing himself to become enraged at so unworthy an object as a Fool:

Ajax: O thou damned cur, I shall--
Achilles: Will you set your wit to a fool's?
 (II, i, 82-3)

Two scenes later he again protects Thersites, this time from Patroclus, by alluding to the Fool's right of free speech:

Thersites: I'll decline the whole question. Agamemnon
 commands Achilles, Achilles is my lord,
 I am Patroclus' knower, and Patroclus is a fool.
Patroclus: You rascal!
Thersites: Peace fool! I have not done.
Achilles: He is a privileged man. Proceed, Thersites.
 (II, iii, 49-54)

Throughout this dialogue, Thersites plays the part of a professional jester whose task is to provide his employer with lively after-dinner entertainment. Achilles greets him in terms which emphasize the misanthrope's status, and then sets out the prescribed subject of the ensuing conversation:

Achilles: Who's there?
Patroclus: Thersites, my lord.
Achilles: Where? Where? O, where? Art thou come?
 Why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not
 served thyself in to my table so many meals?
 Come, what's Agamemnon?
 (II, iii, 35-40)

He and Patroclus then engage Thersites in a catechism-like discussion which Thersites predictably turns against them both:

Thersites: Thy commander, Achilles. Then tell me,
 Patroclus, what's Achilles?
Patroclus: Thy lord, Thersites. Then tell me, I pray
 thee, what's thyself?
Thersites: Thy knower, Patroclus. Then tell me,
 Patroclus, what art thou?
Patroclus: Thou must tell what thou knowest.
 . . .

Thersites: Agamemnon is a fool, Achilles is a fool,
Thersites is a fool, and, as aforesaid, Patroclus
is a fool.

Achilles: Derive this: come.

Thersites: Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command
Achilles, Achilles is a fool to be commanded of
Agamemnon, Thersites is a fool to serve such a
fool, and this Patroclus is a fool positive.

Patroclus: Why am I a fool?

Thersites: Make that demand of the Creator. It
suffices me thou art.

(II, iii, 41-64)

Soon afterwards Shakespeare again underlines Thersites' servile position by making it the subject of a discussion between Ulysses and Nestor. Observing that Ajax has suddenly turned violently against Achilles, Nestor asks the reason, only to be informed that "Achilles hath inveigled his fool from him" (II, iii, 87). All this suggests that Shakespeare viewed Thersites as a parasite who depends for his maintenance on the very objects of his contempt, and who earns his keep through the socially demeaning occupations of messenger and licensed jester. Besides degrading him, this portrayal has the added advantages of giving the misanthrope complete freedom of movement about the Greek camp, and of allowing him to eavesdrop and comment on events in which he takes no part. Consequently, Thersites remains on the edge of the action, offering his running commentary to the audience, and stepping into the events of the play only when another character arrives to engage him in conversation or demand his services. He remains in this role until, in the heat of battle, the Trojans chase him from the stage.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Thersites raises some complex questions for the audience. The most important of these concerns the dramatist's insistence on the misanthrope's status as an allowed Fool,

for Thersites does not conform to the more orthodox representation of this character type. There is nothing in Thersites of the humour and amiability of Touchstone or Feste, or the appealing loyalty of Lear's Fool.¹⁵ On the contrary, his entire repertoire consists of the nastiest invective, while his loyalty is clearly to none but himself. He lacks the Fool's most essential quality--a well-developed sense of humour. Far from being amused by the folly he sees round him, Thersites is enraged by it, and vents his anger in a continuous outpouring of violent personal abuse. His attack on Patroclus provides an especially vivid example:

Thersites: Prithee, be silent, boy: I profit not by thy talk. Thou art said to be Achilles' male varlet.

Patroclus: Male varlet, you rogue! What's that?

Thersites: Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases of the south, the guts-griping ruptures, catarrhs, loads o' gravel in the back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas, lime-kilns i'th'palm, incurable bone-ache, and the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, and the like, take and take again such prepostrous discoveries!

Patroclus: Why, thou damnable box of envy, thou, what means thou to curse thus?

Thersites: Do I curse thee?

Patroclus: Why, no, you ruinous butt, you whore-son indistinguishable cur, no.

Thersites: No? Why art thou then exasperate, thou idle immaterial skein of sleeve silk, thou green sarceret flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered with such water-flies, diminutives of nature.

(V, i, 14-33)

More important, Thersites' rage appears to be prompted by a furious envy of the Greek warriors, and this envy stems from the fact that he considers himself vastly superior to them in intellect. Time and again in the course of his invective he returns to the theme of the total

absence of wit in all but himself. He complains, for example, to Achilles of Ajax' muscle-bound stupidity:

Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicums of wit he utters!
 His evasions have ears thus long. I have bobbed his
 brain more than he has beat my bones. I will buy
 nine sparrows for a penny, and his pia mater is not
 worth the ninth part of a sparrow. This lord,
 Achilles, Ajax, who wears his wit in his belly and
 his guts in his head, I'll tell you what I say of him.
 (II, i, 65-71)

It is not long before he turns on Achilles and berates him in the same way:

E'en so. A great deal of your wit, too, lies in
 your sinews, or else there be liars. Hector shall
 have a great catch if he knock out either of your
 brains. 'A were as good crack a fusty nut with no
 kernel.

(II, i, 95-8)

As he departs, Thersites flings a last insult which leaves the audience in no doubt about his estimation of himself:

I will see you hanged, like clotpoles, ere I come
 any more to your tents. I will keep where there is
 wit stirring and leave the faction of fools.
 (II, i, 112-14)

This sort of arrogance never appears in the utterances of Shakespeare's other Fools. Indeed, the Fool's art, whether sprung from genuine simple-mindedness, or assumed as a professional attitude, owes much of its effectiveness to the assumption that the Fool himself should seem unaware of the aptness of his remarks. It is left instead for the audience to perceive the Fool's superior wisdom. Like Jaques, Thersites is far too convinced of his own worth to qualify as a candidate for the motley. More important, he certainly does not appear to see himself in the role of jester. Rather, it is the Greek host, and in particular the

trio of Ajax, Achilles and Patroclus, who employ him as one, and insist on his privileged status. Finally, Shakespeare puts into Thersites' mouth some of the most startling images of filth and corruption to be found anywhere in his plays. As he makes his first appearance Thersites talks of running sores:

Agamemnon, how if he had boils--full, all over, generally? . . . And those boils did run?--say so, did not the general run then? Were not that a botchy core? . . . Then would come some matter from him. I see none now.

(II, i, 2-9)

His previously-quoted cursing of Patroclus reveals an excessive fondness for images of venereal disease and bodily decay. Thersites resorts to these images at every opportunity to revile the Greek warriors and their cause. He prays, for example, that the whole camp might be appropriately punished for going to war over a woman:

After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or, rather, the Neopolitan bone-ache, for that, methinks, is the curse depending on those that war for a placket.

(II, iii, 16-19)

Later he curses the war in a similar fashion as he watches the Greek leaders arrive at Achilles' tent in another vain effort to persuade the hero to fight:

Here is such patchery, such juggling, and such knavery. All the argument is a whore and a cuckold, a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon. Now the dry serpigo on the subject, and war and lechery confound all!

(II, iii, 67-70)

Although Shakespeare's other Fools frequently resort to bawdy talk, and very often display a frank interest in sex, they rarely dwell so consistently on its more prurient details as Thersites does. This tendency

of his is best revealed as he watches Cressida flirting with Diomedes. For all his censoriousness, Thersites appears to derive considerable pleasure from the scene:

How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and potato
finger, tickles these together. Fry, lechery, fry!
(V, ii, 53-4)

In fact, I would suggest that his gleeful interjections and increasing excitement might indicate that he gains a voyeur's satisfaction from watching the pair's wooing, much as Pandarus gains his by presiding over the earlier coming together of Troilus and Cressida (III, ii). In short, Shakespeare has exhibited in Thersites all those characteristics which make a railing misanthrope singularly unfit to play the role of a Fool. Because he hates his fellows so vehemently, Thersites never attains the ironic detachment that makes the comments of a genuine Fool like Feste so perceptive. Moreover, by insistently asserting his superiority of insight he sets himself up as an essentially rational figure, and as a result his remarks tend to antagonize rather than amuse or instruct.

Why then, does Shakespeare so frequently stress this misanthrope's status as a licensed jester? First of all, I believe that by insisting that his audience consider Thersites as a Fool he deliberately invites the sort of comparison I have just made. By the time he wrote Troilus and Cressida Shakespeare had already created two fine examples of the wise Fool in Touchstone and Feste, and may well have intended that the character of Thersites should be undermined through an unfavourable comparison to these more acceptable representatives. Although this is admittedly a matter of speculation, it is interesting to note that all

three characters were probably played by the same actor, Robert Armin, whose own interest in the Fool has already been examined.¹⁶ If this is the case, Shakespeare may be applying the word "Fool" ironically to Thersites, for by failing to perform the functions of a genuine wise Fool, the misanthrope becomes as great a fool as the objects of his contempt. Secondly, Thersites' role as jester reflects upon those characters who employ him and appear to derive pleasure from his railing. Shakespeare has emphasized this point by making another significant change in his source material. Whereas Homer's Thersites flings his insults directly at Agamemnon and the Greek leadership, Shakespeare's remains exclusively in the company of Ajax, Achilles and Patroclus. Although he frequently refers to Agamemnon, Nestor, Menelaus and Ulysses, and they to him, at no point in Troilus and Cressida does he confront them directly.¹⁷ When the Greek leaders enter, the railer either leaves the stage altogether, as in II, iii, or retires to one side as an un-noticed observer of events, as in V, i. Only twice is he confronted with acknowledged superiors, the Trojan princes Hector and Margarelon (V, iv and vii), and in both instances the encounter turns out to his disadvantage, when he is forced to admit to his abject cowardice. His meeting with Hector provides a good illustration:

Hector: What art thou, Greek? Art thou for Hector's match?

Art thou of blood and honor?

Thersites: No, no, I am a rascal, a scurvy railing knave, a very filthy rogue.

Hector: I do believe thee: live. [Exit]

Thersites: God-a-mercy, that thou wilt believe me: but a plague break thy neck--for frightening me.

(V, iv, 25-31)

By altering the source in this way Shakespeare has drawn a sharp

distinction between the Greek leaders, who for all their faults, are at least trying to bring some order into the conduct of the war, and the three disaffected warriors. This distinction first appears in the council scene (I, iii), when Ulysses outlines the causes of the discord in the Greek camp. After discoursing at length on the virtue of 'degree', and citing its absence as the sole cause of the Greeks' inability to conquer Troy (I, iii, 75-137), he indicts Achilles and Patroclus as the instigators of discontent:

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
 The sinew and the forehand of our host,
 Having his ear full of his airy fame,
 Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent
 Lies mocking our designs. With him Patroclus
 Upon a lazy bed the livelong day
 Breaks scurril jests,
 And with ridiculous and silly action
 (Which, slanderer, he imitation calls)
 He pageants us. . . .
 . . .And in this fashion
 All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,
 Severals and generals of grace exact,
 Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,
 Excitements to the field or speech for truce,
 Success or loss, what is or is not, serves
 As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.
(I, iii, 142-84)

Nestor then joins in to add Ajax to the company and, more important, to introduce the figure of Thersites:

And in the imitation of these twain,
 Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns
 With an imperial voice, many are infect.
 Ajax is grown self-willed, and bears his head
 In such a rein, in full as proud a place
 As broad Achilles: keeps his tent like him;
 Makes factious feasts: rails on our state of war,
 Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,
 A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,
 To match us in comparisons with dirt,
 To weaken and discredit our exposure,
 How rank soever rounded in with danger.
(I, iii, 185-96)

Shakespeare follows this introduction by showing the sort of relationship that exists between Ajax and his servant. There is an abrupt lowering of tone from the measured blank verse of the council scene to the snarling, abusive prose of the misanthrope and his brawny employer:

Ajax: Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear?
 Feel then. [Strikes him]

Thersites: The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel beef-witted lord!

Ajax: Speak then, thou vinewed'st leaven, speak. I will beat thee into handsomeness.

Thersites: I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness: but I think thy horse will sooner con an oration than thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike, canst thou? A red murrain o'thy jade's tricks!

Ajax: Toadstool, learn me the proclamation.

Thersites: Thou art proclaimed fool, I think.

Ajax: Do not, porpentine, do not: my fingers itch.

Thersites: I would thou didst itch from head to foot: an I had the scratching of thee. I would make thee the loathsomest scab in Greece. . . . (II, i, 9-27)

Besides reviling Ajax for his brutality, Thersites deliberately fans the discord between him and Achilles:

Thersites: Thou grumblest and raillest every hour on Achilles, and thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpina's beauty, ay, that thou bark'st at him.

Ajax: Mistress Thersites!

Thersites: Thou shouldst strike him.

Ajax: Cobloaf!

Thersites: He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit.

Ajax: You whoreson cur! [Beating him] (II, i, 30-38)

Thersites continues this process under the protection of Achilles by entertaining him with disparaging comments on Ajax' stupidity. However, Shakespeare soon makes it clear that Thersites thinks no more highly of

his new protector than he did of the old, for the railer gleefully reviles the pair of them for allowing themselves to become the brutish pawns of the Greek leaders:

There's Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was
mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes,
yoke you like draught oxen and make you plow up the
wars. . . . Yes, good sooth. To, Achilles, to, Ajax, to--
(II, i, 99-104)

When Patroclus intervenes in an attempt to make peace, Thersites turns on him with a particularly nasty insult, to the evident delight of Achilles:

Patroclus: No more words, Thersites: peace!
Thersites: I will hold my peace when Achilles' brach
bids me, shall I?
Achilles: There's for you, Patroclus.
(II, i, 108-11)

The whole scene effectively undermines the characters of the three disaffected warriors by showing their demeaning relationship to the misanthropic railer. Ajax, who, according to Nestor, had originally set Thersites to rail at the leaders, reveals himself to be little more than a muscular idiot. But the more damning comment is directed against Achilles, who so obviously derives pleasure from Thersites' attacks on his companions, and who becomes nettled only when the railer turns against him. Achilles' complacent assertion that Thersites is merely a Fool thus reflects more on his own arrogance than on his new protégé's talents. Shakespeare sees to it that both he and his companions suffer a loss of reputation through their association with so unpleasant a character.

This idea is further developed in the three scenes in which Thersites visits Achilles. As Ulysses later points out, Thersites has

changed his allegiance from Ajax to Achilles, much to the latter's delight. He initially receives a hearty welcome for his services as entertainer of the warrior and his friend (II, iii, 21ff.), and, as always, his entertainment takes the form of vicious abuse directed against the Greek leaders. For the moment, at least, Achilles seems willing to put up with the railer's attacks on himself. On his second visit (III, iii, 242ff.), Thersites once more regales Achilles and Patroclus with his abuse, this time of Ajax, whose election to fight with Hector has made Achilles uneasy:

Why, 'a stalks up and down like a peacock--a
stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that
hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her
reckoning: bites his lip with a politic regard, as
who should say, ' There were wit in this head an
'twould out ': and so there is, but it lies as coldly
in him as fire in a flint, which will not show with-
out knocking. . . .

(III, iii, 251-7)

Although he engages in a mock-dialogue at Ajax' expense (III, iii, 266-95) Achilles has clearly been distracted by his recent conversation with Ulysses (III, iii, 95-215):

My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirred:
And I myself see not the bottom of it.

(III, iii, 303-4)

Thersites' exit-lines indicate that his relationship with the warrior may be on the decline:

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

(III, iii, 305-7)

By the time of his third visit (V, i, 4-46) the disintegration is complete, and their conversation has degenerated to the level of

vituperation:

Achilles: How now, thou cur of envy!

Thou crusty batch of nature, what's the news?

Thersites: Why, thou picture of what thou seemest,
and idol of idiot-worshipers, here's a letter for
thee.

Achilles: From whence, fragment?

Thersites: Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.
(V, i, 4-9)

Indeed, the process seems to have come full circle, right back to the sort of abusive dialogue that marked Thersites' initial appearance with Ajax. Shakespeare seems to indicate that prolonged association with this misanthrope eventually drags other characters down to his level of railing. More important, the dialogues between Achilles and Thersites help to point out those distasteful qualities in Achilles' nature that in the end provoke him to the cowardly murder of Hector.

So far I have discussed at length the ways in which Shakespeare degrades Thersites in the eyes of the audience, and uses him to bring out the less desirable traits of those who have anything to do with him. This does not mean, however, that his view is entirely discredited. Indeed, the bitterest irony of the play rests on the fact that his analysis of events proves so often to be the correct one. His summary of the war, for example, as a dispute about "a whore and a cuckold" (II, ii, 68-9) receives considerable support throughout the play. Menelaus never appears onstage without some reference being made to his cuckold's horns, while Helen's "honey-sweet" sensuality (III, i), together with Hector's expressed doubts about the wisdom of keeping her (II, ii, 8ff.) seriously undermine her value as a theme of honour. Furthermore the strongest condemnation of Helen is given not to Thersites

but to Diomedes:

She's bitter to her country. Hear me, Paris:
 For every false drop in her bawdy veins
 A Grecian's life hath sunk: for every scruple
 Of her contaminated carrion weight
 A Trojan hath been slain. Since she could speak,
 She hath not given so many good words breath
 As for her Greeks and Trojans suff'ered death.

(IV, i, 68-74)

Another instance involves Ulysses' plot to induce Achilles to rejoin the fighting. For all his magnificent rhetoric on the necessity of observing degree, and his shrewd analysis of the trouble in the Greek camp, Ulysses does resort to a trick which exploits Achilles' vanity and Ajax' gullibility, and thereby gives credence to Thersites' gibe that the two warriors are harnessed like oxen to plough up the wars (II, i, 101). Moreover, his carefully-laid scheme backfires, and Shakespeare leaves it for Thersites to drive the fact home to the audience:

O'th' t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals--that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses--is not proved worth a blackberry. They set me up, in policy, that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles. And now is the cur Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles, and will not arm today. Whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion.

(V, iv, 8-16)

Thersites' estimate of the Greek princes also contains a distressing proportion of truth. Ajax consistently proves himself to be the hulking simpleton of the railer's jests, while Achilles' surly pride and subsequent cowardice over the killing of Hector lend considerable justification to the canine epithets with which Thersites epitomizes him. King Agamemnon, whom Thersites dismisses as a man with "not so much brain as ear-wax" (V, i, 51), is depicted as a pompous but slow-

witted man incapable of taking any initiative, while Nestor frequently acts the part of the ineffectual old man of Thersites' gibes. But it is surely his commentary on the love-plot that provides the bitterest mockery in the play. From his vantage-point on the edge of the action Thersites gleefully interprets the flirtation of Cressida and the mental anguish of Troilus as the sexually-prompted impulses typical of a "commodious drab" and a lovesick fool. His parting lines summarize in a nutshell that misanthropic attitude which the endings of both plots appear unfortunately to support:

Lechery, lechery: still wars and lechery: nothing else
holds fashion. A burning devil take them!
(V, ii, 190-92)

To what extent, then, is Thersites Shakespeare's spokesman? Certainly the outcome of the play seems more than amply to justify his misanthropic outlook for instead of finishing it with some decisive action, Shakespeare allows it to trail off in a welter of chaotic fighting. Hector is slain in a dastardly fashion by Achilles and his Myrmidons, when he stops to pillage a corpse (V, viii), while Troilus and Diomedes pursue each other up and down the battlefield, much to the delight of Thersites:

Now they are clapper-clawing one another: I'll
go look on. That dissembling abominable varlet,
Diomedes, has got that same scurvy dotting foolish
young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm. I
would fain see them meet, that that same young Trojan
ass, that loves the whore there, might send that
Greekish whoremasterly villain with the sleeve back
to the dissembling luxurious drab, of a sleeveless
errand.

(V, iv, 1-8)

With the death of Hector the feeling of disillusionment intensifies, as Troilus leaves the field with a gloomy prediction on Troy's fate:

Frown on, you heavens, effect your rage with speed;
 Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy,
 I say, at once let your brief plagues be mercy,
 And linger not our sure destructions on.

(V, x, 6-9)

As Troilus retires from the stage with futile thoughts of revenge, Pandarus comes forward to sound the other half of Thersites' wars-and-lechery theme in the epilogue:

' As many as be here of Pandar's hall,
 Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall:
 Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,
 Though not for me, yet for your aching bones.
 Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,
 Some two months hence my will shall here be made.
 It should be now, but that my fear is this,
 Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss.
 Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,
 And at that time bequeath you my diseases. '

(V, x, 46-55)

In short, Shakespeare has surrounded what in Homeric and medieval legend had been a tale of heroic exploits, with an atmosphere of futility and disillusionment. Yet, as I have tried to point out, several aspects of Shakespeare's presentation work directly against a complete surrender to the misanthrope's view. The playwright has taken every opportunity to stress Thersites' meanness, and to show how his company degrades others. Expanding on the conventional view of the railer as the epitome of physical and mental deformity, Shakespeare has presented his audience with a character whose hatred of his fellows finds expression in terms that ultimately repel their hearers despite the truth they contain. Finally, Shakespeare follows Elizabethan dramatic convention by dismissing his misanthrope from the stage in as undignified a manner as possible. Having already exhibited his abject cowardice in the face of Hector's challenge, Thersites is finally routed

by Margarelon, Priam's bastard son. As he beats a hasty retreat, the railer leaves this self-denunciation fresh in the minds of the audience:

I am a bastard too; I love bastards. I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valor, in everything illegitimate.
(V, vii, 16-18)

But the most telling point against the wholesale adoption of Thersites' misanthropic outlook is the fact that it promotes an over-simplified response to the dramatic situation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of one's reaction to Troilus. If, as many commentators on the play seem to think, Shakespeare has endorsed Thersites' judgement of Troilus as "that young Troyan ass that loves the whore", there would be little cause to waste any sympathy on him in the course of his disillusionment. Yet Shakespeare has managed to generate considerable sympathy for the young man, even as he demonstrates the obvious folly of his misplaced love. For all his impetuosity and lack of perception in his failure to see the falseness of Cressida and Pandarus, Troilus is shown to possess many good qualities which earn him the respect of Greek and Trojan alike. In fact, Shakespeare gives the most complimentary accounts of Troilus' character to Ulysses, the shrewdest of the Greeks:

The youngest son of Priam, a true knight,
Not yet mature, yet matchless, firm of word,
Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue,
Not soon provoked, nor being provoked soon calmed:
His heart and hand both open and both free,
For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows;
Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,
Nor dignifies an impare [sic] thought with breath:
Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;

They call him Troilus, and on him erect
A second hope as fairly built as Hector.
(IV, v, 96-109)

Consequently, his transformation into a bitter, death-seeking revenger after witnessing Cressida's infidelity arouses considerable pity, for, as one critic has pointed out, the fact that Troilus' love has been tragically misdirected does not utterly rob that love of its nobility.¹⁸ Shakespeare ensures that the audience maintains a more balanced attitude to Troilus' disillusionment by providing him with a sympathetic companion in Ulysses, at the same time as he exposes the entire scene to the derisive scrutiny of Thersites. In an agonized attempt to square his idealistic love with Cressida's visible proof of her wantonness, Troilus at first refuses to believe what he sees:

Let it not be believed for womanhood!
 Think we had mothers: do not give advantage
 To stubborn critics, apt, without a theme,
 For depravation, to square the general sex
 By Cressid's rule. Rather think this not Cressid.
 (V, ii, 125-9)

To Thersites such anguish is simply incomprehensible:

Will 'a swagger himself out on's own eyes?
 (V, ii, 132)

Shakespeare then vividly demonstrates the depth of Troilus' bitterness in a powerful speech:

This she? No, this is Diomedes' Cressida.
 If beauty have a soul, this is not she:
 If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,
 If sanctimony be the gods' delight,
 If there be rule in unity itself,
 This was not she. O madness of discourse,
 That cause sets up with and against itself:
 Bi-fold authority, where reason can revolt
 Without perdition, and loss assume all reason
 Without revolt. This is, and is not, Cressid.
 (V, ii, 133-42)

To Thersites, however, this is merely another example of man's lustful, belligerent nature, and he ends the scene by gleefully anticipating

the coming fight between Troilus and Diomedes:

Would I could meet that rogue Diomede, I would
croack like a raven: I would bode, I would bode. Pa-
troclus will give me anything for the intelligence of
this whore. The parrot will not do more for an al-
mond than he for a commodious drab. Lechery, lechery:
still wars and lechery: nothing else holds fashion.
A burning devil take them!

(V, ii, 186-92)

In short, Shakespeare has indicated in this scene that the savage
misanthropy of Thersites often fosters just as blinkered a view of
humanity as the blind idealism of Troilus or the shrewd practicality
of Ulysses. Complacent in his gleeful assumption of a superior insight,
the railer becomes as much a victim of delusion as those he derides.

Of all Shakespeare's misanthropes Thersites clearly receives
the most conventional dramatic treatment. Because he remains con-
sistently on the edge of the action, his exclusively verbal role does
not interfere with the unfolding of events. Instead, Shakespeare
uses him to help direct the audience's response to characters and
episodes, chiefly through the medium of deflation. Thersites is
instrumental to the creation of the bleakly pessimistic atmosphere
that surrounds the play, because his view nearly always turns out to
be the correct one. At the same time, however, Shakespeare takes care
to make his misanthrope as unacceptable a figure as possible, and
ultimately dismisses him ignominiously from the scene. Moreover,
he makes it clear to the audience that a whole-hearted acceptance of
Thersites' misanthropic outlook involves a loss of the impartial
perspective necessary for a total understanding of the play's meaning.
The dominant impression left by the play is not the savage gloating
over human frailty implicit in Thersites' misanthropy, but a feeling

of distress that his fellow men have so obviously fulfilled his expectations. Shakespeare does not even allow his audience the alternative of a superficially happy outcome as he does in the other two "dark" comedies. Instead of merely suggesting that knavery and foolishness predominate in the affairs of men, he brings on a confirmed misanthrope to insist on the sordidness of men and the futility of their endeavours. The fact that Shakespeare ultimately dismisses this misanthrope as a figure "in everything illegitimate" does little to alleviate the feeling of depression brought on by his derisive commentary.

NOTES

¹For a concise summary of the critical history of both these terms see John Wilders, "The Problem Comedies", Shakespeare, Select Bibliographical Guides, ed. Stanley Wells, Oxford: University Press, 1973, pp. 94-5. Although I am aware that both terms have now gone out of fashion, I consider that the term "dark comedy" most aptly communicates the disquieting effect all three plays exercise upon the audience.

²cf. Robert K. Presson, Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida" and the Legends of Troy, Madison, Wis.: University Press, 1953.

³The fullest account of this story is to be found in the work of the fourth-century poet Quintus of Smyrna. Although I have not been able to determine the exact source from which the Elizabethans may have got the legend, contemporary references make it certain that it was known at that time.

⁴Homer, Ten Bookes of Homers Iliades, tr. Authur Hall, London: Ralph Newberrie, 1581, p. 25. In a side-note to the lines quoted here Hall informs his readers that "Homer in the name of Thersites describes a seditious person."

⁵Homer, Seaven Bookes of the Iliades of Homer, Prince of Poets, tr. George Chapman, London: John Windet, 1598, p. 34.

⁶Seaven Bookes. . . . p. 98.

⁷sigs. H₈^V; I₂^V.

⁸George Puttenham, The Art of English Poesie, (1589) Scholar Press Facsimile No. 110, Menston, Scholar Press, 1968, sig. G₂^H.

⁹See Chapter I, pp. 27-28.

¹⁰Plutarch, Morales, p. 235, ll. 19-26.

¹¹Thomas Walkington, The Opticke Glasse of Humors London: John Windet for Martin Clerke, 1607 ff. 2^V; 17^V.

¹²Bastard, Chrestoleros, (1598) p. 22. Epig. 35: "In Thersitem".

¹³Anon. A New Enterlude called Thersytes, London: John Lysdale, c1550, ll. 1-7. Tudor Facsimile Text, ed. John S. Farmer, 1912. New York: AMS Press, 1970. The play has been attributed to John Heywood (Farmer) and Nicholas Udall (Harbage).

¹⁴For the most detailed account see Quintus of Smyrna, The War at Troy, tr. Frederick Combellack, Norman, Okla.: University Press, 1968, p. 44.

¹⁵Thersites is probably closest in spirit to Lavatch of All's Well that Ends Well. Lavatch, however, never attains the pitch of vituperative fury prevalent in this misanthropic railer.

¹⁶Chapter II, pp. 53-60.

¹⁷By contrast, Thomas Heywood's play The Iron Age (c1612) gives Thersites a more prominent role as an advisor to Menelaus. The railer is thus present at all the most important events, and frequents the company of the Greek leaders.

¹⁸E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays, Toronto: University Press, 1950, p. 47.

VIII

TIMÓN

It is evident that Shakespeare has so far managed to treat misanthropy largely according to the dictates of conventional literary and dramatic practice. Despite their highly individualized characters, and the very different ways in which each affects the play in which he occurs, both Jaques and Thersites conform to the accepted Elizabethan view of the misanthrope as one whose extreme aversion to society alienates him from his more balanced fellows. Consequently both characters function primarily as comic figures, and although their jaundiced view of human relations is shown to be at least partly justified, it is ultimately dismissed as the product of an unsound mind. In each case the dramatist's rejection of misanthropy is symbolized by the expulsion of the misanthrope from the stage once he has fulfilled his function as commentator. Moreover, neither Jaques nor Thersites presented Shakespeare with the theatrical difficulties that often surround the depiction of misanthropy on the stage, since both function as secondary characters whose position on the edge of the action is admirably suited to their primarily verbal contribution. Situated as they are, they can be used to influence the audience's response to various characters and episodes without hindering the rapid unfolding of events. In short, both As You Like It and Troilus and Cressida illustrate that Shakespeare was capable of working within established conventions and prejudices to create highly individualized presentations of misanthropy.

But Shakespeare faced a much tougher challenge when he sought to fashion a tragedy around the career of Timon of Athens. As in the case of Thersites, the character of Timon was well-known to Elizabethan playgoers from their reading, and, as I have already pointed out, sixteenth and seventeenth-century accounts of the Timon story were almost unanimous in their disapproval of the character. Any attempt to transform this epitome of misanthropy into a sympathetically-conceived tragic protagonist would face the formidable task of overcoming the prejudices of an audience predisposed to be hostile. Furthermore, the best-known accounts of the Timon story do not furnish enough material on which to base a five-act play. Plutarch, Shakespeare's only undisputed source,¹ takes up the story after Timon's fall from prosperity, and mentions only four incidents to illustrate the depth of his hatred. These incidents are his prediction that Alcibiades will destroy Athens, his surly reaction to Apemantus' friendly overtures, his offer of a fig-tree to the Athenians to use as a gallows, and his burial by the sea.² All subsequent versions, with the exception of Lucian's Timon and the anonymous Timon Play, follow the same pattern. Shakespeare, however, devotes the greater part of his play to an examination of the reasons behind Timon's conversion to misanthropy. The first three acts trace his career as the city's wealthiest and most generous inhabitant, and illustrate the greed and ingratitude which bring about his terrible disillusionment. Timon

proclaims his intention to become a misanthrope at the end of the third act (III, vi, 105-6) and first appears in that guise at the beginning of the fourth. The remainder of the play deals with his life in the wilderness, his discovery of gold, the return of his erstwhile friends, and his death and burial. The familiar examples of his misanthropic behaviour take up two scenes in the fourth act (i and iii) and part of one in the fifth (V, i, 190-211). To supplement the Timon story Shakespeare has also added a subplot, loosely based on Plutarch, involving the exile of Alcibiades and his subsequent conquest of Athens. By expanding the original account in this way Shakespeare has sought to resolve some of the difficulties presented by the subject matter. First, the heavy concentration on events leading up to Timon's conversion allows the playwright more opportunities to build up audience sympathy for his protagonist and, as far as possible, to justify Timon's bitterness. At the same time he has provided himself with the means of developing a suitably dramatic plot. Devoting three complete acts to the depiction of Timon's life in Athens obviously involves the introduction of several new characters and episodes. Furthermore, this change allowed Shakespeare the chance to expand the roles of Apemantus and Alcibiades, the two characters who, along with Timon, figure prominently in all well-known accounts of the story. Shakespeare has thus endeavoured to transform a brief episodic narrative about a repugnant figure

into an entertaining and thoughtful dramatic study of a noble man so embittered by human ingratitude that he became history's first and greatest misanthrope.

Like so many of Shakespeare's plays, Timon of Athens begins with a revealing conversation between minor characters. Two seekers after Timon's favour, a Poet and a Painter, arrive to await their patron's notice, and proceed to comment both on Timon and on his many clients. By using these two as spokesmen, Shakespeare creates a highly ambivalent response to Timon's fabled generosity before the protagonist himself appears onstage. At first glance these two appear to be representatives of the arts, creators of beauty in word and picture. Theoretically Timon's support of such men speaks well of his generosity. However, both Painter and Poet soon reveal themselves to be inspired solely by greed. After greeting one another with excessively fulsome compliments (I, i, 1-7), they suspiciously eye two other candidates for Timon's favour, a Merchant and a Jeweller. This latter pair frankly combine praise of Timon with discussion of the wares they have to offer him:

Merchant: O, 'tis a worthy lord!

Jeweller: Nay, that's most fixed.

Merchant: A most incomparable man: breathed, as it were,
To an untirable and continue goodness.

He passes.

Jeweller: I have a jewel here--

Merchant: O, pray let's see't. For the Lord Timon, sir?

Jeweller: If he will touch the estimate: but for that--

. . .

Merchant: [Looks at the jewel] 'Tis a good form.
Jeweller: And rich. Here is a water, look ye.
 (I, i, 8-18)

The Poet smugly deplores this obvious display of mercenary calculation by way of a well-turned platitude:

'When we for recompense have praised the vile,
 It stains the glory in that happy verse
 Which aptly sings the good.'
 (I, i, 15-17)³

Yet before long he is shown to be guilty of the same fault. Striking an affected pose of artistic preoccupation, he deliberately invites the Painter's curiosity about his gift to Timon:

You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedication
 To the great lord.
 (I, i, 19-20)

In his reply the Poet exhibits the plib complacency of the second-rate artist, to whom words, but not ideas, come all too easily:

A thing slipped idly from me.
 Our poesy is as a gum which oozes
 From whence 'tis nourished. The fire i'th'flint
 Shows not till it be struck: our gentle flame
 Provokes itself and like the current flies
 Each bound it chafes.
 (I, i, 20-25)

He follows this pronouncement with an expression of curiosity about the work of his companion and potential rival. Almost too politely the men question each other about their hopes for preferment at Timon's hands. They then proceed to indulge in the same sort of flattering appraisal for which the Poet had previously condemned the Jeweller and the Merchant:

Poet: What have you there?

Painter: A picture, sir. When comes your book forth?

Poet: Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.

Let's see your piece.

Painter: 'Tis a good piece.

Poet: So 'tis. This comes off well and excellent.

Painter: Indifferent.

Poet: Admirable. How this grace

Speaks his own standing! What a mental power

This eye shoots forth! How big imagination

Meets in this lip! To th'dumbness of the gesture

One might interpret.

(I, i, 25-34)

Naturally the Poet expects some return for his compliments, and as soon as possible he turns the conversation towards the subject of his own work. Using the arrival of a group of Athenian senators as a springboard (I, i, 39-41), he hastens to inform his companion about the contents of his latest poem:

You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors:

I have in this rough work shaped out a man

Whom this beneath world both embrace and hug

With amplest entertainment. My free drift

Halts not particularly, but moves itself

In a wide sea of wax; no levelled malice

Infects one comma in the course I hold,

But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,

Leaving no tract behind.

(I, i, 42-50)

Despite his grandiose claims to artistic generality, there is little doubt that the Poet's subject is Timon and his intent is to flatter. He confesses as much in his next speech, when he enlarges on the moral import of his poem:

Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill

Feigned Fortune to be throned. The base o'th'mount

Is ranked with all deserts, all kind of natures

That labor on the bosom of this sphere

to propagate their states. Amongst them all

Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fixed
 One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,
 Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her,
 Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
 Translates his rivals.

(I, i, 63-72)

Instead of supplying the expected compliment the Painter indulges in a little artistic oneupmanship:

'Tis conceived to scope.
 This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,
 With one man beckoned from the rest below,
 Bowing his head against the steepy mount
 To climb his happiness, would be well expressed
 In our condition.

(I, i, 72-7)

Undeterred by his companion's egotism, the Poet goes on to develop the theme of Fortune's changeability and the consequent fickleness of human friendship:

Nay, sir, but hear me on.
 All those which were his fellows but of late
 (Some better than his value) on the moment
 Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
 Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,
 Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him
 Drink the free air. . . .
 When Fortune in her shift and change of mood
 Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants,
 Which labored after him to the mountain's top
 Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
 Not one accompanying his declining foot.

(I, i, 76-88)

This idea is, of course, one of the most commonplace themes of Renaissance literature, and Shakespeare's audience would be quick to notice the Poet's lack of originality. The Painter's condescending reply further reinforces the point:

'Tis common.
 A thousand moral paintings I can show
 That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's
 More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well

To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen
The foot above the head.

(I, i, 89-94)

But there is a lot more to this conversation than the self-conscious posturing of a pair of conceited parasites. In one of the play's finest ironic touches Shakespeare has used these two ridiculous figures to foreshadow the impending tragedy of Timon's situation. Both Poet and Painter clearly form part of that crowd of "glass-fac'd flatterers" which dances attendance on Timon in order to devour his substance. Moreover, it is far from the Poet's mind that his allegorical potboiler might hold some actual significance for his patron. Yet almost despite himself the Poet actually fulfils the true artist's aim by using his creative powers to offer instruction through the delight of the senses. Consequently, the dialogue between the Poet and the Painter acts as a prologue to the story of Timon's fall in that it presents the audience with a preliminary view of the situation that leads ultimately to his downfall. As yet there is no definite indication that Timon is incapable of distinguishing between friendship and flattery, but the hint of impending disaster is present, and it receives further development as Timon himself makes his first appearance.

At first glance Timon's initial display of generosity seems wholly commendable. A comparison with a parallel situation in the Timon Play reveals that Shakespeare has gone out of his way to stress the noble intentions behind Timon's philanthropy. Whereas the anonymous playwright from the first depicted Timon as a reckless prodigal motivated by a desire for renown (Timon I, i, 43-60), Shakespeare emphasizes that Timon's excessive bounty arises primarily out of a mis-

placed but still noble idealism. His first acts of generosity involve the releasing of a friend from prison and the bringing together of a pair of lovers in an honourable marriage. Once more, a similar incident from the Timon Play illustrates how Shakespeare has sought to emphasize his protagonist's nobility. In both plays Timon frees a man from the demands of his creditors. But while the anonymous playwright quickly shows Eutrapelus to be a worthless parasite, Shakespeare reserves the details of Ventidius' character until a later scene. The audience is merely informed that a friend of Timon's needs his help and that Timon generously agrees to assist him:

Timon: Imprisoned is he, say you?

Messenger: Ay, my good lord. Five talents is his debt,

His means most short, his creditors most strait.

Your honorable letter he desires

To those have shut him up, which failing

Periods his comfort.

Timon: Noble Ventidius! Well,

I am not of that feather to shake off

My friend when he most needs me. I do know him

A gentleman that well deserves a help,

Which he shall have. I'll pay the debt and free him.

(I, i, 94-103)

The same is true in the case of Lucilius. There is nothing in the play so far to suggest that Timon's estimate of his servant is anything but justified:

This gentleman of mine hath served me long:

To build his fortune I will strain a little,

For 'tis a bond in men.

(I, i, 142-4)

Although it is possible to read a certain hollowness into Lucilius' extravagant protestations of gratitude, they are not, at this point, shown to be outright lies:

Humbly I thank your lordship. Never may

That state or fortune fall into my keeping
Which is not owed to you!

(I, i, 149-51)

This does not mean that Shakespeare ignores or suppresses the fact that Timon is tragically naïve in his idealistic view of his fellow men. He makes it clear throughout this scene that the men clamouring for Timon's favour are preoccupied with mercenary considerations. Ventidius has been imprisoned for debt, and looks to Timon for a ransom of five talents to free him from his creditors. The old Athenian puts the matter of Lucilius' poverty ahead of any question about his intrinsic merit, and even refers to his daughter as a saleable item:

This fellow here, Lord Timon, this thy creature,
By night frequents my house. I am a man
That from my first have been inclined to thrift,
And my estate deserves an heir more raised
Than one which holds a trencher. . . .
One only daughter have I, no kin else
On whom I may confer what I have got.
The maid is fair, o'th'youngest for a bride,
And I have bred her at my dearest cost
In qualities of the best. This man of thine
Attempts her love. I prithee, noble lord,
Join with me to forbid him her resort:
Myself have spoke in vain.

Timon: The man is honest.

Old Man: Therefore he will be, Timon,
His honesty rewards him in itself:
It must not bear my daughter.

(I, i, 116-31)

Once Timon has promised to enrich Lucilius, the father's resistance melts away:

Timon: Give him thy daughter:
What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise,
And make him weigh with her.

Old Man: Most noble lord,
Pawn me to this your honor, she is his.

(I, i, 144-7)

Finally, the four would-be clients who opened the play press forward to show off their wares and assert their claims on Timon's bounty (I, i, 152-72). Their praise is specifically connected to their hopes of financial reward. Shakespeare provides an especially telling example of this fact in the behaviour of the Jeweller, who had previously asserted that Timon must "touch the estimate" if he would possess the jewel he had to offer. When Timon appears to balk at rumours of the gem's high price (I, i, 164-8), the Jeweller immediately resorts to flattery:

My lord, 'tis rated
 As those which sell would give: but you well know
 Things of like value, differing in the owners,
 Are prized by their masters. Believe't, dear lord,
 You mend the jewel by the wearing it.
 (I, i, 168-72)

Yet these hints of tragic blindness in Timon do not at this point seriously detract from the audience's initial impression of him as a noble and idealistic man. In seeking to build up sympathy for his protagonist Shakespeare has chosen to reveal the greed and corruption with which he has surrounded himself through a gradual, step-by-step process which takes up the entire first act. So far he has merely hinted that Timon's idealism will lead to his ruin. These hints become much more insistent with the entrance of Apemantus.

The character of Apemantus is almost wholly a Shakespearean creation, for the play's sources say of him only that he closely resembled Timon Misanthropos in disposition and manner of living. Shakespeare first introduces him to the audience through a remark of the Poet, who numbers him among the various sorts of men who seek

Timon's bounty:

You see how all conditions, how all minds,
 As well of glib and slipp'ry creatures as
 Of grave and austere quality, tender down
 Their services to Lord Timon. His large fortune,
 Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
 Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
 All sorts of hearts: yea, from the glass-fac'd flatterer
 To Apemantus, that few things loves better
 Than to abhor himself--even he drops down
 The knee before him and returns in peace
 Most rich in Timon's nod.

(I, i, 52-62)

The Poet's description might lead the audience to believe that Apemantus is just another sycophant, and it may well be an indication of the Poet's own shallowness that he sees his own image in the behaviour of the churlish philosopher. Timon certainly holds no such view, for he warns his companions of the abuse in store for them the moment he catches sight of Apemantus. He then proceeds to entertain himself and his company by treating Apemantus in the manner of a licensed Fool, offering him subjects on which to exercise his misanthropy:

Timon: Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus.

Apemantus: Till I be gentle stay thou for thy good morrow--

When thou art Timon's dog and these knaves honest.

Timon: Why dost thou call them knaves? Thou know'st them not.

Apemantus: Are they not Athenians?

Timon: Yes.

Apemantus: Then I repent not. . . .

Timon: Whither art going?

Apemantus: To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.

Timon: That's a deed thou'lt die for.

Apemantus: Right, if doing nothing be death by th' law.

(I, i, 178-93)

Each of the four craftsmen comes in for his share of abuse, often at Timon's suggestion. More and more the dialogue assumes the form of a witty exchange between a complacent nobleman and his jester. Apemantus, however, like all misanthropes, lacks the Fool's subtlety, and conse-

quently provokes the anger of his listeners:

Timon: How lik'st thou this picture, Apemantus? . . .
Apemantus: He wrought better that made the painter,
 and yet he's but a filthy piece of work.
Painter: Y'are a dog.
Apemantus: Thy mother's of my generation. What's
 she, if I be a dog? . . .
Timon: How dost thou like this jewel, Apemantus?
Apemantus: Not as well as plain-dealing, which will
 not cost a man a doit.
Timon: What dost thou think 'tis worth?
Apemantus: Not worth my thinking. How now, poet?
Poet: How now, philosopher?
Apemantus: Thou liest.
Poet: Art not one?
Apemantus: Yes.
Poet: Then I lie not.
Apemantus: Art not a poet?
Poet: Yes.
Apemantus: Then thou liest. Look in thy last work,
 where thou has feigned him a worthy fellow.
Poet: That's not feigned: he is so.
Apemantus: Yes, he is worthy of thee, and to pay thee
 for thy labor. Hethat loves to be flattered is
 worthy o'th'flatterer. . . . Art not thou a merchant?
Merchant: Ay, Apemantus:
Apemantus: Traffic confound thee, if the gods will not!
Merchant: If traffic do it, the gods do it.
Apemantus: Traffic's thy god: and thy god confound thee!
 (I, i, 194-238)

This dialogue provides the most definite indication so far of the complacency that will bring about Timon's ruin. By casting Apemantus in the role of licensed jester, Shakespeare has placed Timon in the position of the self-assured man who derives amusement from urging the philosopher to rail at himself and his companions, but who seems totally blind to the serious implications of the jests. At the same time, however, the impact of Apemantus' remarks is qualified by his unkempt appearance and surly behaviour. Like Thersites, Apemantus demonstrates through his scurrility that he lacks the genuine Fool's ironic detachment, in that he is angered rather than amused by the

Make thy requests to thy friend.

2 Lord: Away, unpeaceable dog, or I'll spurn thee hence!

Apemantus: I will fly, like a dog, the heels o'th' ass.

[Exit]

(I, i, 254-69)

Apemantus thus suffers for the moment the conventional fate of the railing misanthrope, in that he becomes an object of ridicule. I would suggest that Shakespeare purposely stresses this aspect of Apemantus' role to keep the audience from allying itself too firmly with the philosopher's viewpoint so early in the play. The forces which bring about Timon's conversion to misanthropy must be allowed to unfold gradually if the dramatization of his downfall is to generate any sympathy. Too early an acceptance of Apemantus' view would therefore detract from the character of Timon, since he would be seen from the first as a credulous fool who revels in the flattery of parasites. Consequently Shakespeare seeks to keep the audience guessing by balancing the many obvious indications of Timon's complacency and the parasitic nature of his companions against the equally compelling instances of his unforced generosity and the scurrility of the one man who sees through the artifice of flattery surrounding him. The final part of this balancing act involves the conversation of the two Lords, who indulge in an encomium on Timon's godlike bounty as they prepare to go to his feast. On the one hand, their tribute bears witness to the almost supernatural quality of his generosity, so magnificent that a god seems to be in charge of his estates:

He pours it out. Plutus, the god of gold,
Is but his steward. No need but he repays
Sevenfold above itself: no gift to him
But breeds the giver a return exceeding
All use of quittance.

(I, i, 273-7)

On the other hand, Shakespeare hints at a more ominous interpretation of the Lords' conversation, chiefly through the imagery. In inviting his companion to go in and "taste Lord Timon's bounty" (I, i, 271), the First Lord takes up an image pattern that recurs throughout the play. This image of men consuming Timon and his fortune becomes a dominant symbol of the human greed and treachery that eventually converts Timon to misanthropy. Moreover, their praise emphasizes the material side of Timon's bounty and the obvious advantages of becoming a recipient. Such emphasis gives an ominous double meaning to their closing remarks:

1 Lord: The noblest mind he carries

That ever governed man.

2 Lord: Long may he live

In fortunes! Shall we in?

1 Lord: I'll keep you company.

(I, i, 277-9)

Shakespeare thus ends the scene on a note of anticipation. The audience is left to anticipate not only the spectacle of Timon's feast, but also the further development of Timon's character.

In contrast to the quiet opening of the first scene, Scene Two begins with great ceremony, to the accompaniment of loud music and the serving in of a great banquet. Shakespeare follows this immediately with a further demonstration of Timon's generosity, when, to the applause of his companions, he refuses Ventidius' offer to repay the loan that freed him from prison:

O, by no means,
Honest Ventidius. You mistake my love:
I gave it freely ever: and there's none
Can truly say he gives, if he receives.
If our betters play at that game, we must not dare
To imitate them: faults that are rich are fair.

(I, ii, 8-13)

This gesture of Timon's reveals in him an idealism that strives towards the absolute, both in generosity and in friendship. In contrast to the self-conscious applause-seeker of the Timon Play, this play confronts its audience with a man for whom the act of giving is itself sufficient. Timon even goes out of his way to forestall the company's adoration of him by insisting that they abandon the practice of waiting for him to be seated:

Nay, my lords, ceremony was but devised at first
 To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,
 Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown:
 But where there is true friendship, there needs none.
 Pray sit. More welcome are ye to my fortunes
 Than my fortunes to me.

(I, ii, 15-20)

But immediately upon the heels of this noble-minded declaration come the first barbed remarks of Apemantus who had, according to Shakespeare's stage directions, brought up the rear of the procession "dropping after all . . . discontentedly, like himself". Always true to his idealistic philanthropy, Timon chides Apemantus for his surliness and gives him a place by himself (I, ii, 26-35). From this vantage point Apemantus functions as a choric commentator whose asides help to deflate the extravagant declarations of Timon and his guests. At the same time this professed misanthrope exhibits an unwonted concern for Timon which itself pays tribute to the latter's nobility. His next comment offers a telling instance of this concern, when, for a brief moment, he abandons his misanthropic stance to express his sorrow at the appalling waste of Timon's substance:

. . . O you gods, what a number of men eats Timon,
 and he sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many
 dip their meat in one man's blood; and all the mad-

ness is, he cheers them up too.

(I, ii, 37-40)

Once again Shakespeare uses the image of men consuming food to emphasize the self-destructiveness of Timon's bounty. As in the first example, the image is strongly cannibalistic, for Apemantus wishes to stress the fact that the flatterers are devouring Timon himself when they consume his feast. At the same time, his use of the image contains distinctly Biblical overtones which recall St. Matthew's account of the Last Supper and Judas' betrayal (Matt. 26: 20-25). Shakespeare thus employs this most unlikely figure to create a momentary impression of pathos, as he pictures a saintly Timon cheerfully entertaining a horde of treacherous men, all eager to dip their meat in his blood. But this note of solemnity is not sustained, for Shakespeare once more attempts to qualify the effect of Apemantus' remarks by stressing the extreme nature of his misanthropy. In an ill-assorted mixture of prose and rhyming couplets the philosopher begins to moralize on the example of Timon and his guests, and to draw conclusions which the audience will find hard to accept:

I wonder men dare trust themselves with men.
 Methinks they should invite them without knives:
 Good for their meat, and safer for their lives.
 There's much example for't. The fellow that sits
 next him now, parts bread with him, pledges the
 breath of him in a divided draft, is the readiest man
 to kill him. 'T has been proved. If I were a huge
 man, I should fear to drink at meals,
 Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes.
 Great men should drink with harness on their throats.

(I, ii, 41-50)

A similar qualification takes place when Apemantus proceeds to eat his own meal. On the one hand, the simplicity of his fare accentuates the excessive quantities of food and drink consumed by Timon's other

guests. Yet there is also a definitely ridiculous side to the spectacle of this unkempt figure gnawing away at a root amid the splendours of Timon's banqueting-hall. (I, ii, 61-9) Shakespeare thus endeavours to retain the balance between the attraction of Apemantus' perceptiveness and the alienating effect of his misanthropy. The maintenance of this balance is doubly important at this point in the play since it helps to prepare the audience for the second of Timon's philanthropic statements.

Timon's discourse on the sanctity of friendship reveals the extent to which his idealism has blinded him to the reality of his surroundings. Shakespeare makes this point abundantly clear by leading up to the declaration with a most blatant example of flattering affectation from the First Lord:

Might we but have that happiness, my lord, that you would once use our hearts, whereby we might express some part of our zeals, we should think ourselves for ever perfect.

(I, ii, 79-82)

Such Osric-like blandishments hardly seem worthy of the emotion they provoke in Timon:

O no doubt, my good friends, but the gods themselves have provided that I shall have much help from you: how had you been my friends else? Why have you that charitable title from thousands, did not you chiefly belong to my heart? I have told more of you to myself than you can with modesty speak in your own behalf: and thus far I confirm you. O you gods, think I, what need we have any friends if we should ne'er have need of 'em? They were the most needless creatures living, should we ne'er have use for 'em: and would most resemble sweet instruments hung up in cases, that keeps their sounds to themselves. Why, I have often wished myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits; and what better or properer can we call our own

than the riches of our friends? O what a precious comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes! O joy, e'en made away ere't can be born! Mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks. To forget their faults I drink to you.

(I, ii, 83-101)

Like so many of his utterances in the first part of the play, this outburst of Timon's is heavy with irony. To Timon the "help" decreed by the gods is that idealized universal friendship to which he aspires, little knowing that he will very soon have to rely on quite another sort. All his pronouncements on the usefulness of friends indicate that Timon looks upon the world from as extreme a viewpoint as that of his alter ego, Apemantus, for whereas the philosopher can see nothing good in men, Timon can see nothing evil. It is therefore most important to ensure that Apemantus' gibes at Timon do not detract so much from the latter's idealism that the peculiar relationship between the two is upset in Apemantus' favour. Once again, Shakespeare attempts to maintain a balanced response by allowing Apemantus to acknowledge Timon's statement only briefly before he turns his attention to the deflation of the guests' fulsome compliments:

Apemantus: Thou weep'st to make them drink, Timon.

2 Lord: Joy had the like conception in our eyes

And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

Apemantus: Ho, ho! I laugh to think that babe a bastard.

(I, ii, 102-5)

Apemantus' role as commentator reaches its climax during a masque put on in Timon's honour by a troupe of ladies dressed as Amazons (I, ii, 114-50). This masque, with its stately music and dancing, adds a touch of formality to the banquet, and helps to set Timon apart in almost a kingly fashion, for he receives the adoration of

the dancers in much the same way as King James accepted the homage of participants in the contemporary court masque:

The Lords rise from table, with much adoring of Timon,
and to show their loves, each single out an Amazon,
and all dance, men with women, a lofty strain or
two to the hautboys, and cease.

(S.D., I, ii, 138)

It is interesting at this point to compare this feast scene with parallel scenes from the Timon Play, where such formality and decorousness is totally lacking. Whereas the anonymous playwright chose to emphasize Timon's reckless profligacy by involving him in scenes of disorderly revelling with a host of drunken friends, Shakespeare depicts a much more appealing character who likes to surround himself with beauty in all its forms. The masque is thus of a piece with the jewel, the painting and the poem, all of which come into being as a result of Timon's generosity. But like the other three, the masque too can be viewed as a tool of flatterers, and it is again left to Apemantus to drive this point home to the audience:

Hoy-day!
What a sweep of vanity comes this way!
They dance? They are madwomen.
Like madness is the glory of this life
As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.
We make ourselves fools to disport ourselves
And spend our flatteries to drink those men
Upon whose age we void it up again
With poisonous spite and envy.
Who lives that's not depraved or depraves?
Who dies that bears not one spurn to their graves
Of their friends' gift?
I should fear those that dance before me now
Would one day stamp upon me. 'T has been done.
Men shut their doors against a setting sun.

(I, ii, 124-38)

Here again Shakespeare creates an interesting visual contrast between

the shabby, carping figure of Apemantus and the graceful appearance of the masquers. This, coupled with his extreme misanthropy, helps to mitigate the effect of Apemantus' remarks on the audience's conception of Timon. As he has done several times before, Shakespeare here endeavours to depict Timon's naiveté and its probable consequences without making his protagonist too contemptible. Since Apemantus' effectiveness as a commentator is clearly limited by his misanthropic bias, it is necessary at this point to bring in another character whose view of Timon is less censorious. This character is Flavius the Steward.

Flavius makes his first appearance at the end of the masque, when, in another burst of generosity, Timon orders him to bring a casket of jewels. Although outwardly obedient, he voices his concern over his master's extravagance in an aside:

More jewels yet?
 There is no crossing him in's humor;
 Else I should tell him well, i'faith I should:
 When all's spent, he'd be crossed then, and he could.
 'Tis pity bounty had not eyes behind,
 That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind.

(I, ii, 153-8)

Soon afterwards Flavius tries to warn Timon of his perilous financial condition, but is thwarted by the latter's refusal to listen and his own apparent reluctance to create a disturbance in front of the guests. (I, ii, 170-74) Finally, when a procession of servants provokes Timon to new excesses of bounty with tributes from still more admiring friends, the steward despairingly reveals to the audience that Timon has nothing left to give:

What will this come to?

He commands us to provide and give great gifts,
 And all out of an empty coffer;
 Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this,
 To show him what a beggar his heart is,
 Being of no power to make his wishes good.
 His promises fly so beyond his state
 That what he speaks is all in debt: he owes
 For every word. He is so kind that he now
 Pays interest for't: his land's put to their books.
 Well, would I were gently put out of office
 Before I were forced out!
 Happier is he that has no friend to feed
 Than such that do e'en enemies exceed.
 I bleed inwardly for my lord.

(I, ii, 185-99)

Coming as it does from the servant in charge of Timon's estates, this speech carries far greater conviction than all the warnings of Apemantus. Moreover, Flavius immediately proves to be a much more appealing character than the surly philosopher. Once again, a comparison with the Timon Play reveals the extent to which Shakespeare has used Flavius to create sympathy for Timon. In that play the steward, Laches, is depicted as a forthright, rough-spoken man who chides Timon for his recklessness at every opportunity until he is driven from the house with blows and abuse. Consequently his subsequent loyalty to his master and his decision to follow Timon into the wilderness is totally unmotivated. Flavius, by contrast, exhibits from the first a deference towards his master that makes him unwilling to shame Timon before company. More important, his asides reveal a genuine concern for Timon's well-being and an equally genuine sorrow at his undoing. As a result, Flavius instantly wins the audience's sympathy in a way that is impossible for the misanthropic Apemantus. He is therefore able to confirm the truth of the philosopher's warnings without making Timon seem contemptible. Indeed, his words enhance the

poignancy of Timon's situation, for they indicate a nobility of character that has won Timon the love of this most admirable servant.

After this revelation of Timon's poverty, the remainder of the scene takes place in an atmosphere of bitter irony, as Timon extravagantly persists in displaying his generosity, oblivious to his fast-approaching ruin. Shakespeare gives him one last philanthropic declaration in the form of a farewell speech to the departing parasites:

I take all and your several visitations
So kind to heart 'tis not enough to give.
Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends
And ne'er be weary.

(I, ii, 212-15)

The speech takes on added significance as Timon's farewell to the last of his departing fortune. As the feast breaks up with courteous leave-taking (I, ii, 220-24), Shakespeare again uses Apemantus to reduce the entire spectacle to absurdity:

What a coil's here!
Serving of becks and jutting-out of bums!
I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums
That are given for 'em. Friendship's full of dregs.
Methinks false hearts should never have sound legs.
Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on curtsies.

(I, ii, 224-9)

The philosopher then directs his abuse at Timon in a vain effort to warn him of his danger:

Timon: Now, Apemantus, if thou wert not sullen,
I would be good to thee.
Apemantus: No, I'll nothing; for if I should be
bribed too, there would be none left to rail upon
thee, and then thou wouldst sin the faster. Thou
giv'st so long, Timon, I fear me thou wilt give
thyself away in paper shortly. What needs these
feasts, poms, and vainglories?

Timon: Nay, an you begin to rail on society once,
I am sworn not to give regard to you. Farewell,
and come with better music.

(I, ii, 230-39)

Apemantus angrily leaves the stage, resolving to abandon Timon to his fate, and lamenting the obduracy of men addicted to flattery:

So. Thou wilt not hear me now; thou shalt not
then. I'll lock thy heaven from thee.
O that men's ears should be
To counsel deaf but not to flattery!

(I, ii, 240-43)

Although this final exchange does reveal Timon's unwillingness to accept advice, Apemantus too receives his share of ridicule for the self-importance he displays in assuming that he alone holds the key to Timon's salvation. Here, as elsewhere, Shakespeare indicates that Apemantus' misanthropy limits his usefulness as a balanced observer of characters and events. Like a Fool, whose role he sometimes usurps, he is noticed and baited, but hardly ever believed.

I have dwelt at considerable length on the dialogue of the first act in an effort to show how Shakespeare attempts a gradual revelation of Timon's lack of perception, designed to maintain sympathy for the protagonist without blinding the audience to his obvious faults. By using Apemantus as both the instigator and the object of ridicule, he seeks to keep the audience from passing judgement on Timon's extravagance until it has been provided with abundant evidence of his nobility. Unlike the author of the Timon Play, who exhibits his protagonist's folly within a few lines, and then goes on to present several variations on the same idea, Shakespeare unfolds the details of Timon's situation little by little, so that, by the end of

the first act, he has prepared his audience to witness the inexorable forces that bring about his downfall.

With the beginning of the second act, the pace of the action picks up noticeably, as Timon's creditors begin to gather. Although Shakespeare does not identify the Senator of the opening episode, he may well have intended that the audience should recognize him as one of Timon's guests from the previous scene. This circumstance would add an edge of bitter irony to the Senator's self-righteous condemnation of Timon's extravagance, especially since his remarks directly parallel the tribute of the Second Lord at the end of I, i:⁴

It cannot hold: it will not.
 If I want gold, steal but a beggar's dog
 And give it Timon--why, the dog coins gold.
 If I would sell my horse and buy twenty moe
 Better than he--why, give my horse to Timon:
 Ask nothing, give it him--it foals me straight,
 And able horses. No porter at his gate,
 But rather one that smiles and still invites
 All that pass by. It cannot hold: no reason
 Can sound his state in safety.

(II, i, 4-13)

The Senator's criticism of Timon evokes a complex response. On the one hand, his mercenary outlook and calculating decision to call in his debts before Timon goes bankrupt, place him firmly in the company of Timon's rapacious trencher-friends:

My uses cry to me: I must serve my turn
 Out of mine own . . . I love and honor him,
 But must not break my back to heal his finger.

(II, i, 20-24)

On the other hand, he is undeniably right in his estimate of Timon's financial state--a fact which the reliable Flavius drives home only a few lines later:

No care, no stop: so senseless of expense
 That he will neither know how to maintain it
 Nor cease his flow of riot: takes no account
 How things go from him nor resumes no care
 Of what is to continue. Never mind
 Was to be so unwise to be so kind.

(II, ii, 1-6)

What Flavius hesitated to do in the first act is finally accomplished here, when Timon suffers the humiliation of being dunned by his creditors' servants while in the company of his guests (II, ii, 15-36). Once again Shakespeare endeavours to rouse the audience's sympathy for Timon, this time by depicting his bewilderment at this sudden onslaught of the creditors' servants, and by indicating that the latter are not particularly enthusiastic about their assignment:

Caphis: Good even, Varro. What, you come for money?

Varro: Is't not your business too?

Caphis: It is: and yours too, Isidore?

Isidore's Servant: It is so.

Caphis: Would we were all discharged!

Varro's Servant: I fear it.

(II, ii, 10-13)

The situation now requires that there be a pause in the action while Flavius informs his master about the details of his debts. Since the audience already knows this information, it would serve no purpose to reiterate the details here. Moreover, the Steward would be most unlikely to augment Timon's humiliation by publicly exposing his financial condition. Shakespeare therefore removes the pair from the stage for a brief period (II, ii, 245), and fills the interval with a most puzzling dialogue between the creditors' servants, Apemantus and a Fool (II, ii, 47-119).

The sudden appearance of a Fool in this play has so mystified commentators and directors alike that it is normally dismissed as an

unfinished scene and cut from productions. Admittedly the scene contains a number of loose ends which indicate that Shakespeare might have intended to use the Fool elsewhere but later changed his mind. At one point, for example, Apemantus reveals that he is bringing the Fool to visit Timon, and perhaps to become his servant:

Apemantus: . . .Fool, I will go with you to Lord Timon's.

Fool: Will you leave me there?

Apemantus: If Timon stay at home.

(II, ii, 86-9)

Yet it is obvious from the beginning that the Fool is already employed, since his status as the servant of a bawd has been previously exploited in the dialogue with the servants. Furthermore, the Fool does not appear again, nor is any mention made of his ever having visited Timon. There is also the matter of the Page (II, ii, 72-85). This fellow servant of the Fool's carries letters to Timon and Alcibiades, yet there is never any explanation given of what these letters contain or why the proprietress of a brothel should be writing to Timon. Indeed, the Page's sole function in the play seems to be that of providing yet another target for Apemantus' insults:

Page: . . . How dost thou, Apemantus?

Apemantus: Would I had a rod in my mouth, that I might answer thee profitably.

Page: Prithee, Apemantus, read me the superscription of these letters: I know not which is which.

Apemantus: Canst not read?

Page: No.

Apemantus: There will little learning die then the day thou art hanged. This is to Lord Timon: this to Alcibiades. Go: thou wast born a bastard, and thou'lt die a bawd.

(II, ii, 74-83)

Yet the scene is not completely irrelevant, nor is it merely a piece of comic relief. For one thing, Shakespeare uses the Fool's position

as the servant of a bawd to draw a telling parallel between the habits of Timon's creditors and those of the brothel-keeper. Apemantus first makes this connection when he derides the three servants as "poor rogues and usurers' men: bawds between gold and want" (II, ii, 59-60): and the Fool later enlarges upon it when he too discovers the nature of their employment:

Fool: Are you three usurers' men?

All Servants: Ay, Fool.

Fool: I think no usurer but has a fool to his servant. My mistress is one, and I am her fool.

When men come to borrow of your masters, they approach sadly and go away merry: but they enter my mistress' house merrily and go away sadly.

(II, ii, 94-100)

This witticism of the Fool's has a grimly ironic application to Timon, for like a man who looks for love in a brothel, Timon has sought for the ideals of friendship among mercenary men. Shakespeare may also have intended to use the Fool to point out Apemantus' limited effectiveness as a social critic. At the beginning of the scene the three usurers' men greet the philosopher's entry with angry comments on his well-known habit of scurrility, and then attempt unsuccessfully to exclude him from their conversation with the Fool:

Caphis: Stay, stay: here comes the fool with Apemantus.

Let's ha' some sport with 'em.

Varro's Servant: Hang him, he'll abuse us.

Isidore's Servant: A plague upon him, dog!

Varro's Servant: How dost, fool?

Apemantus: Dost dialogue with thy shadow?

Varro's Servant: I speak not to thee.

Apemantus: No, 'tis to thyself. [to the Fool]

Come away.

(II, ii, 47-54)

Later his gibes at the Page earn Apemantus the usual canine epithet:

Thou was whelped a dog and thou shalt famish a dog's death. Answer not, I am gone.

(II, ii, 84-5)

Yet the Fool rails just as bitterly at the three men without provoking their anger. Indeed, Apemantus himself pays tribute to his companion's misanthropic rejoinders by comparing them favourably with his own efforts:

Varro's Servant: What is a whoremaster, fool?

Fool: A fool in good clothes, and something like thee. 'Tis a spirit: sometime't appears like a lord, sometime like a lawyer, sometime like a philosopher, with two stones more than's artificial one. He is very often like a knight: and, generally, in all shapes that man goes up and down in, from fourscore to thirteen, this spirit walks in.

Varro's Servant: Thou art not altogether a fool.

Fool: Nor thou altogether a wise man. As much foolery as I have, so much wit thou lack'st.

Apemantus: That answer might have become Apemantus.
(II, ii, 105-15)

Although it is impossible to discover Shakespeare's intentions from the evidence of this one scene, he may have considered including the Fool instead of the philosopher in later scenes with Timon, much as he had used the same sort of character in King Lear. This might explain Apemantus' motives for bringing the Fool to Timon. Having vainly attempted to criticize Timon himself the philosopher now seeks to provide him with a companion whose gibes might gain some hearing. Unfortunately, the interlude ends as mysteriously as it begins, and the Fool disappears from the play without further comment.

With the departure of the Fool and Apemantus, the audience's attention turns back to the confrontation between Timon and his steward. Once again Shakespeare seeks to build up sympathy for Timon by depicting his anguished bewilderment, as, one by one, the props that supported his benevolence are knocked out from under him. Paradoxically, this scene presents a most effective depiction of Timon's admirable

qualities even as it informs the audience of his most glaring faults. Shakespeare manages to bring this about by emphasizing the obvious distress of Flavius, as the unhappy steward forces his master to face the truth of his poverty. When, for example, Timon attempts to blame the steward for his own negligence, (II, ii, 125-9) Flavius justifies himself by recounting instances of Timon's carelessness, but his accusations are made with sorrow rather than anger:

O my good lord,
 At many times I brought in my accounts,
 Laid them before you. You would throw them off
 And say you found them in mine honesty.
 When for some trifling present you have bid me
 Return so much, I have shook my head and wept:
 Yea, 'gainst th'authority of manners prayed you
 To hold your hand more close. I did endure
 Not seldom, nor no slight checks, when I have
 Prompted you in the ebb of your estate
 And your great flow of debts. My lovèd lord,
 Though you hear me now too late, yet now's a time:
 The greatness of your having lacks a half
 To pay your present debts.

(II, ii, 129-42)

While Timon dazedly tries to comprehend the fact that all his land is now gone, Flavius offers a graphic account of the riotous waste that brought about their loss. Yet here again Shakespeare places the emphasis not upon Timon's prodigality but on Flavius' sorrow:

When all our offices have been oppressed
 With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept
 With drunken spilth of wine, when every room
 Hath blazed with lights and brayed with minstrelsy,
 I have retired me to a wasteful cock
 And set mine eyes at flow.

(II, ii, 155-60)

His sorrow quickly turns to anger at the remembrance of those who devoured Timon's wealth:

Heavens, have I said, the bounty of this lord!
 How many prodigal bits have slaves and peasants
 This night englutted! Who is not Timon's?
 What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is Lord Timon's
 Great Timon; noble, worthy, royal Timon!
 Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise,
 The breath is gone whereof this praise is made.
 Feast-won, fast-lost: one cloud of winter show'rs,
 These flies are couched.

(II, ii, 161-9)

Having thus allowed Flavius to dominate the conversation for much of the scene, Shakespeare now shifts attention back to Timon, who reasserts the idealistic vision of friendship he had developed in the first act and optimistically resolves to put it to the test:

Come, sermon me no further.
 No villainous bounty yet hath passed my heart:
 Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.
 Why, dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack
 To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart:
 If I would broach the vessels of my love,
 And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,
 Men and men's fortunes could I frankly use
 As I can bid thee speak, . . .
 And in some sort these wants of mine are crowned,
 That I account them blessings: for by these
 Shall I try friends. You shall perceive how you
 Mistake my fortunes: I am wealthy in my friends.

(II, ii, 169-81)

This confidence of Timon's might strike the audience as no more than hollow bravado, were it not for the effect it has on Flavius. Although sceptical, the steward keeps his doubts to himself, and hopes against hope that his master will prove to be right (II, ii, 177). Only when Timon orders him to ask the senators for a loan does Flavius add to his master's disillusionment in a bitter description of their response:

They answer in a joint and corporate voice
 That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
 Do what they would, are sorry: you are honorable,
 But yet they could have wished--they know not--
 Something hath been amiss--a noble nature

May catch a wretch--would all were well--'tis pity--
 And so, intending other serious matters,
 After distasteful looks and these hard fractions,
 With certain half-caps and cold-moving nods
 They froze me into silence.

(II, ii, 200-209)

Timon's reaction to this news demonstrates the strength of his idealism and thus heightens the pathos of his subsequent disillusionment.

Momentarily shaken, he immediately recovers his optimism and even seeks to comfort Flavius:

You gods, reward them!
 Prithee, man, look cheerily. Those old fellows
 Have their ingratitude in them hereditary.
 Their blood is caked, 'tis cold, it seldom flows;
 'tis lack of kindly warmth they are not kind;
 And nature, as it grows again toward earth,
 Is fashioned for the journey, dull and heavy.
 Go to Ventidius. Prithee be not sad:
 Thou art true and honest: ingeniously I speak,
 No blame belongs to thee.

(II, ii, 209-18)

Shakespeare closes the second act on a note of foreboding, as Timon leaves the stage with one last idealistic outburst:

Ne'er speak or think
 That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink.

(II, ii, 226-7)

Ironically these lines mark Timon's final appearance before his conversion to misanthropy.

When examining the events that lead up to Timon's first misanthropic outburst, it is again interesting to compare Shakespeare's version with that of the Timon Play. The anonymous dramatist postpones the disclosure of Timon's downfall until near the end of the third act, and then presents it in the form of a sudden announcement delivered by a shipwrecked sailor in the middle of Timon's wedding banquet (III, v, 66-75). Immediately the false friends begin to desert, and throughout

the fourth act they are seen to abuse Timon, who himself goes to test their constancy. As a result the playwright exposes his protagonist to a great deal of humiliation and ridicule. The audience is treated to the spectacle of a character who first raves at the injustice of the gods in a most ludicrous fashion (III, v, 138ff.), calls on the earth to swallow him (IV, i, 40-62), and throws himself on the ground to suffer the gibes of his erstwhile drinking companions (IV, i; ii). Timon's fury breaks out at several points during the course of these scenes, so that his decision to revenge himself by means of the false banquet comes as no surprise.⁵ By contrast, Shakespeare keeps Timon offstage throughout the exposure of his friends' treachery, and mirrors his anguish in the reactions of several minor characters. This device allows Shakespeare to create a variety of incidents and responses, each of which contributes to the buildup of tension leading to the disclosure of Timon's conversion. In the first scene, for example, he confronts the glib hypocrisy of Lucullus with the righteous anger of Timon's servant, Flaminius. Their meeting starts out on a rather farcical note, as Lucullus' greedy anticipation of a gift from Timon prompts him to mix unctuous flattery of Timon with what might be interpreted as an attempt to frisk the servant:

Lucullus: [aside] One of Lord Timon's men? A gift, I warrant. Why, this hits right, I dreamt of a silver basin and ewer tonight--Flaminius, honest Flaminius, you are very respectively welcome, sir. . . . And how does that honorable, complete, free-hearted gentleman of Athens, thy very bountiful good lord and master?

Flaminius: His health is well, sir.

Lucullus: I am right glad that his health is well, sir. And what hast thou there under thy cloak, pretty Flaminius?

(III, i, 5-14)

When Flaminius reveals his errand, Lucullus reacts with a pious rectitude that greatly heightens the irony of his words:

Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I ha' dined with him and told him on't, and come again to supper to him of purpose to have him spend less: and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his. I ha' told him on't, but I could ne'er get him from't.

(III, i, 21-7)

Up to this point Flaminius has merely acted the part of the respectful subordinate. His reaction is thus all the more startling, when he responds to Lucullus' attempt at bribery (III, i, 32-41) with an outburst of rage:

Let molten coin be thy damnation,
Thou disease of a friend, and not himself!
Has friendship such a faint and milky heart
It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,
I feel my master's passion. This slave unto his honor
Has my lord's meat in him.
Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment
When he is turned to poison?
O may diseases only work upon't:
And when he's sick to death, let not that part of nature
Which my lord paid for be of any power
To expel sickness, but prolong his hour!

(III, i, 49-60)

Flaminius' anger foreshadows the subsequent fury of Timon, whose passion is reflected in the disease imagery used here by the servant. In the next encounter Shakespeare varies the pattern by transferring the function of commentator from the servant, Servilius, to three Strangers. These men have already informed Lucius, the second of the false friends, of Timon's poverty and Lucullus' treachery (III, ii, 3-14) by the time Servilius arrives, and Lucius has responded with self-righteous condemnation, never believing for a moment that he will have

to live up to his promises:

What a strange case was that! Now before the gods,
I am ashamed on't. Denied that honorable man? There
was very little honor showed in't. For my own part,
I must needs confess, I have received some small
kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and
such-like trifles--nothing comparing to his: yet had
he mistook him and sent to me, I should ne'er have
denied his occasion so many talents.

(III, ii, 16-23)

Shakespeare emphasizes the hollowness of this pledge by following it immediately with the entrance of Servilius, who strives to relate his message in spite of constant interruptions from the greedy parasite:

Servilius: See, by good hap, yonder's my lord. I have
sweat to see his honor--My honored lord!

Lucius: Servilius? You are kindly met, sir. Fare
thee well: commend me to thy honorable virtuous
lord, my very exquisite friend.

Servilius: May it please your honor, my lord hath
sent--

Lucius: Ha! What has he sent? I am much endeared
to that lord! He's ever sending. How shall I
thank him, think'st thou? And what has he sent now?

(III, ii, 24-32)

Once he is convinced that Servilius is not joking, Lucius changes his tune with grim predictability, and makes a mockery of his former pose:

What a wicked beast was I to disfurnish myself
against such a good time, when I might ha' shown
myself honorable! How unluckily it happ'ned that I
should purchase the day before for a little part and
undo a great deal of honor! Servilius, now before
the gods, I am not able to do--the more beast, I say--
I was sending to use Lord Timon myself, these gentle-
men can witness: but I would not for the wealth of
Athens I had done't now. Commend me bountifully to
his good lordship; and I hope his honor will conceive
the fairest of me, because I have no power to be kind.
And tell him this from me: I count it one of my
greatest afflictions, say, that I cannot pleasure
such an honorable gentleman.

(III, ii, 43-55)

Although these lines speak for themselves, Shakespeare seeks to drive home the magnitude of Lucius' perfidy still more forcefully through the commentary of the three Strangers (III, ii, 63-86). Unlike Flaminius, whose loyalty to Timon drives him to anger, these neutral observers maintain a tone of measured indignation, in the face of Lucius' shameless lies. Using the food image that had dominated the feast scene, the First Stranger reveals the true extent of Lucius' debt to Timon in a wholesale denunciation of flattery:

Why, this is the world's soul, and just of the same piece
 Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him
 His friend that dips in the same dish? For in
 My knowing Timon has been this lord's father
 And kept his credit with his purse,
 Supported his estate. Nay, Timon's money
 Has paid his men their wages. He ne'er drinks
 But Timon's silver treads upon his lip:
 And yet--O, see the monstrousness of man
 When he looks out in an ungrateful shape!--
 He does deny him, in respect of his,
 Which charitable men afford to beggars.

(III, ii, 63-74)

He then goes on to emphasize Timon's nobility in a speech that directly parallels Lucius' pledge of III, ii, 19-23:

For mine own part,
 I never tasted Timon in my life,
 Nor came any of his bounties over me
 To mark me for his friend: yet I protest,
 For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,
 And honorable carriage,
 Had his necessity made use of me,
 I would have put my wealth into donation
 And the best half should have returned to him,
 So much I love his heart.

(III, ii, 75-84)

For the third encounter, Shakespeare reverts to the pattern of confronting the false friend with a single servant. This time, however, it is the friend, Sempronius, who becomes angry in a barefaced attempt

to bluster his way out of his obligations. First, he petulantly wonders why Timon came to him before the other friends (III, iii, 1-5), and then shifts his position with amazing rapidity when he is informed of their refusal to help:

Must I be his last refuge? His friends, like physicians,
Thrice give him over. Must I take th'cure upon me?
Has much disgraced me in't; I'm angry at him,
That might have known my place. I see no sense for't
But his occasion might have wooed me first:
For, in my conscience, I was the first man
That e'er received gift from him:
And does he think so backwardly of me now
That I'll requite it last? No.

(III, iii, 11-19)

Unlike Flaminius, Timon's third servant reacts to Sempronius' treachery with Apemantus-like cynicism:

Excellent! Your lordship's a goodly villain. The
devil knew not what he did when he made man politic.
He crossed himself by't: and I cannot think but in the
end the villainies of man will set him clear.
How fairly this lord strives to appear foul! takes
virtuous copies to be wicked, like those that under
hot ardent zeal would set whole realms on fire. Of
such a nature is his politic love.

(III, iii, 27-34)

He then reverts to verse in a speech that prepares the audience for the events of the following scene:

This was my lord's best hope: now all are fled
Save only the gods. Now his friends are dead.
Doors that were ne'er acquainted with their wards
Many a bounteous year must be employed
Now to guard sure their master.
And this is all a liberal course allows:
Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house.

(III, iii, 35-41)

By presenting the desertion of Timon's friends in this way, Shakespeare avoids the loss of dramatic tension evident in the fourth act of the Timon Play. The use of three different commentators instead

of Timon himself, not only enhances the dignity of the protagonist by indicating that he does not run his own errands; but also builds up suspense by causing the audience to wonder what effect all this is having on Timon. Furthermore, Shakespeare seeks to avoid monotony by creating in the evasions of Lucullus, Lucius and Sempronius, three distinct variations on the theme of human ingratitude. The scenes convey the impression that Athens has become a city where the finer qualities of loyalty and generosity reside only in servants and foreigners. It is amid this atmosphere that Shakespeare finally presents the reaction of Timon.

The fourth scene opens with the realization of the Third Servant's fears, as the creditors' servants again gather before Timon's house. Before revealing Timon's distraction to the audience, Shakespeare once more seeks to emphasize the magnitude of his friends' treachery, this time by putting the condemnation into the mouths of the very men who are besieging Timon on behalf of those friends:

Titus: I'll show you how t'observe a strange event.

Your lord sends now for money.

Hortensius: Most true, he does.

Titus: And he wears jewels now of Timon's gift,

For which I wait for money.

Hortensius: It is against my heart.

Lucius' Servant: Mark how strange it shows:

Timon in this should pay more than he owes,

And e'en as if your lord should wear rich jewels

And send for money for 'em.

Hortensius: I am weary of this charge, the gods can witness:

I know my lord hath spent of Timon's wealth,

And now ingratitude makes it worse than stealth.

(III, iv, 18-28)

Their regret is brief, however, and the defense of Timon soon reverts to the Steward, who confronts the creditors' servants with an angry

denunciation:

If money were as certain as your waiting,
 'Twere sure enough.
 Why then preferred you not your sums and bills
 When your false masters ate of my lord's meat?
 Then they could smile, and fawn upon his debts,
 And take down th'int'rest into their glutt'nous maws.
 You do yourselves but wrong to stir me up:
 Let me pass quietly.
 Believ't, my lord and I have made an end:
 I have no more to reckon, he to spend.

(III, iv, 47-56)

All this time the audience has been aware that Timon remains within the house besieged by this flock of insistent creditors, and haunted by the knowledge that the men he thought of as friends have turned on him in ingratitude. Shakespeare constantly reminds the audience of this fact both in the comments of the creditors' servants and in the actions of Timon's own retainers, who, like Flavius (III, ii, 41-2) go to great lengths to evade the creditors' insistent demands. Timon's predicament is forcefully brought home in the vindictive reaction of Varro's two servants to Flavius' anger:

1 Varro's Man: How? What does his cashiered worship mutter?
2 Varro's Man: No matter what: he's poor, and that's
 revenge enough. Who can speak broader than he
 that has no house to put his head in? Such may
 rail against great buildings.

(III, iv, 60-65)

After all this preparation, the disclosure of Timon's conversion takes place quickly. First, Shakespeare brings on Servilius to warn the creditors' servants of Timon's distraction:

If I might beseech you, gentlemen, to repair some
 other hour, I should derive much from't. For take't
 of my soul, my lord leans wondrously to discontent.
 His comfortable temper has forsook him: he's much
 out of health and keeps his chamber.

(III, iv, 67-71)

Then, after a few remarks from the sceptical creditors, Timon suddenly bursts onto the scene:

What, are my doors opposed against my passage?
 Have I been ever free, and must my house
 Be my retentive enemy, my jail?
 The place which I have feasted, does it now
 Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?

(III, iv, 78-82)

The impact of Timon's rage is heightened by the implicit contrast between this scene and his last appearance in II, ii, and by the fact that its revelation comes as the climax of a carefully-planned buildup of dramatic tension, designed to focus as much attention as possible on the pathos of Timon's disillusionment. Shakespeare now seeks to augment this pathos in a bitterly farcical dialogue between the enraged Timon and his bewildered creditors, who persist in dunning him in spite of his obvious transformation. As each of the servants presses forward with his bill, Timon speaks of himself in terms of the sacrificial imagery first used by Apemantus during the feast scene (I, ii, 37-40):

Timon: Knock me down with 'em; cleave me to the
 girdle!

Lucius' Servant: Alas, my lord--

Timon: Cut my heart in sums!

Titus: Mine, fifty talents.

Timon: Tell out my blood!

Lucius' Servant: Five thousand crowns, my lord.

Timon: Five thousand drops pays that. What yours?
 and yours?

1 Varro's Man: My lord--

2 Varro's Man: My lord--

Timon: Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon you!
 (III, iv, 89-98)

Timon then leaves as abruptly as he had come, only to enter a moment later to announce preparations for what later turns out to be the false banquet. Once more it is instructive to compare Shakespeare's

handling of this episode with the corresponding lines from the Timon Play. The anonymous playwright has Timon specifically proclaim his intention of revenging himself at the proposed feast:

Timon: O thou, revenge, come wholly to my hands!
I will revenge.

Laches: That takes not griefe away.

Timon: But it will lessen griefe: something Ile doe:
Ile not consume this day in idlenesse.
Invite these rascalls.

Laches: What shall they doe here?

Timon: I have prepared them a worthy feaste:
Goe, call them therefore; tell them there remains
Of soe much wealth as yet some overplus.

(Timon: IV, iv, 142-51)

Shakespeare, on the other hand, leaves Timon's intentions mostly to the audience's imagination. He also augments the speaking part of the Steward in another effort to win sympathy for Timon in his disillusionment:

Timon: They have e'en put my breath from me, the
slaves! Creditors? Devils!

Steward: My dear lord--

Timon: What if it should be so?

Steward: My lord--

Timon: I'll have it so. My steward!

Steward: Here, my lord.

Timon: So fitly? Go, bid all my friends again,
Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius--all.
I'll once more feast the rascals.

Steward: O my lord,
You only speak from your distracted soul:
There is not so much left to furnish out
A moderate table.

Timon: Be it not in thy care. Go,
I charge thee, invite them all: let in the tide
Of knaves once more: my cook and I'll provide.

(III, iv, 102-16)

Having thus raised the audience's expectations, Shakespeare now brings the primary action to a momentary halt while he develops what is undoubtedly the most puzzling element of the entire play--the Alcibiades sub-plot.

Up to this point, the audience has seen relatively little of Alcibiades. In his initial appearance, as one of Timon's many guests (I, i, 245-54), there is nothing to distinguish Alcibiades from the host of flatterers. Indeed, he even provokes the ridicule of Apemantus with his courteous salute (I, i, 245-9), and greets Timon with the food image used elsewhere to denote the voracious greed of Timon's false friends:

Sir, you have saved my longing, and I feed
Most hungerly on your sight.

(I, i, 250-51)

During the feast scene, however, Shakespeare uses the same image to differentiate between Alcibiades and the flatterers:

Timon: Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.

Alcibiades: My heart is ever at your service, my lord.

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

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

(I, ii, 71-7)

This dialogue is reminiscent of Prince Hal's ironic description of Hotspur (I Henry IV, II, iv, 97-104), and may well suggest a comparable soldierly naïveté. The suggestion is further reinforced by the fact that Apemantus seems to approve of the sentiment:

Would all these flatterers were thine enemies then,
that then thou mightst kill 'em--and bid me to 'em!

(I, ii, 77-8)

At the end of the scene Alcibiades is included among the recipients of Timon's farewell distribution of gifts (I, ii, 215-19), and in the second act he appears briefly as a silent witness to the first onslaught of Timon's creditors (II, ii, 15-36). These appearances do little to

prepare the audience for Alcibiades' emergence in Act III as a major character. Moreover, Shakespeare's portrayal of Alcibiades departs significantly from the account of his primary source, Plutarch's Life of Alcibiades. Plutarch describes the character as a man of great beauty and promise, whose outstanding talents both as general and politician were offset by his arrogance and ostentatiously dissolute life-style. This extract from North's translation of Plutarch clearly sets out the duality of Alcibiades' character as it appeared to sixteenth-century Englishmen:

Yet with all these goodly deedes and faire words of Alcibiades, and with this great courage and quicknesse of understanding, he had many great faults and imperfections. For he was too daintie in his fare, wantonly given unto light women, riotous in bankets, vaine and womanish in apparell. . . . The noblemen, and best citizens of ATHENS perceiving this, they hated his fashions and conditions, and were much offended at him, and were afeard withall of his rashnesse and insolencie: he did so contemne the lawes and customes of their countrie, being manifest tokens of a man that aspired to be King, and would subvert and turne all over hand. And as for the good will of the common people towards him, the poet Aristophanes doth plainly expresse it in these words:

The people most desire what most they hate to have:
and what their minde abhorres, even that they seem to crave.

For to say truely: his curtesies, his liberalities, and noble expences to shew the people so great pleasure and pastime as nothing could be more: the glorious memorie of his auncesters, the grace of his eloquence, the beautie of his person, the strength and valiantnesse of his body, joyned together with his wisdom and experience in martiall affaires: were the very causes that made them to beare with him in all things, and that the ATHENIANS did patiently endure all his light parts, and did cover his faults, with the best wordes and termes they could, calling them youthfull, and gentelmens sports.⁶

Shakespeare, however, ignores this duality and presents Alcibiades as

a plain-spoken soldier whose loyalty and appreciation of valor prompts him to appeal to the Senate on behalf of his friend. Plutarch's account also attaches some blame to Alcibiades for his banishment by indicating that his own insolence did as much to rouse the suspicion of the Athenians as the false accusations of his enemies.⁷ Shakespeare passes over this consideration, and invents the story of the soldier accused of manslaughter in order to place the blame entirely with the Senators. From the first, their self-righteous insistence on the law's rigor is contrasted unfavourably with the eloquence of Alcibiades' plea for mercy:

1 Senator: My lord, you have my voice to't: the fault's

Bloody: 'tis necessary he should die.

Nothing emboldens sin as much as mercy. . . .

Alcibiades: I am an humble suitor to your virtues:

For pity is the virtue of the law,
 And none but tyrants use it cruelly.
 It pleases time and fortune to lie heavy
 Upon a friend of mine, who in hot blood
 Hath stepped into the law, which is past depth
 To those that without heed do plunge into't.
 He is a man, setting this fault aside,
 Of comely virtues;
 Nor did he soil the fact with cowardice
 (An honor in him which buys out his fault)
 But with a noble fury and fair spirit,
 Seeing his reputation touched to death,
 He did oppose his foe:
 And with such sober and unnoted passion
 He did behave his anger, ere 'twas spent,
 As if he had but proved an argument.

(III, v, 1-23)

When Alcibiades continues to urge his case, the Senators compound their guilt by adding the sin of ingratitude to that of mercilessness:

Alcibiades: I cannot think but your age has forgot me:

It could not else be I should prove so base,

To sue and be denied such common grace.

My wounds ache at you.

1 Senator: Do you dare our anger?

'Tis in few words but spacious in effect:
We banish thee for ever.

(III, v. 92-7)

Although Shakespeare does not specifically identify him as such, it would make good dramatic sense to consider this First Senator as the same man who expressed his concern over Timon's debts in II, i. This touch would certainly lend added significance to Alcibiades' closing soliloquy:

Now the gods keep you old enough that you may live
Only in bone, that none may look on you!
I'm worse than mad: I have kept back their foes
While they have told their money and let out
Their coin upon large interest, I myself
Rich only in large hurts. All those for this?
Is this the balsam that the usuring senate
Pours into captains' wounds? Banishment!

(III, v. 103-10)

It would also provide a thematic link with Timon's predicament, and might help to explain why Shakespeare chose to introduce a sub-plot at this point in the play. Having just depicted the mercenary greed of Timon's erstwhile friends, Shakespeare appears to have been intent on demonstrating that the sin of usury has become universal in Athens, subverting all considerations of mercy and gratitude for past service. Timon and Alcibiades are thus linked in that they suffer unjustly for their generosity at the hands of petty, self-righteous men. More important, Shakespeare sets up an implicit contrast between the two men in their reaction to this ingratitude. Alcibiades quickly resolves to avenge his wrongs by taking arms against the city:

It comes not ill; I hate not to be banished:
It is a cause worthy my spleen and fury,
That I may strike at Athens. I'll cheer up
My discontented troops and lay for hearts.
'Tis honor with most lands to be at odds;

Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods.
 (III, v, 111-16)

His quick decision contrasts sharply with the more deliberate resolve of Timon, whose purpose in inviting his friends is as yet unclear to the audience. By placing the Alcibiades scene between the first revelation of Timon's transformed character and the climactic display of this transformation at the false banquet, Shakespeare deliberately invites comparison between Alcibiades' determination to take destructive action against those who wronged him, and Timon's sweeping rejection of the whole of mankind. He will return to this comparison in the next act, when the two men confront one another in the wilderness.

Another comparison with the Timon Play reveals the way in which Shakespeare attempts to exploit the full ironic potential of the false banquet. In the anonymous play, for example, the flatterers arrive at the banquet fully aware of the change in Timon's nature. Indeed, the dramatist extracts a certain amount of comedy from the timorous behaviour of three of the characters whom Timon had previously beaten (Timon: IV, v, 13-18). Moreover, Timon's poverty is an acknowledged fact among the guests, since they were all present when the Sailor announced the wreck of his fortunes in III, v. By contrast, Shakespeare emphasizes the perplexity of Timon's guests at the apparent revival of his prosperity, and their concern lest their refusal to help Timon should lose them any further benefits of his generosity:

1 Friend: The good time of day to you, sir.

2 Friend: I also wish it to you. I think this honorable lord did but try us this other day.

1 Friend: Upon that were my thoughts tiring when we encount'ed. I hope it is not so low with him as he made it seem in the trial of his several friends.

- 2 Friend: It should not be, by the persuasion of his new feasting.
- 1 Friend: I should think so. He hath sent me an earnest inviting, which many my near occasions did urge me to put off: but he hath conjured me beyond them, and I must needs appear.
- 2 Friend: In like manner was I in debt to my importunate business, but he would not hear my excuse. I am sorry, when he sent to borrow of me, that my provision was out.
- 1 Friend: I am sick of that grief too, as I understand how all things go.
- 2 Friend: Every man here's so. . . . (III, vi, 1-19)

This emphasis on the friends' perplexity follows logically out of Shakespeare's handling of the scenes involving their trial. By using the servants instead of Timon himself in the first part of Act III, Shakespeare makes it dramatically believable that the friends should now consider the rumour of his poverty to be a false alarm.⁸ This consideration heightens the irony of their shamelessly hypocritical efforts to set things right with Timon:

- 1 Friend: I hope it remains not unkindly with your lordship that I returned you an empty messenger.
- Timon: O sir, let it not trouble you.
- 2 Friend: My noble lord--
- Timon: Ah, my good friend, what cheer?
- 2 Friend: My most honorable lord, I am e'en sick of shame that when your lordship this other day sent to me I was so unfortunate a beggar.
- Timon: Think not on't, sir.
- 2 Friend: If you had sent two hours before--
- Timon: Let it not cumber your better remembrance. (III, vi, 35-45)

Shakespeare also draws an obvious parallel between this scene and the feast of I, ii, in that Timon is once again surrounded by the same host of flattering parasites. Even Timon's initial compliments appear at first glance to partake of his former graciousness:

Gentlemen, our dinner will not recompense this long stay. Feast your ears with the music awhile, if they will fare so harshly o' th' trumpets' sound; we shall to't presently.

(III, vi, 31-4)

Yet the effect on the audience is totally different, for in the light of what has preceded this scene, every one of Timon's remarks is heavy with irony. Another difference between the two feasts lies in the absence of Apemantus. While this change arises consistently out of the philosopher's determination to abandon Timon to his fate (I, ii, 240-41), there are also sound dramatic reasons for excluding him from this particular scene. He is, first of all, unnecessary, since Timon's disillusionment needs no elaboration. More important, his cynical remarks would direct the audience's attention towards himself at a time when the dramatic situation demands its total concentration on Timon. In short, the presence of Apemantus at this mock banquet would detract from the gradual buildup of tension that leads inexorably towards the revelation of Timon's misanthropy.

This buildup of tension reaches its peak in the ironic grace pronounced by Timon over the covered dishes of lukewarm water. Here again I would suggest that Shakespeare intended to remind the audience of a similar gesture by Apemantus during the first banquet (I, ii, 60-69), and perhaps even to indicate that Timon has now taken on the philosopher's disposition. Timon's grace, however, reveals a mounting fury at the perfidy of man, which makes Apemantus' doggerel look feeble:

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts make yourselves praised: but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for were your godheads to borrow

of men, men would forsake the gods. Make the meat be beloved more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains. If there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be-- as they are. The rest of your foes, O gods--the senators of Athens together with the common lag of people--what is amiss in them, you gods, make suitable for destruction. For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome. Uncover, dogs, and lap!

(III, vi, 69-83)

Shakespeare's use of warm water as the main ingredient of the mock banquet constitutes an improvement over the stones painted to resemble artichokes of the Timon Play⁹, in that it symbolizes more aptly the tepid quality of the parasites' friendship which has driven Timon to the repudiation of all mankind. Having roused himself to a furious pitch during the grace, Timon now indulges in the first of his misanthropic curses, as he violently assaults his astounded guests:

Live loathed and long,
Most smiling, smooth detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,
Cap-and-knee slaves, vapors, and minute-jacks!
Of man and beast the infinite malady
Crust you quite o'er! What, dost thou go?
Soft, take thy physic first: thou too, and thou!
Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none.

(III, vi, 90-98)

After this climactic display of Timon's fury Shakespeare relieves the tension with the grimly comic spectacle of the disconcerted parasites searching anxiously among the remnants of the feast for their lost belongings:

3 Friend: Push! Did you see my cap?

4 Friend: I have lost my gown.

1 Friend: He's but a mad lord and naught but humors sways him. He gave me a jewel th'other day, and now he has beat it out of my hat. Did you see my jewel?

3 Friend: Did you see my cap?
2 Friend: Here 'tis.
4 Friend: Here lies my gown.
1 Friend: Let's make no stay.
2 Friend: Lord Timon's mad.
3 Friend: I feel't upon my bones.
4 Friend: One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones.
 (III, vi, 105-15)

Besides offering a moment of comic relief between two intense manifestations of Timon's misanthropy, this episode once again dramatizes the small-minded greed of Timon's erstwhile friends, each of whom is more concerned about the threatened loss of his possessions than by his host's apparent derangement. It provides an ironic afterpiece to a scene which for the audience had reached its climax with Timon's proclamation of misanthropy:

Burn house! Sink Athens! Henceforth hated be
 Of Timon man and all humanity!
 (III, vi, 101-2)

The mock-banquet scene marks a turning-point in Shakespeare's development of Timon as a tragic protagonist. Up to this point he has sought to focus the audience's attention on the nobility of Timon's character by contrasting his generosity and idealism with the pettiness and greed of his fellows. To emphasize this contrast, Shakespeare has used a number of minor characters, each of whom helps build up sympathy for the wronged protagonist. Timon himself remains in the back-ground for much of the time, while these lesser figures inform the audience of his situation either through direct comment or indirectly by means of the action. Indeed, Timon seems to be more of a passive object of events than an active participant. This pattern changes dramatically at the end of the third act with Timon's conversion to

misanthropy. From this point on he is almost continuously present onstage, as nearly all the remaining action consists of his encounters with various former associates. More important, Timon becomes the centre of attention, while the lesser characters function primarily as objects of his misanthropy. Finally, Shakespeare appears to turn away from his efforts to build up sympathy for Timon and to concentrate instead on undermining his misanthropic outlook. These changes appear to take place because of the demands of Shakespeare's source material. Aside from the Timon Play, whose status is questionable, there is no known source for Shakespeare's treatment of Timon's prosperity. Consequently, Shakespeare was free to handle the first three acts much as he pleased. This freedom did not extend to the treatment of Timon's misanthropy, for Shakespeare now had to deal with a story whose outcome and interpretation were well documented in numerous sixteenth-century works and thus familiar to a significant proportion of his audience. Since this interpretation does not easily lend itself to the creation of sympathy for Timon, Shakespeare appears to have counted on using the impressions created in the first three acts to counteract the less favourable picture of the misanthrope which dominates the remainder of the play.

Shakespeare begins his depiction of Timon's misanthropy with two short episodes of his own invention, both of which help to link the Athenian scenes of the first three acts with the events that take place before Timon's cave. The first of these episodes presents Timon outside the walls of Athens, where he once again curses the city for its ingratitude and further enlarges on his determination to forsake

the society of men (IV, i). The imagery of this scene vividly illustrates the way in which Timon's conversion to misanthropy has affected his mind. Whereas he formerly envisioned a world where men shared their fortunes in universal brotherhood (I, ii, 95-9), Timon now evokes a picture of chaos that would undoubtedly have appalled an audience whose concept of world order is reflected in Ulysses' often-quoted "degree" speech (Troilus and Cressida, I, iii, 85-124):

Matrons, turn incontinent!
 Obedience fail in children! Slaves and fools,
 Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench
 And minister in their steads! To general filths
 Convert o'th' instant, green virginity!
 Do't in your parents' eyes! Bankrupts, hold fast:
 Rather than render back, out with your knives
 And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal;
 Large-handed robbers your grave masters are
 And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed:
 Thy mistress is o'th' brothel. Son of sixteen,
 Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire;
 With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear,
 Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
 Domestic awe, night-rest and neighborhood,
 Instruction, manners, mysteries and trades,
 Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
 Decline to your confounding contraries,
 And let confusion live!

(IV, i, 3-21)

Following as it does so closely upon the heels of his disillusionment, this speech is meant to underline the pathos of Timon's situation by showing how terribly his experiences have warped this once-noble figure. Further evidence of Timon's degeneration immediately follows, when he curses the city in language filled with the images of venereal disease:

Plagues incident to men,
 Your potent and infectious fevers heap
 On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou cold sciatica,
 Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
 As lamely as their manners! Lust and liberty
 Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,

That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive
 And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,
 Sow all th'Athenian bosoms, and their crop
 Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath,
 That their society, as their friendship, may
 Be merely poison!

(IV, i, 21-32)

So far Timon has directed his abuse only at the citizens of Athens. He now announces his intention to take to the woods (IV, i, 35-6), and, after a last burst of invective against the city, he prays that the gods transform his specific hatred of Athenians into a hatred for all men:

The gods confound--hear me, you good gods all--
 Th'Athenians both within and out that wall:
 And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
 To the whole race of mankind, high and low!

(IV, i, 37-40)

Hardly have his words died away than Shakespeare confronts the audience with several objects of his curse in the persons of Flavius and some of Timon's former servants (IV, ii). Their conversation evokes a curious double-edged response to Timon's recent soliloquy. On the one hand they again stress the fact that their master has been unjustly wronged, primarily because of his nobility:

1 Servant: Such a house broke!
 So noble a master fall'n: all gone, and not
 One friend to take his fortune by the arm
 And go along with him?
2 Servant: As we do turn our backs
 From our companion thrown into his grave,
 So his familiars to his buried fortunes
 Slink all away; leave their false vows with him,
 Like empty purses picked; and his poor self,
 A dedicated beggar to the air,
 With his disease of all-shunned poverty,
 Walks like contempt alone.

(IV, ii, 5-15)

Their tribute to Timon's goodness receives further support from the

Steward Flavius, whose judgement the audience has by this time come to trust:

Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
 Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,
 When a man's worst sin is he does too much good!
 Who then dares to be half so kind again?
 For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.
 My dearest lord, blest to be most accurst,
 Rich only to be wretched, thy great fortunes
 Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord,
 He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat
 Of monstrous friends, nor has he with him to
 Supply his life or that which can command it.

(IV, ii, 37-47)

Yet even as it reasserts the pathos of Timon's downfall, this dialogue between the servants neatly undermines his misanthropic vision of society by demonstrating that the bonds of loyalty and friendship have flourished in the very city that Timon has so vehemently cursed. While Timon calls for the destruction of "domestic awe, night-rest and neighborhood" (IV, i, 17), his servants swear a heartfelt pledge of mutual loyalty in his name:

3 Servant: Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery:
 This see I by our faces. We are fellows still,
 Serving alike in sorrow. Leaked is our bark:
 And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,
 Hearing the surges threat. We must all part
 Into this sea of air.

Steward: Good fellows all,
 The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you.
 Whenever we shall meet for Timon's sake
 Let's yet be fellows: let's shake our heads and say,
 As 'twere a knell unto our master's fortunes,
 'We have seen better days.'

(IV, ii, 17-27)

Needless to say, their pledge makes a mockery of Timon's assertion that only "wolves" inhabit Athens. Similarly, the Steward's gesture of sharing his remaining wealth among his fellows, and his subsequent

decision to follow Timon into exile (IV, ii, 48-50) both counteract the effectiveness of Timon's curses and prepare the audience for the confrontation between master and servant which forms the climax of the next scene. In this way Shakespeare offers, as it were, a prologue to his portrayal of Timon's life in the wilderness, in that these two short episodes present the audience with a foretaste of the misanthrope's future behaviour and an insight into the way in which this behaviour will be questioned. While Timon still retains the sympathy of the audience, Shakespeare has sought to ensure that all future misanthropic outbursts will be greeted with a certain amount of scepticism.

The third scene opens with a soliloquy which marks the fulfilment of Timon's prayer to the gods at the end of IV, i. Whereas he had formerly called for the destruction of the Athenians, he now reviles the whole of humanity, including himself:

Who dares, who dares
 In purity of manhood stand upright
 And say 'This man's a flatterer'? If one be,
 So are they all: for every grise of fortune
 Is smoothed by that below. The learned pate
 Ducks to the golden Fool. All's obliquy: lo
 There's nothing level in our cursèd natures
 But direct villainy. Therefore be abhorred
 All feasts, societies and throngs of men.
 His semblable, yea himself, Timon disdains.
 Destruction fang mankind!

(IV, iii, 13-23)

Timon's appearance in this scene heightens the bitterness of his outbursts, for, like Lear, he has stripped himself of all his finery (IV, i, 32-4), and now presents himself to the audience as an unkempt, virtually naked figure armed only with a spade (IV, iii, 204), and

grovelling hungrily in the earth for roots. His total rejection of humanity is ironically crowned by the discovery of gold (IV, iii, 25-6). Significantly, Shakespeare has introduced this episode before bringing Timon into contact with his former associates. By doing so he provides an element of irony to Timon's conversations with Alcibiades and Ape-mantus, neither of whom is aware of the misanthrope's new-found wealth. For the moment, however, the discovery merely provides Timon with the opportunity of revealing the depth of his misanthropy by scorning the temptation to repair his fortunes:

No, gods, I am no idle votarist:
 Roots, you clear heavens! Thus much of this will make
 Black white, foul fair, wrong right,
 Base noble, old young, coward valiant.

This yellow slave
 Will knit and break religions, bless th'accursed,
 Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves
 And give them title, knee, and approbation
 With senators on the bench. This is it
 That makes the wappened widow wed again;
 She whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
 Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices
 To th'April day again. Come, damned earth,
 Thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds
 Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
 Do thy right nature.

(IV, iii, 27-45)

Having thus acquainted the audience with the full extent of Timon's hatred, Shakespeare now begins to confront him once more with the society of men.

Shakespeare's treatment of the meeting between Timon and Alcibiades differs in every way from that of his source. In the Life of Alcibiades, Plutarch declares that the meeting took place in Athens at a time when Alcibiades was at the height of his popularity, and

recounts the incident as an ironic prophecy of his future conduct:

And on a daye as he came from the counsell and assembly of the citie, where he had made an excellent oration, to the great good liking and acceptation of all the hearers, and by meanes thereof had obtained the thing he desired, and was accompanied with a great traine that followed him to his honour: Timon, surnamed Misanthropus (as who would say, Loup-garou, or the manhater) meeting Alcibiades thus accompanied, did not passe by him, nor gave him way (as he was wont to do to all other men) but went straight to him, and tooke him by the hande, and said: O thou doest well my sonne, I can thee thanke, that thou goest on, and climest up stil: for if ever thou be in authoritie, woe be unto those that follow thee, for they are utterly undone. When they heard these words, those that stood by fell a laughing: other reviled Timon, other againe marked well his words, and thought of them many a time after, such sundrie opinions they had of him for the unconstancie of his life, and waywardnesse of his nature and conditions. ll

Elsewhere Plutarch states that Timon constantly showed affection for Alcibiades because he knew that this "bolde and insolent youth . . . shall do great mischief unto the Athenians".¹² By contrast Shakespeare treats the episode as a means of linking the subplot, begun in III, v, with the primary events of the Timon story. The two exiles confront one another in the wilderness, to which each has fled from the treachery of the Athenians. Both have a just complaint against the inhabitants of their native city. But while Timon has abandoned himself to misanthropic cursing, Alcibiades has taken active steps to remedy his situation by marching upon Athens. Shakespeare thus prompts the audience to compare the two characters, and then proceeds to qualify this comparison throughout the ensuing dialogue. Initially, Alcibiades might seem to be the more dangerous of the two, as he marches in, accompanied by his soldiers and whores. Yet it soon becomes apparent that Timon is the one who harbours the more destructive vision. Having

learned that Alcibiades intends to destroy Athens (IV, iii, 102-3), Timon seeks to bribe him into carrying out his purpose, and conjures up a lurid picture of wholesale slaughter:

Put up thy gold. Go on. Here's gold. Go on.
 Be as a planetary plague when Jove
 Will o'er some high-iced city hang his poison
 In the sick air. Let not thy sword skip one.
 Pity not honored age for his white beard:
 He is an usurer. Strike me the counterfeit matron:
 It is her habit only that is honest,
 Herself's a bawd. Let not the virgin's cheek
 Make soft thy trenchant sword; for those milk paps
 That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes
 Are not within the leaf of pity writ,
 But set them down horrible traitors. Spare not the babe
 Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy:
 Think it a bastard whom the oracle
 Hath doubtfully pronounced thy throat shall cut,
 And mince it sans remorse. Swear against objects:
 Put armor on thine ears and on thine eyes,
 Whose proof nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,
 Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding,
 Shall pierce a jot. There's gold to pay thy soldiers:
 Make large confusion: and, thy fury spent,
 Confounded be thyself!

(IV, iii, 108-29)

Timon's bloodthirstiness appears to give even the soldier Alcibiades pause, and though he opportunistically accepts the misanthrope's gold, he refuses to carry out the terms of the bribe (IV, iii, 130-31). Moreover, although Alcibiades' "brace of harlots" reveal him to be no saint, his sexual appetite pales into insignificance before Timon's horrifying vision of destructive sexuality--a vision that rivals the most virulent curses of Thersites:

Consumption sow
 In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,
 And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,
 That he may never more false title plead
 Nor sound his quilllets shrilly. Hoar the flamen,
 That scolds against the quality of flesh
 And not believes himself. Down with the nose--

is particularly true of his exchanges with Phrynia, and his ironic summary of his downfall:

Timon: . . .This fell whore of thine
 Hath in her more destruction than thy sword
 For all her cherubin look.
Phrynia: Thy lips rot off!
Timon: I will not kiss thee; then the rot returns
 To thine own lips again.
Alcibiades: How came the noble Timon to this change?
Timon: As the moon does, by wanting light to give.
 But then renew I could not, like the moon;
 There were no suns to borrow of.
 (IV, iii, 62-70)

Moreover, Timon now begins to use the same beast images that had characterized Apemantus' vituperation before and during the feast:

Alcibiades: What art thou there?
 Speak.
Timon: A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart
 For showing me again the eyes of man.
Alcibiades: What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee
 That art thyself a man?
Timon: I am Misanthropos and hate mankind.
 For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog.
 That I might love thee something.
 (IV, iii, 48-56)

It is therefore appropriate that Apemantus should be the next to confront Timon. The philosopher's entry interrupts yet another of Timon's destructive invocations, directed this time at the very earth that feeds him:

Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb;
 Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!
 Grow great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears;
 Teem with new monsters whom thy upward face
 Hath to the marbled mansion all above
 Never presented!--O, a root! Dear thanks!--
 Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas,
 Whereof ingrateful man with liquorish drafts
 And morsels unctuous greases his pure mind,
 That from it all consideration slips--
 [Enter Apemantus]
 More man? Plague, plague!
 (IV, iii, 187-97)

There are several differences between this encounter and the meeting with Alcibiades. First and most obvious, Timon and Apemantus are alone onstage, whereas the confrontation with Alcibiades took place under the gaze of the two whores and probably several of Alcibiades' soldiers. But far more significant is the contrast in tone built up by the differing relationships between Timon and his two companions. While Alcibiades had pitied the misanthrope's plight, and even restrained Timandra from returning his curses (IV, iii, 89-90), Apemantus gleefully mocks Timon with the memory of his former wealth:

What, think'st
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
Will put thy shirt on warm? Will these mossed trees,
That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels
And skip when thou point'st out? Will the cold brook,
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste
To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures
Whose naked natures live in all the spite
Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks,
To the conflicting elements exposed,
Answer mere nature: bid them flatter thee.
(IV, iii, 221-31)

Moreover, he appears delighted that his predictions of Timon's downfall have come true:

Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft,
Hug their diseased perfumes, and have forgot
That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods
By putting on the cunning of a carper
Be thou a flatterer now and seek to thrive
By that which hast undone thee. . . .
. . . 'Tis most just
That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,
Rascals should have't.
(IV, iii, 206-18)

For his part, Timon responds to Apemantus' gibes with appropriate ferocity:

Timon: Were all the wealth I have shut up in thee,
I'd give thee leave to hang it. Get thee gone.
That the whole life of Athens were in this!
Thus would I eat it. [Gnaws a root.]

Apemantus: Here! I will mend thy feast.

[Offers him food]

Timon: First mend my company; take away thyself.

Apemantus: So I shall mend mine own, by th'lack of thine.

Timon: 'Tis not well mended so; it is but botched.

If not, I would it were.

Apemantus: What wouldst thou have to Athens?

Timon: Thee thither in a whirlwind.

(IV, iii, 279-88)

Exchanges such as this reveal the extent of Timon's degradation, in that they show him seeking to out-curse the man whose scurrility he had formerly chided. More important, Shakespeare uses this conflict between the two misanthropes to demonstrate the futility of their hatred. First, he pits them against each other in an argument over which of the two is more justifiably misanthropic. Apemantus charges Timon with hypocrisy, and asserts that Timon has assumed the guise of a man-hater out of necessity:

If thou didst put this sour cold habit on
To castigate thy pride, 'twere well; but thou
Dost it enforcedly. Thou'dst courtier be again
Wert thou not beggar.

(IV, iii, 239-42)

Here, of course, Apemantus is wrong, since Timon has just rejected the chance to remedy his losses. Timon responds to the charge by flinging it back at Apemantus, and asserting that the philosopher's curses arise from envy of what he can never enjoy:

Thou art a slave whom Fortune's tender arm
With favor never clasped, but bred a dog.
Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords
To such as may the passive drugs of it
Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself
In general riot, melted down thy youth
In different beds of lust, and never learned
The icy precepts of respect, but followed
The sug'red game before thee.

Why shouldst thou hate men?
 They never flattered thee. What hast thou given?
 If thou wilt curse, thy father, that poor rag,
 Must be thy subject, who in spite put stuff
 To some false-beggar and compounded thee
 Poor reputation hereditary. Hence: be gone!
 If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,
 Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

(IV, iii, 250-76)

In the course of this indictment Timon attempts to justify his own misanthropic outlook by recounting the anguish of his fall from prosperity, and by contrasting his painful transition from wealth to wretchedness with Apemantus' long acquaintance with poverty:

But myself,
 Who had the world as my confectionary,
 The mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men
 At duty, more than I could frame employment:
 That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves
 Do on the oak, have, with one winter's brush,
 Fell from their boughs and left me open, bare
 For every storm that blows--I to bear this,
 That never knew but better, is some burden.
 Thy nature did commence in sufferance: time
 Hath made thee hard in't.

(IV, iii, 259-69)

In accusing Apemantus of envy, Timon ascribes to him the quality most commonly thought to be the cause of misanthropy.¹⁴ Yet Timon's condemnation is not wholly convincing. For one thing, Shakespeare does not provide any other evidence to support Timon's allegations against the philosopher, and in view of his previous behaviour, Timon is hardly a reliable witness. More important, despite its moving quality, Timon's self-justification betrays some hints of that pride of which Apemantus had accused him, as the philosopher is quick to point out (IV, iii, 276). The pair exchange more telling accusations a few lines later, when, after a short abusive dialogue, Apemantus indicts Timon for his

immoderate behaviour and taunts him with ineffectualness:

The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends. When thou wast in thy gilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much curiosity: in thy rags thou know'st none, but art despised for the contrary.

(IV, iii, 299-303)

This accusation proves to be far more apt than the last one, for it neatly summarizes Timon's behaviour to this point in the play. Timon responds by cleverly trapping Apemantus into advocating a philosophy that is out of touch with reality, and then by exposing the fallacy of his attitude:

Timon: . . . What wouldst thou do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

Apemantus: Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men.

Timon: Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?

Apemantus: Ay, Timon.

Timon: A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee t'attain to! If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee: if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee: if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee when peradventure thou wert accused by the ass: if thou wert the ass, thy dullness would torment thee, and still thou livedst but as a breakfast to the wolf. If thou wert the wolf thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner. Wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury: wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be killed by the horse: wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard: wert thou a leopard, thou wert germane to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life: all thy safety were remotion and thy defense absence. What beast couldst thou be that were not subject to a beast? And what a beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation!

(IV, iii, 319-43)

This long catalogue of animals has proved to be a puzzle for subsequent

adapters and producers of Shakespeare, many of whom delete it entirely or cut it to its barest essentials. Admittedly, the speech does not significantly contribute to the plot's development, and would undoubtedly prove to be a nightmare to any actor who had to memorize it. Moreover, its philosophy is inconsistent with Timon's own utterances both before (IV, iii, 50-56) and afterwards (IV, iii, 388-9). Nevertheless, the "beast speech" effectively explodes Apemantus' unrealistic conception that the society of beasts differs in any way from that of men. Apemantus further damns himself in the audience's eyes by foolishly missing the whole point of Timon's discourse:

If thou couldst please me with speaking to me,
thou mightst have hit upon it here. The common-
wealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts.
(IV, iii, 344-6)

Having pointed out the flaws in the attitude of both misanthropes, Shakespeare now illustrates the futility of their hatred by climaxing the encounter with a violent exchange of abuse:

Apemantus: Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.
Timon: Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon!
Apemantus: A plague on thee! Thou art too bad to curse.
Timon: All villains that do stand, by thee, are pure.
Apemantus: There is no leprosy but what thou speak'st.
Timon: If I name thee,
I'll beat thee, but I should infect my hands.
Apemantus: I would thy tongue could rot them off!
Timon: Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!
Choler does kill me that thou art alive;
I swoon to see thee.
Apemantus: Would thou wouldst burst!
Timon: Away,
Thou tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose
A stone by thee.
[Throws a stone at him]
Apemantus: Beast!
Timon: Slave!
Apemantus: Toad!
Timon: Rogue, rogue, rogue!

(IV, iii, 355-71)

By the time Apemantus departs with the promise to plague Timon with company by informing others about his gold (IV, iii, 389-91), Shakespeare has managed to turn a great part of the audience's sympathy away from Timon. The arguments of both misanthropes combine to form an effective denunciation of Timon's vision of mankind, while his behaviour towards Apemantus reveals that he now outdoes the philosopher in scurrility. In fact, were it not for the power of some of his utterances, and Shakespeare's numerous hints that his bitterness proceeds from his great suffering, Timon might well appear utterly ridiculous. As it is, Shakespeare treads a fine line between pathos and ridicule throughout this encounter, so that it depends very much on the actors to prevent the scene's more laughable elements from distracting the audience.

Timon's encounter with the three Banditti (IV, iii, 395-453) graphically illustrates the effect of his misanthropy on characters who have had no previous contact with him. It appears to parallel the dialogue of the three Strangers (III, ii) where independent witnesses paid tribute to Timon's generosity, and I would suggest that the parts of the Strangers and Banditti may well have been doubled. Having sought out the misanthrope with the sole intent of getting hold of his treasure (IV, iii, 395-403), these hardened thieves are unexpectedly confronted with a man whose commendation of thievery far surpasses their own. As he exhorts them to join robbery with murder, Timon justifies the crimes in a speech that recalls his catalogue of animals in its depiction of nature's wholesale rapacity:

I'll example you with thievery:
 The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
 Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
 And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
 The sea's a thief whose liquid surge resolves
 The moon into salt tears; the earth's a thief,
 That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n
 From gen'ral excrement. Each thing's a thief.
 The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
 Has unchecked theft. Love not yourselves: away,
 Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats.
 All that you meet are thieves. To Athens go;
 Break open shops; nothing can you steal
 But thieves do lose it. Steal less for this I give you,
 And gold confound you howsoe'er.

(IV, iii, 431-45)

The reaction of the Banditti vividly reflects the impact of Timon's destructive misanthropy on men who, despite their criminality, retain a "normal" view of human relations:

3 Bandit: Has almost charmed me from my profession
 by persuading me to it.
1 Bandit: 'Tis in the malice of mankind that he thus
 advises us, not to have us thrive in our mystery.
2 Bandit: I'll believe him as an enemy, and give
 over my trade.
1 Bandit: Let us first see peace in Athens: there is
 no time so miserable but a man may be true.

(IV, iii, 446-53)

Throughout this scene, Shakespeare has brought Timon into contact with characters who had little or nothing to do with the events leading to his downfall. In an effort to plumb the depths of Timon's misanthropy, he confronts Timon first with a man whose friendship has been genuine, then with another misanthrope whose behaviour Timon has adopted with a vengeance, and finally with three total strangers, whose own cynical disregard for humanity is shaken by Timon's destructive attitude. In each case, however, the reactions of these men are qualified by considerations that undermine their reliability as witnesses. Alcibiades' friendly overtures are balanced by his opportunistic

behaviour in accepting Timon's gold, and by the blatant greed of his two whores. Apemantus seeks out Timon only to gloat over his discomfiture, and, as I have indicated, his criticism of Timon combines with Timon's responses to form an effective indictment of them both. The status of the three Banditti needs no elaboration. Now, however, Shakespeare confronts the misanthrope with a character whose previous words and actions have earned him the audience's unqualified trust, and whose motives for seeking Timon are free of any self-interest. This character is, of course, the Steward, Flavius.

In examining Shakespeare's handling of this encounter it is again helpful to compare his version with a similar episode from the Timon Play. The anonymous playwright brings master and steward together before confronting Timon with any of his former associates (Timon, V, ii). As a result of this encounter, the steward is himself converted to misanthropy (Timon, V, ii, 34-44), and later joins with Timon to drive off the parasites.¹⁵ Shakespeare confronts Timon with Flavius only after he has revealed the extent of Timon's misanthropy in several encounters with other men. Moreover, there is a world of difference between the compassionate Flavius and Laches, his blunt, aggressive counterpart from the Timon Play. Flavius sets the tone for the encounter with an emotional speech deploring the terrible change that has come over his beloved master and proclaiming his own loyal intentions:

O you gods!
 Is yon despised and ruinous man my lord?
 Full of decay and failing? O monument
 And wonder of good deeds evilly bestowed!
 What an alteration of honor has desp'rate want made!
 What viler thing upon the earth than friends,
 Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!

How rarely does it meet with this time's guise
 When man was wished to love his enemies!
 Grant I may ever love, and rather woo
 Those that would mischief me than those that do!
 Has caught me in his eye; I will present
 My honest grief unto him, and as my lord
 Still serve him with my life.

(IV, iii, 454-67)

This speech appears to be another attempt on Shakespeare's part to bring out the pathetic side of Timon's transformation by stressing its effect on a character whose word the audience trusts. However, Timon soon undercuts whatever pity Flavius' tribute might have evoked by brusquely rejecting the steward's assertion of past service:

Timon: Away! What art thou?

Steward: Have you forgot me, sir?

Timon: Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men;

Then if thou grant'st thou'rt a man, I have forgot thee.

Steward: An honest poor servant of yours.

Timon: Then I know thee not.

I never had honest man about me; ay, all

I kept were knaves to serve in meat to villains.

(IV, iii, 468-74)

As the audience well knows, this accusation of Timon's is patently untrue, for Shakespeare has in several places emphasized the loyalty and compassion of Timon's entire household. Indeed, Timon's speech seems to be especially designed to call up memories of his servants' sad leave-taking in IV, ii. When Flavius insists upon his honesty and reinforces his oath with tears (IV, iii, 465-7) and generous offers of further service (IV, iii, 483-5), the incredulous Timon is forced to alter his opinion. His concession is, however, a most grudging one:

Had I a steward

So true, so just, and now so comfortable?

It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.

Let me behold thy face. Surely this man

Was born of woman.

Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,

You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
 One honest man--mistake me not, but one:
 No more, I pray--and he's a steward.
 How fain would I have hated all mankind,
 And thou redeem'st thyself. But all save thee
 I fell with curses.

(IV, iii, 486-97)

By praying to the gods that he find no other exceptions to his misanthropic outlook and by seeking to diminish the significance of this exception by emphasizing Flavius' humble social status, Timon exhibits the degree to which his misanthropy has made him unwilling or unable to come to terms with this obvious contradiction. He further seeks to deny its validity by questioning the steward's motives:

Methinks thou art more honest now than wise:
 For by oppressing and betraying me
 Thou mightst have sooner got another service:
 For many so arrive at second masters,
 Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true--
 For I must ever doubt, though ne'er so sure--
 Is not thy kindness subtle-covetous,
 A usuring kindness, and as rich men deal gifts,
 Expecting in return twenty for one?

(IV, iii, 498-506)

Flavius' reply constitutes another of Shakespeare's attempts to evoke pity for Timon, as the Steward recalls past glories and seeks to ascribe his master's disbelief to his painful experiences:

No, my most worthy master, in whose breast
 Doubt and suspect, alas, are placed too late.
 You should have feared false times when you did feast.
 Suspect still comes where an estate is least.
 That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,
 Duty, and zeal to your unmatched mind,
 Care of your food and living: and believe it,
 My most honorable lord,
 For any benefit that points to me,
 Either in hope or present, I'd exchange
 For this one wish, that you had power and wealth
 To requite me by making rich yourself.

(IV, iii, 507-18)

But Timon again undermines this attempt to excuse his bitterness. Forced to admit to the genuineness of Flavius' unselfish act, the misanthrope now seeks to corrupt his generosity by urging the steward towards a disregard for humanity:

Thou singly honest man,
Here, take. The gods out of my misery
Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy,
But thus conditioned: thou shalt build from men,
Hate all, curse all, show charity to none,
But let the famished flesh slide from the bone
Ere thou relieve the beggar. Give to dogs
What thou deniest to men. Let prisons swallow 'em,
Debts wither 'em to nothing: be men like blasted woods,
And may diseases lick up their false bloods!
And so farewell, and thrive.

(IV, iii, 519-29)

When Flavius pleads only to stay and comfort him (IV, iii, 529-30), the misanthrope churlishly orders him out of his sight:

If thou hat'st curses,
Stay not: fly, while thou art blest and free:
Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

(IV, iii, 530-32)

It is difficult to see how, after witnessing this scene, the audience can retain much sympathy for Timon. Nor is it any easier to imagine what more Shakespeare can do with the character, since by rejecting Flavius, Timon has turned his back on his last opportunity to change his mind and acknowledge the error of his wholesale condemnations. Aside from bringing on still more characters to confront Timon and provoke him to further misanthropic outbursts, the dramatist seems to have no other alternative but to provide for his removal. Shakespeare has already begun this process during Timon's encounter with Apemantus, when the misanthrope abruptly leaves off cursing his visitor to express a wish for death:

I am sick of this false world, and will love naught
 But even the mere necessities upon't,
 Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave.
 Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat
 Thy gravestone daily. Make thine epitaph,
 That death in me at others' lives may laugh.

(IV, iii, 372-7)

He completes it in the next act with Timon's lonely death, but not before he has allowed the misanthrope to avenge himself on a few of his parasitic friends.

Like all act and scene divisions in this play, the traditional beginning of Act V, with the entry of the Poet and Painter derives from eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare.¹⁶ Although at least one modern editor has found this division an arbitrary one,¹⁷ there is, I would suggest, a sound dramatic reason for such a division. First, the characters who confront Timon in this act differ from their counterparts in Act IV in that they belong to the horde of parasites whose treachery had brought about Timon's conversion. Moreover, there is a distinct change of tone between Timon's deadly serious conversation with Flavius and his ironic encounter with both Poet and Painter and the two Senators. Indeed, these latter confrontations appear as light relief beside the snarling vituperation of the dialogue with Apemantus or the bitterness of the meeting with the steward. Shakespeare's selection of characters for the first two scenes is also significant. Instead of bringing in every one of the parasites, as the author of the Timon Play has done, Shakespeare confronts Timon only with two representative groups. The first, which consists of the Poet and Painter, evokes memories of the opening scene, and thus provides the audience with a basis for comparing Timon's behaviour in his prosperity

with his present actions. Furthermore, these two ridiculous figures are admirably suited to an ironic treatment. The choice of two Senators as the final targets of Timon's misanthropy not only gives Shakespeare the chance to include the well-known "fig-tree episode", but also allows for the smooth transition of emphasis from the events of the Timon story to those of the Alcibiades subplot which take up the remainder of the play. In this way Shakespeare attempts to provide for a satisfactory continuation of the dramatic action beyond the point of the protagonist's disappearance from the scene.

The final act begins with the sudden appearance of the Poet and Painter,¹⁸ lured back by the rumour of Timon's new-found wealth. Full as ever of their own importance, they candidly discuss their motives for hastening to renew Timon's acquaintance:

Poet: Then this breaking of his has been but a try
for his friends?

Painter: Nothing else. You shall see him a palm in
Athens again, and flourish with the highest.
Therefore, 'tis not amiss we tender our loves to
him in this supposed distress of his: it will show
honesty in us and is very likely to load our
purposes with what they travail for, if it be a
just and true report that goes of his having.
(V, i, 9-16)

In an eloquent summary of the techniques of sycophancy, the pair go on to reveal how they intend to win the misanthrope's favour:

Poet: What have you now to present unto him?

Painter: Nothing at this time but my visitation. Only
I will promise him an excellent piece.

Poet: I must serve him so too, tell him of an
intent that's coming toward him.

Painter: Good as the best. Promising is the very air
o'th'time: it opens the eyes of expectation.
Performance is ever the duller for his act: and,
but in the plainer and simpler kind of people,
the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise

is most courtly and fashionable: performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it.

(V, i, 17-28)

The blatant knavery of these two recalls to mind both their own previous behaviour in I, i, and the self-revealing utterances of Lucius, Lucullus and Sempronius from Act II. The Poet's next speech similarly conjures up memories of his last presentation-piece, also framed to warn Timon about the treachery of flatterers:

I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him. It must be a personating of himself: a satire against the softness of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulency.

(V, i, 31-4)

The whole of this dialogue nicely sets up the pair for their ironic reception by Timon. Using the simple expedient of allowing Timon to overhear their conversation, Shakespeare engages misanthrope and flatterers in a richly comic dialogue laden with ironic misunderstandings:

Poet: Hail, worthy Timon!

Painter: Our late noble master!

Timon: Have I once lived to see two honest men?

Poet: Sir,

Having often of your open bounty tasted,
Hearing you were retired, your friends fall'n off,
Whose thankless natures--O abhorred spirits!--
Not all the whips of heaven are large enough--
What, to you,
Whose starlike nobleness gave life and influence
To their whole being?--I am rapt, and cannot cover
The monstrous bulk of this ingratitude
With any size of words.

Timon: Let it go naked; men may see't the better.

You that are honest, by being what you are
Make them best seen and known.

Painter: He and myself

Have travelled in the great show'r of your gifts,
And sweetly felt it.

Timon: Ay, you are honest men.

(V, i, 53-69)

Timon's sarcastic repetition of the word "honest" throughout the dialogue has the same effect as Antony's continual use of the phrase "honourable men" during Caesar's funeral oration (Julius Caesar, III, ii, 73ff.). He continues in this vein until, having thoroughly confused the two parasites with his sarcasm, he drives them off (V, i, 112-13). Before sending them packing, however, he treats them and the audience to his punning opinion of their craftsmanship:

[To the Painter] Thou draw'st a counterfeit
Best in all Athens. Thou'rt indeed the best:
Thou counterfeit'st most lively.

[To the Poet] And for thy fiction,
Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth
That thou art even natural in thine art.
(V, i, 78-83)

The same ironic spirit presides over Timon's encounter with the Athenian Senators, only this time the comedy is darkened by the threat of war. Shakespeare's puzzling choice of Flavius as the Senators' guide (V, i, 114ff.) might have been prompted by a wish to sound one last note of pity for Timon in the episode that immediately precedes his death. If this is the case, the Steward would have to display his emotion visually, since he has very little to say after the first three lines. These lines merely help to highlight the falsity of the Senators' optimistic assertion that prosperity will soon cure Timon of his misanthropy:

Steward: It is vain that you would speak with Timon:
For he is set so only to himself
That nothing but himself which looks like man
Is friendly with him.

2 Senator: At all times alike
Men are not still the same. 'Twas time and griefs
That framed him thus. Time, with his fairer hand
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him.

(V, i, 114-23)

Again, I would suggest that Shakespeare might have intended to identify the two Senators who have sought out Timon as the same ones who had participated in his downfall and unjustly banished Alcibiades. Such an identification would lend considerable dramatic impact to Timon's initial greeting:

1 Senator: The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.
Timon: I thank them; and would send them back the plague,
 Could I but catch it for them.
 (V, i, 134-6)

The penitent speeches of the two Senators (V, i, 136-53) represent the first half of an intentional parallel drawn between Timon's attitude towards offering forgiveness and that of Alcibiades, depicted two scenes later. In this case, the Senators condemn themselves, first by attempting to bribe Timon (V, i, 148-53), and then by revealing that they have only sought Timon's forgiveness because they need him (V, i, 157-66). Timon's reply evokes some of the imagery he had used in his earlier destructive exhortation to Alcibiades:

Well, sir, I will; therefore I will, sir, thus:
 If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
 Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
 That Timon cares not. But if he sack fair Athens
 And take our goodly aged men by th'beards,
 Giving our holy virgins to the stain
 Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brained war,
 Then let him know (and tell him Timon speaks it
 In pity of our aged and our youth)
 I cannot choose but tell him that I care not--
 And let him tak't at worst--for their knives care not.
 While you have throats to answer. For myself
 There's not a whittle in th'unruly camp
 But I do prize it at my love before
 The reverend'st throat in Athens.
 (V, i, 166-80)

At this point Shakespeare introduces another of the Plutarchan anecdotes about Timon's misanthropy, the so-called "fig-tree episode".

This anecdote, which relates how Timon went into Athens one day and publicly invited the citizens to hang themselves on his fig tree,¹⁹ was cited by a number of Elizabethan moralists as a cautionary example of the effects of envy.²⁰ Shakespeare changes the story only slightly, first by altering the setting to the Athenian wilderness, and secondly by introducing it as part of Timon's ironic confrontation with the

Senators:

Timon: Commend me to them,
 And tell them that, to ease them of their griefs,
 Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,
 Their pangs of love, with other incident throes
 That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain
 In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them:
 I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath:

1 Senator: I like this well. He will return again.

Timon: I have a tree which grows here in my close
 That mine own use invites me to cut down,
 And shortly must I fell it. Tell my friends,
 Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree
 From high to low throughout, that whoso please
 To stop affliction, let him take his haste,
 Come hither ere my tree hath felt the axe--
 And hang himself! I pray you do my greeting.

(V, i, 195-210)

The tone now changes abruptly, as Timon leaves off baiting the Senators to inform them of his coming death:

Come not to me again: but say in Athens,
 Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
 Upon the beachèd verge of the salt flood,
 Who once a day with his embossèd froth
 The turbulent surge shall cover. Thither come,
 And let my gravestone be your oracle.
 Lips, let sour words go by and language end.
 What is amiss, plague and infection mend!
 Graves only be men's works, and death their gain.
 Sun, hide thy beams; Timon hath done his reign.

(V, i, 212-21)

Because this speech turns out to be Timon's last, it occupies a dramatically important position in the play as Shakespeare's final

attempt to evoke a sympathetic reaction towards the protagonist. I would suggest that the attempt does not succeed, primarily because the transition from irony to pathos is too abrupt. While Shakespeare has admittedly sought to prepare the audience for this final speech through Timon's utterances at IV, iii, 372-7 and V, i, 183-8, the essentially comic impact of the dialogue with the Senators makes Timon's farewell to the world fall rather flat. In addition, the events of the subplot have become so intrusive here that they deflect attention from Timon at a time when it should be focused exclusively on him. Hampered by the anti-climactic nature of the misanthrope's death, Shakespeare has apparently chosen to proceed quickly on to the more dramatically rewarding episodes of the Alcibiades subplot.

The pace picks up noticeably after Timon's final departure. After two brief scenes which depict the fading hopes of the Athenian Senate (V, ii) and the discovery of Timon's tomb (V, iii), Shakespeare brings the play to a close with the confrontation between Alcibiades and the Senators, and the announcement of Timon's death. If my previous conjectures about the identity of certain Senators is true, it would be reasonable to assume that the Senators who treat with Alcibiades in this scene are not meant to be the same ones who had banished him and robbed Timon. Although Shakespeare makes no explicit distinction between the two groups, he does imply in the speech of one of the Senators that the men who had perpetrated the wrongs have somehow been punished:

Nor are they living
Who were the motives that you first went out.
Shame, that they wanted cunning, in excess
Hath broke their hearts.

(V, iv, 26-9)

As was mentioned earlier, Shakespeare seems to have designed this scene as a parallel to Timon's encounter with the Senators. Here, however, the Senators strike a more sympathetic chord, as they appeal to Alcibiades' humanity instead of seeking to bribe him with promises of wealth and honour:

All have not offended.
 For those that were, it is not square to take,
 On those that are, revenge; crimes, like lands,
 Are not inherited. Then, dear countryman,
 Bring in thy ranks, but leave without thy rage;
 Spare thy Athenian cradle, and those kin
 Which in the bluster of thy wrath must fall,
 With those that have offended. Like a shepherd,
 Approach the fold and cull th'infected forth
 But kill not all together.

(V, iv, 35-44)

For his part, Alcibiades shows, unlike Timon, a willingness to distinguish between those who wronged him and the rest of mankind:

Those enemies of Timon's and mine own
 Whom you yourselves shall set out for reproof
 Fall: and no more: and to atone your fears
 With my more noble meaning, not a man
 Shall pass his quarter or offend the stream
 Of regular justice in your city's bounds
 But shall be rendered to your public laws
 At heaviest answer.

(V, iv, 56-63)

At this point, Shakespeare brings in a messenger to announce Timon's death and to reveal his epitaph (V, iv, 65-81). As a tribute to the dead protagonist, Alcibiades' closing speech does not amount to much, and resembles, rather, a hurried attempt on Shakespeare's part to bring the play to a close:

These well express in thee thy latter spirits.
 Though thou abhorred'st in us our human griefs,
 Scorned'st our brains' flow and those our droplets which
 From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit
 Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye

On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead
 Is noble Timon, of whose memory
 Hereafter more. Bring me into your city,
 And I will use the olive with my sword,
 Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each
 Prescribe to other, as each other's leech.
 Let our drums strike.

(V, iv, 74-85)

Clearly this speech is supposed to function in much the same way as that of Fortinbras at the end of Hamlet, by paying tribute to the dead protagonist and asserting the renewal of order. Its effect, however, is much less satisfying, perhaps because it does not follow a dramatically compelling catastrophe. The result could be compared to the impact Fortinbras' speech might have had if he had been interrupted in the midst of negotiations with the King of Poland by the news that Hamlet and the entire Danish court had perished as the result of a fencing-match.

In providing so detailed an examination of the play, I have attempted to show how Shakespeare has sought to overcome the difficulties inherent in creating a tragedy around the story of Timon. As I have indicated, many of the alterations to his source material reveal a conscious effort to counteract the more ridiculous aspects of Timon's character and thereby make him a more appropriately sympathetic protagonist. Similarly, his development of minor characters such as Flavius and the Servants, and his addition of the Alcibiades subplot are primarily the results of an attempt to generate sufficient stage action to carry this potentially static plot. Yet despite its many interesting dramatic moments, Timon of Athens fails as tragedy, and I would contend that a considerable part of this failure is due to the impossibility of

presenting so complete a misanthrope as a sympathetic figure. Despite Shakespeare's many efforts in the first three acts to overwhelm the audience with evidence of Timon's noble idealism, it is impossible to rid the play of the impression that Timon wilfully ignores the facts of his situation and therefore richly deserves to be gulled. In the last two acts Shakespeare is forced to depend almost exclusively on the testimony of Flavius, Alcibiades and one or two others to remind the audience that Timon's behaviour is to be pitied rather than laughed at, and this is definitely not enough to contradict the impression left by a protagonist who often acts in a manner more suited to farce than tragedy. Moreover, Shakespeare seems to have been influenced by the prevailing moral and literary conventions to treat misanthropy as an unacceptable outlook. Such a view would partially explain his development of Alcibiades and Flavius as foils to Timon. Unfortunately, it also has the effect of detracting from Timon's status as a figure whose anguish should evoke pity. Finally, Shakespeare's efforts to generate sufficient action cannot prevent the play from degenerating into a static sequence of debates during the fourth act, and trailing off rather lamely in the fifth. At least part of the problem is due to the fact that once Timon has become a misanthrope, he takes over as the instigator of the action. Because he is by definition confined to one pattern of behaviour, the type of action he initiates is necessarily limited. Although Shakespeare has endeavoured to vary the action by confronting the misanthrope with widely differing characters, Timon's predictability makes his behaviour in the last two acts wear a little thin after two or three episodes. More important, Shakespeare had to

overcome the difficulty of elevating Timon's unspectacular death to the level of a tragic catastrophe. To do this he again had to rely on the testimony of another character, in this case, Alcibiades, and the result, as I have pointed out, is anything but convincing. Finally, because Timon merely disappears from the scene to suffer an unspecified death, Shakespeare had to close the play with material from the subplot. In short, I would suggest that for all its obvious superiority over other contemporary treatments of misanthropy, Timon of Athens fails because of the intransigence of its subject.

NOTES

¹I have already discussed this and other versions of the Timon story in Chapter 1. For a thorough analysis of the play's sources see Bullough, Other Classical Plays, pp. 21-22.

²Quoted on p. 22.

³Various editors have treated this speech either as a specimen of the Poet's work or as an aside to the Painter. The former interpretation fits in nicely with the Painter's subsequent observation that the Poet seems "rapt. . .in some work", prompting editors like the one quoted here to put the speech in quotation marks or italics. The Folio text, however contains no such indication, and many editors therefore treat it as a simple aside. In either case I believe that the Poet is meant to be remarking upon the overheard dialogue between the Merchant and the Jeweller, and although I prefer the reading given here, I do not think either version has any serious bearing on my interpretation.

⁴Quoted on p. 228.

⁵For a detailed examination of these scenes see Chapter III, pp. 102-106.

⁶Plutarch, Lives,

⁷According to Plutarch Alcibiades was banished twice, first after he had been accused of sacrilege, and later after he had been charged with mismanagement of the Athenian fleet. Although neither charge was proved, Alcibiades' own behaviour did lend colour to the accusations.

⁸Timon's furious outburst of III, iv, 78ff. need not provide any inconsistency here, since there is no indication given that the flatterers knew of it, and even if they did, they might possibly consider it to be part of Timon's attempt to try them.

⁹All modern editions of the play indicate that Timon throws stones as well as water at his guests. Editors base this stage direction on the remark of the Fourth Friend at III, vi, 115. There is, however, no other evidence besides this for such an assumption, first made in the c.1773 edition of George Stevens.

¹⁰This word appears to be a variant either of "obliquity" or "obloquy". The context makes the former word the more likely choice. See Oliver's note in the Arden ed.

¹¹Plutarch, Lives, p. 218.

¹²Plutarch, Lives, p. 1001.

¹³Of these two characters only one, Timandra, appears in Plutarch, and she receives more sympathetic treatment as the person who saw to Alcibiades' honorable burial after he had been murdered (Plutarch, Lives, p.234). Shakespeare seems to have introduced them primarily as an excuse for Timon's invective against lechery.

¹⁴See Chapter I, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵For a more detailed examination of this encounter, see Chapter III, pp. 107-8.

¹⁶See Butler, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷See Oliver, Arden ed., Act V

¹⁸Although the text of the play has Apemantus announce their coming as early as IV, iii, 349, this discrepancy seems to have resulted from a change of mind on Shakespeare's part after he had completed the scene with Apemantus. See Oliver, Arden ed. IV, iii, 353n.

¹⁹Plutarch, Lives, p. 1001.

²⁰See Chapter I, pp. 27-28.

IX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Primary Materials

A. Shakespeare

Shakespeare, William. The Complete Works. Alfred Harbage (gen. ed.)
Baltimore: Penguin, 1969.

-----, The First Folio. Facsimile prepared by Charlton Hinman.
New York: Norton, 1968.

B. Other Contemporary Works

Allot, Robert. Wits Theater of the Little World. London: I.R. for
N[icholas] L[ing], 1599.

Andrewes, John. The Anatomie of Basenesse, or the Foure Quarters of
a Knave. London: For Richard Redner, 1615.

Anon. Timon: A Play, ed. Alexander Dyce, London: For the Shakespeare
Society, 1842.

Anon. A New Enterlude called Thersytes. London: John Lysdale, c1550.
Tudor Facsimile Text, ed. John S. Farmer, 1912. New York: AMS
Press, 1970.

Armin, Robert (attrib. John Singer). Quips Upon Questions, ed. Frederic
Ouvry, London: Privately printed, 1875.

-----, A Nest of Ninnies. . . . London: T.E. for John Deane, 1608.
Reprinted under the title Fools and Jesters With a Reprint of Robert
Armin's Nest of Ninnies. ed. J. P. Collier, London: For the Shake-
speare Society, 1842.

Bacon, Sir Francis. Essaies, Religious Meditations Places of Perswasion
and Diswasion. London: For John Jaggard, 1612.

Barckley, Sir Richard. A Discourse on the Felicitie of Man or His Summum
Bonum. 2nd. ed. London: For William Ponsonby, 1603.

B[asse], W[illiam] and E.P. A Helpe to Discourse or a Miscelany of
Merriment. London: Bernard Alsop for Leonard Becket, 1619.

Bastard, Thomas. Chrestoleros: Seven bookes of Epigrames. . . .
London: Richard Bradocke for J.B., 1598.

- Baynes, Roger. The Praise of Solitarinesse. . . . London: Francis Coldocke and Henry Bynneman, 1577.
- Bodenham, John (comp.). Bel-vedere or The Garden of the Muses. London: F.K. for Hugh Astley, 1600.
- Boistuau, Pierre. Theatrum Mundi. The Theatre or Rule of the World. . . tr. John Alday, London: Thomas East for John Wright, 1581.
- Brant, Sebastian. The Shyp of Folys of the Worlde. tr. Alexander Barclay, London: Richard Pynson, 1509. Facsimile of an 1874 reprint ed. T. H. Jameison for the Advocates' Library, 2 vols. Edinburgh: William Patterson. New York: AMS Press, 1966.
- Brathwait, Richard. The English Gentleman. . . . London: John Haviland for Robert Bostock, 1630.
- Breton, Nicholas. A Dialogue. . . Upon the Dignitie or Indignitie of Man. London: T.C. for John Browne, 1603.
- . The Good and the Badde, or Descriptions of the Worthies and Unworthies of This Age. London: George Purstone for John Rudge, 1616.
- Bright, Timothy. A Treatise of Melancholy. London: John Windet, 1586.
- Bryskett, Ludowick. A Discourse of Civile Life. . . . London, For Edward Blount, 1606.
- Burton, Robert. The Anatomy of Melancholy. . . . Oxford: John Lichfield and James Short for Henry Cripps, 1621.
- Cawdrey, Robert. A Treasurie or Storehouse of Similes. London: Thomas Creede, 1600.
- Chapman, George (tr.) Seaven Bookes of the Iliades of Homer, Prince of Poets. London: John Windet, 1598.
- Charron, Pierre. Of Wisdome, Three Bookes. tr. Samson Lennard. London: For Edward Blount and Will Aspley, c1606.
- C[ockeram], H[enry]. The English Dictionarie or an Interpreter of Hard English Words. London: Edmund Weaver, 1623.
- Coeffeteau, Nicholas. A Table of Human Passions with Their Causes and Effects. tr. Edward Grimestone, London: Nicholas Okes, 1621.
- Cooper, Thomas. Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Britannicae. London: For Henry Wykes, 1565.
- Corn-Waleys, Sir William the Younger. Essayes. London: For Edward Mottes, 1600.

- Dallington, Richard. Aphorismes Civill and Militarie, London: For Edward Blount, 1613.
- Davies, Sir John. Orchestra, or a Poeme of Dauncing. London: J. Roberts for N. Ling, 1596. Facsimile of Huntington Library copy in The Poems of Sir John Davies, introd. Clare Howard, New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.
- . Nosce Teipsum. London: Richard Field for John Standish, 1599.
- Davies, John (of Hereford). The Scourge of Folly. London: E.A. for Richard Redner, 1611.
- de Montaigne, Michel. The Essais or Morall Politicke Discourses, tr. John Florio, London: Val Sims for Edward Blount, 1603.
- Elyot, Sir Thomas. Bibliotheca Eliotae. . . Enriched and More Perfectly Corrected by Thomas Cooper. London: T. Berthelet, 1548.
- Erasmus, Desidarius. The Praise of Folie. tr. Sir Thomas Chaloner, ed. Clarence H. Miller for the Early English Text Society. E.E.T.S. no. 257. Oxford: University Press, 1965.
- Fenton, Geffrey. Golden Epistles, Conteyning Varietie of Discourse both Morall, Philosophicall and Divine. London: Ralph Newberrie, 1582.
- Florio, John. A Worlde of Wordes. London: M. Bradwood for Edward Blount, 1598.
- Gainsford, Thomas. The Rich Cabinet. . . . London: For Roger Jackson, 1616.
- Garzoni, Tommaso. The Hospitall of Incurable Fooles. London: Edmund Ballisant for Edward Blount, 1600.
- Greene, Robert. The Scottish History of James the Fourth. London: Thomas Creede, 1598. Reprinted literatim from the British Museum and Dyce copies. Oxford: University Press for the Malone Society, 1921.
- Guazzo, Stephano. The Civile Conversation. . . . tr. George Pettie, London: Thomas East, 1586.
- Guilpin, Everard. Skialethia or A Shadowe of Truth in certaine Epigrams and Satyres. London: I.R. For Nicholas Ling, 1598. Reprinted literatim from British Museum copy (C. 40. b. 54) under the title Skialethia 1598. Oxford: University Press for the Shakespeare Association, 1931.
- Hall, Arthur (tr.) Ten Boockes of Homers Iliades. London: Ralph Newberrie, 1581.

- Hooker, Richard. Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie. London: William Stansbye for George Lathum, 1632.
- Humfrey, Lawrence. The Nobles, or Of Nobility, London: Thomas Marshe, 1563.
- Hurault, Jacques. Politicke, Morall, and Martial Discourses. tr. Arthur Golding, London: Adam Islip, 1595.
- Kendall, Timothy. Flowers of Epigrammes out of Sundrie the moste Singular Authours Selected. . . . London: For John Sheppard, 1577.
- La Primaudaye, Pierre de. The French Academie, fully finished in foure bookes. tr. T. B[owes]. London: J. Legate for T. Adams, 1618.
- Lennius, Laurentius. The Touchstone of Complexions. . . . tr. Thomas Newton, London: Thomas Marsh, 1581.
- Ling, Nicholas (comp.) Politephuia, Wits Commonwealth. London: I.R. for Nicholas Ling, 1598.
- Mancin, Dominic. The Mirour of Good Maners Containing the Foure Cardinall Vertues. tr. Alexander Barclay, London: John Cawood, 1570.
- Marston, John. The Scourge of Villainie, London: I.R. 1598/9. Reprinted literatim from Bodlein Library copy (8°L550B.S.) Bodley Head Quarto XIII. ed. G. B. Harrison, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1925.
- Meres, Francis. Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury. London: P. Shott for Cuthburt Burnie, 1595.
- Mexia, Pedro. et.al. The Tresurie of Auncient and Moderne Times. tr. Thomas Milles, London: W. Jaggard, 1613.
- M[iddleton], T[homas]. Micro-Cynicon, Sixe Snarling Satyres. London: Thomas Creede for Thomas Bushell, 1599.
- Nixon, Anthony. The Dignitie of Man. London: Edward Alde, 1612.
- Painter, William. The Pallace of Pleasure, London: Thomas Marshe, 1566-7.
- Pauls, Peter. Shakespeare's TIMON OF ATHENS. An Examination of the Misanthrope Tradition and Shakespeare's Handling of the Sources. Unpublished Dissertation. University of Wisconsin, 1969. DA69-9713.
- Plutarch, Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans. tr. Thomas North, London: T. Vautrollier and J. Wright, 1579.
- The Philosophie Commonlie Called The Morals. tr. Philemon Holland. London: Arnold Hatfield, 1603.

- Purchas, Samuel. Purchas His Pilgrim: Microcosmos or the Historie of Man. London: W.S. for Henry Fetherstone, 1619.
- Puttenham, George. The Art of English Poesie. London: Richard Field, 1598. Scolar Press Facsimile No. 110. Menston: Scolar, 1968.
- Rogers, Thomas. A Philosophicall Discourse Entituled the Anatomie of the Mind. London: L.C. for Andrew Maunsell, 1576.
- Rowlands, Samuel. "The Melancholie Knight". London: R.B. for George Loftus, 1615.
- Sharpe, Roger. More Fooles Yet. London: For Thomas Castleton, 1610.
- Topsell, Edward. The House-holder or Perfect Man. 2nd. ed. London: For Henry Rochyt, 1610.
- Vaughan, William. The Golden Grove. . . . London: Simon Stafford, 1600.
- W.I. The Whipping of the Satyre, London: For John Flasket, 1601.
- Walkington, Thomas. The Opicke Glasse of Humors. London: John Windet for Martin Clerke, 1607.
- Wilson, Thomas. The Art of Rhetorique. London: George Robinson, 1583, ed. G.H. Mair. Oxford: Clarendon, 1909.
- Wright, Thomas. The Passions of the Mind in Generall. 2nd. ed. London: Valentine Simmes for Walter Barre, 1604.

2. Secondary Materials

- Babb, Lawrence. The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State College Press, 1951.
- Baker, Herschel. The Dignity of Man. Studies in the Persistence of an Idea. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947.
- Birney, Alice Lotvin. Satiric Catharsis in Shakespeare. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- Bradbrook, Muriel. "The Comedy of Timon. A Revelling Play of the Inner Temple." Renaissance Drama. IX (1966) 83-103.
- . Shakespeare the Craftsman. London: Chatto & Windus, 1969.
- Brant, Sebastian. The Ship of Fools. tr. Edwin H. Zeydel. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944.

- Branam, George C. Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956.
- Braunmuiler, A. R. "The Serious Comedy of Greene's James IV". English Literary Renaissance. III. (1973) 335-50.
- Bullough, Geoffrey. Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare. 8 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. (1957-)
 Vol. II. The Comedies: 1597-1603 (1958)
 Vol. VI. Other Classical Plays (1966)
- Bulman, James C. Jr. "The Date and Production of Timon Reconsidered". Shakespeare Survey. XXVII (1974) 111-27.
- Butler, Francelia. The Strange Critical Fortunes of Shakespeare's 'Timon of Athens'. Ames, Iowa: University Press, 1966.
- Campbell, O.J. Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida'. San Marino: University of California Press, 1933.
- . Shakespeare's Satire. Oxford: University Press, 1943.
- Chambers, E.K. William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems. 2 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1930.
- Charney, Maurice. "Coriolanus and Timon of Athens." Shakespeare: Select Bibliographical Guides. ed. Stanley Wells. Oxford: University Press, 1973.
- . (ed.) Timon of Athens, by William Shakespeare. (Signet) New York: New American Library, 1965.
- Collins, A.S. "Timon of Athens: A Reconsideration." Review of English Studies XXII (1946) 96-108.
- Cumberland, Richard. Timon of Athens Altered from Shakespeare. London: For the Proprietors of Shakespeare's Works, 1771. Facsimile of Birmingham Shakespeare Library copy. London: Cornmarket Press, 1969.
- Ellis-Fermor, Una. "Timon of Athens: An Unfinished Play." Review of English Studies. XVIII, (1942) 270-83.
- Farnham, Willard. Shakespeare's Tragic Frontier. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.
- Felver, Charles S. Robert Armin, Shakespeare's Fool. Kent State University Bulletin V. Kent, Ohio: University Press, 1961.
- Fink, Z.S. "Jaques and the Malcontent Traveller". Philological Quarterly, XIV (1935) 237-52.

- Fraser, George MacDonald. The Steel Bonnets: The Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1971.
- Furness, Horace Howard (ed.) As You Like It by William Shakespeare. (New Variorum) Philadelphia: Lippincourt, 1890. Reprinted New York: Dover, 1963.
- Gilman, Albert (ed.) As You Like It by William Shakespeare, (Signet), New York: New American Library, 1963.
- Goldsmith, Robert H. Wise Fools in Shakespeare. Liverpool: University Press, 1958.
- Greene, Robert. The Scottish History of James the Fourth. ed. J. A. Lavin, London: Benn, 1967.
- . The Scottish History of James the Fourth. ed. Norman Saunders. London: Methuen, 1970.
- Kaiser, Walter. Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Kernan, Alvin. The Cankered Muse, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
- Knight, G. Wilson. "The Pilgrimage of Hate: An Essay on Timon of Athens." The Wheel of Fire. 4th ed. London: Methuen, 1960.
- Langham, Michael. "Speech to the Canadian Club, Montreal, Monday, Feb. 3, 1964." Stratford, Ont.: Festival Archives.
- Latham, Agnes (ed.). As You Like It by William Shakespeare (Arden) London: Methuen, 1975.
- Lewis, Percy Wyndham. The Lion and the Fox. London: Harper, c1927.
- Lyons, Bridget Gellert. Voices of Melancholy. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Marx, Karl. Early Writings. tr. and ed. T. B. Bottomore, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- Maxwell, J. C. "Greene's 'Ridstall Man'", Modern Language Review. XLIV, (1949) 88-9.
- . (ed.) The Life of Timon of Athens by William Shakespeare. (New Cambridge) Cambridge: University Press, 1957.
- Oliver, H. J. (ed.) Timon of Athens by William Shakespeare (Arden) London: Methuen, 1963.
- Presson, Robert K. Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida' and the Legends of Troy. Madison, Wis.: University Press, 1953.

- Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur and John Dover Wilson (edd.) As You Like It by William Shakespeare. (New Cambridge) Cambridge: University Press, 1926.
- Quintus of Smyrna. The War at Troy, tr. Frederick Combellack. Norman, Okla.: University Press, 1968.
- Renwick, W.L. "Greene's 'Ridstall Man'" Modern Language Review XXIX, (1934) 434.
- Rowse, A.L. The Expansion of Elizabethan England. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Seltzer, Daniel (ed.). Troilus and Cressida by William Shakespeare (Signet). New York: New American Library, 1963.
- Shadwell, Thomas. The History of Timon of Athens the Manhater. London: J. M. for Henry Herringman, 1678. Facsimile of Birmingham Shakespeare Library copy. London: Cornmarket Press, 1969.
- Spencer, T. J. B. Shakespeare and the Nature of Man. 2nd. ed. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1949.
- Spencer, Theodore. "The Elizabethan Malcontent" Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies. edd. James C. McManaway et. al. Washington: Folger, 1948.
- Spivack, Bernard. Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- Stoll, E.E. "Shakespeare, Marston and the Malcontent Type", Modern Philology. III (1905-6) 281-303.
- ". "Jaques and the Antiquarians". Modern Language Notes. XLV. (1939) 79-83.
- Swain, Barbara. Fools and Folly During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. New York: Columbia University Press, 1932.
- Tillyard, E.M.W. The Elizabethan World Picture. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1963.
- ". Shakespeare's Problem Plays. Toronto: University Press, 1950.
- Turner, Louise C. "A Caveat for Critics Against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology." PMLA LXI (1946) 651-72.
- Walker, Alice (ed.). Troilus and Cressida by William Shakespeare (New Cambridge) Cambridge: University Press, 1969.
- Welsford, Enid. The Fool, His Social and Literary History, 2nd. ed. London: Faber, 1968.

- Wilders, John. "The Problem Comedies." Shakespeare, Select Bibliographical Guides, ed. Stanley Wells. Oxford: University Press, 1971, 94-112.
- Willeford, William. The Fool and His Scepter. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969.
- Wilson, F.P. Elizabethan and Jacobean. Oxford: Clarendon, 1946.
- Wright, Herbert G. "Greene's 'Ridstall Man'", Modern Language Review XXX (1935) 347.
- Zolbred, Paul G. "Coriolanus and Alceste: A Study in Misanthropy." Shakespeare Quarterly XXII (1972) 51-62.