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محاضرات مادة المسرح الشكسبيري (تحليل الشخصيات في هاملت)

ARAPID glance at any concordance will reveal that Shakespeare, both for words and metaphors, drew abundantly from Ahy;K the language of the theater. Terms like argument, prologue, stage, pageant, scene, player, act, actor, show, audience, rant these and their cousins which evoke dramatic connotations occur again and again throughout his plays in instances which range from very literal or technical significations to highly figurative and symbolic ones. This constant recourse to dramatic vocabulary suggests an analogy in Shakespeare's mind between life and the theater an analogy which he himself makes explicit and which even the name of his own theater, the Globe, reinforces. Examples are not far to seek. Everyone will recall the famous references of Jaques ("All the world's a stage . . .")<sup>1</sup> and Macbeth ("Life's but . . . a poor player, / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage . . ."); and there are many others. Not infrequently the figure is associated with pain or death and the relation of man to the cosmos; hence, it becomes a natural focus for the idea of tragedy. The Duke in As You Like It speaks of the world as a "universal theatre" which "Presents more woeful pageants than the scene / Wherein we play . . ."; Lear with the penetration of madness bewails that "we are come /To this great stage of fools"; and Richard of Bordeaux, the actor-king, glances back over his life to find it as unreal and as temporary as a play-"a little scene, / To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks".

That Shakespeare should have conceived of man as an actor, the world as a stage, and the universe as its backdrop is not extraordinary, for, apart from the fact that he himself played the triple role of actor, playwright, and part owner of a theater, the metaphor was a Renaissance commonplace. The motto of the Globe, "Totus mundus agit histrionem", is only the most succinct expression of an idea extended to greater length in Montaigne, in Erasmus' Praise of Folly, in Romei's Courtier's Academie, and in the 'works of Shakespeare's fellow dramatists, as, for instance, the Induction to Marston's Antonio and Mellida.

The intention of this essay is to analyze some of the elaborate ramifications of the theater symbol as it functions throughout Hamlet, to suggest that by reexamining the play with emphasis on the theme of acting, we may reach certain new perceptions about its dramatic architecture and see some of its central issues (Hamlet's delay, for instance, his disillusionment and madness, his intrigue with Claudius, his relation to his mother, his knowledge of himself) in fresh perspective. Before, however, we consider the one play of Shakespeare that embodies his most personal statements on the drama, let us make some further generalizations about the complexity of aesthetic response which theatrical imagery entails and the relation of this complexity to the idea and nature of tragedy. S. L. Bethell<sup>3</sup> points out that references to the theater in a public performance elicit a double or "multi-conscious" reaction from the audience. Suppose Humphrey Bogart (at the local cinema) corners his gangster with a loaded revolver and sneers that the bullets are real, not blanks "like in the movies". The chief effect of this remark is to establish verisimilitude. We are invited to compare what is happening on the screen with cruder versions of the same thing which we have seen before, and the implication is that we know a hawk from a hand saw. But at the same time the remark distances the performance by reminding us that we are after all looking at a film and not at real life. The response is the same in Shakespeare, but its duality is more constant there, not only because the theatrical references are more frequent and the actors are people instead of pictures, but because the Elizabethans, lacking our naturalistic visual aids, had to rely much more than we are accustomed to do upon the symbolic suggestiveness of the spoken word. So, when Fabian comments in Twelfth Night, apropos of gulling Malvolio: "If this were play'd upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction", or

when Cleopatra inveighs against her would-be captors with ". . . I shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I' th' posture of a whore", the audience responds to the situation on a dual plane of reality. They are aware of play-world and real world at once. The opposition between appearance and reality, between fiction and truth, is maintained; yet the appearance seems more real and the fiction more true.

In Hamlet this duality functions almost constantly, not only because there is so much reference to playing and to related aspects of the fictional world, both literally and figuratively, but because the center of the play itself is largely concerned with the arrival of the players at Elsinore and the "mouse trap" that constitutes the climax or turning point of the plot.<sup>4</sup>