

A PROJECT IN DESIGN FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
TWELFTH NIGHT

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A PROJECT IN DESIGN FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
TWELFTH NIGHT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Imagination is one of the most important attributes of the artistic mind. Without it there can be little of creation, expressive meaning, or originality; with it one is able to reach beyond the ordinary, creating powerful reality out of merest obscurity, making the most fantastic convincingly real.

Robert Edmond Jones in his inspiring book, The Dramatic Imagination, advises young theatre designers that their imaginations must wander when designing, and defines the term as "the peculiar power of seeing with the eye of the mind. And it is the very essence of the theatre."¹ This essential quality must forever maintain the theatre artist's interest, love, and devotion. Then, and only then, can he reach beyond the ordinary.

The Problem and Its Scope

A creative problem in design is an appropriate and exciting method of conducting a study in the theatre. It allows the artist to explore deeper into theatre research, further develop his talent, and assemble a unique, yet

¹Robert Edmond Jones, The Dramatic Imagination (New York, 1941), p. 90.

practical collection of designs which can be a future reference both to himself and to other interested persons.

The question, then, is, what makes designing sets and costumes for a play as a thesis study unusual and challenging? First, superior literature must be selected with sufficient scope to challenge the designer's potentials. Secondly, the play selected must be amenable to a variety of legitimate design approaches. Thirdly, the approach and style should be new, unique, and fresh.

With this incentive, surely, one of the plays of William Shakespeare lends itself as an ideal selection. Besides being great literature, his plays have provided a continual challenge for actors, directors, producers, and designers to excel in the theatre for the past three hundred years.

Elizabethan dramatists were free to base their plays on other existing plays, on history and legend, on works of travel or reminiscence, on French romance or Italian tales.² Scanning through Shakespeare's works, it can be noted that in at least thirteen of his dramas Italian influence and flair are evident. Further investigation into these plays reveals many Italian names and characters, dialogue and scenes, and in some instances entire Italian plots. The plays possessing truly Italianate elements are The Taming of the Shrew, The Merchant of Venice, and Twelfth Night.

²K. R. S. Iyengar, Shakespeare His World and His Art (London, 1964), p. 627.

This discovery reveals another interesting fact concerning the Italian Renaissance drama. Italian materials, sources, and novella offer close parallels with Shakespearean drama. The Italian popular comedy of the period or the commedia dell' arte, also, suggests an interesting subject for allusion. This popular comedy with its stock characters improvising from brief scenarios, performing on crude stages, and exerting influence all over Europe surely presents a fresh, unique theatrical approach and style.

Of the three plays mentioned above, Twelfth Night was chosen for this thesis study. It is deservedly one of the most popular of all Shakespeare's comedies. It is an ideal play for the stage. Each player in turn has his moment. The story is superbly planned, and each of the characters is completely molded.³ It has long been a favorite with the critics, who have seen it as a recapitulation comedy, a combination of much that has gone before,⁴ but so deftly wrought that it has been termed "mirth of the finest quality"⁵ and the "most perfect of romantic comedies."⁶ It is justly

³G. B. Harrison, editor, "Introduction to Twelfth Night," Shakespeare The Complete Works (New York, 1952), p. 849.

⁴John Russell Brown, Shakespeare and His Comedies (London, 1957), p. 162.

⁵Arthur Symons, Studies in Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1919), p. 35.

⁶Robert Boies Sharpe, Irony in the Drama (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1959), p. 144.

considered as one of the most delightful and musical of his comedies.

A barrister of the Middle Temple in London, John Manninham, was also helpful in the selection of Twelfth Night for this study. In his diary, under the date of February 2, 1602, he recorded:

At our feast [Candlemas] we had a play called Twelve Night; or What You Will, much like The Comedy of Errores, or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called Inganni.⁷

It is clear from contemporary evidence of this kind that the Elizabethans were surely familiar with the Italian drama.

The purpose of this thesis is to design the sets and costumes for William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night or What You Will adapting to the sixteenth century Italian commedia dell' arte style.

Method of Procedure

Chapter two of the study reviews the commedia dell' arte as a theatrical style of a given period. To understand much of Shakespeare's comic sense and style, a brief investigation of the commedia is necessary. The possible origins of the commedia are discussed by exploring the beginnings of comedy in Europe up to the Renaissance of the sixteenth century. The meaning of the term is explained. Discussion is devoted to the scenarios or scripts written as a guide

⁷Harrison, "Introduction to Twelfth Night," p. 846.

for the actors and the lazzi or stage business employed by the players. The theatres, stages, and staging of the commedia drama is investigated with the purpose of establishing a precedent for the set renderings for the thesis play. Brief attention is given to the more noted actors and famous troupes of the commedia dell' arte. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to the stock characters seen in the improvised comedy. The chapter gives a review of the commedia dell' arte and establishes the historical background needed for the design study.

Chapter three seeks to show how widespread the Italianate flavor is throughout many of Shakespeare's works. The chapter illustrates parallels in Shakespeare to commedia scenarios.

The fourth chapter shows the similarities, relationships, and application of the standard commedia masks to the characters in Twelfth Night. Also the commedia dell' arte qualities, such as plot, style, language, and mood in the play are examined from a similar standpoint.

Chapter five treats the costume and set design problems encountered in adapting the play à la commedia. Color, line, and design of the costumes are examined and discussed. Analysis of each character's costume is also given. Suggested fabrics for the costume construction is considered. The set designs are here explained.

Chapter six reviews the design solutions employed. This chapter serves as a subjective evaluation of the costume and set designs. Reference to the plates in the appendix is made. The chapter also concludes the thesis study.

The appendix to the study includes detailed costume sketches and the set renderings. The seventeen costume sketches and five set renderings were designed and water-colored after the first four chapters were written establishing the necessary criterion. The completed sketches were sized with a coat of lacquer, cut out, and mounted on the accepted typing paper. Also included in the appendix is a list of the art supplies employed for the designs.

Sources

Textual references to Twelfth Night and other Shakespearean plays are based on Shakespeare The Complete Works, edited by G. B. Harrison.

The various collections and mention of the commedia dell' arte scenarios are described and analyzed as a whole from Kathleen M. Lea in Italian Popular Comedy. Allardyce Nicoll in The World of Harlequin has reproduced segments of the scenarios, as well as Maurice Sand in The History of the Harlequinade.

Illustrative material relating to the commedia dell' arte has been reproduced in various volumes. Rudolf T. Weaver's translation of Pierre L. Duchartre's The Italian

Comedy reproduced hundreds of drawings, prints, and paintings which were consulted for much of this thesis study. Nicoll in Masks Mimes and Miracles has been extremely helpful in this capacity. A beautiful collection of commedia illustrations is found in Winifred Smith's The Commedia Dell'Arte. Without these visual aids and actual reproductions to study and contemplate, the designs for Twelfth Night (à la commedia) would be invalid.

Significance of the Problem

A graduate student is rarely granted the opportunity to study and design a play such as Twelfth Night. This type of theatre research can be utilized by those who study the thesis and by the designer if he so desires. It is, also, a learning experience because of the practicable and technical chores involved.

Therefore, this project depicts a point of view for William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night or What You Will, and presents in graphic renderings one unique style for production of a comedy mad and merry.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE IN REVIEW

Introduction

Through both sound and movement, the commedia dell' arte was and is communication in the theatre at the highest level of perfection achieved by man. Eventually it evolved a language easily understood by one and all. It survived persecution, overcame opposition, and disregarded the narrow confines of national and temporal boundaries.

It was improvised comedy in which stock characters were used, and masks expressing their prevailing characteristics were worn. Its players were so highly skilled, well trained and versatile that they were able to make a convincing play from the briefest scenario. No dialogue was written, and few stage directions given. It presented a tremendous challenge which was met with joyous eagerness. Its stock types provided opportunities for endless diversity simply because they were the stock types of which humanity is composed. The lack of play scripts freed them from set words and movement. This enabled them to rely on their own talents and inventiveness.

The early exponents of this craft brought much dedication and inspiration to it. They traveled throughout

Europe and introduced it widely influencing famous playwrights of the era, among whom are Lope de Vega, Moliere, Jonson, and Shakespeare.

Clearly, to understand much of Shakespeare's comic sense and style, it is necessary to investigate further the commedia dell' arte and determine wherein its virtue consisted.

The Origins

Theories as to the origins of the commedia dell' arte have been propounded from time to time, and it is likely that there is a quite considerable amount of truth in all of them. The variety of its composition lends itself to the possibility that it sprang not from one but from many sources. Therefore, it is necessary to explore what are believed to be the beginnings of comedy itself in Europe to see whether therein lay the seeds of what was subsequently to become the commedia dell' arte.

The New Comedy in Greece

After the death of Euripides, Greek drama showed signs of further development. In the fourth century, from the time of the accession of Alexander (336 B. C.), the Athenian theatre was more and more frequently the venue of what was termed New Comedy. It showed an increasing vitality, was featured to an evergrowing extent in the Drama Festivals, of which Menander was the most famous writer, skillful in

irony, humor, and pathos. Its subject matter

was taken almost exclusively from the everyday life of the upper middle class of Athens' which city had an enlightened, sophisticated social background which provided a wealth of material eminently suited to dramatic portrayal.¹

Conventional costumes were worn and much might be known of a character by his garments, while his mask would show the prevailing expression of the type he enacted. Stock types, such as the Old Man, Old Woman, Youth, Maiden, Soldier, Miser, Cook, Slave, Courtesan, Wife, Husband, Boaster, Thief, Parasite, and so forth, were typical in the New Comedy. All were skilfully combined in plots to make the comedy what was required--light, witty, and amusing.

The Phlyakes in Italy

It was among the Dorian settlements in Southern Italy that the Phlyakes came into being.² The ancient scholars, Athenaeus and Suidas, mention the Phlyax as a form of mimic drama which enjoyed popularity during the third century before Christ. It was largely improvised, and which, therefore, gave more importance to the actor than to the dramatist--the reverse of the usual situation with the advent of Shakespearean drama.

¹P. W. Harsh, A Handbook of Classical Drama (Palo Alto, California, 1905), p. 317.

²Allardyce Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles (New York, 1963), p. 50.

The Phlyakes dealt with the heroes of myths and legends in comical style. Intrigue, dishonesty, gluttony, and debauchery were all featured both in these and in the scenes of daily life. The costumes worn were tights with short, plain or patterned, thickly-padded tunics bulging before and, or, behind. Many of the characters wore masks, often with pointed beards. They included the familiar old Man, old Woman, Slave, drunken young man and Rustic, with some variations but basically similar.

Paintings on pottery of the time indicate clearly that the stages on which the Phlyakes performed were wooden platforms raised on posts sometimes hung with drapery, and with portable flights of steps to the ground. Properties, wings, and some scenery were used, but more as a suggestion than an attempt at naturalism.³

That the Phlyax was full of vitality and fun cannot be doubted, for the characters depicted were vigorously alive and clearly engaged in activities calculated to amuse their audience.

The Atellan Farces

There is some controversy as to the exact origin of the Atellan Farces (Atellanae), but for present purposes, it is sufficient to know that they did exist. What is relevant is

³Ibid., pp. 63-64.

that they came into being in an area not far removed from that in which the Phlyakes flourished, and that most of their matter was satiric burlesque as in the Phlyax farces. The deeds of gods and heroes were travestied, and as well, certain local stock characters were intermingled with these celebrities, much to the delight of those who witnessed them.

Like the ancient Dorians and the Phlyakes, the Atellanae performed in masks, frequently used the Greek language, and permeated their performances with music, dancing, and acrobatics. Furthermore, much of their performance was improvised, and animal mime, myth burlesque, and intrigues of daily life interspersed with stage-business provided their material. It was witty, vulgar, zestful, foolish, and rapidly became exceedingly popular among the polyglot people of Rome.

No survey of the Atellanae can adequately be made without mention of the types featured in it. Among these was one, Bucco, a garrulous, greedy blockhead, highly suitable to the drama. Maccus, a doltish rustic, farina-fed and resultantly stodgy character, also appeared. Maccus was seen in many of the plays of Pomponius (a poet of considerable reputation), always as a blundering butt certain of an uproarious welcome.⁴ Plautus, however, created the character and adopted the name for his own.⁵ There was also Dossennus.

⁴K. M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy (London, 1934), p. 226.

⁵John Gassner, Masters of the Drama (New York, 1957), p. 97.

He was humpbacked with a large hooked nose, protruding, and a pointed lower jaw with great gnashing teeth. He was made more grotesque by his baldness, his corpulence, and the brief tunic revealing his short legs. A caricature if ever there were one. He is said to have been an example of cunning and sharp wit combined with cruelty and a waspish tongue.

Pappus appears in several plays of Pomponius and Novius.

His name no doubt comes from the Greek Pappos, the old fellow or papa. He is aged and bald with a straggling beard and a staff, well-meaning, hard-of-hearing, gullible and ever likely to assist in muddles which must be unraveled.⁶

Plautus and Terence, in their Roman plays, made much use of these stock figures. Menaechmi, whose twin brothers experience many complications, perhaps influenced Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors. In Plautus' Miles Gloriosus or the Braggart Soldier, a proto-Falstaffian soldier is seen.

Gassner comments on the braggart in this play:

Very much in the style of The Merry Wives of Windsor, the lecherous braggart is made to believe that his neighbor's wife has fallen in love with him and is consequently trapped into making a ninny of himself. . . . soldier whose vaunts reach the sublime by way of the ridiculous . . .⁷

⁶Lea, p. 226.

⁷Gassner, p. 99.

The Latin Mimes

All male and female exponents of speech, movement, improvisations, music, ropewalking, juggling, and dance as well as acrobatics came in time to be classified under the single title of Mimes. Their various and specialized kinds of performances were no longer separated from the activities of other actors. They performed plays in which innumerable characters took part. The Christian mimes included martyrs, a hero, his supporters, a judge and his court, dignitaries of the court and the Church, Christians, and soldiers.

At first the mimes were performed in the orchestra which was the paved dancing floor of the ancient form of theatre, or on a low platform before the stage, as brief interludes between the acts or at the conclusion of tragedies. Gradually, however, their importance and length increased until they superseded the other plays, and rose in their own right to the stage-proper and to the control of the theatres. Most were played at the regular festivals, though some are said to have been performed on makeshift stages erected in the great arenas.⁸ Often mimi were attached to the households of the wealthy, and yet others were in groups of strolling players whose talents were engaged when available for special occasions. The mimic drama of the playhouse included singers, magicians, dancers, mime speakers, acrobats,

⁸Nicoll, pp. 99-100.

and musicians as well as a host of others skilled in entertaining. What was required of such players was ability, and, if we are to accept accounts of them, this they had in abundance.

Although most of their repertoire was improvised, which leads to a dearth of actual scripts, there is mention of the writers of mime plays. The titles are similar to those of the Atellanae, but even these are comparatively few, and figure incidentally in accounts of the times.⁹

A character who appears frequently in the mimes is Scholasticus, the learned, obtuse Doctor who seems always to complicate situations which to the layman are simple, for he is stupid in all but his own field. No doubt this personality would have delighted audiences in which the vast majority had little or no schooling, and would therefore be made to feel superior to the man of letters. Other figures in these witty, satirical works were the Rustic, the bald Fool, the sly Slave, the Parasite, the Bawd, the Sailor, the talkative Barber, the King, the Maiden-in-distress, and the guileless Young Man.¹⁰

"The costumes of the actors must have varied with the plays in which they appeared, but of some characteristic feature we have extant record."¹¹ The fool's costume

⁹Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 114.

¹¹Ibid., p. 90.

consisted of a cone-like hat and a multi-colored tunic and tights. Robes depicting tragedy or comedy were worn. Short cloaks for women were "evidently used often for disguise and no doubt especially for burlesque disguise."¹² The mask was rarely employed in the days of Julius Caesar, Octavius, Caligula, Nero, and the Latin Mimes.

The Roman Pantomimes

Some of the dancers among the mimi practiced a version of the art along the lines of pure interpretation through visible movement to a musical accompaniment, to the exclusion of audible movement (speech). It became known as pantomime. That they were very able in this interpretative art is recorded in the works of the Roman statesman and author, Cassiodorus, who remarks on the enthusiasm with which such a performance was greeted. On occasion the parts in such a scene were taken by several dancers, but sometimes one performer played all parts with a change of masks.¹³ Their masks had no mouth opening.

The success of the Pantomimes can well be imagined in Roman polyglot society, for their effective, expressive gestures perfected to a remarkable degree could readily be understood by all and sundry. The themes chosen were wide of range. The most popular, however, were those taken from the stories of myth and legend, and unlike the mimes, were

¹²Ibid., p. 91.

¹³Ibid., p. 131.

treated in serious fashion instead of burlesque. That they became lascivious, and incurred displeasure in some quarters, is probably true. They were much sought after by the sensualists of Rome in decay, especially in court society. What they had to offer soon came to appeal most to sophisticated, if corrupt, taste, and they never attained that general appeal and popularity of their cousins, the mimes.

Nicoll points out the significance of the pantomimes:

. . . the art of the pantomimic actors is by no means void of significance. The pantomimes carried on a certain tradition of professional acting, and in many ways they may have helped--tragic though they were--to mould the later drama. Their masks, their costumes, their dances and music, perhaps even some of their themes may well have been remembered . . .¹⁴

The Church and the Theatre

Because of the heterogeneity of the drama and the licentiousness of the matter portrayed, there grew among the most responsible and respectable citizens an increasing resentment against it. Most hostile of the antagonists were adherents to the rapidly spreading Christian religion. They condemned the players' immorality, and could not forgive their sinful parodies and mockery of the most sacred rites and mysteries of the Church. No convert was acceptable to Christianity, unless he swore never to witness or take part in the spectacles. The penalty exacted for breaking the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 134.

oath was excommunication and relegation to eternal damnation.¹⁵

In spite of such dire threats and penalties, the church had to wage a ceaselessly vigilant battle in order to force its peoples to forego the pleasures to which so many were eagerly addicted. Although in the fifth century some Christians grudgingly admitted that there was some merit in the mimes, the consensus of opinion was firmly against anything to do with the theatre. In fact the ecclesiastical writers, Orosius, a protege of Jerome and Augustine, and Salvian, both devoted a considerable portion of their works to blaming the theatre for the decay of the Empire, and the subsequent sacking of Rome by the Goths. They were surely without cognizance of the fact that the theatre represents its times, and not vice versa. The truth of this is clearly to be seen in the greatness of the theatre during the noblest period of Greek history.

The decadence of Rome was reflected in the degradation of its theatre. While the Goths ruled, some vestiges of the public spectacle remained, but with the advent of the Germanic Lombards in 568 A. D., even these disappeared. By the late sixth century "the Bishops and the barbarians had triumphed."¹⁶

¹⁵ Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre (New York, 1952), pp. 134-136.

¹⁶ E. K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage (London, 1903), p. 22.

The Strolling Players

The players became outcasts, and mimes and pantomimes were forced to become nomads. In small groups they took to the highways and byways, traveling on foot to any town or village where there might be a fair, a celebration or some gathering of people. Circumstances necessitated their mingling with charlatans and mountebanks (quacks), but somehow they survived the rigors of this harsh and precarious existence. They kept their companies intact, and learned to adapt their entertainment in innumerable ways to attract and please their diverse audiences. Thus was the transition effected from mimes and pantomimes to minstrels in the Dark Ages.

Over the long years of their wanderings, the minstrels combined much of what they had inherited from the Latin mimes, the sophisticated, gay, and risqué. In multicolored clothes and carrying their musical instruments on their backs, they were hailed everywhere, and had free access wherever they roamed. Ill-will, threats, and persecution failed to suppress them or to diminish their popularity. Their contact with all classes and their undoubted ability to sway public opinion made them a power in the land. Some men of religion, wiser than their brethren, came to realize the possibilities of minstrelsy as a means of spreading the tenets of Christianity in a form which, over the centuries, had proved very acceptable to the public.¹⁷

¹⁷Cheney, pp. 138-139.

The vast group of minstrels covered subdivisions in which were included ballad singers, romance makers--sacred and secular, satirists, fools, and the exponents of dance and gesture who performed in costume and mask--human and animal. The wanderers were scattered over Europe and England, but many of the ancient traditions existed through them. It is thought that some comic drama existed through them at the same time as the staging of religious plays in mediaeval times.

Mediaeval Drama

In order to teach the Bible to the populace, the Church instituted dramatizations of its stories, very simply at first, and later with more elaboration. That the performance of these mystery plays brought the people thronging to church is well known, for human beings have ever loved to see things brought to life in the form of acting.

In later times, the plays were acted outside the churches. During all this period of production, the parts were taken by the clergy themselves, whether those of women or of men. Elaboration as to these plays is here unnecessary.

Eager dramatists began to search further afield for fresh subject matter, when that of the Scriptures had been fully explored, and many wrote miracle plays about the lives of the Saints. Besides these they later devised morality plays in which abstract ideas of Good and Evil struggled for

men's souls. One of the best known in this category is Everyman.

Although the motivation of the miracles and the moralities was of a serious nature in which the good were very, very good, and the bad were horrid, they included at times devils dressed in black with fearsome animal-like masks, much in the form of the ancient Dionysiac demons. They were accompanied by troupes of masked lesser fiends whose liveliness, pranks, and acrobatics resembled those of the mimes, as they dragged suitable victims to the smoke-belching Hell Mouth.¹⁸

The paucity of information about drama in the Middle Ages makes it difficult to declare with certainty that the ancient traditions of the mimi did more than survive in the mummers, jesters, and acrobats who indicate the continuity by the very nature of their work.

The Renaissance

With the composition of the moralities, the trend was strengthened towards the field of invented subjects for dramatic purposes. During the ensuing Renaissance it became the vogue to explore and to reproduce as far as possible the works of the great writers of classical times.

However, in spite of the fact that the revivifying of the arts was less spectacular in drama than in the rest,

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 152-176.

"the Italian Renaissance, none the less, marks the birth of the modern stage."¹⁹ It was the Renaissance in Italy which discontinued the closely bound relationship of drama to the religious, and restored it to the paths it had followed in classical times. The return to the old dramatic forms shook all Europe free of the domination of the Church. The Renaissance Italians were among the first to recapture the spontaneity, wit, and the powerful vitality which once the comedy had known.

The Meaning of the Term

Meanwhile, in the midst of the burgeoning of the Renaissance, free of the sophistication of palace and playhouse, the unaffected comedy of the people flourished uncircumscribed by the author's written word. It was born of the native talent which abounded in Italy, as it had done centuries before--it became the Italian Popular Comedy called Commedia Improvisa, Commedia non Scritta, Commedia a Maschera, or Commedia all' improvviso.²⁰

Joseph S. Kennard in Masks and Marionettes, writes:

The Commedia dell'Arte is Art and it is Psychology. It is a theatre of all people, of all arts, of all moments when life wings up out of drab reality. It is a theatre of music and dance; of song, colour and light; of plays on wagon stages; on rivers; at weddings and funerals and

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 177.

²⁰ Thelma Niklaus, Harlequin (New York, 1956), p. 27.

coronations; of actors with or without masks; sometimes in extraordinary costumes.²¹

The term signifies, according to Dr. Michele Scherillo, a type of comedy which, "in distinction to the written comedies, was not, and could not be, performed except by professional actors."²² Maurice Sand spoke of it simply as being "artistic perfection."²³

It was not until the eighteenth century that it was called by the name by which we know it--the Commedia dell'Arte, meaning the Comedy of the profession or of artistry.

The Scenario and the Lazzi

The keynote was improvisation, for the commedia players, like those of the Atellan farces, conjured their dialogue from memory, or originated it on the spur of the moment around a sketchily written scenario. Those more experienced in the profession are known to have made frequent use of well-trying and unfailingly successful items of stage business or lazzi which interrupted but added interest and amusement to the proceedings without necessarily having any special bearing on them. For example, in a scene intended

²¹ Joseph S. Kennard, Masks and Marionettes (New York, 1935), p. 3.

²² Pierre L. Duchartre, The Italian Comedy (London, 1929), p. 19, citing Dr. Michele Scherillo, The Mask, p. 113.

²³ Maurice Sand, The History of Harlequinade (London, 1915), p. 23.

to be pathetic, and for no apparent reason, a player might resort to turning somersaults, to copying the words and gestures of another player, or to praising himself and his abilities. In the midst of a proposed scheme for rescuing a damsel in distress, he might decide to indicate that he is overcome by hunger, and proceed to catch a fly, carefully remove its wings, and eat it. Such lazzi surely rendered an audience hysterical with laughter.

Duchartre avers that an actor "would resort to lazzi whenever a scene began to drag or his eloquence gave out."²⁴ Nicoll agrees with Duchartre and adds:

. . . This certainly seems to be the strict sense of the word, although no doubt it came to be applied to anything--dialogue as well as action--not strictly germane to the theme [lazzi] . . . most of the verbal lazzi are of this rather crude type; and many of the action lazzi deal merely with rough-and-tumble.²⁵

That the antics of these comedians were bound to have their vulgar aspects is not in doubt. Their assessment of the kind of people they were entertaining was acute, and it must be remembered that their business was entertainment. Whatever the fare they offered, they were in great demand among the heterogeneous crowds for whom they performed.

No true commedia dell' arte had a complete text.

Most of the time the director of a troupe assumed the task of composing and drawing up the

²⁴Duchartre, p. 26.

²⁵Nicoll, p. 220.

scenarios; otherwise it was undertaken by one or more of the actors, among whom there were nearly always men of culture and imagination.²⁶

After a scenario was written and chosen for a performance, it was first supervised by the corago, guida, maestro, or concertatore--the leader or producer and always the prompt-holder of the troupe.²⁷ "The director, leader, master, or most efficient member of the company," apprises Andrea Perrucci in his directions,

. . . must, before the performance, supervise the scenario. His duty is not merely to read over the plot; but to explain the characters, giving their names and special features, to detail the plot of the play, the locality of the action, and the houses, to enumerate the lazzi and all the necessary items in the plot, and to see to all the properties necessary, such as letters, purses, pens, etc., as noted at the end of the scenario.²⁸

Cheney adds "the plot outlines were stolen freely from old plays, from novels, from any source whatsoever; or invented on the basis of remembered incidents, fables, or the latest scandal."²⁹

Every troupe had many scenarios which it inherited from earlier troupes or stolen from competitors, and to this foundation it added materials of its own. The scenarios,

²⁶Duchartre, p. 52.

²⁷Nicoll, p. 226.

²⁸Nicoll, p. 226, citing Andrea Perrucci, Dell' Arte rappresentative, premedita ed all' improvviso, p. 364.

²⁹Cheney, pp. 231-232.

including lazzi, were handed down from generation to generation.

They were divided into three categories: a serious or tragic theme, a pastoral class, and the most popular, those completely comic. Flaminio Scala, famous comic actor/author, published fifty of his scenari in a collection early in 1611.³⁰ Of the original commedia scenarios, only a smattering remain; "yet it is in this collection that Harlequin--Arlecchino, Arlequin, Harlekin, call him what we will--first makes his entry within the framework of a printed play."³¹

The Theatres--The Stages--The Staging

The organized actors traveled constantly about the country. Naturally, they could not hope to find a theatre in every town they visited. Therefore, to guard against this exigency and assure their independence, they always carried about with them a single portable stage structure which was housed in a cart together with the curtains, drops, costumes, and other properties.

The stages were usually built high, so that the platform was on a level with the eyes of a man standing.³² In

³⁰Marvin T. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana, Illinois, 1960), p. 212.

³¹Allardyce Nicoll, The World of Harlequin (London, 1963), p. 1.

³²At least it appears so in several of di Jacomo Callot's drawings and sketches of the commedia dell' arte.

this way even the spectators farthest removed from the stage had an unobstructed view of the proceedings. The height of the platform assured another material advantage, for by dropping curtains to the ground on all sides a storing-place was formed underneath.

The platform itself was divided into two unequal sections by a large drop-curtain suspended between two poles, making a back-stage and a fore-stage. The back-drop generally had painted on it a scene of some public square with houses and streets in perspective. Two or three slits cut in the canvas served for the entrances and exits. As a rule, there were two ladders, one placed at either side from the ground to the stage, and on the rungs of these one or two players would perch after having finished their turns in the performance.

In this use of the platform the Italian comedians merely followed the customs of the time. From the Renaissance to the seventeenth century, however, the more important companies played under altogether different conditions in many of the larger Italian towns. At Vicenza, for example, they were provided with the theatre built by Palladio (famed Italian architect known for formal, grandiose designs; imported into England by Inigo Jones),³³ which was specially arranged to facilitate the kind of performance required by

³³Winifred Smith, The Commedia Dell' Arte (New York, 1964), p. 67

the scenarios Scala wrote. His plays were filled with jeux de scene, or scenic action, which would seem absurd, if not impracticable, on a modern stage. On the Palladian stage, however, it was possible for one character literally to go down the street in search of another, or for two characters to converse without being visible to each other, or for two groups to perform at the same time yet independently, in full view of the audience. This theatre's design will constitute the basic source for the set renderings of the play chosen for this thesis study; therefore, continued discussion of it here is not necessary.

The development of the opera in Renaissance Italy eventually exercised a considerable influence upon the commedia dell' arte, and was responsible for much of its color, fantasy, and exotic character.³⁴

The troupes of the Italian comedy adopted the vogue of elaborate stage effects to such an extent that they soon acquired almost as complete an equipment as a modern theatre. During the seventeenth century some of the troupes rarely gave a performance, either in Italy or in France, in which they did not make use of a great variety of mechanical devices, numerous and sumptuous stage-settings, fireworks, and fountains.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 200-201.

Flaminico Scala and his troupe did not mount many of their productions in the extravagant fashion just described, but they nearly always employed the fixed architectural stage-set.

They achieved their effects of fantasy and the fantastic by means of costumes and properties, a list of which Scala always gave in detail at the beginning of each of his scenarios. He would indicate for example, "bats for beating; numerous lanterns; a live cat and a cock; four hunting-dogs; costumes for notaries, pilgrims, or travellers; an artificial moon which rises,"³⁵

The Actors and the Troupes

In order to achieve what was required of them, the actors must have practiced self-discipline to a remarkable degree; for selfishness or an unwillingness to allow the other players his or her chance might afford momentary satisfaction, but could easily wreck the show. The success of the commedia dell' arte depended far more upon the acting than upon the scenario, but the acting could be fully effective only if team spirit were strong.

It would be erroneous to suppose that there was anything haphazard in the technique of the improvisator, for he brought to his performance a wealth of knowledge and the skill born of long and arduous practice. His wits and resourcefulness had many times been tested when adapting his words and actions to those of his colleagues, possibly after scanning

³⁵Duchartre, p. 69.

the scenario cursorily before making his entrance. They gave the impression that every move, gesture, and sentence had been prearranged and rehearsed.

The versatility of these players seems to have astonished their contemporaries. On every occasion upon which a play was presented, though the scenario was the same, everything else was different, but just as well accomplished. Even a last minute change of roles did not deter them, for so flexible of imagination were they, that they were able immediately to undertake a new assignment, and to effect it with fluency and verve. The play was carried to its conclusion with excitement, boundless energy, and freedom from the staleness occasioned by identical repetition.³⁶

That most of them relied on a large stock-in-trade of speech and movement with which they had some familiarity was bound to be the case. How else could they have complied so readily and surely with the demands of their undertaking? Hence, their acting was improvised insofar as adaptation was concerned, and yet it was a kind of refurbishing of what they already knew, with some innovations. They never went on stage unprepared because of the vast knowledge at their disposal. Nor did they take liberties in altering the scope of their parts, for this might prove disconcerting to others--

³⁶John A. Symonds, The Memoirs of Count Carlo Gozzi (London, 1889), pp. 61-64.

instead, they were allowed to deepen their characterization to any extent of which they were capable. Through adherence to this rule, there grew the traditions special to every character which have been passed down; individuality was submerged in them, and every new player became the re-embodiment of what had been evolved generations before. This indicates regimentation of sorts, but one from which they did not deviate. Besides their minds and bodies being totally engaged, their hearts were in the ultimate success of the production.³⁷ They were keen to carry on a proud tradition.

As the typical peculiarities of every character were painstakingly acquired, and carefully preserved, so the masks expressing them were ingeniously molded and effectively worn. Whether the reason for donning them emanated from man's primitive wish to experiment in temporarily changing his personality through a new guise, whether they were the revival of those worn by the comedians of ancient days, or whether they gave a more immediate and sustained effect to characterization,³⁸ we cannot be certain, suffice it to say that they were an essential part of the commedia dell' arte. They remained so despite opposition and some unsuccessful attempts to discard them.

³⁷Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, pp. 40-41.

³⁸Duchartre, p. 41.

Carlo Goldoni, the Italian playwright, disapproved of the masks:

The mask must always be very prejudicial to the action of the performer, either in joy or sorrow; whether he be in love, cross, or good-humoured, the same features are always exhibited; and however he may gesticulate and vary the tone, he can never convey by the countenance, which is the interpreter of the heart, the different passions with which he is inwardly agitated.³⁹

The comedians agreed that they did much to establish the parts for which they were created, but that this they alone could not do without suitably matched speech and movement. If an actor were incapable of "playing the mask"⁴⁰ it would hamper instead of help him in his work, and until he could master it, he was much handicapped in his efforts to achieve the results he desired.

The art of playing with the mask, then, was not conceivable without a perfect knowledge of pantomime. When once this was mastered all the muscles of the actor's body cooperated in his interpretation and performed the expressive function of the muscles of the face.⁴¹

The masks, for the most part, were made of thin leather lined with linen.⁴² The corners were moistened, and so manipulated that they took the impression of even the finest lines

³⁹H. C. Chatfield Taylor, Goldoni (New York, 1913), p. 118.

⁴⁰Duchartre, p. 42.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 49.

⁴²Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 266.

of the mold from which they were made. The perfection of physical expression was of paramount importance, the body had to become an eloquent tool. When this was accomplished, the mask came into its own as a highly effective adjunct to interpretation.

Since the technique of improvising required the most rare and varied gifts, an actor of the Italian comedy was obliged to be, among other things, an acrobat, dancer, psychologist, orator. He had to be a man of imagination, possessing a thorough knowledge of human nature, so that he could adequately bring alive the character he interpreted.

The troupes of improvisators from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries contained a great many actors of this stamp. The name of Angelo Beolco, or Il Ruzzante, appears as practically the first of primary importance. He was a sort of Italian Shakespeare, an actor, writer, philosopher, and poet.⁴³ Then there was the beautiful Isabella Andreini, who belonged to Scala's company. She was a member of several academies and a distinguished Latin scholar, and was honored by T. Harzoni and Tasso, sixteenth century Italian epic poets, as well as the princes of Italy and France.⁴⁴ Her husband, Francesco Andreini, also achieved a reputation of some distinction. He could play every kind of musical instrument, and he spoke Italian, French, Greek, Slav, and Turkish.

⁴³Herrick, pp. 43-52.

⁴⁴Cheney, p. 238.

He was a poet and writer, and a member of the Spensierati, a literary society in Florence.⁴⁵

Their son, Giovanni Battista Andreini, was equally accomplished. He was an admirable actor, "who is reputed to have written literally hundreds of works in drama, verse, 'visions,' dialogues, etc., etc."⁴⁶ There was also Valerini, a nobleman of Verona who lived during the second half of the sixteenth century. He was a doctor and a talented poet, and was well versed in Greek and Latin.⁴⁷

The musicians were notably represented by Ottavio, who could play all sorts of instruments. He could dance and sing exceedingly well. The pretty Armiani of Vicenza, who played various roles of Inamorata (lover), was a poet, musician, and gifted comedienne.⁴⁸ Diana Ponti, otherwise known as Lavinia, was also a poet of some note. Brigida Bianchi, or Aurelia, the author of L'Inganno Fortunato, was a brilliant musician. Flaminia Riccoboni was a student of several languages, especially Latin.⁴⁹ Fabrizio de Fornaris belonged to the nobility of Naples, and was celebrated for his wit and spirited humor.⁵⁰ Gherardi the Elder, or Flautino, imitated perfectly a variety of wind instruments

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 237.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 239.

⁴⁷Lea, p. 264.

⁴⁸Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, pp. 240-241.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 241-2.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 251.

with his voice while accompanying himself on the guitar.⁵¹ Tiberrio Fiorilli was an acrobat of no mean worth and has been acclaimed one of the most magnificent of all the performers.⁵² Nearly all the women of the theatre could sing and dance and play the guitar.

The commedia company known as I Gelosi was the most famous and probably the most accomplished of the traveling troupes. It became the favorite at a dozen courts in Europe and kings and dukes disputed over its dates and itineraries.

Duchartre has said that the commedia dell' arte gradually achieved an international reputation.⁵³ It is true that the troupes such as I Gelosi and others were widely known all over Europe and England. The evidence of its influence appeared everywhere. This influence, particularly in England, will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

The Stock Types

It is to the individual stock characters that the review must now turn. Without them the commedia dell' arte could never have existed. The personages of the commedia grouped themselves as parents and guardians (old men), clown-servants (Zanni), other types, and the lovers (inamorati).⁵⁴

⁵¹Ibid., p. 284.

⁵²Ibid., p. 288.

⁵³Duchartre, p. 80.

⁵⁴Lea, p. 17.

The Old Men

The most well known of the old men who appears in almost all the scenarios is Pantalone, a type who may well be a descendant of old Pappus of the Atellan Farce. Usually he has retired from business as a (Venetian) merchant; and may be rich or poor; if the former, he tends to be swollen-headed as to his own importance, and anxious about the safety of his worldly goods; if the latter, he speaks, whenever he has the chance, of his former standing and success. He is often a miser whose meanness is the subject of many jokes and much stage business, as well as a source of hardship to his wife and family, if he is married; otherwise it affects his business associates and his servants.⁵⁵

Should he have a wife, she is usually young and pretty, and revenges herself on him by being consistently unfaithful, and is quite unaware of the great "privilege" which marriage to him should mean. If his wife is, more rarely, a simple woman, he is a tyrant, and frequently unfaithful to her. His daughters and his maid servants deceive him as often in matters of the heart, as his friends do in matters of business. He is constantly in a state of perturbation or fury as a result.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, pp. 46-47.

⁵⁶Duchartre, pp. 181-182.

He is always at a loss to understand the many blows he receives, and it never occurs to him that they are the result of his meanness or his preference to interfere in everybody's affairs. At every rebuff or deception he is filled with ungovernable rage, draws his knife, prepares to kill the culprit, and has to be restrained by those about him. Little do they know that he never kills anyone, for something always diverts his attention at the crucial moment.⁵⁷

On occasion he is known to play the lover, and then the object of his affections is always a beautiful young woman who demands gifts and money from him, and mocks his age and infirmities behind his back. Should she be difficult to conquer, he thinks nothing of enlisting the aid of some crone, in order to lure her from innocence. When engaged in these amorous adventures, he considers himself a desirable gallant, and takes the damsel's cold rebuffs as coyness designed to whet his appetite.

He is feared by his ill-used servants, often Harlequin among them, for he beats, starves, and underpays them. Should he dismiss one and engage another, he sends him packing just before dinner. They revenge themselves on him by all manner of tricks and lies, thieving and cheating.⁵⁸ Whatever his difficulties and misfortunes, however, he is constantly spying on everyone, and devising new ways in which to make

⁵⁷Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 255.

⁵⁸Lea, p. 21.

money, while greedily clutching what he already has.

Nicoll describes his costume as a

. . . stock traditional one, consisting of a tight-fitting red vest, red breeches and stockings, and soft slippers . . . Over this is cast a black-sleeved coat, called a zimarra, which reaches to his ankles. On his head is set a soft cap without a brim . . .⁵⁹

He wore a brownish hooknosed mask and a sparse, pointed beard. A few wisps of hair protruded from under his cap.

Pantalone appeared in almost all of the commedia dell'arte plays. He was a fine target for the hisses of the audience who found him distinctly unlovable, stupid, and self-important.

The Dottore (Doctor) is the boon companion of Pantalone, and almost always appears with him. He has many of the traits of his forebears in the early mimes and farces. He is the stupid man of learning and "a member of every academy, known and unknown."⁶⁰ He is a philosopher, astronomer, man of letters, cabalist, barrister, grammarian, diplomat and physician, besides being a mathematician, linguist, oculist, and patron of the arts.⁶¹ In short, there is nothing he does not know and will not discuss in long rigmaroles. He becomes unconscious of all about him through the mesmerism of his own voice. This gave wonderful chances for lazzi to his less erudite and unwilling listeners. He is the know-all bore of

⁵⁹Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 254.

⁶⁰Duchartre, p. 196.

⁶¹Symonds, p. 45.

any society in any age, and he will not be interrupted. He insists on quoting in foreign tongues, something he has never yet been able to do correctly, and those he has buttonholed to listen to his long arguments turn on him when they can endure them no longer, and beat him soundly.

He and his friend, Pantalone, have much in common--age, greed, determination to talk, and self-absorption. Often their attempts at romance have the same disastrous results. The Doctor sometimes has a young attractive wife who is capable of deceiving him on their wedding night.⁶² When he sets himself up as a Don Juan, he is duped, or laughed to scorn.

He is known to attend seriously ill patients in his medical capacity, and then forget why he is there. He makes light, social conversation, while ogling the maidservants, or embarks on some profound topic, and when the patient sleeps or dies in order to escape his spate of words, he is free to give his full attention to the woman of the house, whom he woos with a pronounced lisp.⁶³

Duchartre has an interesting description of the Dottore's costume:

The costume of the Doctor in the sixteenth century and up to the beginning of the seventeenth century was a caricatured version of the ordinary dress which the men of science and letters in Bologna wore at the University and about town.

⁶²Duchartre, p. 197.

⁶³Sand, p. 144.

The Doctor was with rare exceptions, clothed in black. His footgear was black, and a short black gown fell below his knees. Above this he had a long black robe which extended to his heels. He also wore a small black toque.⁶⁴

His rheumy eyes bulged from either a black or a flesh-colored mask. His cheeks were red, his nose dark, and occasionally he appeared with a moustache and a short, pointed beard.

"It scarcely seems fair to maltreat so excellent a servant when he has spent his whole life learning everything without understanding anything."⁶⁵

Others of the older group are three less well-defined types. Coviello plays the smug bourgeois on occasion or the Doctor of Astrology, but never with quite the same ability as either Pantalone or the Dottore. He may at times be cast lower down the social scale, and be a clownish servant. His mask has a long pointed nose, and he wears a beard to match. His talents include acrobatics, singing, and playing musical instruments. His costume belongs to the clowns' style, tight jacket with fluted collar, short cloak and long, tight trousers with pompoms down the sides.⁶⁶ He favors at his belt a long sword which continuously gets in his way.

⁶⁴Duchartre, pp. 200-201. ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 196.

⁶⁶Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, p. 61.

Cola or Nicola, who often comes into the scenario, may be a noble, a middle-class husband, or a servant. He, too, is an acrobat, but a very skilled one. His chief characteristic is stupidity. Everything he does is ridiculous, everything he says is foolish, everything he touches he breaks, as he capers about. His guise is not very different from that of Coviello.

Cassandro appears most with Pantalone, sometimes in place of the Dottore. He is a foil for the former and a willing go-between in his amours. He does not have the special traits of the Dottore who is Pantalone's equal, but plays a rather subservient role. He is unsuccessful where Pantalone is not, and though he may rouse and challenge his fury, after loud argument, he gives in first. Of his costume nothing is known.

Perhaps other old men appeared on the commedia dell' arte stages, but those mentioned seem to have been the leaders, "and of them all Pantalone and the Dottore ruled as bourgeois kings."⁶⁷

The Zanni

Perhaps the most interesting among the stock types of the commedia dell' arte are the Zanni or clown-servants. It is very likely that they stemmed from the old mimic fools of

⁶⁷Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 262.

the Atellan Farces and the Latin mimes. About them there is more information than there is about any of the others, in spite of the fact that they were more numerous. Their popularity spread far and wide.

Usually two Zanni were in a play, the one crafty, the other doltish in order to afford contrast and a maximum of fun. The former, through his keen wits is able to trick and cheat, and should he be caught, his ready tongue comes to his aid to talk his way out of trouble. The latter is quite the opposite. He is gullible, thick-headed, and easily persuaded by his astute companion to embark on all manner of risky tasks. Through his doltishness, he invariably bungles, and, if they are involved together and caught in the act, he is left to bear the brunt of his folly. The instigator goes free.⁶⁸

Much of the success of the play depended on the ability of the chief or quicker-witted Zanni. It was in his power to set its pace by the amount of nonsense and duplicating he could incorporate in his part. Very often he held the threads which bound all the other characters together, and the intrigues could give them tremendous scope. This stupid fellow was of less moment--the rustic blockhead given to blundering his way into delicate situations, and gaping round-mouthed at indelicate ones.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Lea, pp. 63-65.

⁶⁹Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 265.

The parts of the first and second Zanni were played by various of the stock types depending on the needs of the play, for all of them could be either crafty or guileless as occasion demanded. What was essential was that they should understand their roles perfectly and be capable of maintaining them convincingly.

Perhaps the most famous of this illustrious brotherhood was Arlecchino or Harlequin, the child of paradox, probably sired by the god Mercury, "patron of merchants, thieves, and panders,"⁷⁰ born in Lower Bergamo, and citizen of the world.⁷¹ It is of consequence to note that the panders of the ancient satires wore motley garb of shreds and patches to signify poverty and ambivalence. Those of Roman times were often phallic, and blackened their faces to disguise as negro slaves, probably because the part of the Young Satyr of the Dionysiac myth-burlesques had been taken by one of the latter.

Arlecchino's name is often the subject of dispute, and two suggestions as to its origin are intriguing. One, that a plausible rascal who sought refuge in Italy from his native Arles, soon recommenced his misdeeds of seducing women and defrauding men, thus sowing the seeds for the stock type, and earning him his Arlecchino name.⁷² The other, that

⁷⁰Duchartre, p. 124.

⁷¹Niklaus, p. 31.

⁷²Duchartre, p. 136.

this name comes from il lecchino, "the little glutton."⁷³ Either possibility would be quite apt, for he has an insatiable appetite for maidens, for money, and for food. It is his adventures in these categories which bring him time and time again into the scenario, not with viciousness, but with captivating charm.

Whatever his antecedents, Arlecchino is a rogue who enlists the sympathy and goodwill of the audience by being at once a brilliant acrobat and beautiful of body. However, he is dull of brain except for occasional, startling rashes of rapier-sharp wit. His mocking ribaldries are full of insolence towards all authority, defying even the force of gravity by his capers and physical agility.⁷⁴ He could somersault himself out of any situation however difficult.

As Pantalone's valet he is starved and beaten by his cowardly master. He mismanages every task he is given and is absent-minded to the point of half-wittedness. He swallows every tale he is told no matter how preposterous. His ignorance is abysmal, but he manages to conceal it with graceful witticisms. "He is in every way a mass of fantastic contradictions."⁷⁵

⁷³Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 267.

⁷⁴Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, p. 70.

⁷⁵Carl Talbot, "Commedia Dell'arte: A Theatrical Approach," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Drama, Occidental College, Los Angeles, California, 1963, p. 15.

His simplicity is youthful, his hopes, fears, and disappointments are child-like. He may be bitterly miserable but can be made blissfully happy in an instant by being offered a sweet or a piece of fruit. Everything about him is mercurial--his temperament, his changes of mood, his fleetness of foot.

Thelma Niklaus perhaps gives the best description of Arlecchino's costume in Harlequin:

. . . he appears wearing a long, loose tunic and tight trousers covered here and there with large irregular patches. His jacket is untidily laced in front, and caught in at the thighs with a belt holding his purse and his wooden sword. His head is shaved, and he is wearing a cap of the time of Francis I or Henri II, with a rabbit's scut in front, while his whole face is masked in black. The effect is dual: of jaunty poverty, combined with dramatic strangeness.⁷⁶

Many of his traits are embodied in his characteristic black half-mask. The deep wrinkles are the painstaking efforts to understand the complexity of life. The eyes are tiny holes expressing cunning and a remarkable degree of sensuality. Thick, crinkled, bristling eyebrows and beard are evident. The total effect is good and evil, happy yet sad.⁷⁷

Brighella is frequently the companion of Arlecchino, but, in contrast, lacks his winsome qualities. He is cynical, cold-hearted, crafty, cruel, selfish, and libidinous. He

⁷⁶Niklaus, p. 32.

⁷⁷Observation and study made of the masks in Nicoll's Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 266.

is thought to be a descendant of Pseudolus of the Graeco-Roman mimes. "Like Harlequin, Brighella is from Bergamo."⁷⁸ He is bold and unscrupulous, and his insolent swaggering is intended to provoke hostility, for he thrives on quarrels and fights. His manner is offensive, and he boasts of the unpleasant encounters in which he has maimed or killed other men.⁷⁹ He is physically strong and lithe; his movement is like that of a panther, and his shrewd, searching appraisal of his world is intended to give him the advantage in all his undertakings.

He overcharges for his services, thinks nothing of knifing anyone unable or unwilling to pay, and then helps himself to all they have. He is totally without pity. He will play the guide or sing a serenade, for his talents are numerous. Money is his god, and once he has it, he enjoys an orgy of wine, women, and food.

Like all bullies, he is a coward who fawns on those stronger and more powerful than himself. His victims are always weaker. Women fear him, and repel his unpleasant advances if possible. Should he play the married man, he protects his wife, not because she is a woman, but because she is his chattel. However, he thinks nothing of being unfaithful, or of deserting her and his children for "metal more attractive."

⁷⁸Duchartre, p. 161.

⁷⁹Kennard, p. 55.

He is never known to tell the truth except by accident. He has no saving graces whatsoever and never does a kindly deed. However, he is a useful type of villain, and he plays his part with strength and determination, never deviating from his course.⁸⁰

His costume is a jacket and wide trousers of white cloth with green braid or stripes down the seams. His béret-style hat is worn at a rakish angle, and his short cape gives him a swashbuckling air. His brown mask is hook-nosed, with flaring nostrils, heavy-eyed, and with a brutal, sensual mouth with a beard.⁸¹ He is always presented with the dagger at his belt and the purse, for he often uses the one to fill the other.

The Zanni, Scapino, plays roles similar in some ways to those of Brighella, and is held by some authors to be a pale version of him. His name comes from scappare, to escape, which signifies a very strong aspect of his character--he makes mischief, and then takes to his heels.⁸² He is ready to engage in pranks and dishonesty, but is far too limited to risk detection. This faintheartedness is apparent even in matters amorous, although they are the greater part of his interest. He prefers easy game, and shuns the undertaking of conquests which may prove difficult or dangerous. He prefers

⁸⁰Duchartre, pp. 161-162. ⁸¹Kennard, p. 55.

⁸²Duchartre, p. 168.

the simple maidservant rather than the daughters of a great house. He flits promiscuously from one to the next, sometimes with such speed that his easily confused mind finds it difficult to grasp exactly where he is bound or to which one.

He is always busily engaged in nothing very important, and this is fortunate, for everything in which he has a hand becomes chaotic. Needless to say, he is often thrashed and kicked down the steps by his irate employer who is trying to extricate himself from the troubles in which Scapino has involved him through his stupidity.

His costume consisting of large hat with long feathers, loose jacket, wide trousers and short cape was later altered to make the coat and trousers close fitting and striped in green and white.⁸³ His character, however, did not change, nor did the singing, playing of music, and acrobatics interspersed throughout his acting.

He often appears with a close associate, and in many ways a duplicate of himself and Brighella, who is known by the entertaining name of Mezzetino, the Half-measure. His character is not dissimilar from theirs in some of its traits:

Like Brighella he was a singer, a musician, and a ready dancer, but he had gentler manners than his prototype . . . He was both a deceived and deceiving husband; sometimes he accepted bribes

⁸³Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 285.

and betrayed his master, and again he worked for him with blind devotion . . . he is like the other valets of the Italian comedy . . . he is akin also to the valets of the Moliere comedies.⁸⁴

His costume resembles Scapino's but for the fact that it is striped in red and white.

Pulcinella is thought to be a direct descendant of Maccus and Bucco of the ancient Atellanae. Whether he accentuates rascality and wit, or stupidity, his mask is unaltered as to the nose (a great, hooked beak), and the shining bald head, sensual, curved mouth, and heavy chin pointing upwards. His back is humped, his paunch large, and his legs short,⁸⁵ so that the total impression intended is ridiculous.

His heritage accounts for his dual personality. Maccus was wicked, insolent and sharp. Bucco was a stupid schemer and a rather nervous petty thief. His hooked nose came from Maccus, so, too, did his figure; his wide mouth and pendulous cheeks came from Bucco.⁸⁶

At times he appears with the Maccus traits uppermost, at times with those of Bucco, but whichever of the two is predominant, the other lurks beneath the surface ready to emerge should the need arise. He cares not for matrimony or the boredom of home life. We recall that he is a shockingly

⁸⁴Duchartre, p. 171.

⁸⁵Kennard, p. 54.

⁸⁶Lea, p. 227.

difficult husband and cruel father in the Puppet shows. His wife is Judy; he is Punch.

When young and agile, Pulcinella plays master or servant with guile and confidence. He is known to have a high opinion of himself as a magistrate or a man of letters. His looks, however, lend themselves to older parts. As a dotard, deaf and dull with age, he is often known to startle the younger generation. "As he possessed a great deal of wit, and his hump was chockfull of a sense of humour, his chief weapon of defense was to feign stupidity."⁸⁷ He had no scruples whatsoever, and his eccentricities were numerous.

His costume has changed over the years. It was once a peasant blouse with wide collar, short mantle and full trousers together with a skull cap. Later he was given a jacket trimmed with green, trousers of red, and cock feathers in his pointed hat. Eventually the wide pantaloons were shortened to show his striped hose. A ruff with green lace was put round his neck.⁸⁸

Pedrolino or Pierro is said to be a close connection of Pulcinella. This may be because of their association in several plays, for they are not alike in any way. Pedrolino is young, personable, and gentle as lover, friend, or servant. He is much too guileless to avoid being tricked and cheated, and when he discovers his plight, he bursts into

⁸⁷Duchartre, p. 215.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 220.

tears. Sometimes he weeps for joy too, or for no reason at all. The only things that are strong about him are his tear ducts and his appetite, all of which constantly claim attention.

His naiveté enlists the warm sympathy of damsels who later jilt him for someone more robust and prosperous, thus invariably affording him another occasion for tears. Pedrolino is charming, sentimental and often overwhelmed with self-pity. Occasionally he is successful in what he does; this delights him and he hastens to acquaint his beloved with the happy news, only to find her in the arms of another. Holding back the tears, he congratulates the pair and turns disconsolately away.⁸⁹ Everyone gets the better of him and he is usually left sadly alone, as the curtain falls--much in the Chaplin style.

He goes by several names in the scenarios, but his contrast to the lively characters together with his well known costume leaves no doubt as to who he is. He guises in a flat cap, neck ruff, wide white trousers and loose jacket with sleeves so long they hang dejectedly over his hands. He wears no mask, and his face is thickly whitened in the old tradition of the strolling players who did this so that their faces were visible in the ill-lit venues in which they performed. The effect in Pedrolino's case was very suitably doleful.

⁸⁹Sand, pp. 200-201.

It is not necessary here to say much more concerning the many Zanni who made merry many a comic intrigue or serious plot. They were the truly popular figures, and their popularity spread far and wide.

The Other Types

The Capitano (Captain) is in the sharpest possible contrast to poor Pedrolino. He is the army type through and through--bold, brisk, boastful, self-assured, and successful. No one knows exactly how this type arose. It is held by some writers that he is of the line of Manducus of the Atellan farces. Others see in him an imitation of the Plautan miles gloriosus. Some regard him "as born independently in the Renaissance of the contempt and hatred felt by Italians toward their Spanish tyrants."⁹⁰

He is arrogant, pompous, and given to making a great show of his gallantry towards the ladies.⁹¹ He enjoys their wonderment at the tales he is all too willing to tell of his prowess in the field. Once embarked upon them, he will not cease. His listeners are driven to extremes of boredom at his detailed accounts of battles long past.

His gait is vain and strutting, and, on meeting a rival, he observes the most exact rules of procedure. He has no

⁹⁰Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 246.

⁹¹Cheney, p. 242.

sense of humor and the Zanni have great fun at his expense, provided they can remain beyond sword's reach. Sometimes his bravery is put to the test, and then to everyone's delight, he either runs away or drops dead of sheer fright. He chases the clowns and they scatter nimbly rather than challenge his swordsmanship. He does not belong to their brotherhood and his "superiority" must be allowed some scope in the play.

His flesh-colored mask has a large, firm nose and a great bristling moustache, which combined with his keen, glittering eyes, give an impression of strength and determination.⁹² His figure is well-proportioned, and he wears the military uniform of his age with pride and upright carriage. Of the history and changes in the Capitano's costume, Duchartre explains:

The history of the Captain's costume is much the same as that of military dress in general. The Captain followed the contemporary styles and changes of each period. The early Italian Captain wore a helmet, or morion, buff straps, and a long sword. His Spanish prototype was decked out in an immense starched ruff, a wide plumed hat, and boots with scalloped edges at the top. . . . At the beginning of the seventeenth century Abraham Bosse represented the Captain in tight-fitting, striped clothes and a plumed felt hat. . . . His character was best delineated not so much by physical traits as by his pretentiousness and indigence, which always amused the poorer classes in particular.⁹³

⁹²Talbot, "Commedia Dell' Arte: A Theatrical Approach," p. 22.

⁹³Duchartre, pp. 229-230.

Besides Giangurogolo or Big-Mouth, the frightened little man with the huge appetite and a nose to match, the Capitano has in his train Rogantino, the typical corporal who will carry out orders to the letter. He is a dolt without imagination and very representative of those of his particular calling.⁹⁴

A far more interesting member of this coterie is Scaramuccia. "His name, which signifies 'little fighter' or 'skirmisher,' and his primitive Neapolitan type, would place him in the category of Captains."⁹⁵ He is usually armed with a long sword and dagger, for the fights into which he might be drawn are numerous. He often has to look the other way, if he is forced to draw arms in order to hold off an adversary, to seek the exit through which he will depart in haste. He has all the bombast of his military fellows though his own rank in the army is uncertain.

His pursuit of the fair sex is as unrelenting as the Captain's, and his lack of success seems not to dampen his ardor. He may not have an illustrious background himself, or be well-to-do, but he enjoys both vicariously. He boasts continually of these assets.

His cunning and agility enable him to escape detection in many dishonest dealings of which pick-pocketing is the most usual. He recounts his deeds to his crony, Pulcinella,

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 234-235.

⁹⁵Sand, p. 207.

during their frequent wine drinking. The latter invariably challenges his truthfulness and beats him soundly,⁹⁶ however, they sally forth on their favorite pastime of scaring the wits out of susceptible people, in order to show off to the opposite sex.⁹⁷

Scaramuccia has more artistic talents than his friend, and far better looks, of a saturnine kind. He can bring to his courting all manner of aids such as singing, playing instruments, and verse making which help towards success. Moreover, he has a lithe, cat-like grace which facilitates swift departure from a scene should he be discovered by a father or a rival.

Scaramuccia wears a very long-nosed, slit-eyed mask topped by a loose, black cap often topped with cock's feathers. He dons a black jacket, trousers, and cloak--in all probability to denote his "sinister" qualities if not to provide swift chance of disappearance into the night.

The Inamorati

Within the range of characters of the commedia dell'arte the abovementioned are the most distinguished of that important group--the caricatured types. But, in addition to these, there are the Inamorati or lovers, male and female, who usually play more serious roles without masks. They

⁹⁶Niklaus, p. 41.

⁹⁷Duchartre, p. 237.

wear the clothing of the day suitable to their station in life and are often attended by servants drawn from the Zanni group.

The young men (*inamorati*) are usually of good figure and handsome appearance, whether they be rich or poor. They must be well spoken, and they do not engage in any of the deviltry of the Zanni. Though they often encounter them, their chief occupation is that of being in love. Whether named Silvio, Orazio, Flavio, Leandro, Lelio, Fabio, or Antonio, these personable fellows are most necessary to the plot, and have always had a big following—the feminine section of their audiences.⁹⁸ One may be shy and timid, and consequently in need of the services of Arlecchino, Scapino, or some other enterprising Zanni to help him to elope with his beloved. Another may be bold and dashing, and have to beat a Zanni who is furthering his rival. Often both types appear in the same play.

Lovers' parts were often played by poets, scholars, and young blades with a love of the theatre and an enjoyment of the excitement to be found in mingling with its people. The challenge entailed was not insignificant, and they had to be intelligent, "well set up, courteous, gallant even to the point of affectation,"⁹⁹ as well as presentable. Many of the

⁹⁸Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, pp. 234-235.

⁹⁹Duchartre, p. 286.

inamorato won fame and lasting recognition in this field, and were the fore-runners of the serious actors of later times.

The women (inamorata), prettily called Isabella, Viola, Olivia, Maria, Lelia, Flavia, Rosalinda, and so forth must be suitable partners for the inamorato. The daughter of someone such as Pantalone has much to do usually in outwitting her difficult parent in order to marry her heart's desire. Her lover is considered most unsuitable for reasons of birth or pocket, the father's choice being the Dottore or the Capitano. As the beautiful wife of either of the old men, an inamorata must retain the sympathy of the audience in spite of her infidelity with a young man who may be a lover type or Pedrolino or Arlecchino. As a courtesan, Florinetta, she must retain her charm and be faithful to her young lover.

For centuries the opposition of the church to the performance of women on the stage meant that females were played by men. When they began to reappear in the sixteenth century, in such famous troupes as the Gelosi, they were welcomed with great enthusiasm by the majority of those who saw them play. Prior to this, there are records of women who disguised as men in order to be allowed to act women's parts on the stage. Even then, France and England did not see them until the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰Duchartre, p. 263.

Because of women's absence from the stage for so long, feminine roles were not developed to anything like the extent to which those of the male characters were. Although they swiftly became known and much beloved, few achieved the scope enjoyed by the men of the commedia dell' arte.

The Songstresses, Cantarina and Ballerina, with their graceful dancing, sweet voices, and musical ability, are thought to be the lovely daughters of the girl singers and dancers of the ancient Roman theatre. They are always a source of delight in the plays in which they are featured.

The most famous of the inamorate is Isabella, whose beauty, grace, wit, and fidelity have made her the epitome of the charm of women in love. She belongs to a group of characters played by women, many of whom were well-educated, gifted actresses, and able writers of scenarios.

The maids attending the inamorata are of diverse character. Columbina, known by many other names, is typical. Sometimes she is young and pert, sometimes older, married and a mother. She appears in the early scenarios as a coarser person than she is in later times, when her youthful and pretty attributes are brought to the fore, and she is linked with Arlecchino or Pierro.

In older parts she may be an innkeeper's wife, or a widow sought in marriage by Pulcinella or Scaramuccia, usually because of her nest egg. As Franceschina she is

gay and lively--dancing and singing her way into many hearts, and guarded by her native wit from being beguiled by the advances of exploiters. With one or more of the young Zanni as suitors, her love scenes are comical and prove an amusing replica of the more serious and decorous activities of her mistress.

Arlecchino is her faithful admirer but she may on occasion stray in other directions. She is devoted to her mistress, will do anything for her, and often gives, in her direct and sensible fashion, advice. She knows the ways of the world and is surely unspoiled.

The characteristics of the feminine roles of the commedia dell' arte were made by the brilliant, beautiful women who played them. The mistresses "revelled in bodices and ruffles embroidered in gold and silk, jewels of every description, earrings of pearl or of gold thread in rings and twisted strands."¹⁰¹

They were unmasked except occasionally for the intriguing little black toup. The serving maids "wore a large, wide apron . . . Her costume was that of a woman of the people. . . . bow in her hair . . ."¹⁰² The fairer sex provided a delightful contrast to the stock types of the Zanni in their grotesque masks and costumes.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 264.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 283.

The women, provocative to every kind of man, provided an undying interest in the theatre. They played their parts, went their ways, and yet remained forever in what they had created.

These, then, were the stock types or "masks" of the commedia dell' arte. They set forth to conquer Europe, and enjoyed a brilliant and triumphant career some three hundred years long. "Very few of the variations ever left Italy; but a gallant band consisting of Arlecchino, Brighella, Pantalone, and Il Dottore, Pulcinella, Scaramuccia, Il Capitano," Pedrolino, Scapino, Lelio, Isabella, Columbina, and Franceschina "were responsible for the great invasion."¹⁰³

Of this great invasion, the study will now focus its attention and concentration in Chapter III, and note the influences on the works of William Shakespeare.

¹⁰³Niklaus, p. 44.

CHAPTER III

COMMEDIA INFLUENCE ON SHAKESPEARE

In Elizabethan literature there are references enough to aspects of the commedia dell' arte to assume that it was sufficiently well known. The anglicizing of words such as Harlaken, Pantaloon, and Zany very well leaves this impression. The purpose then, of this chapter is to investigate various plays of Shakespeare and note the commedia aspects and possible allusions.

Owing to the roving habits of the troupes, the commedia dell' arte gradually achieved an international reputation. The players and their theatre eventually became widely known not only in Italy and France, but in nearly every country in Europe.

The Italians reached England in the mid-sixteenth century. If they had hoped to arouse immediately the enthusiasm, and enjoy the popularity they had gained in France, they were soon disillusioned. Their arrival into Elizabethan England is thus described by Niklaus:

The way had been prepared for him [Arlecchino] in France by the royal alliance with the House of Medici [Catherine], and the subsequent adoption of Italian fashion at court. There was no such preparation in Elizabethan England, where both Italy and France were considered "foreign" by all but a few well-travelled gentlemen.

The company who arrived in 1582, at the time Francesco and Isabella Andreini were delighting French audiences, found themselves playing to a frigid public who showed clearly that they found their own tradition infinitely superior to that of the Italians.¹

It took considerable time to show the Englishment what improvised comedy was like. However, the newcomers managed subtly to influence trends in the theatre, as they had done elsewhere in Europe. There were various opportunities for the Elizabethans to become acquainted with the fashion of the contemporary Italian stage. "A few notices survive of the way in which travellers in Italy, residents in Paris, and more particularly English players touring on the continent came across Italian actors."² English noblemen, present at the French court, were entertained by the famous Gelosi and other acting troupes. They expeditiously forwarded the reviews back to England.

Of the commedia improvised acting, the English clowns probably were more influenced by the Italians than were the serious actors of the day.

Will Kempe, most famous of the Shakespearean clowns, toured widely in Europe and spent a considerable amount of time in Rome learning the commedia style. He "insisted on acting ex-tempore after the usual manner of commedia,"³

¹Niklaus, p. 126.

²Lea, p. 342.

³Louis B. Wright, "Will Kempe," Modern Language Review, XLI (December, 1926), 518.

undoubtedly his ordinary preference of interpretation. Kempe played Peter in Romeo and Juliet, Dogberry in Much Ado About Nothing, perhaps Costard in Love's Labor's Lost and Launce in Two Gentlemen of Verona. "The tricks Launce plays with his shoes and clothes in Two Gentlemen are typical of Kempe's performances; they are also stock commedia tricks."⁴ The techniques of the commedia buffoonery truly presented a fruitful means of amplifying Kempe's talents as a clown.

Robert Armin succeeded Kempe in 1600 as the clown of the Lord Chamberlain's company. "He was doubtless the greatest living authority on court-foolery"⁵ and an expert at composing verses ex-tempore. The part of Feste in Twelfth Night was especially written for Armin and perhaps he played a Grave-digger in Hamlet, Lavache in All's Well That Ends Well, and the Fool in King Lear.

Kennard has shown that Italian companies visited England:

The commedia dell' arte exerted considerable influence upon the English comedy. In 1527 an Italian company crossed to England, led by a Mantuan, the Harlequin Drusiano Martinelli. At the court of Elizabeth the two English buffoons Tarleton and Wilton probably learned from him how to improvise on mere "scenarios" and to compose them. We still have the scenari of four comedies dell' Arte from the time of Elizabeth. Writers of the Elizabethan period frequently express admiration

⁴Ibid., p. 520.

⁵John W. Draper, The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience (Stanford, California, 1950), p. 195.

for the Italian Commedia dell' Arte, and reproduce the traditional comic characters in their own comedies.⁶

Italian comedy eventually became a familiar part of the English Renaissance scene, and "exerted its influence over the plots and structure of contemporary drama in England."⁷ The playwrights were surely cognizant of the invasion from the continent.

Italian influence or parallels may be illustrated by examining various of Shakespeare's plays. It should be emphasized that parallels are not sources, though some of them may be possible sources. A brief summary will show how widespread the Italianate commedia flavor is throughout the works of William Shakespeare.

In the early comedy Love's Labor's Lost there are two characters probably directly descended from stock commedia characters: Don Armado, the fantastical Spaniard, who is akin to the Capitano, and the pedant Holofernes, who is akin to the Bolognese Dottore. In Act IV, ii, Holofernes demonstrates his "learning":

Hol. "Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne
sub umbra Ruminat --
 and so forth. Ah, good old Mantuan! I may
 speak of thee as the traveler doth of Venice:
Venetia, Venetia,
Chi non ti vede non ti pretia.
 Old Mantuan, old Mantuan, who understandeth

⁶Kennard, pp. 34-35.

⁷Niklaus, p. 128.

thee not, loves thee not. Ut, re, sol, la,
mi, fa."⁷

Armado is made a butt in the tricking scene in Act IV, i, in which Costard, the clown, and the ladies make comment:

Cost. "By my soul, a swain, a most simple clown!
Lord, Lord, how the ladies and I have put
him down!
O' my troth, most sweet jests, most incony
vulgar wit!
When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely,
as it were, so fit.
Armado o' th' one side--Oh, a most dainty man!
To see him walk before a lady and to bear her
fan!
To see him kiss his hand! And how most sweetly
a' will swear!
And his page o' t' other side, that handful
of wit!
Ah, Heavens, it is a most pathological nit!
Sola, Sola!"⁸

In Act V, ii, Shakespeare calls the set types of the Italian commedia--"the pedant, the braggart, the hedge priest, the fool, and the boy."⁹ He recalls a "slight zany"¹⁰ as one who knows the tricks to make a lady laugh when she is indisposed.

As every student of Shakespeare knows, the Comedy of Errors is an English adaptation of Plautus' Menaechmi. Plautus was not the only contributor, however, for some

⁷William Shakespeare, Love's Labor's Lost, IV, ii, 94-101. This and all subsequent textual references to Shakespeare's plays are based on Shakespeare The Complete Works, edited by G. B. Harrison (New York, 1952).

⁸Ibid., IV, i, 141-151.

⁹Ibid., V, ii, 545.

¹⁰Ibid., V, ii, 463.

characters, the servants especially, are more Italian than Roman. As Lea says, "By status the Dromios of Shakespeare's play are the slaves of Latin comedy, but in behavior and misfortunes they are the servants of the commedia dell' arte."¹¹

The trials of the lovers in The Two Gentlemen of Verona are similar to the trials of the lovers in Scala's Flavio tradito.¹² Julia's disguising herself as a boy in order to win back her lover is paralleled by Isabella's disguise in Scala's Gelosa Isabella.¹³

A parallel to Bottom's metamorphosis in A Midsummer Night's Dream may be found in the pastoral scenario of Il Pantaloncino wherein Pantalone is changed into an ass.¹⁴ The mix-up of lovers in the same play is a routine situation in Italian comedy. Bottom's dance, the "Bergomask,"¹⁵ must have been a peculiarity of the Zanni's role, for Arlecchino was traditionally a rustic peasant of Bergamo in Italy.

Kate in The Taming of the Shrew has been compared with the reluctant bride, Isabella, in Scala's Il pellegrino fido amante.¹⁶ "The wooing of Bianca by a suitor who changes places with his servant and pretends to be a tutor can be

¹¹Lea, p. 438.

¹²Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, p. 145.

¹³Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁴Lea, pp. 631-642.

¹⁵A Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i, 360.

¹⁶Nicoll, World of Harlequin, p. 9.

paralleled in an Italian play by Ariosto called I Suppositi.¹⁷ Vincento, the old gentleman of Pisa and father to Lucentio, is tricked and beguiled by Bianca and Lucentio, and afterwards referred to as "the old Pantaloon."¹⁸ A typical lazzi scene is that in which Grumio pretends not to understand Petruchio's command to knock on Hortensio's door: "Knock, sir. Whom should I knock? Is there any man has rebused your Worship?"¹⁹ His real impudence, Petruchio's threats and the blows which close the scene, together with the conventional couplet of greeting, in Italian, between Petruchio and Hortensio, all these features suggest imitation of the commedia dell' arte.

Sir John Falstaff of Henry IV and The Merry Wives of Windsor shares many qualities with the Italian braggart soldier, but there is a closer parallel to the Capitano. Several analogues to his wooing in The Merry Wives have been found, the closest of them being Li tre becchi ("The Three Cuckolds"),²⁰ a scenario not in Scala's collection, however. The revelry and antics of Falstaff and his gang are directly from the commedia scenarios. Doctor Caius, the French

¹⁸The Taming of the Shrew, III, i, 37.

¹⁹Ibid., I, ii, 6.

²⁰Lea, pp. 580-584.

²¹Ibid., p. 398.

physician, and Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh parson, are typical commedia stock types.

Captain Parolles in All's Well That Ends Well is a particularly good example of the vain, arrogant, and bragging Italian Capitano, not only in his language, but in his relations with the other characters of the play. The scene in which he falls into the hands of jesting soldiers and is frightened by their gibberish into betraying army secrets is directly from a scenario. If not, it is at least very similar to the lazzi scenario so common in Italian drama, in which the Captain is the butt of the disguised Zanni. Lea says, "The practical jokes played upon Parolles are of the same type as the 'burle' devised by the professional comedians."²¹

A situation similar to the trumped-up accusation of the heroine in Much Ado About Nothing is found in Scala's Gelosa Isabella which may have been based on the same novel by Bandello that probably provided Shakespeare with the Hero-Claudio story. Dogberry and Verges add much low comedy and spirit to the play as Arlecchino and Brighella add to a scenario.

Polonius, father to Laertes and Ophelia in Hamlet, has many characteristics of Pantalone; specifically his sententious advice to Laertes on his departure to France is

²¹Ibid., p. 398.

paralleled by a scene in Scala's Li tappeti Alessandrini. Shylock of The Merchant of Venice has features in common with the Venetian merchant of Italian comedy; specifically his troubles are similar to those of Pantalone in Scala's La pazzia d' Isabella and his Il fido amico.²² Harrison offers an opinion of the origins of Merchant: "of the various versions of the story of the pound of flesh, the nearest is an Italian tale called Il Pecorone, written by Ser Giovanni in 1378 and printed in 1558."²³ Also worth noting in this play is the continuous reference to the magnificoes of Venice. Iago, the villain in Othello, calls Brabantio a "Magnifico"²⁴ and treats him as if he were a Pantalone. Jacques, son of Sir Rowland de Boys in As You Like It, pictures the sixth age of mankind as

"the lean and slippered Pantaloon
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well save, a world to wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound."²⁵

Nicoll avers, "No one who has studied the prints representing the early Venetian type can turn to the 'Seven Ages of Man'

²² Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, pp. 151-152.

²³ G. B. Harrison, editor, "Introduction to The Merchant of Venice," Shakespeare The Complete Works (New York, 1952), p. 580.

²⁴ Othello, I, ii, 12.

²⁵ As You Like It, II, vii, 157-163.

and deny that Shakespeare had seen a real Pantalone."²⁶
 Perhaps it may even be true that, in this famous speech, Shakespeare's imagination had been fired by witnessing the Italian innamorato (Lover), Capitano (soldier), Dottore (justice), and Pantalone play in some scenario in London.²⁷

The use of situations, devices, and characters prominent in the commedia dell' arte was not confined to Elizabethan comedy. Some of the tragedies may have drawn upon the Italian comedians. Scala's Li tragici successi²⁸ offers a close parallel to the plot of Romeo and Juliet, with the ending changed to a happy one. The Romeo-and-Juliet story was however, common property for the writers of tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy. Peter's conversation with the musicians in Act IV, v, is the lowest of comedy play. Juliet's nurse is typical of the earlier Columbina.

This peculiar practice of improvisation seems to have impressed the Elizabethan pamphleteers and dramatists more strongly than any other feature of the Italian drama.

Cleopatra's forecast of how "the quick comedians extemporally will stage us,"²⁹ surely refers to the Italian

²⁶ Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 346.

²⁷ J. Isaacs, Shakespeare as Man of the Theatre (London, 1927), p. 115.

²⁸ Winifred Smith, "A Comic Version of Romeo and Juliet," Modern Philology, VII (October, 1909), 217-220.

²⁹ Antony and Cleopatra, V, ii, 216-217.

practice. A much disputed phrase in Hamlet can refer only to this custom. Polonius commends the traveling actors in terms very suitable to them. They were "the best men in the world for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, . . .;" for them "Seneca is not too heavy nor Plautus too light;" they were the only men for "the law of writ and the liberty."³⁰ Such a conglomerate repertory certainly belonged to the English companies of the day, but it was even more characteristic of the Italians, who gave actual Seneca and Plautus, and both written and improvised plays. Falstaff and Hal's discussion of an extempore play at the Boar's Head Tavern in Henry IV, Part I is evidence also that Shakespeare was familiar with this type of play-making. Falstaff, being thoroughly roused, retorts: "What, shall we be merry? Shall we have a play extempore?" and the Prince replies: "Content, and the argument [plot] shall be thy running away."³¹ These illustrations may very well indicate Shakespeare's appreciation of the two main forms of theatrical art in his own day.

Lea has suggested half a dozen parallels to The Tempest among the scenarios and argues that the tight structure of Shakespeare's last play may have owed much to the influence

³⁰Hamlet, II, ii, 419-421.

³¹Henry IV, II, iv, 308-310.

of Italian commedia dell' arte.³² Sharon L. Smith, in the Emporia State Research Studies, presents five scenarios as source material for The Tempest.³³

A fundamental likeness between many of Shakespeare's plays and Italian comedy is the heroine's disguise as a boy. In eighteen of Scala's fifty scenarios the prima donna or innamorata disguises herself as a boy. In eleven of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays disguises of both men and women can be found. Of these eleven plays, six contain women disguised as boys: Helena as a pilgrim in All's Well That Ends Well; Nerissa as a lawyer's clerk in The Merchant of Venice; Julia as a boy in Two Gentlemen of Verona; Imogene as a boy in Cymbeline; Rosalind and Celia as pages in As You Like It; and Viola as a page in Twelfth Night. Other disguises seen are Lucentio and Hortensio as a school master and musician in The Taming of the Shrew; Duke Vincentio as a friar in Measure for Measure; Edgar as Poor Tom and Kent as a fool in King Lear; and Feste as a friar in Twelfth Night.

The results of seeking Italian analogues in the plays of other Elizabethan dramatists, such as Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Chapman, Kekker, and Middleton, are similar to what is found in examining Shakespeare. The Italianate flavor is

³²Lea, pp. 443-453.

³³Sharon L. Smith, "The Commedia dell' Arte and Problems Related to Source in The Tempest," Emporia State Research Studies, XIII (September, 1964), 11-23.

there and readily perceived even when the setting and names have been changed, but whether it comes directly or indirectly from the learned comedy (commedia erudita) or from the commedia dell' arte is seldom clear, however the latter is stronger.

The Italian scholar Rébora calls the Elizabethans "magnificent plagiarists,"³⁴ and it is true that almost all the authors of this remarkable epoch robbed high and low, gathering motives, ideas, and images without indicating their sources. The debt of Elizabethan tragedy to Italy is well known and the writers of comedy owed no less to the Italian dramatists, novelists, and actors. The Elizabethans were evidently fascinated by the complicated Italian plots, by the theatricality of their mistaken identities and disguises, by the clever repartee of their characters, and by the cynical heartlessness of even the best Italian writers. Above all was the fascination of the

. . . unbridled Italian vivacity, the lack of restraint and of religious or moral checks, the innate ready wit and comicality, which naturally struck the slower and more stable English as something different, expressive, picturesque, as something in itself dramatic.³⁵

Some of the early Elizabethan critics were apt to find fault with the commedia dell' arte because of its loose

³⁴Piero Rébora, L'Italia nel dramma inglese (Milan, 1925), p. 103.

³⁵Ibid., p. 134.

morals and with the Italian comedians because of their vulgarity and bawdry. In 1578, George Whetstone, writing the Dedicatory Letter to Promos and Cassandra, complained that "the Italian is so lascivious in his comedies, that honest hearers are greeved [sic] at his actions."³⁶ In 1592, Thomas Nashe condemned the Italian comedians:

Our players are not as the players beyond the sea, a sort of squirting baudie Comedians, that have Whores & common Curtizans to playe womens partes, & forbear no immodest speech or unchast action that may procure laughter, but our Sceane is more statelye furnisht . . . our representations honourable & full of gallant resolution, not consisting like theirs of Pantaloun, a Whore, & a Zanie, but of Emperors, Kings & Princes.³⁷

The disparaging remarks of Whetstone and Nashe are misleading if they suggest general disapproval and unwillingness to follow the Italians. Both writers were devoted followers of the Italians though in different ways, it seems.

In regard to the influence of the commedia dell' arte on Elizabethan literature, Lea draws the following conclusion:

Frequent references put it beyond doubt that the English audiences knew at least enough of the Commedia dell' arte to make it a safe subject for allusion. The uses of the names of the chief masks in their anglicized forms of Zany, Pantaloon, and Harlaken, are tests of the knowledge of Italian popular drama.

³⁶Lea, pp. 379-380.

³⁷R. B. McKerrow, editor, The Works of Thomas Nashe (London, 1910), p. 215.

Judged by a study of particular plays it appears that the contact between the English stage and the Commedia dell' arte was considerable . . .³⁸

Allardyce Nicoll concludes his accurate and comprehensive

Masks Mimes and Miracles with:

Shakespeare, indeed, leaves no doubt in our minds that such performances [commedia] had impressed him deeply. . . . the zany is for ever peeping through the dress of his clowns. . . . How far he borrowed from the Italians will never be known, but that he did borrow seems to be undeniable from his apparent use of lazzi, which might have developed independently, but which more probably were based on Italian example. . . . Shakespeare approached very close to the comic style of the Italians, and we wonder whether those Elizabethan scenes may not have been inspired, indirectly at least, by this professional comedy of the Continent.³⁹

In his Epilogue to The World of Harlequin, Nicoll has this to say:

Whether Shakespeare actually witnessed any performances given by the Italians we cannot say with certainty, but with assurance we can declare that the inner spirit of his early comedies closely approaches that of Scala's plays; and we can reasonably guess that commedia dell' arte performances would have appealed to him.⁴⁰

By 1590, the Elizabethan playwrights had thoroughly assimilated the methods and much of the comicality of the Italians that they were hardly conscious of imitating either the commedia erudita or dell' arte. The superior dramatists,

³⁸Lea, pp. 374, 453.

³⁹Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 347.

⁴⁰Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, p. 223.

talented artisans like Shakespeare and Jonson, did not try to duplicate word for word, but imitated an element far more important--the spirit.⁴¹

Typical theatregoers to the private Blackfriars or to the public Globe did not care where the play had come from or whether its source was Italian or English or ancient Roman. They only wished to enjoy the program and lose themselves in it. For those, however,

who like to know where the play came from and who were the ancestors of Horatio and Isabella and Dromio, there is a special satisfaction in viewing the plot and the characters through the long perspective that reaches back to Florence and Venice, even to Rome and Athens.⁴²

True, the Elizabethans of the sixteenth century were not concerned with the sources and origins of their dramatic entertainment. However, the scholars and students of the twentieth century find it an interesting and fascinating subject for investigation. Therefore, to continue the study for the design problem, the fourth chapter seeks to show the relationships, similarities, and applications of the standard commedia masks to the characters in Twelfth Night. Also, the commedia dell' arte qualities, such as mood, style, language, and plot in the play will be examined.

⁴¹Herrick, p. 227.

⁴²Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

TWELFTH NIGHT AND THE COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE

Introduction

Twelfth Night opens with a passage of music which creates the mood and atmosphere for what is to follow.¹ In Act I, i, Duke Orsino of Illyria enters with a host of attending musicians, romantically sighing:

If music be the food of love, play on.
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall.
Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor! . . .²

Harrison declares Twelfth Night as "the most musical of all Shakespeare's plays. It not only begins with music, the whole play is an elaborate composition."³

Indeed, Twelfth Night is an elaborate orchestral composition. It should also be noted that elements of music, dance, and color enhanced the dynamic quality of the commedia dell' arte performances. Play after play of the commedia breathed the air of pleasant romance, fantasy, and musical merriment, not too far removed from such a play as Twelfth Night.

¹Harrison, "Introduction to Twelfth Night," p. 847.

²Twelfth Night, I, i, 1-7. ³Harrison, op. cit., p. 849.

To design for any theatrical production, the style, mood, and atmosphere of the play must be established before the design work is begun. Then and only then can the theatre artist create in terms of scenic design. He must understand and recognize the primary and secondary plots and themes within the chosen play for reasons of clarity and revelation. He should become cognizant of the play's source, background, and stage history. Finally, and so ultimately important, he must become well acquainted with the personage of the drama.

This chapter, therefore, seeks to establish this necessary design precedent and background needed for the study. The commedia dell' arte qualities, such as theme, style, tone, and mood, found in Twelfth Night will be examined, as well as its plot and possible source. This will determine the design approach needed for the study. Also, the relationship, similarities, and application of the standard commedia masks to the Twelfth Night masks or characters will be shown. This examination will seek to establish the costume needs and requirements for each character. Secondly, it will determine the style and line of the costume designs for the characters in Twelfth Night.

Commedia Qualities in Twelfth Night

According to Leslie Hotson, Twelfth Night was written to order and first performed on Twelfth Night, January 6, 1600-01, for the festivities in Queen Elizabeth's palace at

Whitehall, when she entertained Virgino Orsino, Duke of Bracciano, an emissary from Italy.⁴ Although one cannot prove this, the tone of the play, indeed, suggests that Shakespeare prepared it with a court performance in mind. His company was frequently called upon to provide plays at court just as the commedia plays were summoned to the magnificent courts of Europe.

Twelfth Night was evidently popular enough to be chosen for a night of revels in the Middle Temple at Candlemas, 1602. As has been aptly illustrated in Chapter One, John Manningham made note of a Twelfth Night performance and compared it to an Italian work in his diary dated February 2, 1602. For the members of the Middle Temple at this annual feast, perhaps for the court of the Queen herself, Twelfth Night was a merry play fit for an occasion of fun and gaiety.

It is not clear which particular Italian work John Manningham had in mind when he compared it to Twelfth Night: Gl' Inganni or Gl' Ingannati. However, there are doubtless certain similarities between these two and Twelfth Night. But, before noting the similarities in the plays and some of Scala's scenarios, a brief synopsis of Twelfth Night is in order.

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, is blindly in love with his neighbor the Countess Olivia, who will not hear his suit.

⁴Leslie Hotson, The First Night of Twelfth Night (London, 1954), pp. 12-14.

Orsino sends his page Cesario (the disguised Viola, who has fallen in love with him) to plead his cause; Olivia falls in love with Cesario. Olivia's household includes her uncle, Sir Toby Belch, a sponger and a tippler; his friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a wealthy but preposterous knight who ludicrously hopes to gain Olivia's hand; and Malvolio, her steward, whose ambition causes his downfall. Scenes of intrigue and merriment alternate and interact with the romantic affairs of the aristocrats. Sir Andrew is persuaded, to his terror, to challenge Cesario-Viola to a duel. Viola unwillingly accepts. Meanwhile, her twin brother Sebastian (whom she believes drowned in a shipwreck) arrives in Illyria with Antonio, a sea captain and his friend. Antonio comes upon Viola dueling and, mistaking her for Sebastian, comes to the rescue; Viola cannot render him similar assistance when he is arrested. Olivia now mistakes Sebastian for his disguised sister, and Sebastian falls in love with Olivia. Further complications ensue before identities are unraveled and the play brought to a happy conclusion.

Manningham compared Twelfth Night with The Comedy of Errors and Plautus' Menaechmi as well as the Italian drama. In The Comedy of Errors (as also in its Plautine original) the twins are brothers; in Twelfth Night the twins are a brother and a sister. Gl' Ingannati (The Deceits), also, presents a brother-sister twin set. The sister (Lelia) and

her brother (Fabrizio) are separated. Finding that Flamminio, the young man she loves, has transferred his affections to Isabella, Lelia assumes male disguise, calls herself Fabio, becomes Flamminio's page, and takes his protestations of love to Isabella. But Isabella herself falls in love with Fabio, while Isabella's father plans to marry Lelia. When Fabrizio appears on the scene, he is taken to be Fabio and shut up with Isabella, where the inevitable happens. When all is revealed, Flamminio returns to his former love, Lelia, and marries her. There are subsidiary intrigues also, and there is much that is lustful in the play. But the main equations are clear: Flamminio=Orsino; Lelia:Fabio=Cesario:Viola; Fabrizio=Sebastian. In Shakespeare, the story is simpler and purer than in Gl' Ingannati. Orsino does not jilt Viola; he is not aware of her at all, it is Cesario from the beginning for him. Viola as Cesario does not double-cross her master (as Lelia does); though much against her own inclinations and interests, Viola-Cesario does her best to persuade Olivia to return Orsino's love. The impropriety of Isabella and Fabrizio being shut up in a room is avoided in Twelfth Night. The lecherous old fathers--Isabella's and Lelia's--are quietly eliminated from the play's scheme.

William Winter in his Shakespeare on the Stage, avers that Twelfth Night (Epiphany) is mentioned in the Prologue to Gl' Ingannati and "taken with other considerations, warrants belief that Shakespeare was acquainted with that

Italian play and that he built the serious part of the plot of his Twelfth Night on that basis."⁵ Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, makes the same point: "a phrase in the Prologue of Gl' Ingannati, 'la notte di Beffana' (night of Epiphany) presumably gave Shakespeare his title."⁶

John Draper, in The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience, suggests an even stronger but interesting allusion, "Somewhat closer in plot is the sixteenth-century comedy Gl' Ingannati, and it contributes the name Malevolti."⁷ This name may have suggested Malvolio and his ill wishes toward the merrymakers.

Winter maintains that in 1577-78, a company of Italian actors performed in London before Queen Elizabeth at Windsor, and that the popular Gl' Ingannati was certainly included in the repertory of that company.⁸ It is possible that Shakespeare witnessed this Italian play at court.

H. H. Furness asserts that Shakespeare built his Twelfth Night on a Latin translation of Gl' Ingannati, entitled Laelia, acted at Queen's College, Cambridge, in 1590.⁹

⁵William Winter, Shakespeare on the Stage (New York, 1915), p. 7.

⁶Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources (London, 1957), p. 68.

⁷John Draper, The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience (Stanford, 1950), p. 3.

⁸Winter, p. 6.

⁹H. H. Furness, editor, Twelfth Night, Vol. XIII of A New Variorium Edition of Shakespeare (Philadelphia, 1901), p. xxi.

If, as is generally held, Shakespeare's habit was to consult not one but many sources, harmoniously combining whatever material suited his purpose, it is not unreasonable to believe that he depended not only upon the anonymous Gl' Ingannati for Twelfth Night, but also upon Nicolo Secchi's commedia Gl' Inganni (The Deceits). This scenario includes a Genevia disguised as a page (Ruberto) helping Gostanzo, her master whom she loves, woo Dorotea. However, there is little resemblance beyond this in Gl' Inganni to Twelfth Night. But, similarities in some dialogue passages are evident:

Gostanzo: (in reply to Ruberto who has just told him that some young girl is in love with him)
Do I know her?
Ruberto: As well as you do me.
Gostanzo: Is she young?
Ruberto: Of my age.
Gostanzo: And loves me?
Ruberto: Adores you.
Gostanzo: Have I ever seen her?
Ruberto: As often as you have seen me.¹⁰

In Act II, iv, of Twelfth Night, a beautiful and romantic scene filled with music, the Duke questions Cesario (Viola) in much the same way:

Duke: . . . My life upon't, young though thou art,
thine eye,/ Hath stayed upon some favor that
it loves./ Hath it not, boy?
Viola: A little, by your favor.
Duke: What kind of woman is't?
Viola: Of your complexion.

¹⁰Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare (London, 1958), p. 342.

Duke: She is not worth thee, then, What years,
i' faith?

Viola: About your years, my lord.¹¹

As for the source of Twelfth Night, Harrison ascertains, "The nearest and likeliest is the tale of Apolonius and Silla, included by Barnabe Riche in a collection called Riche His Farewell to the Military Profession (1581)." However, he continues, "If indeed Riche's story was the direct source of the main plot of Twelfth Night, Shakespeare took only the main outline and certain incidents."¹² Bullough contends that Apolonius and Silla is directly based on the Gl' Ingannati story by way of Pierre de Belleforest's French version of it.¹³ Many of the circumstances of the Gl' Ingannati version are here, but Riche's story is less complicated and more decorous.

Nicoll offers Scala's improvised scenario, Il pellegrino fido amante, as one possible source for Twelfth Night:

Set in Genoa, the plot introduces us to Pantalone, with his daughter Flaminia and his servant Franceschina. Flaminia is loved by Orazio, a young gentleman whose servant is Fabrizio. It soon turns out, however, that this Fabrizio is really a girl in disguise--Isabella, daughter of Graziano, a Milanese doctor, who, having been wooed by a certain Flavio and not wishing to marry, has thus fled her father's house. Flavio shows himself the perfect lover and comes as a pilgrim, attended by his servant Arlecchino, to Genoa in search of her. Complications are introduced through a Capitano

¹¹Twelfth Night, II, iv, 22-29.

¹²Harrison, p. 846.

¹³Bullough, p. 276.

Spavento and his astute servant Pedrolino, but the course of true love ends happily; Isabella's heart is touched by Flavio's fidelity; she gives him her hand; and at the same time Orazio wins his Flaminia.¹⁴

This scenario, with its pleasant romance, sentimentality, musical atmosphere, and merriment attracts the attention and establishes a special quality not too far removed from Twelfth Night. In fact this comedy, in its structure, closely resembles Twelfth Night, wherein the cheating of Malvolio is modified and mollified by the musical, romantic world in which it is placed.

There are four essential characters found in Gl' Ingan-nati, and the plays of Secchi, Riche, Scala, and Shakespeare: a lover, a heroine in his service disguised as a page, her twin brother (who at first has disappeared), and a second heroine. The basic elements common to all the plots are: the heroine's secret love for her master; her employment as go-between, leading to the complication of a cross-wooing; and a final solution by means of the unforeseen arrival of the missing twin.

Numerous variations of the story seem to have survived, and Shakespeare might have been familiar with more than one of them. He changed the story fundamentally, however, broadened the interest and at the same time made the whole situation more romantically improbable, more melancholy at

¹⁴Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, pp. 9-10.

some points, more fantastic at others. In complicating his play by introducing the older Sir Andrew wooing Olivia, his challenging Cesario to a duel, and the gulling of Malvolio, Shakespeare was making a definite approach towards the commedia dell' arte. He may have taken these hints from the actions of the two suitors in Gl' Ingannati, Gherardo and Giglio, or Doctor Graziano, Pantalone, and Capitano Spavento in Il pellegrino fido amante. In Twelfth Night the dramatic art of Shakespeare operates with an ease that is delightful. "The touch is light. The mood,--now gentle, now exuberantly joyous, now pensive, now satiric, now tender,--is natural, careless, seemingly almost indifferent."¹⁵ The action of the play is contained in two plots. The first is concerned with Viola and her relationships with the lady Olivia and the duke Orsino. Its complications arise, much in the fashion of the commedia, from Viola's assumption of boy's attire, which later results in confusion between her and her brother Sebastian. The plot insistently turns on the confusion of the twins, but the unraveling of identities is not the end but the means to the end.¹⁶ The second plot is concerned with the gulling of Malvolio (a favorite device in the commedia drama), who stands opposed to the revelry of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria, the maid.

¹⁵Winter, p. 9.

¹⁶Alan S. Downer, "Feste's Night," College English, XIII (February, 1952), 259.

The problem of theme cannot be separated from character; therefore, in discussing the quality of theme in Twelfth Night, the various roles in the play must be considered to some extent. To give a more faithful account of what the play is about, it should be remembered that theme is something expressed explicitly and implicitly in all the situations and characters.

Twelfth Night has one of its major themes "the most widely current maxim of the Renaissance, that self-knowledge is the summum bonum."¹⁷ That is to say that there is self-deception in many of the characters in the play. The main plot is concerned with Viola, who is undeceived as to her own nature, but who causes confusion by her deception; with Orsino, who has confused his basically noble nature with the popular idea, in society and in literature, of the melancholy lover; with Olivia, who has confused her true nature with the romantic figure of the lady in mourning. The second plot is concerned primarily with Malvolio, who denies his own nature in his role of efficient, grave steward and later in his role as aspirant for Olivia in marriage. It is Feste, Olivia's clown, who points out the lack of self-knowledge and deception in each of these characters.

Twelfth Night could be called a play about pride, which is present in Orsino, Olivia, Malvolio, and some of the other

¹⁷Hardin Craig, editor, "Shakespeare as an English Dramatist," The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Chicago, 1951), p. 6.

characters.¹⁸ Olivia even accuses Viola of pride, and Feste's motive for baiting Malvolio is an injury to his professional pride. It is in many cases pride which causes much of the low comedy antics. Pantalone, Capitano, the Dottore, and the Zanni are quite proud on various occasions.

A third major theme of Twelfth Night is typically Elizabethan, yet universal in the midst of the contemporary times. The play could be called a play about folly. This is truly Twelfth Night, the Feast of Misrule, "when law and order are turned upside down and folly given its head."¹⁹ The duke is rejected for a page, and a girl at that. The countess soon disregards the mourning of her father and brother in a foolish susceptibility to an outside appearance. The grave Malvolio feigns eccentricity and is consequently delivered to the joyfully tiddly Lord of Misrule, Sir Toby. Orsino is more in love with love than Olivia. Everyone, except Feste, the court fool, "is made a fool of in these reversals, and folly is given almost a ritual celebration in the baiting of Malvolio"²⁰ by the comic members of Olivia's household.

An interesting point can now be made. The fool, much like the Zanni in the commedia scenarios, is given the task of calling wise men fools. One of the many functions of the

¹⁸Barbara Hardy, "Twelfth Night," Notes on English Literature, edited by John Harvey (New York, 1964), p. 9.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

Zanni is to exploit various of the characters' foibles and follies as well as their physical possessions. Orsino, Olivia, Sir Toby, and Malvolio are all accused of being mad or foolish. Viola and Sir Andrew are the only characters to call themselves fools.

Many comedies criticize harshly and some present no moral standard at all. Shakespeare, as well as the commedia scenarists, combines satire and sympathy, praise and blame, and this is one reason for calling Twelfth Night and the commedia dell' arte good-tempered and delightful.²¹ If there is a lack of self-knowledge and self-deception, there is purity and discernment. If there is pride, "it is true and false, with humility thrown in for good measure."²² If there is folly, there is also enjoyment and great relish. And opposite traits often appear in the same character. Shakespeare, also, to some extent, shows various strengths within his weak characters. Hardy maintains "Viola is the main source of all these qualities . . . and although she is involved, by accident, in Deception, Folly, and Misunderstanding, she reacts with honesty, sense, and insight."²³ The matter of theme, as has been pointed out, cannot be divided from character, but more about the characters will be said in the next subdivision of this chapter.

²¹Ibid., p. 11.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

The similarities in plot and theme can be further illustrated in the commedia dell' arte. They were always of an amorous complexion much in the fashion of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Fathers, uncles, lovers, guardians, varlets, priests, suitors, and panders played their parts. The action proceeded by means of disguises, changelings, pirates, sudden recognition of lost relatives, shipwrecks, possessions, burlesque, and human vice and folly. The commedia dell' arte made few excursions into history, fable, or mythology, however. Its scene was an Italian piazza; and though adventures by land and sea are alluded to, they are only used to loose a knot or to elucidate the transformation of some character. The same technique is cleverly utilized in Twelfth Night. The shipwreck is mentioned to build intrigue in the play and is used to separate Sebastian and Viola.

If the commedia dell' arte lacked fancy and invention in its themes, "this defect was compensated by audacious realism and Gargantuan humour."²⁴ The Italians took themes and twisted them to suit their purpose of merrymaking;

Shamless old men and still more shamless young people attempt to get their wills through a series of outlandish maskings and tricks, and disguises like those of Viola in Twelfth Night and Imogen in Cymbeline occasion mistakes quite other than

²⁴ Symonds, p. 56.

²⁵ Smith, p. 16.

those permitted by Shakespeare's sympathy for his heroines.²⁵

In all these theme and plot intrigues it is the subplot group of characters, the servingmen, maids, and guardians, who set the tone and mood for the drama as well as plan most of its complications. The complications brought about in Twelfth Night are a result of the revelry and antics of Olivia's household. Winifred Smith elucidates this point:

. . . endowed with more wit than sentiment they [subplot characters] go about to attain their ends with a fertility and a straightforwardness of bold invention that often plunges them and their betters into most embarrassing situations. Therefore, while among the pairs betrothed at the end of the play there is always at least one couple from below stairs "coming toward the ark," their concession to matrimony does not mean that a romantic tone predominates at the climax, it rather intensifies the effect of the whole as a piece of parody.²⁶

The marriage of Sir Toby and Maria in Act V is surely a parody.

One further comment may be made concerning this subject of the commedia dell' arte's spirit and method in theme. Unquestionably Shakespeare wrote his comedies for stage performance; unquestionably they were cast in eminently theatrical molds; yet equally evident is the fact that, while his comedies are exquisitely conceived as the basis for theatrical "shows," they incorporate within themselves a vision which carries one beyond the theatre. It is true that the scenarios

²⁶Ibid., pp. 16-17.

are more restrictedly "theatrical" than Twelfth Night, yet in the best of them is enshrined a vision which may at least be related to Shakespeare's. Had they not possessed this, one may well believe that, whatever the skill of the performers, the commedia dell' arte would not have laid its deep impression on the imaginations of succeeding generations. Those artists, including Shakespeare, who have turned to the Italian popular comedy for subjects were attracted not so much by the adroitness of particular players, not merely by the strange costumes exhibited upon the stage, but by the basic vision consecrated in the comedies these players interpreted.

The Characters

The point should here be made that Shakespeare's characters in Twelfth Night are not and cannot be exact replicas of the masks found in the commedia dell' arte. This section of the chapter seeks only to show the similarities of Shakespeare's characters to those of the commedia. Traits common to both will be examined and finally the application of the commedia masks to the Twelfth Night characters will be shown.

The theatre costumier, through his designs, must bring the play's characters alive. He must know and develop a love for them before he can create for them. This can only occur when he has analyzed the characters' roles; understood

their positions in the play, and their relations to other characters and surroundings; and, finally become aware of their traits and personalities. This section of the chapter seeks to accomplish this in written form, and to reveal the Twelfth Night characters' roles and traits drawing parallels with the standard masks of the commedia dell' arte. In this way the costume needs of each character may be established.

The Duke Orsino

Orsino appears in four scenes and speaks over two hundred lines. He is crucial to the plot: he is Viola's protector and master in her hour of need and weds her at long last; he woos the Countess Olivia, delights in Feste, and dominates, by virtue of his rank, the final distribution of pardons and rewards. Critics, however, have lent him but casual remark and little purpose in the play. He has been neglected in his status as a duke and in his more private capacity as a lover; the former dominates his social life, the latter, his personality. In any case, Orsino belongs high in the social hierarchy and remains a major character in Twelfth Night.

Orsino's physique and age agree with his sanguine humor.²⁷ Olivia declares:

²⁷Draper, p. 121.

Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
 Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
 In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant;
 And in dimension and the shape of nature
 A gracious person.²⁸

It is accepted among the critics that sanguine men were handsome, noble, and generally young.

In Twelfth Night, Orsino appears primarily as a lover, and Draper ascertains that "sanguine men were thought to be especially susceptible to love."²⁹ If the action of the comedy takes place in May, "then the springtime of the year also consorts with his jovial complexion."³⁰ Duchartre in The Italian Comedy indicates that "Whatever the names of the Lovers in the commedia dell' arte, they had no other trait as 'characters' than that of being in love."³¹ Their function in the commedia was to depict a state of mind (like a sanguine humor) rather than to paint a personality. Surely, Orsino is a personality in the play, but he has the qualities of the young, well set up, courteous, and gallant innamorato of the commedia dell' arte.

He was a dilettante of the art of fine music, and Shakespeare's Orsino is the "music-enraptured Duke."³² He can think of nothing but his dearly beloved mistress, however, his love is not returned. Draper says that he truly "deserves

²⁸Twelfth Night, I, v, 277-281.

²⁹Draper, p. 121.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Duchartre, p. 286.

³²Furness, p. 382.

honorable place among those who have loved and lost, and promptly made the best of a bad bargain that, one guesses, turned out to be a good one after all."³³ Orsino makes Viola his queen; for, an inamorato never goes without his lady.

Since the chief asset of the inamorato was his comeliness, he played without a mask. He had no particular costume, but dressed in the latest fashion of the period to which he belonged. Orsino, a man of wealth and position, would perhaps be seen in regal shades of purple. His Renaissance doublet and hose would be of a rich embossed material also suggesting his wealth and rank. Surely, a fashionable young man, he would be seen wearing a cloak fastened with gold chains. A high-crowned hat of matching color and fabric with a feather would suggest his dignity. A sword would be attached to his girdle (belt). His neck ruff would be large but not lacy.

The Lady Olivia

Olivia appears in only six scenes and speaks fewer lines than Viola or Sir Toby, but Draper avers, "she is truly the crux of Twelfth Night."³⁴ She is seen at first mourning the deaths of her father and brother. This "role of melancholy mourning--seclusion, veil, and fertile tears--keeps her

³³Draper, p. 132.

³⁴Ibid., p. 168.

behind the scenes."³⁵ Although she is rarely seen, "repeated reference to her makes her a pervading presence, and she is the center of the plots, which, as in contemporary Italian comedy, chiefly concern her lovers."³⁶

Olivia is the complement to Orsino, a "tragic" sentimentalist, and everyone has plans to marry her off or to be married to her. Yet, she remains a realist in this romantic situation in which she is thrown. She evidently confuses and evades her suitors.

There is probably no other character in Shakespeare who has a more lengthy and elaborate introduction than Olivia.³⁷ In the first scene of Act I, the duke declares her overwhelming beauty:

Oh, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purged the air of pestilence!³⁸

In the second scene, the sea captain tells of Olivia's mourning and Orsino's hopeless suit. Sir Toby opens the third scene by complaining, "What a plague means my niece, to take the death of her brother thus?"³⁹ Orsino sends Cesario (Viola) to woo Olivia in the fourth scene; and, at last in the fifth scene, she appears. The commedia dell'arte presented the inamorata after sufficient intrigue and anxiety had mounted.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁸ Twelfth Night, I, i, 19-20.

³⁹ Ibid., I, iii, 1-2.

Olivia surely has a well rounded education:

She knows something of law, understands the office of 'Crowner' . . . the technical terms of heraldry, a very legal science, come naturally to her lips, and she understands itemized inventories such as those made of an estate. Though a peaceful person, she refers to cannon bullets. She is versed in popular science . . . She has been duly instructed in religion . . . her education had come from her own eyes and ears, from casual reading and from conversation . . .⁴⁰

Indeed, Olivia gives evidence of a clear head. She is quick-witted, poised, and self-controlled. She appreciates drama, music, and bearbaiting. "Like a true woman, she is interested in clothes--as indeed was Queen Elizabeth-- . . ."⁴¹
In short, Olivia is a young lady, rich, noble, accomplished, and beautiful.

The women of the commedia dell' arte were both voluptuous and exquisitely cultivated. The inamoratas went by such names as Cornelia, Lucinda, Flaminia, Lavinia, Olivia, and Isabella, and in many respects, they were the pure reflections of their companions, the inamoratos. On the whole, the inamorato seemed marked only by their love, and even then are often incapable of making plans designed to achieve their end. This can be paralleled in the wooing of Olivia by Orsino.

A slight distinction, however, may be made here between the inamorato and the inamorata. Not only do the latter

⁴⁰Draper, p. 172.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 173.

have the opportunity of varying their status, they share that quality possessed by Shakespeare's maidens of being more energetic and passion-wrought than their male companions. Olivia, then, can be cast to some extent as the beautiful, clever, and resourceful commedia inamorata of Twelfth Night.

The commedia inamorata wore beautiful costumes of silk, satin, and brocades sparkling with jeweled embroidery. She dressed her hair in the latest mode, wore suitable jewels, and conveyed an impression of elegance and dignity. The Countess Olivia would also be seen in shades of purple to reflect her position in life and her association with the duke. Her kirtle, consisting of slender bodice and bell skirt, would be of a rich silk brocade. Her Elizabethan leg-of-mutton sleeves would be suitably jeweled and crowned by a great ruff about her neck. She would wear the Renaissance French hood to denote her age and reflect her facial beauty.

"Cesario"--the Lady Viola

Viola appears early in Twelfth Night as a "young lady without a past, without visible means of support . . ." ⁴² However, she has "gold" ⁴³ to give to her friend, the sea captain. She appears from nowhere in particular on the Illyrian shore, her ship has been wrecked at sea. "She, like Olivia, has lost a brother, but the luxury of conventional

⁴² Ibid., p. 133.

⁴³ Twelfth Night, I, ii, 18.

mourning is quickly exchanged for a willed hope that, as she was saved, so perchance may he be."⁴⁴ She must, therefore, find a new home and obtain a livelihood. Her first impulse is to serve the Countess Olivia, but the plan is rejected as impracticable. She, then, seeks service in the royal household of the duke disguised as a page.

Viola's relations with Orsino and Olivia are presented with irony and contrast. Orsino cannot see her as she is, so her love for him must be secret; Olivia cannot see her as she is, so humiliates both Viola and herself by false love. Viola's disguise isolates her. Like Feste, she moves freely and independently among the others, carrying out orders, subject to criticism and rough treatment. She plays a man, Feste plays a fool. They speak out of this detachment and disguise, commenting wryly on themselves and the others.

Viola is clearly of gentle birth. She is a true woman, exquisitely gracious. She has a touch of the sentimental. She is incapable of the heroism of Olivia; she is of softer nature, of slighter build and lowlier spirit. "When Viola meets Olivia in Act I, v, she shows sense, candour, and curiosity."⁴⁵ She is as gay as she is gentle, and as guileless and simple as she is generous and sincere.

⁴⁴Joseph H. Summers, "The Masks of Twelfth Night," The University of Kansas City Review, XXII (1955), 27.

⁴⁵Hardy, p. 19.

Critics have accounted Viola as one of Shakespeare's loveliest creations and the heroine of the play. Draper evaluates her position in the play:

Thus Viola, though Shakespeare so reduced her part that she has fewer lines than Sir Toby and is much less central to the plot than Olivia, has risen, because she charmed the Romantic nineteenth century, to a supremacy where all unite to praise her virtues and excuse her faults and flaws. Of course, the very fact that she is less true to Elizabethan life has made her lose less vividness in the whirligig of time. She is not so much a portrait as a decorative piece, and time cannot wither nor custom stale the grace of purely decorative forms.⁴⁶

Viola also shares many qualities of the inamorata of the commedia dell' arte. However, she adds the delightful charm and musical finesse of the commedia Seconda Donna to Twelfth Night. As well as being a competent musician, the Seconda Donna is a charming young girl, adventurous, and overfull with life. In many scenarios she plays the role of the go-between disguised as a boy much in the fashion as Viola. On other occasions she serves as interlocker of the drama with the audience. In some of Scala's scenarios, Lelia (Seconda Donna) may outshine Isabella (Prima Donna) in plot, characterization, and audience appeal. Although Twelfth Night's Viola certainly possesses inamorata qualities, she can, however, easily be cast as the Seconda Donna.

Viola, as the Seconda Donna of Twelfth Night, would perhaps in Act I appear in a Spanish cone shirt colored in a

⁴⁶Draper, p. 139.

youthful Elizabethan tawny or gold. Narrow slashed sleeves on the bodice of her gown would suggest her position in the play as well as her adventurous activities. As a stranger in Illyria, a traveling hat and purse would appear proper.

As the disguised Cesario, she would be seen in a copy of Sebastian's costume. A well-cut doublet and hose would suffice for the page to the Duke.

The Lord Sebastian

Sebastian is the reality of which Cesario is the artful imitation. He is, to the eye, identical with Viola. He is present in only five scenes and speaks some hundred and twenty-odd lines. Draper maintains Sebastian is hardly noticeable and compares him to Fortinbras in Hamlet, "who is likewise essential only to the conclusion of the piece, he is early spoken of by others, and here and there appears persona propria so that his part in the ending will not seem too unconvincing a surprise."⁴⁷

Like Viola, Sebastian is given to plain speech, "perhaps because his lines are so taken up with important exposition and his character has but slight comic possibilities."⁴⁸ His dialogue has no wit or emotional climaxes and usually serves as a mere foil for the talk of others.⁴⁹ When he

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 152.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 153.

⁴⁹Ibid.

eventually enters the action of the play in Act IV he is the object of laughter, "not because he has confused himself with an ideal or improper mask, but because he so righteously and ineffectually insists on his own identity in the face of unanimous public opposition."⁵⁰

Sebastian is introduced as "Most provident in peril,"⁵¹ a virile and foresighted young man. "He is prudent, direct, and manly, as a hero should be; but he is also pleasing and reserved and unobtrusive, as Olivia required of a husband."⁵²

Sebastian must also be cast as an innamorato of a sort. Scala often shows two male lovers in his scenarios, and Sebastian is the comely Secondo innamorato of Twelfth Night.

As twin brother to Viola, Sebastian would very well appear in a tawny doublet and a lighter shade of trunk hose. He would wear the traditional Italianate bonnet without the feather. A masculine garter could very well be seen on his leg.

Antonio

Sebastian's friend, Antonio, appears in four scenes and has almost as much dialogue as Sebastian. He apparently exists in the play "as a rescuer and a friend to whom Sebastian can unfold himself and so inform the audience."⁵³ He also mistakes Viola for Sebastian and, therefore, introduces

⁵⁰Summers, p. 28.

⁵¹Twelfth Night, I, ii, 12.

⁵²Draper, pp. 153-154.

⁵³Ibid., p. 158.

the intrigue of the mistaken identities. He, like Viola and Sebastian, is of the romantic nature and humor.

As far as a commedia character is concerned, Antonio, with the exception of his Italian name, has very little in common. He is apparently young and romantic; however, he cannot be considered as an active innamorato. The commedia servants or Zanni are of the comic nature and Antonio is not a comic.

Antonio, being of the masculine romantic humor, would well appear in a dusky-brown leather jerkin. Slashed sleeves revealing an underlying peach doublet with matching panned upper trunks would suggest his rugged appearance. A sword, garter, and seaman's neck ribbon would reveal his occupation.

The Sea Captain

"What Antonio is to Sebastian, the Captain who rescues her is to Viola."⁵⁴ He appears in only Act I, ii, and speaks thirty lines; "but Shakespeare is thought to have played this role, and it is important both in the exposition of the play and in getting her [Viola] to Orsino's court."⁵⁵ The captain befriends the unprotected Viola and treats her with scrupulous kindness and chivalry. He is apparently a native of Illyria for he discusses its duke and the Countess Olivia. He advises Viola as to her immediate plans and future. She remarks

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 159.

⁵⁵Ibid.

on his behavior and entrusts herself in his guidance. "He takes her to his home where she is fitted out in attire like Sebastian's so that she can go to court: in short, he is her Antonio, and by providing the proper garments makes possible the mistaken identity of the later scenes."⁵⁶ Apparently, he is not only a traveled but also an educated captain.

A Roman member of the commedia Capitano family, Rogantino, suggests similarities with Viola's sea captain. Rogantino is a corporal; "he rolls his 'r's' like a regiment of drummers and possesses the true professional conscience."⁵⁷ He does not possess the cowardly and boasting qualities of the Capitano and is rather chivalrous on occasions. Twelfth Night's sea captain, also, possesses the true professional conscience of his trade.

Rogantino would appear in the contemporary Spanish soldier's costume with decorative armor helmet and breastplate. Spanish colors of scarlet, purple, and light violet could well be utilized in this design. A Captain's sash and sword would add the professional conscience of his trade to his costume.

Fabian--Valentine--Curio

The minor roles in a drama generally evolve from the demands of plot or setting; and,

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Duchartre, p. 235.

just as the plot of Twelfth Night required an Antonio to save Sebastian and get him to the city, and a Captain to do like service for Viola, so the setting of the play, in order to achieve the realism incident to comedy of manners, required servitors and attendants, menial and gently born, to run the errands of the great and to lend the proper awe and majesty of dress and manner. The menials, such as the servant who announces Viola's return at the summons of Olivia, can readily be dismissed; he speaks his message of three lines and is forever silent. But the 'servingmen' such as Fabian, who occupied by birth a higher social status, require consideration.⁵⁸

Fabian is a sort of bodyguard to Olivia. He carries her dog, takes her to church and to the theatre, "and then spends the night drunk in the cellar."⁵⁹ He is the last of the gullers of Malvolio to make his appearance. In Act II he enters with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, delighting in their plot against Malvolio, and declares that he would sooner "be boiled to death with melancholy" than "lose a scruple of this sport."⁶⁰ He comments on Malvolio's pompous bearing. He and Sir Toby persuade Sir Andrew to continue his siege of Olivia's heart and so opens the way to the duel between Sir Andrew and Viola.⁶¹ Later he laughs with Sir Toby over Sir Andrew's challenge. "He helps terrify Viola by his description of her opposite's prowess."⁶² In short, he is a necessary handy man in Olivia's household.

⁵⁸ Draper, pp. 161-162.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Twelfth Night, II, v, 2-3.

⁶¹ Draper, p. 162.

⁶² Ibid., p. 163.

Fabian and the commedia Zanni, Pedrolino (Pierrot), have much in common. They both are valets in aristocratic homes. They are young, personable, and trustworthy individuals. They can be charming lovers if necessary. Pedrolino was, none the less, a comic character in the commedia dell' arte. "In some of Scala's scenarios Pedrolino seems more like the other valets."⁶³ He imitates the Capitano (Sir Andrew), cuts capers, undertakes intrigues (gulling of Malvolio and Sir Andrew), and says very little but often seen.

Fabian appears in five scenes of Twelfth Night and has no more dialogue than Antonio; but,

his part in the action is less crucial, and indeed, at times he is little more than background. . . . he enters late, at first does little, and is never much more than a stage convenience, and therefore, despite Shakespeare's fine characterization of his part, the critics have neglected him.⁶⁴

A valet called Fabia also appears in Gl' Ingannati.⁶⁵

Sky-blue was the mark of servitude in the sixteenth century. Pale blue and white are colors most often associated with Pierro's costume. Therefore, in approaching Fabian's costume for Twelfth Night à la commedia, it seems proper to drape him in a pale blue, loose jacket with long sleeves. Dark blue trim could be added for contrast.

Valentine and Curio belong essentially to the same class as Fabian, but they appear in full dress and formal manners,

⁶³Duchartre, p. 252.

⁶⁴Draper, p. 163.

⁶⁵Ibid.

as befits the court of Duke Orsino. Their speaking parts are early in the play, "but perhaps they show themselves later as attendants on Orsino."⁶⁶ Curio tries to persuade Orsino to treat his love-melancholy "by the recognized cure of hunting."⁶⁷ Later in the play, when the duke wants music, Curio tells him that the singer Feste is away; and then he identifies Feste as the jester of Olivia's father. At Orsino's request he leaves and shortly after returns with Feste. He probably appears elsewhere with the duke, but he has nothing to say or do.

Valentine appears in Act I, i. He has been to Olivia's home and brings back word that she has gone into two years' mourning, will neither see him nor consider betrothal to Orsino. This brings Orsino's wooing, which had been going on for more than a month, to a definite stalemate, and makes him turn to a new ambassador with less conventional methods--Viola. Thus she takes over Valentine's thankless post. Valentine is luckily not jealous, and kindly tells Cesario that she is "like to be much advanced,"⁶⁸ that Orsino is by nature constant in his favors; and with these felicitations, he seems to drop out of the play as if his task as unsuccessful intermediary had quite exhausted him. "His magnanimity to Viola, without apparent motive, makes him seem a bit too

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 165.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Twelfth Night, I, iv, 2.

good for this wicked world, for very few of us rejoice to be supplanted by others more successful."⁶⁹ At all events, he disappears in the hurly-burly of the comedy, and the audience, "having hardly noticed his presence, has for his absence neither surprise nor question."⁷⁰

Valentine and Curio represent in Twelfth Night what Scapino and Brighella do in the commedia dell' arte but on a smaller scale. They both are servingmen. They often are go-betweens and on some occasions are seen preparing the music for various dramas. The musician who sings under a window or at a music hall in a mellifluous voice is Brighella. He knows how to dance. He is always "on hand if there is any intrigue afoot, or secret to be laid bare, or debauch to be organized,"⁷¹ or advice to be given. To some extent, these characteristics seem to become the younger, zestful Curio.

Scapino, like Brighella, is an older valet-cicerone and generally a loyal handy-man. "Scapino is bereft of all sense of logic; he makes confusion of everything he undertakes, and forgets everything . . . he is not an ambitious Don Juan in his amours . . ."⁷² Valentine possesses these same go-between qualities.

⁶⁹Draper, p. 165.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Duchartre, P. 162.

⁷²Ibid., p. 168.

The commedia Zanni, Scapino and Brighella, were traditionally costumed in white with green trim and striping. Curio and Valentine appear in full dress--capcs, doublets, berets, and hose--as servingmen for the duke, and the stylized costume of the Aanni would seem ideal for the design of the duke's uniforms.

A Priest and Officers

The later scenes of Twelfth Night introduce three new speaking characters, each of whom fills a small but important niche--a priest and two officers. The priest betroths Olivia and Sebastian, and then testifies to the fact before the people. Most of the clerics of Shakespeare's plays are but meagerly depicted, and appear only for marriages or burials.

The two officers who arrest Antonio in Act III and bring him before the duke in Act V are rather puzzling. The first officer, who does most of the talking and seems to be in command, may be a soldier, for he apparently fought Antonio in one or more naval battles, and he is of high enough place, or blunt enough in speech, to address the duke as Orsino. The second, who makes the actual arrest, keeps urging Antonio to come away to prison, but still allows him to talk with Viola until the first officer breaks off the conversation. He seems to be some sort of bailiff or constable, but above the average in ability. In Act V, the officers reappear,

but only the first one takes the liberty of speech in the presence of the duke. He more fully identifies Antonio as taking part in the naval battles, and briefly tells of the arrest. Together they speak fewer than twenty lines.

Research reveals that clerics, as well as other minor characters, such as law officers, lords, sailors, and attendants, were rarely presented in the commedia dell' arte. Therefore, parallels can not be drawn here.

Sir Toby Belch

Sir Toby appears in ten of the eighteen scenes of Twelfth Night. He speaks some four hundred complete or partial lines--more than any other character. Draper links him

with all the currents of the action. He is the object of Maria's tender passion, the instigator of Sir Andrew's bootless wooing and mock duel, and a ready conniver in the gulling of Malvolio--the liveliest episodes in the comedy. He is mentor of Sir Andrew, uncle and self-style protector to Olivia, and lord of misrule in her hall.⁷³

As a son of a great family, Sir Toby had clearly been educated in accordance with his class. "He had, therefore, been more or less exposed to the wide range of Renaissance arts and sciences."⁷⁴ He is a man of liberal education; has voyaged afar; is less athletic than usual; knows the times

⁷³Draper, p. 19.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 24.

and steps of half a dozen dances;⁷⁵ likes to sing;⁷⁶ is versed in the fashionable etiquette of duels and challenges;⁷⁷ knows something of dogs and likes a bearbaiting.⁷⁸ "In fact, he surpasses in the accomplishments of the alehouse, and is a sort of alehouse gentleman."⁷⁹

Sir Toby's knighthood perhaps was won on the battlefield, unless his father bought it for him in childhood. He is a soldier but far removed from the soldiers found in the com-media dell' arte. He never appears as a professional soldier, he never boasts of his prowess, and when he fights with Sebastian he does not whine about his hurt. He is quite the gentleman. He, therefore, prefers wine to the ale of the lower classes and military.

Of his humor, Draper suggests that Sir Toby "has certainly something of choleric wit."⁸⁰ His innate humor is strong. Sir Toby, as matchmaker for Olivia and inamorato of Maria, is appropriately under the astral influence of the sprightly Venus. Such persons were luxurious, given to idleness and pleasures, and easygoing.

Sir Toby's relations with Olivia are far from satisfactory. As Olivia's maid, Maria, had warned him, Olivia

⁷⁵Twelfth Night, I, iii, passim.

⁷⁶Ibid., II, iii, 60.

⁷⁷Ibid., III, ii, 45-54.

⁷⁸Ibid., II, v, 8.

⁷⁹Draper, p. 26.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 30.

resents his antics in her house of mourning, and she will not even see his suitor, Sir Andrew. Though he makes a point of their blood-relationship, and uses her health as an excuse for his much drinking, "yet he treats her feelings cavalierly: the noise of riot reaches even to her secluded chambers, and when her back is turned, he does not stop at insolence."⁸¹ Furthermore, he is merry. The life of lordly leisure fits his taste and nature. "But if Olivia should marry anyone other than Sir Andrew, it would quickly end."⁸² Fear for his security, then, is the key to his actions in the play.

Thinking of himself and his future, Sir Toby convinces Sir Andrew that Cesario is so pusillanimous that his duel and conquest will be easy. His plans miscarry, however; the second meeting is not with Viola, as it chances, but with Sebastian. As all his plans fall through, Sir Toby looks with growing favor on Mistress Maria. He calls her endearing names while thinking of her dowry. And since the trumped-up duel between Sir Andrew and Viola turns Olivia's anger full upon him, and she orders him out, Sir Toby "is a brave man and he takes the plunge, the last resort of an Elizabethan gentleman: he marries."⁸³ This marriage makes the play a comedy for him as well as for the others, for it seems to

⁸¹Ibid., p. 32.

⁸²Ibid., p. 33.

⁸³Ibid., p. 38.

settle the pressing matter of his future life of ease--"the only life for which his nature could enjoy."⁸⁴

Therefore, in concluding the analysis of the Sir Toby role, it can be noted that the character is woven skillfully and fully into the major plot. He not only supplies comedy to both dialogue and intrigue, but also welds the parts of the play together. He cheats an upstart fool (Sir Andrew), takes a natural interest in the marriage of his niece (Olivia), puts a mere steward (Malvolio) in a temporary madhouse, makes a travesty of the code of honor and arms, and finally takes a wife (Maria) for the best prudential reasons.

The closest parallel for Sir Toby found in the commedia dell' arte is that of the character of Pantalone. Kennard avers that "Pantalone is generally a good devil, frequently deceived by his children and servants. . . . Pantalone is often a glutton . . . frequents taverns . . . arranges marriages or prevents marriages."⁸⁵ Nicoll writes, "He is the old father, the greedy merchant, the doting husband, the silly guardian, the aged counsellor."⁸⁶ The role parallel in the two, then, is obviously strong.

Pantalone represented the middle class Venetian of his time. He was sometimes wealthy, sometimes poor. He was always middle aged and as a rule retired from active business.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 39.

⁸⁵Kennard, p. 69.

⁸⁶Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 253.

Like Sir Toby, he continuously thinks of his well-being and future. "At heart, he is a peace-loving man. He has a horror of blows, and yet he receives them . . ." ⁸⁷ Sir Toby is seen receiving a blow, also.

If Pantalone happens to have any daughters or dependents, he is in constant turmoil and worry concerning their amours and future. The woman he loves is almost always a maiden. In many scenarios, Pantalone is seen marrying the servant, Columbina--Sir Toby marries the Columbina of Twelfth Night, Maria.

As any one of the commedia scenarios are examined, it is realized that the commedia's spirit is animated by a series of focal points of interest. The main story, as in Twelfth Night, is generally one of love, and hence the young Orazios and Isabellas are certainly significant. On the other hand, the love story is usually directed by the clever tricks and stupidities of a Pedrolino, a Columbina, and an Arlecchino--and so they form a second dynamic center. The Capitano generally is drawn into the lover's circle and thus still a third focal point is established. Apart from all of these is the focal point provided by Pantalone. In many plays this character's action may be negative rather than positive; he may serve merely as an obstacle which the lovers must surmount. But, his importance is shown by the fact that

⁸⁷Duchartre, p. 182.

hardly any single scenario fails to place him at the head of the dramatis personae. The majority of the plays start their action with his entry upon the stage.

Twelfth Night does not begin its action with Sir Toby's entry upon the stage; however, in terms of importance to the plot, quantity of dialogue, and many appearances on stage, he surely represents a Pantalone position and type.

Sir Toby's position in Twelfth Night is outstanding and important; therefore, in terms of design, his costume should equally be outstanding. Pantalone, in the commedia scenarios, wore red and black. Such striking and contrasting colors utilized in a rich doublet and soft "venetians," with a long velvet cloak would very well present an interesting Elizabethan gentry's costume design.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek

Draper pictures Sir Andrew as the most comic in the play:

Though Sir Andrew has a speaking part of only some hundred and eighty lines and appears in less than half the scenes, his role is probably the most comic in this play of comic characters.⁸⁸

Sir Toby and Maria give Sir Andrew a lengthy prologue before he enters the play. Their dialogue reiterates three facts concerning him: "he is, though a knight, a coward; though rich, a spendthrift; and, ergo, above all, a callow fool."⁸⁹

⁸⁸Draper, p. 41.

⁸⁹Ibid.

He appears to be susceptible to avarice, bragging, and vanity in dress. He is most unflatteringly portrayed. He appears to be a social upstart of questionable place, and "he has no conception of the proprieties of duelling or of courtship."⁹⁰

Sir Andrew's name and origin and physique suggest that Shakespeare conceived him as having a phlegmatic temperament. The phlegmatic type was apparently slow, dull, and cowardly. Sir Andrew is uneducated. He boasts that his wits are more natural than Sir Toby's. He cannot follow Maria's rapier-like repartee. He is so completely witless that he cannot tell wit from nonsense. "Sir Andrew is neither gentleman enough to command respect, nor man enough to resent the lack of it."⁹¹ Everyone calls him fool and treats him so.

Sir Andrew as a lover, though he declares himself experienced in being adored,⁹² is hardly a success. His methods are most unconventional. His lassitude in the pursuit of both Maria and Olivia illustrate this. "If he had really been in love at all, his rejection would have caused symptoms of melancholy, and none appear."⁹³

Sir Andrew, also, fancies himself in fencing;⁹⁴ and yet Malvolio, a mere steward can abash him into silence. When Malvolio rebukes the late night revelers--Sir Toby, Feste,

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 47.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 59.

⁹²Twelfth Night, II, iii, 197.

⁹³Draper, p. 63.

⁹⁴Twelfth Night, I, iii, 97-98.

Maria, Sir Andrew--Sir Andrew keeps discreetly quiet. He later admits that his idea of making a fool out of a person is to make a coward out of himself.⁹⁵ Maria and Sir Toby slander him to his face, and he suffers these slurs without comment or action: "truly, he is a recreant knight. . . . when he hears that Viola may actually put up a fight, he cravenly offers to settle the nonexistent dispute by giving away his horse!"⁹⁶ Obviously, Sir Andrew could not exist "by his sword, by his swagger, and indeed not by his wits!"⁹⁷ Summers also sees Sir Andrew as a poltroon:

. . . Sir Andrew, a carpet-knight rightly described by Sir Toby as "an ass-head and a cox comb and a knave, a thin faced knave, a gull!" . . . Like a true gull, he tries to assume the particular role which of all others he is most poorly equipped to play: drinker, fighter, wencher.

Sir Andrew, however, would hardly exist with-⁹⁸ out Sir Toby Bech: the gull must have his guller.

The preceding paragraphs may very well describe the commedia dell' arte's swashbuckling Capitano that very little more need be said. A true parallel exists between the Capitano and Sir Andrew. Such a parallel can again suggest that Shakespeare was surely influenced by the commedia.

The Italian commedia authority, Perrucci, asserts that the

. . . Captains may serve as third or second inamorati, but for the most part as despised,

⁹⁵Ibid., II, iii, 135-137.

⁹⁶Draper, pp. 64, 65.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 68.

⁹⁸Summers, p. 29.

cheated, ridiculed, and mocked by the women, by the servants and the maids.⁹⁹

Scala's scenarios show the Capitano frequently "endeavouring to win the affections of a Celia or Flaminia but, at the close of the action, deluded and left out in the cold. . . . a ridiculous figure, arousing laughter and contempt."¹⁰⁰ These words so vividly picture Sir Andrew's position, role, and plight in Twelfth Night.

Sir Andrew and the Capitano are bombastic fellows and vastly tedious in their speech, but they manage to be amusing by virtue of their flights of fancy.¹⁰¹

The history of the Capitano's costume is much the same as that of military dress in general. However, for Sir Andrew's costume, a swashbuckling and flamboyant copy of the Spanish design is desirable. A red and yellow combination in his jerkin, doublet, and melon-shaped trunk hose would surely reveal his comic character. A wide plumed hat, full cloak, fringed garters, and bows could well be utilized for this design.

The Mistress Maria

Maria is the commedia Columbina of Twelfth Night--the sprightly, witty, shifty pendant in Olivia's household. She

⁹⁹Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 248, citing Andrea Perruci, Petraccone, p. 134.

¹⁰⁰Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, p. 101.

¹⁰¹Duchartre, p. 227.

is Olivia's gentlewoman and object of Sir Toby's tender passion. She speaks some hundred and seventy lines "very much to the purpose of the plot."¹⁰² Though not a dominating figure in the play, she supplies motive to the plot and contrast to the other characters. She initiates Olivia's love affair with Cesario, concocts the plot against Malvolio, and connives at Sir Andrew's duel. Maria's plans and purposes, intentionally or otherwise, more or less lie behind the three main episodes of the plot. As she flits from one jest to another, Maria is, willfully or inadvertently, setting the plot in action and acting as a foil to the characters about her.

Maria's physique suggests her humor and her character. "Sir Andrew calls her 'faire'--doubtless referring to her blond complexion and consequent good looks."¹⁰³ She is described as very small, "a beagle, true-bred,"¹⁰⁴ a "little villian,"¹⁰⁵ a "youngest wren,"¹⁰⁶ and Viola ironically calls her Olivia's "giant."¹⁰⁷ Her speech is generally simple and straightforward, and her wit dry and homely. Mistress Maria is obviously the phlegmatic type under the astral influence

¹⁰²Draper, p. 70.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁰⁴Twelfth Night, II, iii, 195.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., II, v, 16.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., III, ii, 70.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., I, v, 219.

of Venus; and "love (or better marriage) is her major motive."¹⁰⁸

Throughout the Scala comedies, the servetta's (maid-servant) normal role is that of attendant upon one of the innamorata. "Light-hearted and loyal to her mistress, she frequently ends by joining hands with Harlequin or another"¹⁰⁹ --perhaps Pantalone! She appears in almost every scenario, and she "likes a fair share in the intrigue."¹¹⁰ Columbina is vivacious and buoyant, lively and animated.

Winifred Smith offers a description of Columbina which might be used to describe Maria as well:

. . . the servetta--Franceschina or Colombina-- kept closer to earth, had always a ready and none too squeamish word for everyone, and in love speeches to her adorers parodies ludicrously enough her mistress's romantic flights.¹¹¹

Nicoll makes a similar point:

. . . sometimes she is sought in marriage by one of the two old men. She is always bright, always witty in a coarse way, always ready to assist in trick and intrigue. . . . Evidently comic love was Franceschina's special role.¹¹²

Again, a strong Shakespearean and commedia dell' arte parallel is obvious. Mistress Maria of Twelfth Night and

¹⁰⁸ Draper, p. 83.

¹⁰⁹ Nicoll, p. 96.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Smith, The Commedia Dell' Arte, p. 5.

¹¹² Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles, p. 243.

the servetta (Columbina) of the commedia are surely first cousins, if not half-sisters.

The servetta's costume was that of a woman of the people. Maria's design should also present this same image. A large, long apron over a loose gown, a maid's cap, a heavy doublet in shades of green would place Maria in the serving class, yet give the costume charm and appeal.

The Steward Malvolio

Not only does Malvolio supply a highlight of satire to the comedy, but he is also a main figure in the plot. He is one of Olivia's lovers; and, because of his Puritanical outbursts, he is the gull of the skittish Maria, rollicking Sir Toby, trivial Sir Andrew, satiric Feste, and Fabian.

As master steward of Olivia's household, Malvolio is a complicated ill-wisher. Maria makes explicit his insincerity and pomposity:

The devil a Puritan that he is . . . an affectioned ass, that cons state without book and utters it by great swarths--the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him.¹¹³

Furthermore, Olivia tells him that he is sick of self-love. Winter maintains that "he is intended for the image of overweening self-love, of opinionated self-esteem, of narrow-minded, strutting, consequential complacency."¹¹⁴

¹¹³Twelfth Night, II, iii, 159-165.

¹¹⁴Winter, p. 32.

Thus, Malvolio is foolish and therefore to be laughed at, and yet, "the saturnine quality in his character is conspicuous and of great dramatic value."¹¹⁵ He is more than a mere gull. He is loyal in his place, "a person of strong individuality and austere mental constitution."¹¹⁶ Draper maintains that he "is not idle or dull."¹¹⁷

Malvolio studies political authors for the very purpose of escaping his status as a steward. "If his humor and vocation had agreed, he would have had no ambition to change it, and so would have supplied neither plot nor comedy to the play."¹¹⁸ Indeed, he displays a personal pride that brings about his efficiency as a steward, but makes him arrogant even toward his superiors, and encourages him in the preposterous notion that he might wed Olivia. He is ambitious for a title--"to be Count Malvolio!"¹¹⁹

Malvolio surely did not come from gentle stock, or he would have been a servingman like Fabian. His language lacks courtly allusion and high astounding terms as Sir Toby could command. He doubtless came of the rural yeomanry, not of the Puritan bourgeoisie as some critics have thought, or of the gentle classes that produced Sir Toby and Maria. His efforts at more elegant and learned allusion emphasize his

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Draper, p. 98.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹⁹ Twelfth Night, II, v, 40.

limitations. He can read, but Maria's forgery of Olivia's hand easily deceives him. He has the temerity to criticize his mistress' taste; and he begins a letter to her "By the Lord Madam"¹²⁰--no way to address a Countess!

Smith, listing the positions of the commedia Dottore, sees Malvolio as a shade of this character:

. . . like Pantalone he [Dottore] is sometimes the husband, sometimes the father of one of the heroines of the piece, and is generally in love with another young woman. . . . now as a charlatan, now as a pedagogue, sometimes a councillor, again--shade of Malvolio!--a majordomo, most often a legal authority or a doctor of medicine.¹²¹

The Dottore, like Malvolio, is a walking caricature of learning, and the low stupid cunning of his nature contrasts with the vain pomp he makes of erudition. He is a pompous bore, miserly, and amorous.

Niklaus makes an interesting point concerning the Dottore: "He was in essence an incarnation of the popular desire to laugh at the intellectual, in the person of this pretentious don with his dubious learning."¹²²

Malvolio and the Dottore have much in common--self-love, foolishness, pomposity, dubious learning--and, therefore, present another strong parallel.

The costume of the Dottore was a caricatured version of the ordinary dress which the men of science and letters in

¹²⁰ Twelfth Night, V, i, 310.

¹²¹ Smith, P. 7.

¹²² Niklaus, p. 38.

Bologna wore both at the University and about town. He was clothed entirely in black with cuffs and ruffs of white. The Puritanical and pompous Malvolio would also be seen in a black design to suggest his character in Twelfth Night as well as his parallel in the commedia. The yellow cross-garters should add comic contrast to the all-black design.

Feste--the Fool

Feste is the gleeful stage manager of Shakespeare's Illyria. He appears on the stage approximately one-third of the time, is in seven scenes, and speaks over three hundred lines. He is visually dominant, appearing on the stage alone three different times; and he stands out from the rest of the inhabitants of Illyria because of his music, for he sings four songs. For all his workaday gaiety, Feste is a shrewd appraiser of persons, a manager of affairs, and somewhat of a scholar. Critics find him a clever fool, perhaps even a philosopher, and a moving force in the comedy's intrigue. Enid Welsford, The Fool, states that "Feste is no mere mischiefmaking Vice, but a fool who sees the truth and is wiser than his betters . . ." ¹²³

As has been pointed out, he is apparently the most musical of Shakespeare's jesters. "He can adapt his repertoire to hearers of such varied tastes as Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and

¹²³Enid Welsford, The Fool (London, 1935), p. 249.

the Duke." In fact, "he has made his singing indispensable to two noble households."¹²⁴ Feste could also dance, or at least "cut a caper." Skill in dancing and even acrobatics belonged in the stock in trade of the stage fool.

Shakespeare thought of character in terms of bodily humors and planets, which dominated contemporary sciences. The covetous, like Feste, were thought to be melancholy, and melancholy might produce a bitter wit;¹²⁵ but the frolicsome Feste, as he himself avers, is no cold, dry fool. He seems outwardly at least to be a mercurial fellow, in vivid contrast to the ardent melancholy of Viola and Orsino, to the fine balance of Sebastian, to the phlegmatic humors of the two knights and Maria.

Feste, as privileged jester who is "equally welcome above and below stairs,"¹²⁶ is visually prominent during the main action of each plot. Thus Feste acts as a link between the main plot and the farcical underplot.¹²⁷ He is found at the Duke's court, in Olivia's presence, and among the revelers, and each time he impresses his presence with a song. It is with the role of Feste that the varied parts of the drama are melded smoothly into one: "his musical

¹²⁴ Draper, p. 203.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 210.

¹²⁶ Welsford, p. 251.

¹²⁷ Robert H. Goldsmith, Wise Fools in Shakespeare (East Lansing, Michigan, 1955), p. 100.

mirth gives unity to a play which, like the Duke's mind,
is a very opal'."128

Perhaps the most telling proof of Feste's ample wit is
found in Viola's estimate of him:

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.¹²⁹

Downer maintains that it is Feste's task to persuade
the others not to be fools.¹³⁰ It is his function to make
plain to the audience and to the characters themselves, the
artificial, foolish attitudes of the principal figures.

Olivia fools Orsino by refusing him; Viola fools
him and marries him; Sebastian unwillingly makes
a fool of himself and of Olivia by letting her
lead him to the altar; Olivia fools Sir Toby and
Sir Andrew; and they fool Malvolio; and Feste, in
this world of chance and caprice and change, though
fooled as to Olivia's marrying the Duke, is perhaps
less of a fool than any of the rest.¹³¹

There are two noble fools, two knightly fools, a commoner
fool in Malvolio, and there is "a fool-by-vocation, Feste,
who knows the others for what they are."¹³² Surely, Feste
has the wit to play the fool.

¹²⁸Welsford, p. 251.

¹²⁹Twelfth Night, III, i, 67-75.

¹³⁰Downer, P. 265.

¹³¹Draper, p. 211.

¹³²Ibid., p. 212.

As wise, witty, detached critic, Feste makes the play gayer and, at the same time, more thoughtful. Feste's own remarks, "Better a witty fool than a foolish wit,"¹³³ truly characterizes his own person.

The Elizabethan fool was both a tradition in drama and an actual figure in the life of the age. The stage fool came down from the Vice of the Medieval drama. In the sixteenth century, "the influence of the zanni in Italian commedia dell' arte, and the more realistic influence of the stupid English rustic, somewhat affected the type."¹³⁴

Although Feste does not possess numerous Zanni qualities, he surely suggests a close parallel with the zestful Arlecchino of the commedia dell' arte. Arlecchino excelled in physical and mental agility. He entered the stage with a sense of quick urgency, "his legs held almost unbent and given a kind of strutting effect."¹³⁵ Like Feste's gait, this "created an impression of self-confidence, perhaps of impertinence, certainly of his own awareness of the humor of his role."¹³⁶

Although Arlecchino may seem a fool, he, like Feste, displays a very special quickness of mind, and allied to

¹³³Twelfth Night, I, v, 40.

¹³⁴Draper, p. 193.

¹³⁵Nicoll, The World of Harlequin, p. 70.

¹³⁶Ibid.

that, there is evident in him a sense of fun. This explains the eagerness with which he seizes any opportunity of popping into disguise. Feste, disguised as a friar, visits Malvolio in the prison.

Duchartre says of Arlecchino:

He is the unwitting and unrecognized creator of a new form of poetry, essentially muscular, accented by gestures, punctuated by somersaults, enriched with philosophic reflexions and incongruous noises.¹³⁷

A description not too far removed from Shakespeare's Feste!

'What do you think of him?' asks Pantalone in Goldoni's The Servant of Two Masters, 'Is he a rascal or a fool?'; to which the Dottore replies, 'A little of one, I think, a little of the other.'¹³⁸

In terms of line, color, and design, Feste's costume should suggest the motley garb of Arlecchino. A long yellow jacket-doublet with multi-colored diamond shaped patches painted on would suffice. Hose of a lighter-hued material should be used in the design. This traditional costume design surely suggests the court fool, clown, and page.

Conclusion

These, then, are the characters and qualities of the Italian commedia dell' arte and Shakespeare's Twelfth Night presented in parallel. It has been the purpose of this chapter to illustrate these similarities, relationships, and application of the theatrical masks and qualities in

¹³⁷Duchartre, p. 134.

¹³⁸Nicoll, p. 74.

order to establish a working knowledge and background for the design study.

The theatre scenic artist must totally submerge himself in the design problems for a chosen play. Through his artistic renderings and sketches he presents the mood and tone of the play; establishes the atmosphere and style of the play; and, reveals the characters' outward and inward personalities regardless of the period, adaptation, or type of drama. Before this is possible, however, he must give the play much consideration, study, and analysis.

Now that a design precedent and the background material needed for the study has been established, the study, in Chapter Five, treats the costume and set design techniques and problems encountered adapting the play à la commedia.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND SOLUTION OF DESIGN PROBLEMS

Introduction

This chapter of the design study seeks to explain and analyze the design problems encountered in adapting Twelfth Night to the commedia style. Design approaches and existing problems and solutions will be given as well as thorough descriptions of the costume and scenery designs. An explanation of the floor plans will be given to explain further the set designs.

It will be well to remember that the designs for this study present in graphic renderings one approach to a production of Twelfth Night. They have been rendered with the expressed desire of presenting them to a producer of the play. From the artistic study, it is hoped that a producer could stage Twelfth Night and capture, through its artistic scenic designs, the charm, magic, and gaiety of the Italian commedia dell' arte.

The costume designs are discussed in terms of line, color, and appropriateness. The design problems encountered and their solution or design approach is given. The floor plans are given in a section preceding the explanation of the

scenery designs. Appendix plate numbers are given to the designs for convenient reference and viewing.

Costume Designs

The costumes for Twelfth Night were designed adapting the style of the sixteenth century commedia dell' arte. The designs were to suggest stylistically this Renaissance Italianate mode as well as its Elizabethan counterpart. This section of the chapter, therefore, deals with the costume design problems and their solutions. It seeks to elucidate the designs in terms of line, color, and appropriateness. A descriptive analysis of each character's costume will be given. Fabrics for the costume construction will also be suggested.

The Duke Orsino

Costuming Duke Orsino (Plate 1) à la commedia has presented no major design problem. To suggest the suave, debonair, and dashing Italian innamorato as well as the ruling magistrate in the play, his costume design was governed by a line of fastidious elegance and color.

For his costume shades of secondary purple rather than deep, kingly purple were chosen to denote the love-enraptured Duke Orsino's rank and position in the play as well as his sanguine nature. As the leading citizen in Illyria, he appears in fashionable Italian Venetians and a tight-fitting

doublet and sleeves of silk embossed brocade. The hose and shoes are of a lighter shade of purple. His cloak of violet velvet, trimmed with dark purple silk, is thrown over his shoulders in the casual gesture with which it was worn by Renaissance gallants.

The costume accessories consist of a three-layered cambric neck ruff à la confusion with matching sleeve ruffs. A cambric ruff rather than lace was chosen to reveal his masculinity. Also, to denote his stature in the play, he wears the only high-crowned hat. It is velvet decorated with a feather and trimmed with a gold band. Gold buttons and a gold chest medallion add rich trim to the design.

The Lady Olivia

The innamorata of Twelfth Night is of a high rank and station in life. Her costume, therefore, should emphasize this position. Shades of monochromatic purple and vertical lines were also utilized in Olivia's costume (Plate 12) to evoke this rank and dignity, her relationship to Orsino as his wooing object, and her conservative, handsome nature.

To create this image, the countess appears in a brocaded kirtle of damask silk. The silhouette is composed of a constricted V-shaped, slashed bodice fitting into a widely spreading bell-shaped French farthingale. As a basically conservative lady, her skirt reveals a plain, rather than the fashionable embossed decorative style of the Renaissance,

purple petticoat. The trim is violet velvet much like Orsino's trim on his cloak and venetians. Flanked at the sides of the bodice are theatrical puffed leg-of-mutton sleeves with embroidered jeweled panes and trim befitting her rank and nobility. A low cut décolletage reveals an elaborate necklace of rubies and garnet.

The elegant lady of Twelfth Night wears the finest silks and laces. Therefore, an Italian lace wedge-shaped dividing ruff, revealing the fashionable bared bosom of unmarried maidens, increases in thick folds toward the back of the neck. The ruffles at the wrist are conservative matching lace turned-up cuffs. A purple brocaded French hood is seen at the back of her head.

The design for Olivia's costume, in terms of line and color, was much the same as Orsino's. Rank and title as well as her position of the beautiful inamorata governed this design for Twelfth Night.

"Cesario"--The Lady Viola

In Act I, ii, Viola (Plate 13) is introduced as a bewildered and adventurous young girl in a strange land. She is seen in her "women's weed"¹ only in this scene and thereafter appears as the duke's page, "Cesario" (Plate 2). In terms of design, this presented a small problem since Sebastian is also seen in the same costume. Appropriate

¹Twelfth Night, V, i, 280.

colors and lines were needed suitable for both characters. Therefore, masculine yet simple lines and soft shades of gold were chosen for this "doubled" costume. A detailed description of the design will be given under discussion of Sebastian's costume.

As a shipwrecked stranger in Illyria, Viola appears in a tailored kirtle of tawny velvet with a bodice slightly tapering to a point over a cone-shaped skirt. For reasons of comfort and mobility when traveling, the farthingale was seldom worn by Renaissance ladies. Therefore, Viola's skirt design reveals no farthingale shape. The tight fitting, slashed sleeves are attached to the dark brown velvet trimmed décolletage neckline and shoulder.

The accessories consist of a rising bone lace whisk with a wired pickadil supporting it, a traveling Italian coif of matching velvet, and a leather purse.

Viola's first entrance costume, in terms of line and color, was governed by her gracious, youthful, and pure position in the play as well as the stated fact that she chanced upon the seashore of Illyria.

The Lord Sebastian

As mentioned above, the twins, Sebastian (Plate 2) and Viola-Cesario, are seen in the same costume throughout the play. (In actual production two costumes of this same design must be executed.) The dual personality of this costume

governed much of its design; therefore, masculine yet simple lines with a soft, but striking color, are evident in the sketch.

This youthful, dashing lord wears trunk hose of designer's white to show the full symmetry of his legs. The tawny doublet with full sleeves and turned-up collar (also worn by Viola) fits loosely about the torso for ease and comfort. The doublet is fastened with decorative hooks and eyes. A velour fabric is suggested for the doublet and bonnet.

An Italian bonnet, small cambric ruff, turned-up cuffs of designer's white, and a gold masculine leg garter constitute the costume accessories. Tan leather short boots and money pouch are worn. No sword is shown in the design since Cesario has not learned the art of fencing.

Antonio

As friend to Sebastian, Antonio (Plate 3), no design problem in silhouette design was encountered; but in color selection, a problem arose. As a basically romantic character, Antonio's costume required colors of an appropriate denomination. He also needed strong, masculine shades to reveal his adventurous nature. Therefore, in solving this design problem, monochromatic red (pink) was to suggest the romantic nature, while monochromatic orange (brown) revealed his adventurous masculinity. They were

utilized in an analogous balance to achieve a color harmony.

Antonio is seen in a slightly peascod-shaped leather jerkin of rough texture with slashed sleeves revealing pink brocaded satin doublet sleeves. Accenting dark brown trim is evident on the doublet. His matching pink trunk hose of rigid contour for out-door activities, are paned with a slight embossed decoration projecting squarely at the thigh. Complementary green satin lining is evident through the paning to add contrast to the design, and to suggest (through the color quality) his trade of seamanship. Canions of a lighter shade of pink are worn above the rolled-down pink stockings.

Turned-down leather boots and feather trimmed hat, cambric ruff, fitting closely under the chin, small cuffs, leg garter, sword and hanger, and green chest ribbon complete the costume. These masculine accessories reflect his rugged nature.

The Sea Captain

The sea captain--Rogantino à la commedia--(Plate 4) is Viola's advisor, friend, and rescuer. Nothing more is known of the character or his commedia parallel with the exception of his belonging to the Capitano family. Therefore, concerning his costume design, only costume history and imagination governed this rendering.

Rogantino's costume is truly of Spanish design. He is seen donning full military items of silver armor chest plate, morion (helmet), and sword. Spanish scarlet and monochromatic shades of purple are seen in rolled, padded satin doublet sleeves. To reflect his trade as a sea captain, wide red-brown broadcloth venetians are worn with inlays of horizontal trim of purple satin. His stockings and shoes are dyed grey. A tailored, turned-down collar of white cotton and small white cuffs, and a sharp purple satin Captain's sash accent the design.

Fabian

Fabian's commedia parallel is Pierrot (Plate 10). Both characters were personal valets and therefore represent the livery of the times. To suggest this image of servitude, simple, carefree lines and lazy blues were employed. Pierrot most often appeared in loose-fitting garments of white and pale blue. For Fabian's costume the same was required. An Elizabethan, dark blue trim added the needed contrast.

Fabian's dress consists of a very loose fitting linen doublet with long, puffed sleeves falling to the fingers as in the Pierrot tradition. Embroidered dark blue trim highlights the neck front and bottom of the doublet. For his domestic chores, his trunk hose are fitted. They match the doublet sleeves in color. His round-crowned hat and shoes are dyed blue. A fluffy, irregular voile ruff à la confusion

is seen fitting close to the chin and neck, also in the Pierrot tradition. To denote his commedia counterpart, Fabian's face should be powdered white.

Valentine--Curio

These two gentlemen (Plates 5 and 6) attending the duke are seen wearing costumes much in the fashion of the commedia Zanni, Scapino and Brighella. Since the traditional costume of these two Zanni also presented the image of livery and servitude, no problem in design was encountered in the adaptation. Capes were added, however, to uniform the costumes.

The servingmen are seen in designer's white, inexpensive polished cotton doublets with flowing puffed sleeves. Venetians are worn. Traditional with Scapino and Brighella's costume is the appearance of green stripes. They are seen here in an emerald green satin donning the front of the doublets and down the sides of the full venetians. Light green stockings are worn. The capes are white with green satin lining and cowls. Large white berets with green bands sit demurely on the head. For contrast the shoes are dyed green with white trim. Simple layered, cambric ruffs don the neck.

The half-masks can be flesh-colored; Curio needs a small pointed goatee and mustache.

A Priest

This costume design (Plate 16) presented no problem. He is seen twice in the play and wears the traditional sixteenth-century costume.

His cassock is brown woolen with a tan felt hood and belt. His shoes are dark brown leather. A gold cross hangs from his belt.

Law Officers

The law officers (Plate 17) are seen in costumes of the lower class Illyrians, or more generally, the sixteenth century European bourgeois. This element governed the rendering of this design.

They are seen in short Indian-red gowns of heavy linen burlap. The felt hood and hose are orange. The lazy, turned-down boots and low-crowned hat are brown leather. An ultramarine feather gently tips from the hat. An officer's medallion attached to a blue ribbon indicates his position in the play.

Sir Toby Belch

Costuming Sir Toby (Plate 7) à la commedia was minor in terms of design problems because theatre history has indicated the traditional costume that Pantalone has worn. He always appeared in red doublet and breeches and a full black cloak or robe. His position in a given scenario indicated the clue of his costume garments.

For Twelfth Night, Sir Toby appears in a slashed, peascod-shaped jerkin of red leather over a brocaded silk doublet. His Venetians are matching red brocade. This combination of leather and silk may well suggest Sir Toby's position as the retiring, yet active knight and newly elected guardian to the wealthy countess. Acquiring this new position, he has a black cloak of cut velveteen with short, full sleeves suited for his fencing scenes. His stockings, shoes, and gentle hat are matching red. To indicate his commedia parallel, a tan colored mask and long, pointed beard is evident for the character.

Sir Andrew Auguecheek

A swashbuckling, bombastic, and colorful costume was required for the vain and comic Sir Andrew (Plate 8). It also needed a Spanish Capitano's flair and design for the commedia parallel. These elements governed the rendering of this design.

He is seen in an exceptionally high collared jerkin of slashed yellow velvet over a doublet of red silk with sleeves slashed between bands of red and yellow rolled braid. His melon-shaped trunk hose are slashed and stuffed with bombast. Canions, in the shape of bows, are attached to the trunks. Bright red stockings add to the comic appearance. Loosely tied, fringed garters are obvious below the knee.

A swashbuckling red velvet cape lined with salmon satin is emphasized with an immense stand-up cowl. A high-crowned, broad-brimmed hat of red velvet with yellow trim is decorated with extravagant multicolored plumage. Colorful ribbons are tied to his shining gold sword which is rarely used. His shoes are dyed yellow.

His half-mask should reveal a large nose with a long, bushy mustache.

The Mistress Maria

In costuming Maria (Plate 14) for Twelfth Night, the design problem is interesting because more historical guidance is available. Her commedia parallel is Columbina, whose image, for the most part, history has made relatively clear. She wore the livery of a woman of the people. She always donned an apron and wore a ribbon in her hair. It was not until the late seventeenth century, that she is seen in the familiar lacy tu-tu.

Maria's dark green, livery costume consists of a quilted doublet with rolled-up sleeves revealing its designer's white lining. Her green skirt of heavy cotton linen, is topped with a long voile apron trimmed with red satin ribbon. A matching quilted piece on the skirt simplifies the costume.

She wears a rustic bonnet with a red ribbon. A small turned-down cambric ruff is seen at the neck.

Maria's costume, although simple, is characterized with bold lines and so reveals her comic position in the play and suggests her carefree, clever nature. The green and reds of her costume also suggest her earthy nature.

The Steward Malvolio

Traditionally, Malvolio either is costumed in all black or black with dark trim, or black and white in the Puritan manner. Therefore, the design problem for Malvolio is interesting because the traditional treatment closely matches the colors found in the costume of the Dottore. The commedia Dottore always appeared in black and white, and, therefore, in presenting Malvolio's Puritan qualities, black was the ideal color. Besides Puritan flavor, the costume should reveal Malvolio's pomposity, self-love, and his position as head steward in Olivia's household. Therefore, bold, full lines and blacks, greys, and whites were employed.

He is seen wearing a black knee-length tunic of polished broadcloth. He wears a traditional robe of cotton velveteen with full, flowing sleeves. His stockings are black with yellow ribbons. In his famous cross-gartered scene, the colors are reversed so that he has yellow stockings with black cross-garters.

His accessories consist of black shoes and an academic togue with white trim. His mask covers his forehead and

nose only. A set of keys and a dusting rag hang from his loosely tied belt. His ruff is full and lays smoothly in folds on his Puritan shoulders.

Feste--The Fool

Being the fool and clown in Olivia's household, Feste (Plate 11) required a costume of Renaissance motley garb as well as one that suggested his commedia parallel, Arlecchino. For his hurly-burly and zesty activities, he required a loose, free costume with soft, simple lines. The traditional Arlecchino diamond-shaped patches were also required. Theatrical and historical tradition governed this design rendering.

Feste is seen in a vivid yellow, long doublet of polished cotton fitting very loosely about his torso. This may allow for his ruff-and-tumble on stage. A slight décolletage neckline connects the straight but full sleeves. He wears tight trunk hose from the waist of a lighter shade of yellow, to enable him to execute broad action. Triangles of red, blue, and green are painted on the costume to suggest his position as jester and his commedia counterpart.

His hat, slippers, and belt are soft brown leather. His half-Mask is grey. Red satin trims the front of the doublet and sleeve cuffs.

A Lord

The Illyrian lord (Plate 15) appears at various times in the household of the duke. No particular problem was encountered in the design of this minor character's costume. He represents a typical Italian Renaissance noble.

To suggest his lordly position, he is seen in a long surcoat of tan-brown velvet with hanging false sleeves. His doublet sleeves and gown are indian reddish-brown silk. Fur trim lines the sleeves and surcoat to give richness to the costume. A black satin trim gives the costume elegance and rank. The cambric ruff fits closely to his neck. His stockings and shoes are dyed tan. His hat is matching velvet.

This treatment of the lord's costume concludes this section of the analysis devoted to the costume renderings. The study now turns to a treatment of the floor plans.

Floor Plans

The floor plan for Twelfth Night (Plate 18), drawn to scale with one-eighth inch per one foot, evolved out of the following considerations: (1) an open playing arena, (2) simple entrance and exit patterns, and (3) a proscenium arch.

The open acting area, utilized on typical platforms, allows for broad movement by the actors, displays the hanging backdrops placed far upstage with the first drop flushed with the platform stage, and allows many sight lines for the

audience. The backdrops serve merely as scenic backgrounds rather than a stage setting. The emphasis, then, is placed on the actors and action. The suggested playing area, from the existing stage curtain line to the backdrops, is twenty feet. Proportionally, this seems to be sufficient playing area. The shallowness of the commedia market place stage is, therefore, suggested, and it is a good optimum depth for any given play. The plan reveals a width of thirty-two feet of acting area, which seems to be in proportion for its purpose.

There are three patterns for entrances and exits. One pattern allows the actors to enter down stage on the existing stage floor between the formal set and existing stage proscenium. Another entrance and exit pattern is allowed for in front of the false proscenium, right and left, on the platform stage. A third pattern is made available upstage from the false proscenium, right and left, in front of the return units. These exit and entrance patterns allow for much variety and flow of action which are useful in the staging of Shakespearean plays.

For conventional reasons, a false proscenium is utilized. It suggests the period, confines the actual playing area as opposed to the real proscenium of the existing theatre, and clarifies the stage picture as a whole.

Platform steps are stacked to provide either a two or three step rise from the existing stage floor to the main platform acting area. It is suggested that they extend one,

two, and three feet from the platform stage to allow for stage movement and utilization as required in various scenes of the play. Two step units are placed at the sides of the platform stage offstage to allow for entrance stand-by and exit decline from the platform to the existing stage.

Plate 19 shows a vertical cross-section of the platform stage within the existing stage. This section reveals the placement of the six backdrops, return unit, two teasers, false proscenium, step units, existing tormenters and curtain, and the proscenium of the existing theatre.

With this technical explanation of the sets' floor plans, the analysis of the set renderings is in order.

Set Designs

The set renderings for Twelfth Night were inspired by the Renaissance staging practices and innovations best illustrated through (1) the crude, portable platform stage of the commedia dell'arte with their hanging backdrops revealing rustic scenes of public plazas with houses and streets in perspective, (2) the bare, formal platform similar to the open acting area of the Elizabethan stage, and (3) the elegant and elaborately ornamented stage structure of Renaissance Italian theatres, for it must be remembered that the commedia companies played as much in the court theatres as well as the market place. These renaissance staging innovations established the precedent

for, and artistically, have been adapted in the scenery designs for this study. Before an explanation of the individual designs is given, a brief, general description of the scenery is in order.

Painted perspective backdrops, suggesting the different locales and scenes in the play, are flown in as needed and hang neatly upstage at the rear of the constructed platform stage. (They can be painted on canvas and attached to two-inch pipe battens.) To suit the purposes of the design project, the drops are much larger than those which the commedia troupes utilized on the crude platforms in their staging of scenarios. The only scenery used by the commedia companies to suggest a given locale was a series of small backdrops hung on portable rigging. To reflect this custom, the present project was limited in a similar manner. From a practical standpoint in modern production, the backdrops also allow continuous action while achieving the eighteen scene changes.²

Platforms, with decorative facades, constitute the stage floor and acting area. This is an extreme adaptation of the rustic commedia stage. It also suggests the Elizabethan apron with its medieval positioning of acting areas and accompanying exists and entrances.

²The progression of scene changes is listed in Appendix A.

The false proscenium, with its ornate design and trim, gives the sets a Renaissance flavor, narrows the acting area, and creates two areas (downstage and upstage) for exits and entrances which are useful in the staging of Shakespearean plays.

Step units are seen downstage center stacked in front of the platform stage from the existing stage. These were employed in the commedia style, to enable the actors to exit and enter from down stage center and also to be used by the actors, if a scene required it, for sitting or hiding as seen in Malvolio's gulling scene and the fencing scenes.

The basic colors employed in the designs were shades of gold. This color was chosen for harmony with the costume designs and to express the elegance, fresh vigor, and healthy vivacity of Shakespeare's comic mode. The light, curved lines seen in the set designs reflect the grace, gaiety, and musicalness of the romantic drama.

The Duke's Palace

The opening scene of Twelfth Night begins in the duke's palace (Plate 20), therefore, a strong impression must be made in terms of design for the play. This opening scene establishes the elegant and musical mood of the play. The backdrop reveals an immense ballroom with arches and columns complete with a crystal chandelier. Ornate trim is evident with a pale blue and gold color scheme suggesting the richness

of the palace. The floor gives a marble tile impression. A blue velvet teaser is lowered for each scene in the duke's palace. Viola's love for Orsino is revealed here. Indeed, the most romantic and musical scenes in the play are seen against this setting of grace and elegance.

The Seacoast

The twins of Twelfth Night, Sebastian and Viola, make their separate entrances into the play at the seacoast (Plate 21). The backdrop reveals a clouded sky and a calm blue sea washing waves on a rocky, sandy beach. The hull of a wrecked ship is seen to suggest Viola and Sebastian's plights. It is here (Act I, ii) that Viola decides to disguise herself as Cesario and seek service with Duke Orsino. In Act II, i, Sebastian and Antonio come ashore on the coast of Illyria.

Olivia's House

Five of Twelfth Night's scenes take place in Olivia's house (Plate 22). Some scenes are romantic in nature and others are comic. Therefore, colors and lines of appropriate denomination went into the development of this rendering. the backdrop suggests a drawing room in a fashionable Renaissance home. An attempt to capture the soulful romanticism of Olivia is seen in the room where drapes hang richly about three windows. A large picture, with gold ornate frame, is mounted on the pink striped, brocaded papered walls. A

low, marble-top, ornate table is seen under the picture. The floor suggests striped marble tile. For the scenes in Olivia's house, a pink velvet teaser trims the top of the backdrop and the gold returns.

The truly comic characters of the play--Sir Andrew, Malvolio, Sir Toby, Maria, and Feste--are seen in these scenes at Olivia's house. The certain romantic feel of the design for Olivia's house should work as a foil to the gullings and revelings of these characters, for the colors of the set are just bright enough to match the revelers' moods.

To utilize this setting for Malvolio's prison scene, Act IV, iii, which should be staged extremely down stage, the lights should dim with a small pool of light reflecting down on the distraught Malvolio in his cage and the gleeful, disguised Feste. For the drinking scene, Act II, iii, only the forestage need be lighted to reveal the active revelers.

A Street

Many commedia dell' arte backdrops revealed a scene containing a town square and the street drawn in true perspective. This technique was employed in designing Twelfth Night's street (Plate 23). The backdrop is painted in shades of brown and blue. The Illyrian houses are seen leading to the piazza and the duke's palace. Viola, who is overtaken by Malvolio in Act II, ii, appears against this drop, therefore, a fountain is seen to soften the drop's boldness.

Olivia's Garden

Most of Twelfth Night's comic hurly-burly and commedia intrigue is staged in Olivia's garden (Plate 24). Malvolio's downfall, plotted by Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Fabian, and Maria, is seen against this setting. He finds Maria's planted love letter while the three male gullers are hiding in "the box tree."³ These Elizabethan evergreen shrubs may be carried on stage and cleverly utilized in comic lazzi for this scene. The steps and existing stage floor may be made useful, as in the commedia fashion, for hiding places by the gullers.

Act III, iv, is the famous yellow stockings, cross-gartered, and smiling scene of Malvolio, who appears before Olivia raving of his love for her. This extremely comic scene is staged in the garden. The mock duel which follows between Viola and Sir Andrew is staged here. Again the many exit and entrance areas, and the down stage step units may be utilized.

Therefore, in approaching this design, a need to achieve a fresh, airy, and comic atmosphere governed the rendering. The backdrop reveals an ivy enhanced rock wall with soft green foliage and rose bushes growing at the base. A marble fountain, statue, and tree vases give the garden a somewhat quaint European flavor. Full foliated trees surround the garden. The patio is tiled in large squares of grey and

³Twelfth Night, II, v, 18.

pink marble. The colors of the backdrop were kept monochromatic with shades of red-orange, grey, and green which, although supplied a sense of color, allowed the background to remain relatively neutral. Consequently, the antics of the characters could be revealed more vividly.

Before Olivia's House

Act IV begins its action and Act V maintains its action before Olivia's house (Plate 25). Olivia, as well as the other characters, meet Sebastian for the first time in scene one of Act IV. The play is brought to a happy conclusion, and Feste brings the action to a close with a merry song before Olivia's house. Therefore, the design should make a strong impression and leave the viewers with a pleasant scenic image. To evoke the romantic and gay aura of the play, an elegant Renaissance estate is painted on the backdrop with shades of salmon, blue, green, tan, and brown forming the color harmony. A rose-covered rock wall connects with a wrought-iron gate. The conceit of the roses and wrought-iron is intended to point up the romantic love element on one hand and the low comic, calculated buffoonery on the other hand. Two large trees give a sense of lushness to the scene while adding color and balance to the picture. A marble walk leads from the street to the entrance of the home.

For Feste's concluding song, the lights should decrease in value with a single spotlight focused on the steps leading to the platform stage where he appears and sings his merry song of conclusion.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to interpret the graphic renderings for Twelfth Night as approached for this study. The design approaches and relative problems and their solutions have been discussed in detail. Descriptions and explanations of the designs, in terms of line, color, and appropriateness, were also presented.

With an understanding of the specific project designs, the final chapter constitutes a summary and an evaluation of the entire thesis project to determine its significance.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF THE DESIGN PROJECT

The purpose of this thesis has been to design the sets and costumes for William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night adapting to the sixteenth century Italian commedia dell' arte style. In summarizing this study, it is necessary to review the project and offer a subjective evaluation of the set and costume designs to determine the significance of this thesis.

In Chapter One of the study a point was made in the form of a question: what makes designing sets and costumes for a play as a thesis study unusual and challenging? Three criteria constituted the answer. First, superior literature must be selected with sufficient scope to challenge the designer's potentials. Twelfth Night, one of the most popular of all Shakespeare's comedies, is considered superior literature. Each of the seventeen speaking characters is completely formed and has his moment or moments in the eighteen scene changes required for the play's action. Its scope, in terms of characters and set requirements, has been sufficient to challenge the designer's potential as a scenic artist.

Second, the play selected must be amenable to a variety of legitimate design approaches. Twelfth Night, justly considered as one of Shakespeare's most delightful and

musical--a comedy of merriment and gaiety untinged with any shadow of unhappy implication--has been amenable and justly illustrated in this study to a legitimate design approach--à la commedia. Definite commedia qualities (theme, plot, mood, and characterization) are evident, and an Italianate atmosphere prevails in Twelfth Night. Its original sources have been found to be based on Italian and Latin novella (Gl' Ingannati, Laelia, Gl' Inganni, and Il pellegrino fido amante), and contemporary evidence, as recorded in John Manningham's diary of February 2, 1602, supports this theory. The action of Twelfth Night's two plots (Viola-Cesario's romantic relationships with Orsino and Olivia, and the gulling of Malvolio by the reveling Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria) is similar to the romantic, good-tempered, and delightful complications found in the commedia scenarios. Various characteristics of the standard stock types are evident in many Twelfth Night characters as well as other Shakespearean characters. The strongest parallels are Dottore=Malvolio, Capitano=Sir Andrew Aguecheek, servetta= Maria, innamorato=Orsino, and innamorata=Olivia. Therefore, in designing the play à la commedia, the costume approach is legitimate. Furthermore, there are certain similarities to be noticed in the staging practices of the commedia and the Elizabethans. Both utilized the platform stage--the Elizabethans playing more upstage, the commedia more downstage. Also, few stage properties and furnishings were

required for successful performances. Physically, then, the play does lend itself to production à la commedia.

Third, the approach and style selected should be fresh and unique. Theatre research has revealed no reviews of a production of Twelfth Night in the fashion of the commedia dell' arte. Therefore, it can be assumed that such a project provides a fresh approach for the play.

However, to determine the significance and value of the purpose of this project, certain summarizing speculations concerning the designs are in order.

The costumes were designed, after the first four chapters were written establishing the historical background and precedent of design, to suggest the stylized dress of the major characters in the commedia dell' arte. The modern conception of the commedia dell' arte, presented by artists' fantasias of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, is that of characters in extremely stylized, bizarre costumes. They possess a story-book aura backed by fantastic surroundings. The costume designs for this study reflect the commedia that was real and apparently known to the sixteenth century Renaissance Elizabethans. The scholarly and illustrative works of Allardyce Nicoll, Pierre Duchartre, and Winifred Smith have been helpful in this design approach.

This commedia quality can best be detected in the costume designs for Sir Toby (Plate 7), Sir Andrew (Plate 8), Malvolio (Plate 9), Feste (Plate 11), and Curio (Plate 6).

Sir Toby's red doublet and venetians with black cloak reveal the traditional dress of Pantalone. The swashbuckling, flashing red and yellow costume of Sir Andrew gives the commedia impression of the boasting Spanish Capitano. Pompous Malvolio, with his costume of black and white, suggests the learned Dottore from Bologna. Arlecchino's traditional multicolored, patched garb is seen in the motley of Feste, the witty fool. Brighella's livery of white with green stripes constitutes the uniform worn by Curio. This detected quality in the costumes of these characters is partially expected since there has been much historical writing concerning their commedia parallels in terms of costume needs. Theatrical tradition has also governed these designs. The employment of the facial masks detects the commedia quality, and the chosen colors enhance these designs in the commedia tradition. The designs least detecting the commedia element are the law officer (Plate 17), Antonio (Plate 3), a lord (Plate 15), and a priest (Plate 16). Owing to the lack of historical data concerning commedia minor characters, these designs reflect the general Renaissance mode of the time.

The serious types in the commedia dell' arte wore the elegant fashion of the day. Therefore, the Elizabethan mode is accented, in the design renderings of the non-comic characters, with Venetian flavor. The designs which best

detect the combination of Elizabethan and Renaissance Italian serious commedia treatment are Orsino (Plate 1), a sea captain (Plate 4), Olivia (Plate 12), and Viola (Plate 13). These designs, perhaps too archeologically correct, reveal many of the major garments found in Renaissance Italian costumes--the décolletage, coif, venetians, bonnets, and Italian lace ruffs. Exact reproductions of this nature are not necessary, however, for theatre design.

From a practical standpoint in theatre production, some of the above mentioned designs would need slight alteration, perhaps, in their execution. The extremely constricted, V-shaped bodices, seen in the designs of Olivia and Viola, might hinder some of the actresses' movements and, therefore, mar the appearance of the costume. Comfort would also be affected. The sea captain's armor chest plate and morion possibly is too bulky. However, the purpose of the rendering is to show line and form. Problems of weight, bulkiness, ease of wearing should be solved routinely in execution. The fullness of the skirt seen in the design for Maria (Plate 14) is distracting for the character and period. To create her domestic image, and keeping in the period style, it would be straighter. Valentine's cape (Plate 5) would be longer and fuller which may allow for easier manipulation and present a more pleasing appearance. Furthermore, it would be more exacting with Curio's (Plate 6). The law officer's costume (Plate 17) would require more official

rank and position. The complementary green neck ribbon and trunk hose lining seen in Antonio's costume (Plate 3) is stark. It should be slightly toned to a monochromatic shade of green.

To achieve color harmony and balance with the set designs and among the characters, monochromatic and analogous color schemes, rather than triadic and complementary, are evident in most of the costume renderings. Monochromatic harmony can best be detected in plates one, two, and ten; analogous harmony in plates four, eight, and twelve. To build emphasis, brilliant hues, for the most part, are seen in the renderings.

Based on the validity of the historical and analytical theatre research and critical appraisal, a subjective examination of the plates reveals that the designs, for the most part, do indicate a definite commedia quality with Elizabethan overtones. Of these designs, plates seven, eight, and nine seem to possess the theatre design constituents (line, color, balance [appropriateness]) of a successfully rendered costume design.

The set designs (Plates 20-25) were inspired by (1) the crude, portable commedia platform stage with its simple backdrops of painted scenes in perspective, (2) the bare, formal platform similar to the open acting area of the Elizabethan stage, and (3) the elegant and elaborately ornamented stage structure with proscenium arch of Renaissance

Italian theatres. Artistically, these staging characteristics of the Renaissance were adapted in the scenery designs.

The renderings reveal an ornamented false proscenium, a platform stage, scenic backdrops, and step units. The false proscenium was employed in the scenery to give the sets an Italian Renaissance flavor with rich, ornamented design and trim, to narrow the acting area, and to create areas for exits and entrances.

An extreme adaptation of the rustic commedia platform stage is seen in the designs. Painted backdrops in perspective, suggesting the different locales and scenes in the play, hang upstage from the platform stage. This device was adapted to reflect the commedia custom of hanging backdrops. The step units, seen down stage center stacked in front of the platform stage, were employed in the commedia style to enable the actors another entrance and exit area, for utilization if a scene required a variety of entrance levels.

An interior of the duke's palace is seen on the backdrop in plate twenty. Plate twenty-one reveals the Illyrian sea shore. A drawing room in Olivia's house is suggested on the drop in plate twenty-one. An Illyrian street leading to a piazza and the duke's palace constitutes the backdrop scene in plate twenty-three. Olivia's Renaissance garden is seen painted on the backdrop for plate twenty-four. The last backdrop painting reveals a sidewalk before Olivia's house for plate twenty-five.

The fundamental colors employed in the renderings were monochromatic in scheme. This was purposely employed in sustaining balance with the costume designs. The false proscenium, revealing return units, and the platform stage facade were colored gold to suggest an opulent atmosphere. The acting area on the platform stage floor and the existing stage floor were hued with a golden wash. Various analogous and monochromatic color schemes were applied to the backdrop scene paintings. However, to suggest a realistic background in a romantic world, complementary color treatment is apparent in the designs to a certain degree. Plates twenty-four and twenty-five (Olivia's garden and home exterior) illustrate this treatment. The street scene (Plate 23) is indicative of the monochromatic harmony employed. The brilliance and starkness seen in the red color harmony of Olivia's house (Plate 22), in actual production, should be toned to softer shades. If utilized as revealed through the rendering, the sharpness would possibly distract from the action on stage.

The absence of stage furnishings in the renderings is in keeping with the commedia and Shakespearean tradition. Stage properties were brought and placed on stage as a scene required. A production of Twelfth Night, as approached in this study, could well be staged through the utilization of four benches properly placed when needed.

The floor plan for Twelfth Night technically suggests the workability of the scenery designs for a possible production. Typical stagecraft platforms constitute the acting area, therefore, for an actual production, the addition or deletion of platforms would suffice depending on the size of the theatre. The backdrops could be made smaller or larger as required. The false proscenium could be altered accordingly.

The scenery was rendered to suggest the crude, portable commedia platform stage with its simple backdrops; the bare, formal platform similar to the open acting area of the Elizabethan stage; and the elegant and elaborately ornamented stage structure of Renaissance Italian theatres with proscenium arch. An analysis and evaluation of the plates can detect this adaptation or suggestion of these innovations.

The procedure in accomplishing this thesis project was similar to the design process employed for designing any production. The historical background for the problem was presented in Chapter II with its review of the commedia dell'arte as a theatrical style of a given period. The raison d'être of the design approach was established in Chapter III with an investigation of various of Shakespeare's plays denoting the commedia influence and parallels. The study, analysis, and evaluation of the play's plot, characters, mood, and theme was revealed in Chapter IV with its treatment of the commedia qualities found in Twelfth Night. Thus, the

design approach and precedents were established. Chapter V presented an analysis and description of the completed designs and discussed the solutions of the design problems encountered.

The dramatic imagination has surely wandered for this design project, but, to paraphrase Robert Edmond Jones, this is the essence of the theatre.¹ In summarizing this study, it is hoped that the design project will be considered unique, and that it reached beyond the ordinary in its depiction of a point of view for William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night or What You Will.

¹Jones, p. 90.

APPENDIX A

The Dramatis Personae and the Synopsis of Scenes are being presented to enable the reader to relate the characters' positions in the play; to identify the characters with the costume plates; to reveal the progression of scene changes; and, to associate the scenes in the play with the set design plates.

Dramatis Personae

Orsino, Duke of Illyria
Sebastian, brother to Viola
Antonio, a sea captain, friend to Sebastian
A Sea Captain, friend to Viola
Valentine, gentleman attending on the Duke
Curio, gentleman attending on the Duke
Sir Toby Belch, uncle to Olivia
Sir Andrew Aguecheek
Malvolio, steward to Olivia
Fabian, servant to Olivia
Feste, a clown, servant to Olivia
Olivia, a countess
Viola
Maria, Olivia's woman
Lords, a Priest, Sailors, law Officers,
Musicians, and other Attendants.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene--A city in Illyria, and the seacoast near it

ACT I

Scene 1: The Duke's Palace
Scene 2: The Seacoast
Scene 3: Olivia's House
Scene 4: The Duke's Palace
Scene 5: Olivia's House

ACT II

Scene 1: The Seacoast
Scene 2: A Street
Scene 3: Olivia's House
Scene 4: The Duke's Palace
Scene 5: Olivia's Garden

ACT III

Scene 1: Olivia's Garden
Scene 2: Olivia's House
Scene 3: A Street
Scene 4: Olivia's Garden

ACT IV

Scene 1: Before Olivia's House
Scene 2: Olivia's House
Scene 3: Olivia's Garden

ACT V

Scene 1: Before Olivia's House

APPENDIX B

Design Plates

Plate 1	The Duke Orsino
Plate 2	The Lord Sebastian
Plate 3	Antonio
Plate 4	A Sea Captain
Plate 5	Valentine
Plate 6	Curio
Plate 7	Sir Toby Belch
Plate 8	Sir Andrew Aguecheek
Plate 9	The Steward Malvolio
Plate 10	Fabian
Plate 11	Feste, a clown
Plate 12	The Lady Olivia
Plate 13	The Lady Viola
Plate 14	The Mistress Maria
Plate 15	A Lord
Plate 16	A Priest
Plate 17	Law Officers
Plate 18	The Floor Plan
Plate 19	Vertical Section of Stage
Plate 20	The Duke's Palace
Plate 21	The Seacoast
Plate 22	Olivia's House

Plate 23	A Street
Plate 24	Olivia's Garden
Plate 25	Before Olivia's House



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17

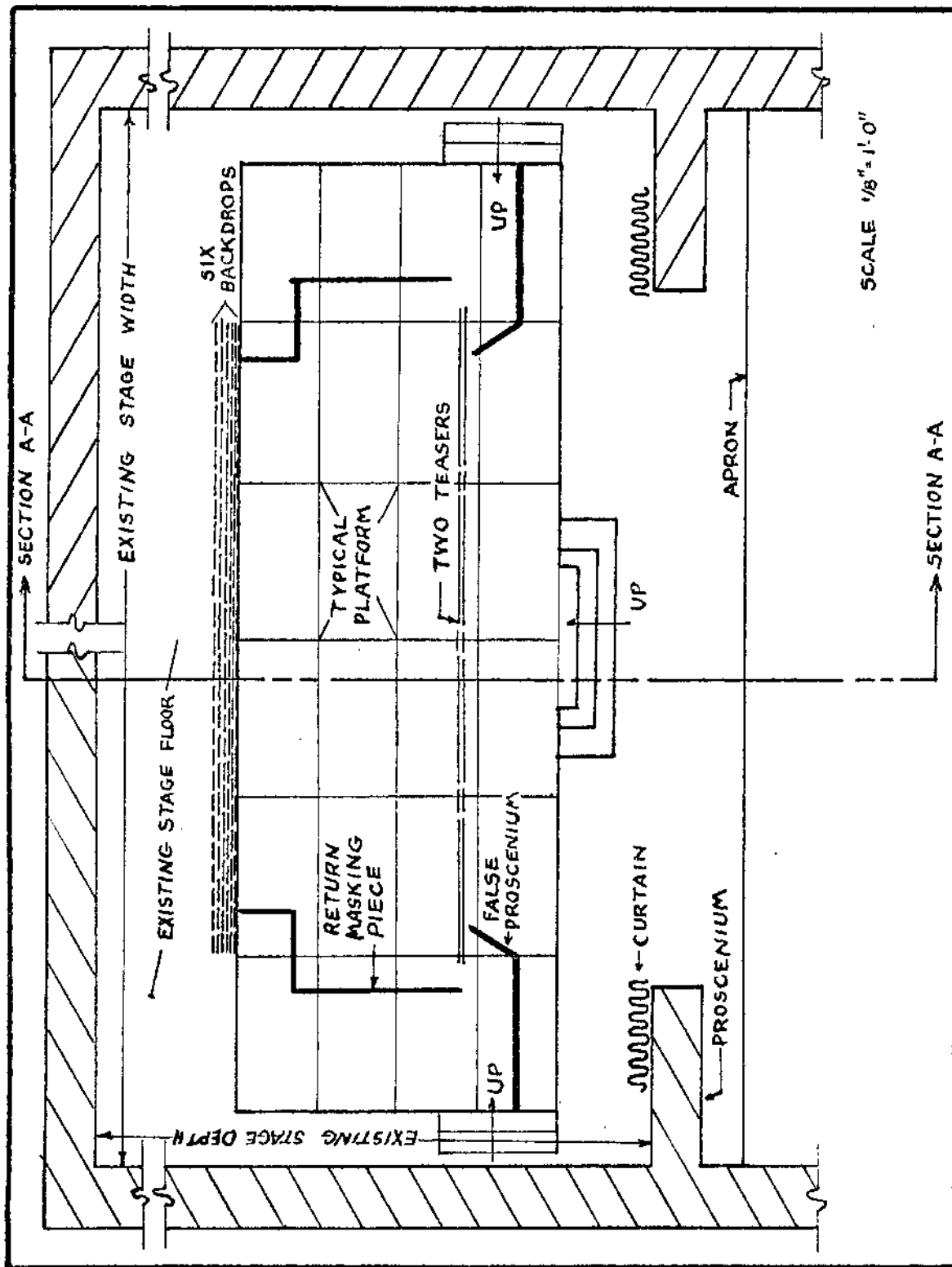


Plate 18

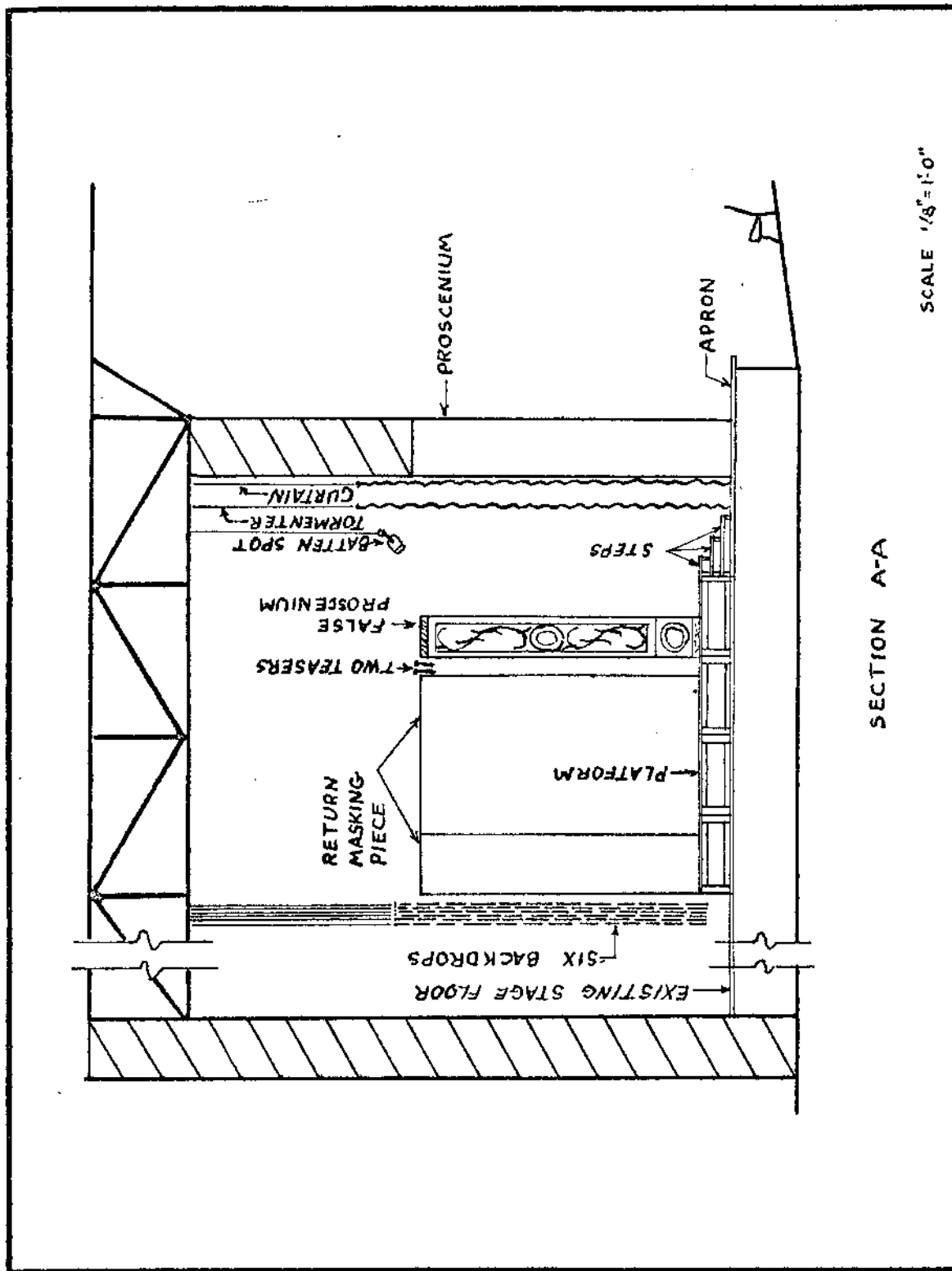


Plate 19

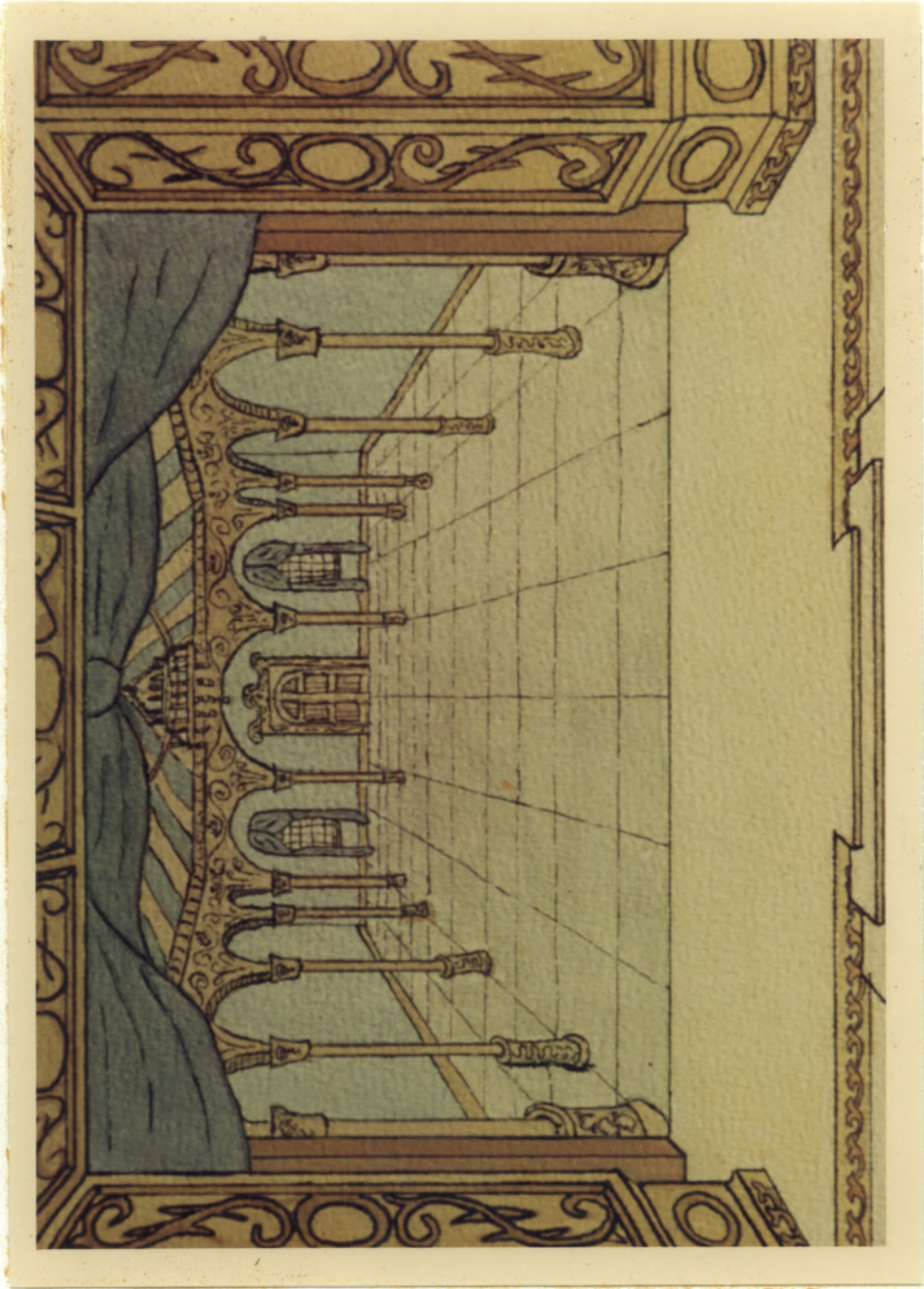


Plate 20



Plate 21

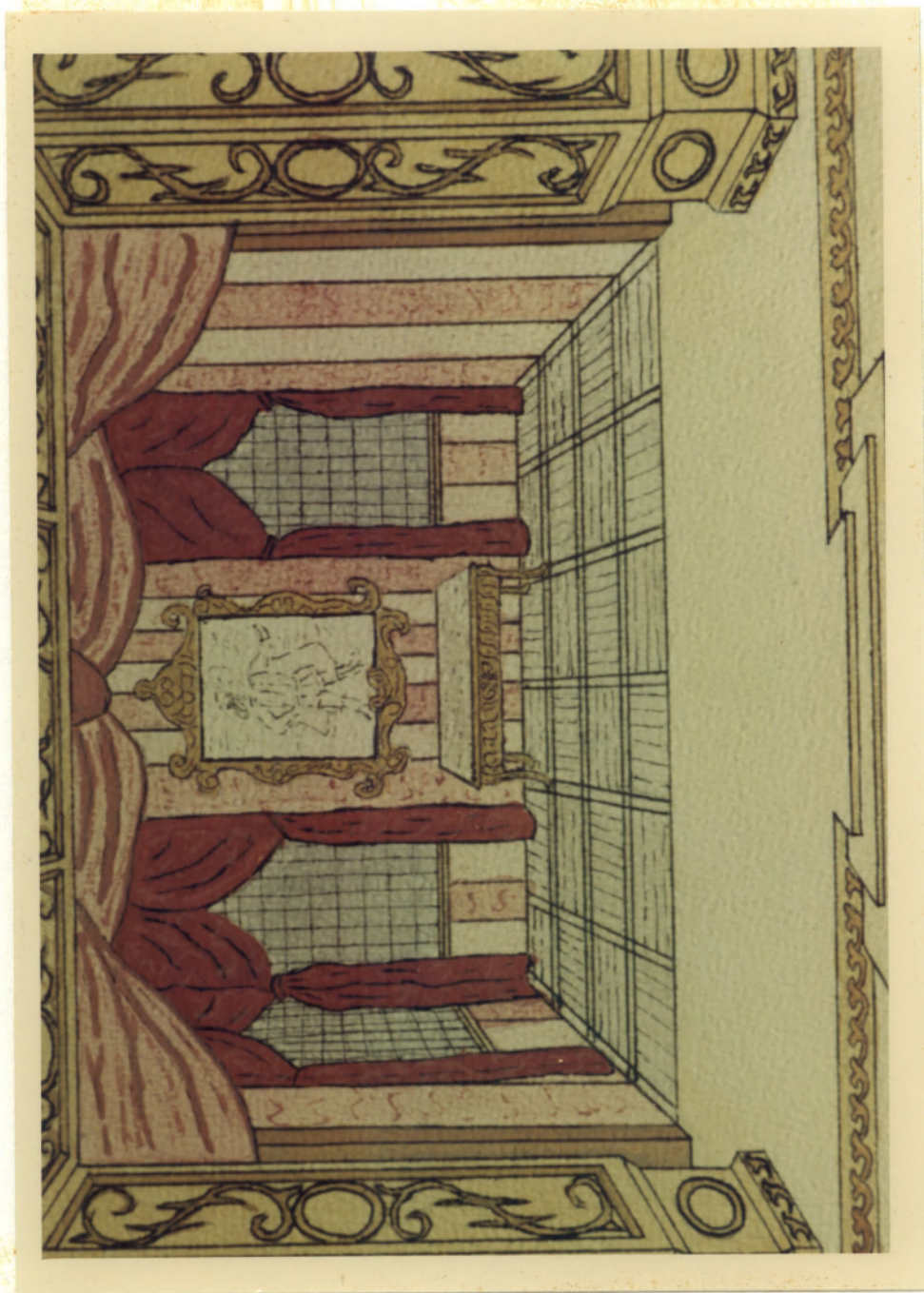


Plate 22



Plate 23



Plate 24

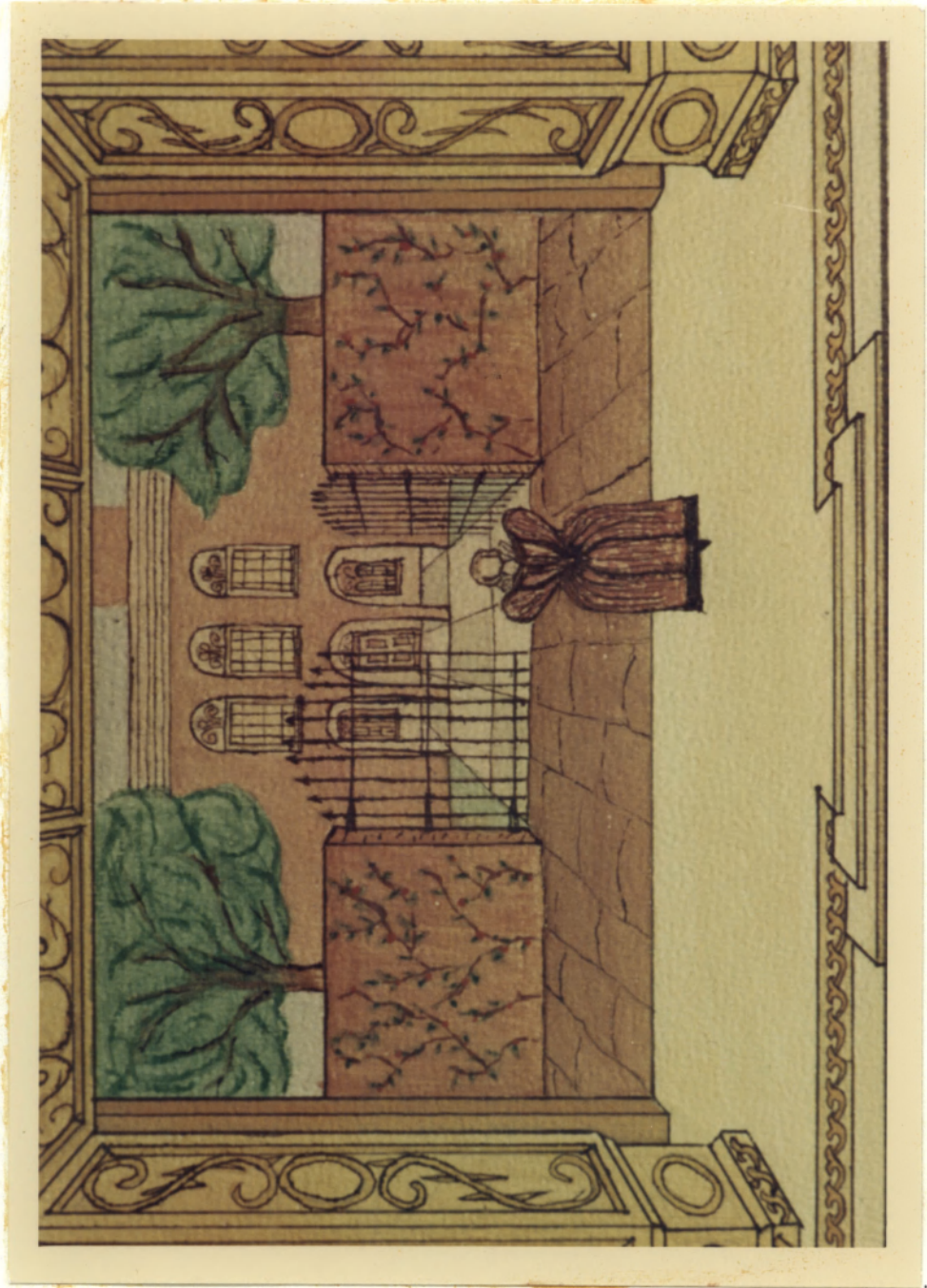


Plate 25

APPENDIX C

List of Art Supplies

1. Strathmore 100% rag content water color paper
2. Prang, Paint-Rite, and Grumbacher opaque water color paint
 - a. viridian
 - b. alizarin crimson
 - c. ultramarine blue
 - d. Harrison red
 - e. cadmium red orange
 - f. cadmium yellow medium
 - g. burnt sienna
 - h. raw umber
 - i. yellow ochre
 - j. Indian red
 - k. showcard white
 - l. showcard black
3. Grumbacher sable and camels hair water color brushes # 0-10
4. Eagle Mirado # 2H and 2B drawing pencils
5. Eagle 1004 pen staff
6. Eagle A-5, B-5, and # 1 speedball inking pens
7. K and E fine-point Mechanical inking pen
8. Higgins Negro india ink

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