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EDITOR'S NOTE

The central theme of *Shakespeare Survey 32*, as already announced, will be the three comedies *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. It will include a retrospect by Professor M. M. Mahood. The theme of Number 33 will be *King Lear*. Contributions on that play or on other topics should reach the Editor (University of Liverpool, P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX) by 1 September 1979. Contributors should leave generous margins, use double spacing, and follow the style and lay-out of articles in the current issue. A style-sheet is available on request. Contributions should not normally exceed 5,000 words. Books for review should be sent to the Editor at the above address, not to the publisher.

K. M.

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THE ANCIENT WORLD IN SHAKESPEARE: AUTHENTICITY OR ANACHRONISM? A RETROSPECT

JOHN W. VELZ

In 1680 Nahum Tate was quite positive about verisimilitude in Shakespeare: 'I am sure he never touches on a Roman Story, but the Persons, the Passages, the Manners, the Circumstances, the Ceremonies, all are Roman'. This was a substantial (though not necessarily substantiated) claim, because Tate had just asserted that 'Nature will not do [a poet's] Business, he must have the Addition of Arts and Learning': acquaintance with 'the Customs and Constitutions of Nations', and with much else, 'the Histories of all Ages', even 'the meanest Mysteries and Trades', 'because 'tis uncertain [whither] his subject will lead him'.[1] Had Ben Jonson been alive to read Tate's opinion of Shakespeare's portraits of the Roman world, he would doubtless have said something memorably contemptuous. His own scholarly pretensions to exact local and temporal verisimilitude in *Sejanus* and 'well-laboured' *Catiline* are a commonplace of literary history; everyone knows also that Jonson once described Shakespeare's portrayal of Gaius Julius Caesar in the moments before his assassination as 'ridiculous'. The Tate school of thought has had some notable adherents, Dryden, Pope, and Johnson among the early ones, but the opposed assertion, that Shakespeare's Romans are Elizabethans in togas, has always been with us.[2] From the time of John Dennis's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* (1712) it has been a scholarly parlor game to enumerate Shakespeare's blunders in the Roman plays.

It may be rewarding to consider the question yet once again, expanding the terms to take in Shakespeare's Greek world. When we observe that the ancient world is the setting for just one third of the Shakespeare canon – two of the comedies, both of the narrative poems, four of the five romances, and six of the eleven tragedies – the exercise justifies itself. And though this article cannot claim to survey the history of opinion in any way fully, it may usefully point to some representative studies. It may be instructive to begin with comments on three or four major attempts in the past century to deal with the Tate/Jonson polarity.

Edward Dowden tried to reconcile the two poles in 1875 in a statement that typifies the Romantic tradition in Shakespeare criticism:

> while Shakspere is profoundly faithful to Roman life and character, it is an ideal truth, truth spiritual rather than truth material, which he seeks to discover . . . Shakspere was aware that his personages must be men before they were Romans . . . He knew that the buttressing up of art with erudition will not give stability to that which must stand by no aid of material props and stays, but if at all, by virtue of the one living soul of which it is the body.[3]

We are a long way in such Platonism from Tate's Aristotelian insistence on the poet's

[1] Address prefatory to *The Loyal General: A Tragedy*.

[2] For a recent instance, see Myron Taylor, 'Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the Irony of History', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXIV (1973), 301–8 (p. 301).

[3] *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (1875; 3rd edn., rpt. 1962), p. 276.

acquaintance with 'the Customs and Constitutions of Nations'. Dowden transmits in his assertion the consensus of the nineteenth-century German aesthetic critics he so greatly admired, and he acknowledges his debt to the English Romantic tradition (Charles Knight in particular) as well. The legacy of *Shakspere* has been as long as its ancestry – my copy of the book (1962) is from the twenty-fifth printing, and I can clearly remember being told of *Julius Caesar* in school thirty years ago very much what Dowden says here of the spirit of Rome in Shakespeare. Dowden's stance may seem to us an evasion, rather more lofty than logical, but there is no doubt of its importance in cultural history.

M. W. MacCallum, writing in 1910, perceived the relation between 'truth material', and 'truth spiritual' in the Roman plays quite differently from Dowden. Pointing out (as Paul Stapfer had done before him[1]) that Shakespeare is a very purist by comparison with those earlier Elizabethans (Thomas Lodge above all) who had dramatized Roman subjects, MacCallum declared:

> No dramatist had been able at once to rise to the grandeur of the theme [of Roman history] and keep a foothold on solid earth, to reconcile the claims of the ideal and the real, the past and the present. That was left for Shakespeare to do.[2]

There is in Shakespeare more of Rome, MacCallum argued, than of Scotland or of pre-Christian Britain. Poetic license is restrained in the Roman plays (sometimes even to the detriment of dramatic impact) because Shakespeare knew that events in those Roman stories had future consequences of immediate interest to his audience; hence his invented characters in the Roman plays are lesser figures (Lucius in *Julius Caesar*, Nicanor in *Coriolanus*, Silius in *Antony and Cleopatra*) who do not figure in the main action the way invented characters in Schiller's historical plays do.

> Shakespeare on the one hand loyally accepted his authorities [in the English history plays and the Roman plays alike – and for the same reasons] and never deviated from them on their main route, but on the other he treated them unquestioningly from his own point of view, and probably never even suspected that their own might be different. This is the double characteristic of his attitude to his documents, and it combines pious regard for the assumed facts of History with complete indifference to critical research. (p. 86)

But Shakespeare's loyalty to his sources

> does not mean that in the Roman any more than in the English plays he attempts an accurate reconstruction of the past. It may even be doubted whether such an attempt would have been intelligible to him or to any save one or two of his contemporaries.[3] To the average Elizabethan (and in this respect Shakespeare was an average Elizabethan, with infinitely clearer vision certainly, but with the same outlook and horizon) the past differed from the present chiefly by its distance and dimness; and distinctive contrasts in manners and customs were but scantily recognised. A generation later French audiences could view the perruques and patches of Corneille's Romans without any sense of incongruity, and the assimilation of the ancient to the modern was in some respects much more thorough-going in Shakespeare's England. (p. 81)

Waving aside such anachronisms as striking clocks, Galenic medicine, and sweaty nightcaps as 'trifles that [do not] interfere with fidelity

[1] *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity: Greek and Latin Antiquity as Presented in Shakespeare's Plays*. A partial translation by Emily J. Carey of *Shakespeare et l'Antiquité* (1880). See especially ch. 5, 'Shakespeare's Anachronisms'. Stapfer's is the earliest full study of Shakespeare's portrait of the ancient world; it remains one of the two or three best treatments of the subject. T. J. B. Spencer is correct in pointing out (in his introduction to the 1967 rpt. of MacCallum – see note 2, this page) that MacCallum owes a large and unacknowledged debt to Stapfer, but I do not agree that MacCallum entirely supersedes Stapfer and the other Continental writers who influenced MacCallum.

[2] *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and Their Background* (1910; rpt. New York, 1967), pp. 71–2.

[3] This idea is traceable ultimately to Goethe.

to antiquity' (p. 82), MacCallum shrewdly observed that Shakespeare stressed just those elements in Roman society and culture (e.g., soldiers of fortune and the orgies of aristocratic decadence in *Antony and Cleopatra*) which appeared also in Renaissance society and culture.

> There was a good deal of such correspondence between Elizabethan life and Roman life, so the Roman Tragedies have a breath of historic verisimilitude and even a faint suggestion of local colour. There was much less between Elizabethan life and Greek life, so *Timon* and *Troilus and Cressida*, though true as human documents, have almost nothing Hellenic about them.[1]

Even in the Roman plays, he points out, Shakespeare is less at home when he portrays something (life in a republic, for example) which he had not experienced in his own culture.

MacCallum's book remains a landmark after nearly seventy years. In 1954 Madeleine Doran was to reason in more general terms and with equal persuasiveness that the Renaissance habit of mind was to perceive and fuse analogues between the native and classical traditions. In such an eclectic frame, anachronism and anatopism become aesthetic merits, not naif oversights; and a proper critical stance, one that takes art in its own terms, will rather approve than condemn.[2] In 1960 she went so far as to declare in a public lecture that the amalgam of Chaucer and Plutarch in the character of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is entirely harmonious and that in general the Greek and English worlds of the play belong together more naturally than has been thought; in Shakespeare 'the present assumes the past'.[3] Here, of course, is an implicit challenge to MacCallum's view of Shakespeare's Hellenism; other challenges will be discussed later in the paper.

As these accounts of the postures of MacCallum and Doran may suggest, the ground of argument has shifted in the twentieth century. From MacCallum's time, scholarship has gradually abandoned the question whether 'the Persons, the Passages, the Manners, the Circumstances, the Ceremonies' in Shakespeare are authentically Roman to ask instead whether Shakespeare and his audience thought them so. And the trend of commentary since the mid-nineteen-fifties has been with increasing frequency to answer, 'Yes'. The most impressive manifestation of the new scholarly stance came early and has been exemplary. In 1957 in a volume of *Shakespeare Survey* devoted to the Roman plays, T. J. B. Spencer showed that Shakespeare's portrait of Rome as a world of tumult and flux, of shouting crowds and violent events, is congruent with his generation's view of Roman history as a succession of 'garboyles'.[4] If a Restoration critic like Tate thought Shakespeare's Rome authentic while his contemporaries Rymer and Dennis thought Shakespeare's Romans unpleasantly lacking in dignity, both had some reason. Yet Shakespeare is unlike his contemporaries, Spencer goes on, in emphasizing Plutarch's Republican vision of Rome: 'in spite of literary admiration for Cicero, the Romans in the imagination of the sixteenth century were Suetonian and Tacitan rather than Plutarchan'. It was the Empire, not the Republic, that provided moral *exempla* to the Renaissance. It can, in fact, be said that *Titus Andronicus* is a more representative 'Noble Roman Historye' by Renaissance

[1] Georg Gottfried Gervinus had asserted that Shakespeare's ostensible preference for Rome over Greece was an *English* preference, as opposed to German (read Romantic) taste; see *Shakespeare Commentaries* (1849–50) (3rd edn. trans. F. E. Bunnètt (1862) 1892), p. 680.

[2] Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1954), ch. 1 *et passim*.

[3] '*A Midsummer Night's Dream:* A Metamorphosis', published in *Rice Institute Pamphlets*, XLVI, 4 (January 1960), 113–35.

[4] 'Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans', *Shakespeare Survey 10* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 27–38.

standards than the other three of Shakespeare's Roman plays – it certainly has more garboyles. With some effort of the historical imagination, we must realize that it required individuality for Shakespeare to focus on the heroes and the moral environment of the Republic, especially to write *Coriolanus*, very nearly the first play ever written on the legendary Gnaeus Marcius. *Coriolanus* is, Spencer points out, the most authentic, least anachronistic, of the Roman plays, perhaps on the model of *Sejanus* – or perhaps because Shakespeare, aware of himself as an innovator, is on his mettle. Spencer's summary verdict on *Romanitas* in Shakespeare would have irritated Ben Jonson, but it is a fair one:

> Setting aside poetical and theatrical considerations, and merely referring to the artist's ability to 'create a world' (as the saying is), we may ask if there was anything in prose or verse, in Elizabethan or Jacobean literature, which bears the same marks of careful and thoughtful consideration of the ancient world, a deliberate effort of a critical intelligence to give a consistent picture of it, as there is in Shakespeare's plays. (p. 35)

Before turning to the question, 'What *was* Rome to Shakespeare?' it is appropriate to consider Greece, a world that appears in the Shakespeare canon as often as Rome does. Though R. R. Bolgar echoed MacCallum in 1954 on the difference between Rome and Greece in Shakespeare,[1] not all scholars are now so ready to dismiss Shakespeare's Hellenism as insignificant.

Shakespeare is at pains to bring 'weeds of Athens' into *A Midsummer Night's Dream* whether or not he had a real sense of what they looked like historically.[2] In the same play and with the same dubious authenticity he introduces 'the ancient privilege of Athens' (I, i, 41), a father's appalling authority over his daughter's freedom and even over her life. When we remember that the rigors of 'the sharp Athenian law' (I, i, 162) are closely paralleled in the hyperbolic harshness of the Ephesian law under which Egeon is condemned to death in *The Comedy of Errors*, we may ask whether Shakespeare had a notion that ancient Greek culture was rigid and cruel. The irrational arbitrariness of Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* and the whimsical nature of Theseus's arbitration in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (III, vi) come to mind as analogues. Of course there are other arbitrary laws in Shakespeare (one thinks of the capital penalty for fornication in *Measure for Measure*)[3] which have nothing to do with Hellenic or Hellenistic culture, and some of Shakespeare's Greek justice derives from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, so one must tread tentatively; but it is possibly significant that Shakespeare, setting two of his early comedies in the Greek world, arranged them so that love, familial or romantic, triumphs over rigid traditionary law which is insisted on early in each play only to be flatly overruled later.

Such a view of rigorous but vulnerable law in the Greek world might have resulted from a mistaken impression of the large number of references in Acts and the Epistles to the brutality and legalism the Apostle Paul encountered in his travels through the Hellenistic world. Paul's encounters are almost all with Jews of the Diaspora, not with Greek civil

[1] *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 327.

[2] II, ii, 71 *et passim*. (The Riverside Shakespeare is my authority for citations.) Shakespeare may have thought weeds of Athens exactly like weeds of Rome; see W. M. Merchant, 'Classical Costume in Shakespearian Productions', *Shakespeare Survey 10* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 71–6 (p. 71). D'Orsay W. Pearson believes, however, that the allusion to buskins (II, i, 71) makes it clear that Shakespeare had a more accurate knowledge; see '"Unkinde" Theseus: A Study in Renaissance Mythography', *English Literary Renaissance*, IV (1974), 276–98 (pp. 279–80).

[3] See Ralph Berry, 'Shakespearean Comedy and Northrop Frye', *Essays in Criticism*, XXII (1972), 33–40, for the opinion that harsh laws in Shakespeare are not so harsh, *pace* Frye.

authorities, who normally appear rather as indifferent than arbitrary. But the number of times Paul is physically threatened after having been accused of preaching doctrine counter to 'our law' in Greek synagogues might easily give a reader of Paul the image of embattled Greek-speaking Christians in a harsh and legalistic environment. The great theme of the Pauline Epistles is, of course, the triumph of love over rigid law, of a new dispensation over an older one.[1] T. W. Baldwin showed in 1963 that the shipwreck and the geography in *Errors* owe something significant to the Acts of the Apostles, though Baldwin apparently missed the relevance of the Epistle to the Ephesians for the play.[2] He also neglected the possible importance of Paul to *Pericles*, where, as in *Errors*, shipwreck and fracture of the family lead to eventual reunion in a religious hospice at Ephesus.[3] It seems likely enough that a thoughtful study of the Pauline Epistles would show that Shakespeare's conception of the Mediterranean world comes in part from Scripture.[4]

It is not cruelty or the preeminence of law over love but dissoluteness, deception, and perfidy that T. J. B. Spencer finds in the ancient Greeks as seen through Renaissance (and Shakespeare's) eyes. In an essay complementary to his earlier paper on 'the Elizabethan Romans', Spencer documents a pejorative view of the Greek national character in Roman literature, especially in the *Aeneid* and in stage comedy, whence it found its way easily to the Renaissance.[5] There can be no doubt from Spencer's massed evidence that Greeks were pejorated in Shakespeare's time exactly as the French are in some English-speaking circles today. And there seems little room for disagreement when Spencer concludes that the right way to read *Timon* and *Troilus* is to strip away our inheritance of nineteenth-century philhellenism and recognize in them Shakespeare's participation in the traditional prejudice. Clifford Leech challenged Spencer by pointing out (quite rightly) that some Athenians are decent-minded in *Timon* and that some characters in *Troilus*, notably Cressida and Achilles, are, however tainted, more

[1] Hugh M. Richmond has reasoned that *Cym.* portrays Roman Britain's urgent need for what the Christian era will provide. See 'Shakespeare's Roman Trilogy: The Climax in *Cymbeline*', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, V, I (April 1972), 129–39 – this is the best of the several articles that have recently focused on the fact that Cunobelinus was king of Britain at the time of Christ's birth.

[2] *On the Compositional Genetics of The Comedy of Errors* (Urbana, Illinois, 1963). Aemilia's lecture to Adriana in V, i on the evil of fractiousness in wives is doubtless inspired by Ephesians – and so, by extension, is Kate's lecture to the rebellious wives in V, ii of *Shrew*, a play that in other ways (including use of the same scene from *Amphitruo*) is a companion to *Com. Errors*.

[3] Though Paul Wislicenus sketched it a century ago (*Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, XIV (1879), 87–96), the relationship of *Com. Errors* to *Per.* has until quite recently been much neglected: F. D. Hoeniger touched only in passing on the similar circumstances of the two fifth acts in his learned and very full introduction to the Arden *Pericles* (1963). The affinity lies deeper, in for example the emphasis in both plays on patience as the sane man's response to an absurd world (see James L. Sanderson, 'Patience in *The Comedy of Errors*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XVI (1975), 603–18). It seems legitimate to suppose that when he worked on *Per.* Shakespeare reassembled in his creative imagination the elements that had been important to him in *Com. Errors* – including St Paul. Roger Carson Price's doctoral dissertation, 'Pauline Perils: A Religious Reading of *Pericles*' (see *Dissertation Abstracts International*, XXXV (1975), 7266A–7A) is a nearly occult symbolic reading, but occasionally it looks in the desired direction.

[4] R. Chris Hassel (*Thought*, XLVI (1971), 371–88) and Robert C. Foy (see *Dissertation Abstracts International*, XXXIV (1973), 724A–5A) have dealt with Paul as an influence on Shakespearian comedy, but not from the proposed perspective.

[5] '"Greeks" and "Merrygreeks": A Background to *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida*', *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig*, ed. Richard Hosley (Columbia, Missouri, 1962), pp. 223–33.

than satiric stereotypes, while Trojans share in the immorality ostensibly Greek;[1] but there is no denying that both plays portray sullied Greeks and a corrupt Hellas. We must agree with Spencer that the two plays are best read as orthodox Renaissance portraits of the Greek world. There is certainly no need to see in them the evidence scholarship has so often strained to find: of Shakespearian world-weariness, or of a wholehearted commitment to medieval classicism (*Troilus*), or of malice toward George Chapman (*Troilus*), or even of rebellion against 'the schoolmasters' worship of antiquity', J. A. K. Thomson's interpretation, as Spencer quotes it.

Yet this view will not answer all our questions about Shakespeare's Greeks; convincingly as Spencer explains the moral tone of two plays, he must leave five more (*The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*) and, as we wish, *Venus and Adonis* unaccounted for. Even when we have granted that these six works are less studiedly Greek in setting than *Troilus* and *Timon*, we must allow that there is more to Shakespeare's Greece than the Renaissance bias. James Emerson Phillips argued nearly forty years ago that Shakespeare's conception of ancient Greece was political, as his conceptions of ancient Rome and of medieval England were, even though politics is not the center of dramatic interest in any of the Greek and Roman plays.[2] He prefigured Spencer's 'Elizabethan Romans' essay by applying Renaissance assumptions about monarchy and the state to *Caesar*, *Antony*, *Coriolanus*, *Troilus*, and *Timon*. It remained for Howard B. White to extend a political interpretation to *Dream* and *Pericles* (and to *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*, also) and to argue that the political questions are 'Greek' in Shakespeare's Greek plays in something like the way they are English in the histories.[3] So he sees *Timon* as portraying the decay of Athenian democracy and *Dream* as portraying the foundation of that democracy. (We might prefer to see the corruption of an entrenched oligarchy in *Timon* and a sketch for a philosopher-king in *Dream*,[4] and then to add that *The Winter's Tale* offers a vivid portrait of a tyrant in action.[5]) White's book is deeply flawed by mistaken interpretation and casual error, but it is sometimes attractively suggestive: on the psychology and ethics of ostracism in *Cymbeline*, for example, and (too briefly) on St Paul in *Pericles*.

A fuller, more tightly reasoned book remains to be written on Shakespeare's response to Greek political philosophy; such a book ought to stress his sense of the *polis* as the core of civilization. One sees it best in *Timon*, where the failure of the *polis* to manifest its ontological essence, the reciprocities of human intercourse, leads to an atavistic collapse into a barbarism conveyed by imagery of bestiality and cannibalism; only Alcibiades's eschatological purge of the city can restore the civility (both senses) of Athens. The best commentary on Timon's personal sins against reciprocity is *The Odyssey* with its insistence on hospitality as a reciprocal ethic and its portrayal of the Cyclopes in Book IX as archetypally pre-civilized, living each in isolation in his cave;

[1] 'Shakespeare's Greeks', *Stratford Papers on Shakespeare* ed. B. W. Jackson (Toronto, 1964), pp. 1–20.

[2] *The State in Shakespeare's Greek and Roman Plays* (Columbia Univ. Stud. in Engl. and Comp. Lit. 149; New York, 1940).

[3] *Copp'd Hills Towards Heaven: Shakespeare and the Classical Polity* (International Archives of the History of Ideas 32; The Hague, 1970).

[4] D'Orsay Pearson (see above, p. 4, note 2) argues that the Theseus of *MND* is no philosopher-king but the carnal and perfidious Theseus of one mythographic tradition; his first note cites some scholars who have seen in Theseus the ideal governor of another tradition. Pearson's case would be weakened by introduction of the Theseus of *TNK*, I believe.

[5] See Paul N. Siegel, 'Leontes a Jealous Tyrant', *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 1 (1950), 302–7.

the best commentary on the *polis* as a whole in *Timon* is the *Nicomachean Ethics* where Aristotle constantly emphasizes the centrality of reciprocity in civilized moral life.[1] Knowing Shakespeare's intellectual habits, we might expect to find similar emphases in *Coriolanus*, written at about the same time as *Timon* and based on a source in Plutarch parallel to a major source of *Timon*; and it is there, the reciprocity emblematized in Menenius's fable of the organic body politic in I, i and pervading the play as one of its great moral issues. It will be necessary to return to *Coriolanus* and the ideal of the *polis* at the end of this essay.

The political ethic of reciprocity was available to Shakespeare in places other than Aristotle's *Ethics*; it was in fact so widespread in antiquity that there is not much point in trying to establish a *locus classicus* for Shakespeare's sense of the classical polity.[2] He may have known Plato's *Republic*,[3] but he would in any case learn something of the Greek ideal of the city state in Cicero and a great deal more, both about the ideal and about the imperfect reality, in Plutarch's *Lives*, especially in 'Pericles', 'Dion' (parallel to 'Marcus Brutus'), and 'Alcibiades', which contributed something more to *Timon* than the quarrel Alcibiades has with Athens. It has sometimes been said (by Bolgar, e.g., see above, p. 4, note 1) that Plutarch taught Shakespeare little about Greece; it is time to qualify that judgment. Examination of the Greek lives in Plutarch which are parallel to Roman lives Shakespeare used shows that Shakespeare may have read more widely than his critics: Sidney Homan's article on 'Dion', 'Alexander' and 'Demetrius' is suggestive.[4]

If Shakespeare's Greece offers us as yet only partially answered questions, his Rome does so no less. What, finally, *was* Rome to Shakespeare? Was it anything more than an analogue to medieval England, or Denmark, or Scotland, or any of the other worlds Shakespeare evoked? Twentieth-century scholarship has in two ways implicitly denied that it was anything more. First, the nearly universal failure to find a generic link among the Roman plays has implicitly suggested that they belong together less inherently than some other groups of plays in Shakespeare; it is still common to exclude *Titus* from the group, as MacCallum did.[5] Second, scholarship has conventionally studied the classical tradition and then applied it broadcast across the Shakespeare canon, as if Shakespeare had not seen the ancient world in which he set one-third of his works as in any real sense a world apart. To illustrate this second implicit challenge to the identity of Shakespeare's Roman world, two instances can stand proxy for many others. In *Hero and Saint*, Reuben Brower 'explore[s] probable analogies between the Shakespearian heroic and the Graeco-Roman heroic' (p. vii); the ancient heroic is to be found in a combination of Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, and Plutarch –

[1] The author advanced this view of *Timon* in '"According to my Bond": Reciprocity and Alienation in Shakespeare's Jacobean Plays' read at the Sixteenth International Shakespeare Conference, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1974.

[2] See Clifford Chalmers Huffman, '*Coriolanus*' *in Context* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, 1971), chs. 1–5 *passim* for classical, medieval, and Renaissance thought about 'the mixed state'; see also Andrew Gurr (who oddly does not mention Huffman), '*Coriolanus* and the Body Politic', *Shakespeare Survey 28* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 63–9.

[3] Scholarship has characteristically been tentative about this; see, for example, Paul Shorey, *Platonism Ancient and Modern* (Berkeley, California, 1938), pp. 179–82.

[4] *Shakespeare Studies*, VIII (1975), 195–210; cf. E. A. J. Honigmann's excellent article on Shakespeare's eclectic reading in Plutarch, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, X (1959), 25–33. For the probable relationship of 'Pericles' to *Per.* (first in W. C. Hazlitt's 1875 edn. of J. P. Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*) and to *Timon* see J. M. S. Tompkins, *Review of English Studies*, n.s. III (1952), 315–24.

[5] See the opening pages of J. L. Simmons's book discussed below, for an account of this failure of generic criticism in the twentieth century.

the analogues in Shakespeare are Othello, Hamlet, and Lear no less than Shakespeare's Greek and Roman heroes.[1] In Milton Boone Kennedy's study of deliberative, forensic, and epideictic oratory in the Shakespeare canon no distinction at all is made between plays in which the world of classical eloquence is actually portrayed and Shakespeare's other plays.[2] No one will deny that a Brower or a Kennedy is entirely justified in seeing classical character or classical rhetoric in non-classical plays. But the effect of their method, a method applied almost universally by historical scholarship in this century, has been to encourage a fallacious inference about the ancient world in Shakespeare, Rome especially.

It can, on the contrary, be argued that Rome is a place apart to Shakespeare, a world whose mystique he attempts quite deliberately to depict. Such an argument appears in J. L. Simmons's *Shakespeare's Pagan World: The Roman Tragedies*.[3] Simmons proposes that the distinguishing characteristic of Shakespeare's Rome is its secularity; the *civitas Dei* is not yet available as a transcendent absolute, and Shakespeare's Roman heroes grope in a relative world for a moral certainty that can never be accorded them in the same sense that such certainty is available to a protagonist in Christian drama. Perhaps because Augustine contrasted his heavenly city very directly and specifically with the temporal city, *Roma*, it seems not to have occurred to Simmons to ask whether his thesis might be applied to Shakespeare's Greek characters; they too, after all, operate *sub specie temporis*. Much greater limitations than the omission of Greeks from the pagan world are the casual dismissal of *Titus* as under the umbrella of the thesis but not worth discussing, the scanty treatment of *Cymbeline*, and the total neglect of *Lucrece*. What Simmons does do, however, is well done: his vantage offers a clear view of three Roman plays, individually and collectively.

A second major attempt to see Shakespeare's Rome as a world apart has recently been made in Paul A. Cantor's *Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire*.[4] Focusing closely on *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cantor finds Shakespeare's portrayal of the Republic dominated by *thumos* (idealistic commitment, public spiritedness) while in Shakespeare's Empire *eros* (self-indulgence and the dissolution of moral boundaries) is in the ascendant. Freud would have labeled the polarity 'super ego' and 'id', though Cantor does not do so. Indeed, in a quite unfreudian way he implies repeatedly that *thumos* is preferable to *eros* and that it is somehow closer to the true spirit of Rome. Any view that Augustan opulence and hegemony are a *casus* from the virtues of the Republic runs across the grain of Virgil's insistence that those virtues survive in the Augustan world and that *Romanitas* in the *Pax Augusta* is the *telos* toward which all Roman history has tended. Yet Virgil does not appear in Cantor's index. There are other limitations: the lack of any coherent treatment of *Caesar* and the total neglect (as in Simmons) of *Lucrece* and *Titus*; the entirely mistaken argument that Rome needs a political leader in *Coriolanus* and that Caius Marcius could have been the man to lead. Yet there is much impressive criticism of both plays in this book. Two examples must suffice: Cantor demonstrates convincingly that the traditional opposition in criticism between Roman *thumos* and Egyptian *eros* is artificial, as self-indulgence dominates Roman politics and daily life in the play; he observes perceptively that the focus in *Coriolanus* is on the *urbs* while in *Antony* 'Rome' means something less defined, as the City diffuses into the Empire.

[1] *Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition* (Oxford, 1971).

[2] *The Oration in Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1942).

[3] Charlottesville, Virginia, 1973.

[4] Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 1976.

There are other ways in which Shakespeare might be seen to have defined Rome; the space that remains will be devoted to some of them. First is the likelihood that Shakespeare thought of *Romanitas* as *eloquentia* and that he made a deliberate effort to forge answerable styles for his Roman plays. Given Shakespeare's grammar-school education in rhetoric it is probable enough that he should have drawn the inference that *Romanitas* was a mode of utterance. I say here *styles*, not *style*, because the four Roman plays differ widely in style, a fact which may account for the neglect of this designation of Roman life in Shakespeare. Yet in all four plays style is prominent – and 'Roman', or so Shakespeare would have thought. *Titus Andronicus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are both florid, though in quite different ways, *Titus* relying on *copia* as Ovid does to attain an aesthetic distance from the horrors it depicts,[1] and *Antony* relying on the 'Brobdingnagian' language of all the characters to elevate the love affair and its tragic consequences to the status of 'high events'.[2] The self-conscious overstatement of the play may remind us of the stylistic self-indulgence of Empire writers like Lucan or Apuleius, though *Antony* never seems merely artificial. In *Coriolanus* hyperbole serves a more complex purpose, suggesting the protagonist's loss of control as well as his colossal stature: if rhetoric is the controlled language of civilized discourse in the *urbs*, the pre-civilized hero designates himself an outsider by this failure in him of *urbanitas*. He would rather pile up the bodies of his opponents like cordwood (I, i, 197–200) than negotiate with those opponents in rational argument.[3]

The most striking of the Roman plays for its style is *Julius Caesar*, though criticism has never done it full justice. Samuel Johnson detected a Roman style, austere and unaffecting, in the play,[4] and for nearly two centuries criticism echoed him by calling the play sparse; not until Wilson Knight's time was the play seen to have any texture to speak of. What is most 'Roman' about *Caesar*, however, is not its linguistic leanness, but its oratorical mode. Any number of commentators have observed that Plutarch offered Shakespeare the distinction between Antony's Asiatic oratorical style and Brutus's Laconic style but that Shakespeare had to devise the two orations himself with help perhaps from Appian. Few, however, have seen how much of the rest of *Caesar* is oratorical.[5] From Marullus's twenty-four-line harangue of the Plebeians in I, i (a prefiguration of Brutus's oration in its merely temporary effectiveness) to Antony's brief *laudatio funebris* of Brutus in V, v, the play is filled with the solemnity and the intensity of public utterance. Indeed, it can be said with some justice that Portia delivers an oration to her husband in the orchard (while Lady Macbeth, by contrast, communicates with hers at a less formal level) and that the impact of IV, iii in *Caesar* is a result of the descent of Brutus and Cassius from the pedestal of formal discourse to the intimacies of bickering.

Another 'Roman' element of style in *Julius Caesar* is illeism, which Shakespeare would

[1] Eugene M. Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Survey 10* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 39–49.

[2] This is S. L. Bethell's interpretation (and his adjective) in *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (Durham, North Carolina, 1944), pp. 144–7; an extension of Bethell's approach is 'The Protean Language of the Man-Made World', ch. 6 of Julian Markels's *The Pillar of the World: Antony and Cleopatra in Shakespeare's Development* (Columbus, Ohio, 1968).

[3] See Leonard F. Dean, 'Voice and Deed in *Coriolanus*', *University of Kansas City Review*, XXI (1955), 177–84, for a related interpretation of the meaning of rhetoric in the play.

[4] End note to *JC* in his Shakespeare ed'n., 1765. Clifford Leech uses the adjective 'marmoreal' for the style of all the Roman plays (see above, p. 6, note 1).

[5] Kennedy, for example, confines himself to the two orations in III, ii.

have found in Caesar's *Commentaries*[1] and which he may have thought characteristically Roman – at least at the time he wrote *Caesar*. A great many characters in the play (not just Caesar, as is sometimes said) refer to themselves or others by name in the third person. Shakespeare made use of this device in *Hamlet*, which abounds in Roman allusions, and in *Troilus*, which like *Hamlet* was written shortly after *Caesar*, but after that it appears much less often;[2] perhaps by the time he wrote *Antony*, *Coriolanus*, and *Cymbeline* he found illeism too artificial a rhetorical stance for drama, however classical it might sound. Such magniloquence is appropriate enough in *Troilus*, but in less satiric contexts it may jar – indeed critics who have caught Caesar and Othello employing the device have labeled both pompous.

The fact that illeism appears in *Troilus* after Shakespeare introduced it in *Caesar* makes it plain that he could readily transfer to a Greek setting something he thought of as characteristically Roman. *Timon* and *Troilus* both evoke as the Roman plays do the relation between personal decorum and verbal eloquence that Cicero and Quintilian thought of as the essence of civility and civilization. In Timon's curses the complete disjunction of eloquence from magnanimity is a living metaphor for the descent from civil conversation to barbarism in the play; when we hear magniloquence used as a cloak for bad logic by both Greeks and Trojans in *Troilus* we may recall Socrates's belief that rhetoric and moral earnestness do not always keep company. T. McAlindon's often very astute book on *Shakespeare and Decorum* does not make these points;[3] indeed, like Kennedy and Brower, he fails entirely to segregate Shakespeare's classical plays.

It was decorum in its technical sense that Samuel Johnson was referring to in his comments on the style of *Julius Caesar*, for he juxtaposed Roman style and 'Roman manners'. We may safely guess that he was alluding to the Stoic temperament that we see in several characters, in Cicero (I, iii), for example, and in Portia (II, i), and in Brutus (IV, iii). The contrast between this phlegmatic manner and Cassius's choleric energy and overtness is one of the effective dramatic devices in the play.[4] There are other common traits of character in *Julius Caesar* that Shakespeare obviously thought distinctively Roman, notably anti-feminism (I, iii, 82–4; II, i, 119–22; II, i, 292–7 etc.); in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where a woman takes on the role of opponent and alternative to all that is Roman, such sentiments occur even more emphatically (cf. Canidius's embittered 'our leader's [led], / And we are women's men' – III, vii, 69–70). In *Coriolanus* the contrast is not so much between man and woman as between man and boy, surely because Plutarch put so much emphasis in 'Coriolanus' on valor as the Roman measure of mature masculinity[5] (we recall that for young Marcius the puberty rite was to flesh his sword against the Tarquins). There are still those who will argue that Volumnia is an Elizabethan huswife rather than a Roman matron,[6] but most scholars no longer doubt

[1] Norman N. Holland, *The Shakespearean Imagination* (New York, 1964), p. 138.

[2] S. Viswanathan ('"Illeism with a Difference" in Certain Middle Plays of Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XX (1969), 407–15) sees that illeism separates the speaker from his role, the persona of a mythic figure like Caesar or Hector from the reality, but he fails to recognize its origin in the *Commentaries*.

[3] 1973.

[4] John Anson (*Shakespeare Studies*, II (1966), 11–33) and Marvin Vawter (*ibid.*, VII (1974), 173–95) are two among a number of scholars who have argued in recent years that Shakespeare was deeply critical of the Stoicism he so often portrayed in his Romans.

[5] E. M. Waith, 'Manhood and Valor in Two Shakespearean Tragedies', *English Literary History*, XVII (1950), 262–73; cf. Kenneth Muir, 'Shakespeare's Roman World', *The Literary Half-Yearly* (Mysore), XV (1974), 45–63 (p. 63).

[6] Margaret B. Bryan, *Renaissance Papers, 1972*, 43–58.