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The Dramatic Significance of I.i of Hamlet, Othello
and Macbeth: A Study of the Relationship between the
Opening Scene and the Complete Drama

by

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This thesis is dedicated to my late grandfather,
Mr. Kazimuddin, without whose love, care and guidance
my life could have been a different story.

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the dramatic significance of I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth in terms of the opening scene's relationship with the complete drama. To facilitate the reader's understanding of this relationship between the opening scene and the whole drama and to illustrate how Shakespeare uses certain expository or dramatic devices in effecting this relationship, the concept of exposition in drama is discussed. Special attention is given to the differences between expository method/device and expository function in general and the expository function of Shakespearean drama in particular. This is followed by an analysis of the rationale for the choice of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth as the focus of this study, an analysis of how Shakespeare's expository methods/devices in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth are different from, and similar to, the methods applied in any other of his plays and a discussion of the act and scene division of Shakespearean drama.

The text of the thesis is divided into three chapters, each dealing with an individual play. Each chapter is, again, organized in the following order: (a) introduction to the chapter, (b) a description of the expository details of I.i of a play, (c) an examination of the implications of the exposition in I.i for the complete drama, (This involves describing a specific area of exposition or an expository method/device and its role in establishing a relationship between I.i and the rest of the drama), and (d) chapter summary.

In Chapter I, the dramatic significance of I.i of Hamlet is considered in terms of (i) the play's mood, tone, atmosphere, (ii) the narrative of the Ghost as an expository device, (iii) the characters of Horatio and Fortinbras, (iv) the dramatic device of recollection and anticipation and (v) the play's setting. It is concluded that these five areas collectively function to give shape and meaning to I.i of Hamlet, which in turn, to cite Maynard Mack, "...implies ...and lives ...with the life and meaning" of the complete drama.

In Chapter II, the dramatic significance of I.i of Othello is examined in terms of (i) the play's setting, (ii) expository insets, (iii) the effect of Iago's language in I.i on the hero and the general atmosphere of the play, (iv) the characters of Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio, (v) the recurrent motifs and patterns and (vi) dramatic irony. It is concluded that each of the above expository devices is woven with others to provide what John Russell Brown aptly describes as "a quiet, mysterious beginning" in which "dramatic interest is coiled up like a spring."

In Chapter III, the dramatic significance of I.i of Macbeth is investigated in terms of Shakespeare's use of the following expository devices: (i) witchcraft, (ii) the theme of contradiction, (iii) an order-disorder antithesis, (iv) two basic patterns, (v) equivocation as a stylistic device and (v) dramatic irony. These dramatic devices are seen to logically and emotionally link I.i with the whole drama.

General Introduction

There are numerous echoes, correspondences, variations and repetitions in each of the tragedies which help to bind the parts of the play together and make it a living organism of which all parts are interrelated. These echoes and correspondences establish links between the scenes and often build a bridge between parts which at first seem unrelated.

1

Wolfgang Clemen

Wolfgang Clemen's statement draws our attention to a significant aspect of Shakespearean drama -- the art of establishing a relationship among the various parts of a play. Clemen points out that Shakespeare takes up, in the later acts or scenes of his plays, suggestions, phrases, hints, images, motifs and ideas or even situations which occurred in the first act or scene. When watching or reading attentively a Shakespearean tragedy, the audience or reader may be reminded in later acts or scenes of such suggestions, hints, ideas, motifs or situations that occurred earlier in the play. In this way, states Clemen, the dramatist builds a logical relationship among the various parts of a tragedy.

In keeping with this view of Shakespearean tragedies, this thesis shall examine the correspondences between I.i and the complete drama in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth. In doing so, it shall attempt to answer the following major questions -

Is I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth logically related to the rest of the play? What expository or dramatic devices does Shakespeare use in I.i of these tragedies and how do they link the scene with the rest?

(i) Exposition in Drama: What It Means

Before discussing the choice of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth as the focus of this study, it is necessary to discuss dramatic exposition. Such a discussion is expected to facilitate our understanding of how Shakespeare uses certain expository methods or devices in making I.i a part of the organic whole of a drama.

In dramatic structure, the term "exposition" means a process in which a dramatist orients his audience. It is the process in which he gets the preliminary information quickly across into the minds of the audience. Exposition is what the dramatist tells the audience right away. In this sense of the term, exposition may involve providing the setting (i.e., the time of the day, the place of action and so on), introducing the atmosphere, mood, tone, theme and characters, and supplying other facts necessary to an understanding of a play. It is essentially a process of creating an imaginative frame of mind in which the audience may believe the course of events to be presented subsequently, and as such, is one of the tests of a dramatist's technical skill.

(ii) The Distinction between Method and Function
of Exposition in Drama

Exposition involves both method and function. An expository method means a device or a set of devices a dramatist employs in orienting the audience. It may mean the ingredients an entire scene or play is made up of. For example, the expository method in I.i of Hamlet includes the constant interruption of the narrative of the past by the intrusion of the Ghost and asking questions (The play significantly opens with questions. In this case, both questions and responses to them contain information bearing meaning to audience).

Expository devices may also include the use of minor characters, the use of chorus or prologue speakers, characters telling others things they already know (For example, in Hamlet, Bernardo telling Horatio about the Ghost in I.i or Horatio telling Prince Hamlet about the Ghost later in the play), use of the supernatural (such as the Ghost in Hamlet), witches and so on. In fact, a dramatist can use a number of expository methods or devices in the unfolding of the drama.

The function of exposition, on the other hand, involves the purpose the dramatic devices serve. One such purpose of exposition can be the creation of suspense or anticipation. The expository function of a scene may mean the setting up of the next scene or all subsequent scenes. It essentially means the

linking together of the scene or scenes with the rest of the drama. For example, Shakespeare's purpose in I.i of Othello is to falsify the audience's expectation about Othello, the Moor. We may wonder why Shakespeare creates this false expectation about Othello. For Shakespeare, creation of a false expectation has an important expository purpose; he uses the rest of the play to contradict this false impression created in the exposition in the opening scene.

(iii) The Purpose or Function of Exposition in Shakespearean Drama

According to William H. Fleming, the function of exposition or introduction in a Shakespearean play can be three-fold.² First, the dramatist gives his audience necessary information to prepare for the development of the plot. Events which have occurred prior to the play's action and have been the cause of it are narrated in this part of the play. The main purpose, writes Fleming, is to provide the audience material for an intelligent and vivid comprehension of the action which follows. Generally, though not in every case, for example, Shakespeare's principal characters are introduced in the opening scene. Even if they are not brought forward in person, a reference is made to them or a description is given of them by one of the minor characters. By this means, important traits of the principal characters are made

known to the audience.

Secondly, not only is the intelligence of the members of audience appealed to, but also their feelings are touched and excited. Shakespeare seems to strike the chord of emotion which invariably vibrates throughout the play. For example, The Merchant of Venice is a comedy with a tragic undertone. In I.i of this play, Shakespeare gives expression to both the sombre and the happy tones. Antonio, who has a presentiment of coming trouble, appears on the stage. Grouped around him are Salerio, Solanio, Gratiano, Lorenzo, Bassanio and the young gallants of Venice. The characters, who are jolly, careless and happy, attempt to diagnose Antonio's sadness, as Solanio says:

Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad.

(I.i.47-50)

In the second scene, Portia, who appears "a-weary of this great world" (I.ii.1), gives an amusing description of her wooers. Clearly, in these two introductory scenes, Shakespeare is able to touch the emotional chords of merriment and sadness which resound throughout the drama.

Finally, the exposition must not only be reminiscent, but also prescient or farseeing. In other words, it often gives not only necessary information about the events which have caused the action of the drama, but also lucidly foreshadows that action. The main action in Twelfth Night is Viola's effort to win Olivia for the Duke, but at the beginning of the

action, Viola herself loses her heart to him, and eventually marries him. Such an ending of the action of the comedy is clearly foreshadowed in I.iv, as Viola says: "I'll do my best / Too woo your lady. -- Yet, a barful strife / Who'er I woo, myself would be his wife."

As John Dover Wilson comments with particular reference to Shakespeare, exposition is a process of "progressive revelation,"³ as every utterance of a character brings to light an additional detail. It is also the means of giving information necessary for the understanding of what follows in a drama. Thus, exposition in a Shakespearean drama becomes an act of "bringing the audience into a state of mind receptive to the effects he next intends..."⁴ For Shakespeare, it may mean the announcement of a new character about to enter the stage for the first time, or it may mean the gradual working towards a catastrophe or climax.⁵ In fact, exposition is a varied and complex process and may be effected by one device or a number of devices or operate through the structure of an act, a whole scene or an extended dialogue. The process invariably reflects upon a play's theme, setting, atmosphere, mood, tone, characterization, inset stories, stylistic devices and so on.

In short, exposition often forms the foundation of a play. For Shakespeare, as Fleming suggests, this often means that the dramatist "foresees the end from the beginning and never loses sight of it, and in every part is conscious of all the rest..."⁶

(iv) The Exposition in I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth:
A Comparative Analysis

The following discussion is intended to achieve two major objectives: (a) to provide the rationale for the choice of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth as the focus of this study and (b) to show how Shakespeare's expository methods or devices in these three tragedies are different from, and similar to, the methods applied in any other of his plays.

(a) The Rationale for the Choice of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth as the Focus of This Study

To begin with, one reason for the choice of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth as the focus of this study is that not only were they written in a chronological sequence but also are generally considered three of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies that have much in common. Also, it was a common practice in Elizabethan drama to prepare the audience for the central figure's appearance. In keeping with this dramatic convention, the central figures in all three tragedies are missing from I.i. However, they are talked about in the scene and are indirectly introduced by other characters. In all three tragedies, Shakespeare keeps the hero off stage for sometime, while the counteraction is rising.

Further, in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, Shakespeare deals with the theme of evil. Both Othello and Macbeth are potentially good human beings but are victims of temptation. Hamlet, the hero is not subject to temptation but is one who unsuccessfully battles against evil. Also, in two of the three tragedies, there are villains in combat against others, namely, Claudius versus Hamlet, Iago versus Othello. Macbeth, on the other hand, is essentially in combat against himself.

In the expositions of all three tragedies, Shakespeare follows a particular pattern: one set of forces advances, in secret or open opposition to the others, to some decisive success, and then is driven downward to defeat by the reaction it provokes. To demonstrate how this pattern works, Shakespeare uses in the plays certain characters (e.g., the Ghost in Hamlet, Iago the villain in Othello and the three Witches in Macbeth) which carry expository implications. These characters, which provide the audience with the foreknowledge of a force destructive to the hero, link the opening scene with the rest of the drama. The Ghost, Iago and the three Witches introduced in I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, are at the root of the tragic action that follows. Furthermore, Shakespeare's intention in I.i of these plays is to make the audience aware of this set of advancing forces (of evil), while keeping the heroes unaware of it. The audience, unlike the heroes, obtains a foreknowledge of the advancing evil forces. With such a foreknowledge, they watch the development of the

events, delusions, hopes, discoveries, the right and wrong decisions of the heroes, showing reactions mixed with pleasure, apprehension and critical detachment.⁸

The audience of Shakespeare's plays not only watches what is happening on the stage at the present moment, but also is constantly looking out for what is likely to happen next. The minds of the audience are stretching forward and their "awakened interest asks for continuation and clarification."⁹ In I.i of any of his plays, the building up of impressions in the minds of the audience also includes the building up of expectations. Such expectations as are built in the opening scene may not always be fulfilled in the course of the action, and the clash between expectation and fulfillment may constitute an important source of dramatic conflict.

Similarly, in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, Shakespeare sets in motion a process of accumulating impressions, expectations and interests, and this encourages an interplay between the audience and the stage. Again, although in I.i of these three tragedies, the dramatist provides the audience with a good deal of foreknowledge, he does not inform them of everything. He leaves the audience not knowing for sure what will actually happen. William Archer writes: "...it is very largely the art of delicate and unobtrusive preparation, of helping an audience to divine whither it is going, while leaving it to wonder how it is to get there."¹⁰ This is, as Archer says, Shakespeare's technique of arousing curiosity and conjecture as to how events will develop and how certain problems raised at a play's beginning will be

resolved. Hence, in I.i, producing tension and suspense is one of the functions of exposition. An expectation is created and its fulfillment is delayed while one's interest is sustained. Such delay and suspense increase the tension inherent in a drama.

Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth have each a single plot, and in each, I.i presents a group of characters possessing certain independent interests which are different from those of the hero. In each play, the second or the third scene (or both together) are wholly devoted to the exposition of such a group of characters. In Othello, it is Iago who opens the play, and at the very outset the audience receives a strong impression of the force which later proves fatal to the hero. In Macbeth, such a force is represented by the Witches, and in Hamlet by the Ghost. Also, in all three tragedies, expositions contain numerous expressions which have ominous overtones. Such expressions significantly contribute to the development of character, theme, atmosphere and other important dramatic elements. They further point to the cause or situation from which future conflicts are likely to arise.

In I.i of some of his plays, Shakespeare may make use of such expository devices as images or ideas which become recurrent key images or ideas throughout the plays concerned. The disease imagery of I.i of Hamlet, Brabantio's superstition motif and Iago's sex imagery in I.i of Othello and the idea of equivocation in I.i of Macbeth exemplify such expository devices. These images or ideas introduced in I.i act on the audience and

create a mood of apprehension or danger about the future course of action. They help create a frame of reference in which one may more readily accept what the next scene will present. Thus, in one sense, Shakespeare tries in I.i to carry his audience into an altered imaginative mood.

Motifs, hints or suggestions introduced in I.i may be taken up later in the play. Particularly in Othello, a later act or scene may remind the audience of a motif or situation that occurred in I.i or in the early part of the play. For example, the motif of the "black devil" introduced in I.i is recurrent throughout the play. According to Marco Mincoff, the purpose of such a motif is not to arouse curiosity or anticipation but to serve as an unconscious preparation for what is to come, "making things drop into place as parts of an inevitable pattern."¹¹ A further function of such motifs or suggestions is to create "numerous echoes, correspondences, variations and repetitions which help to bind the parts of the play together and make it a living organism of which all parts are interrelated."¹²

In some of his tragedies, Shakespeare uses retrospect and foreboding as an expository device. His characters look back at what has happened and also look ahead to what may likely occur. Thus, a constant flow of thought either into the past or the future is noticeable (this is particularly true in Hamlet and Othello) and the relationship between the past and the future is of great dramatic significance. Such a use of retrospect and foreboding as an expository method (for revealing attitude and

inner meaning) forms one of the fundamental principles of composition in a Shakespearean play. It serves as an important means of linking together separate situations, of giving unity and coherence to a play, of arousing expectation and tension and of creating contrasts and parallels within the play. For example, in both Hamlet and Othello, passages about, and references to the past and the future operate as informative hints, recapitulations or visions of the future which open up new vistas and take the audience through imagination to the very core of the play.

In I.i of two of his tragedies, Shakespeare uses omens, portents and supernatural appearances as expository devices. In I.i of both Hamlet and Macbeth, there are respectively a ghost and three witches who have supernatural knowledge and who do not act as mere illusions in the minds of the characters; rather, they contribute to the actions of the plays and, hence, become an indispensable part of them. As in Macbeth, the supernatural is always placed in the closest relation to the play's protagonist and it "gives a confirmation and a distinct form to inward movements already present."¹³

In I.i of some of his plays, Shakespeare uses dramatic irony as an expository device in order to produce premonitory meanings. Such ironies may disclose themselves as deliberate forebodings as the audience watches the action. This is often a subtle and hidden form of exposition.

William H. Fleming, echoing numerous French critics, states: "The drama is preparation" and adds that in a perfectly constructed drama there is "constant and lucid foreshadowing."¹⁴ In I. i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, Shakespeare conforms to this dramatic rule by clearly foreshadowing what is likely to happen to the hero. By having Iago reveal his hatred for Othello in I.i, Shakespeare hints at the latter's destruction. In I.i of Macbeth, the senses and imagination of the audience are stirred by a thunderstorm and by supernatural alarm.¹⁵ Although the scene is comprised of merely eleven lines, its impact is so overwhelming that a second scene is needed to introduce King Duncan, the battles in Scotland and Macbeth's victory. Similarly, I.i of Hamlet clearly foreshadows the future course of action of the play.

Finally, it can be said that Shakespeare, in opening Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, uses certain dramatic devices which arrest, startle and excite the audience. In Hamlet, for example, the first appearance of the Ghost in I.i creates excitement in the audience, and Shakespeare immediately introduces a conversation which explains the state of affairs at Elsinore. The second appearance of the Ghost in the scene increases the tension and leads to a subsequent long scene which contains no action but presents almost all the dramatis personae.

I.i in all three tragedies, then, can be seen to provide an arresting, organically structured introduction to the action that follows.

(b) The Similarities and Differences in Shakespearean Exposition

How, then, are Shakespeare's expositions in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth different from, and similar to, the exposition in any other of his plays? To answer this question, we must stress the fact that it is difficult to generalize about Shakespeare's method of exposition and of establishing a relationship among the various parts of a play. No consistent principles of exposition, observes Robert F. Willson, appear to have been employed by the dramatist in the comedies, histories, tragedies or romances.¹⁶

Although Shakespeare seems to have used no common principles of exposition, a close look at the structure of the mature tragedies (particularly, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and Antony and Cleopatra) makes it evident that the dramatist improved upon the method of exposition, "moving more in the direction of foreshadowing and of symbolism and away from bare exposition." Early on, writes Willson, "he was experimenting with different ways of arousing interest handling exposition and using his stage."¹⁷ Shakespeare's own background as an actor, continues Willson, no doubt aided him "in applying the tricks of the stage in getting his dramatic enterprise underway."¹⁸ For example, Shakespeare sometimes uses a minor character who does not appear again in the play. For example, in Antony and Cleopatra, Philo serves as a prologue speaker, and as an expository device, gives an exceptionally powerful speech in

I.i of the play. The use of such a device saves the dramatist "the trouble of characterizing the speaker or of bringing on a major character to perform before he appeared in the dramatic context Shakespeare had prepared for him."¹⁹ The purpose of the speech of the prologue speaker in I.i is to invite the audience into the imaginary world of the play so that the dramatist can present a major character in the appropriate context.

Mythic figures such as ghosts and bloody men are some other devices of Shakespearean exposition. Use of such devices provides the opportunity of commencing the action without much need for elaborate explanation. Even prologues and inductions are skillfully employed by Shakespeare to provide a kind of mythic frame for the play.²⁰ This is particularly true in Romeo and Juliet.

Also, in some plays, the actions of several characters become part of a chorus supporting the main characters (e.g., Enobarbus in Antony and Cleopatra). Of all three tragedies studied in this thesis, only Hamlet has such a character. Horatio who shares some of the traits of Prince Hamlet is supportive of the latter throughout the play. Use of Horatio as an instrument of exposition has double significance. He not only connects I.i with the rest of the drama but also helps us understand the character of Prince Hamlet as the action continues. Neither in Othello nor in Macbeth does Shakespeare use such a chorus character as a means of exposition.

It was a common practice in Elizabethan drama to prepare the audience for the central figure's appearance. However, in I.i of

Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, the hero is missing (In King Lear, the other great tragedy, the hero's presence is delayed until Gloucester and Kent can comment on the ceremony about to take place). On the other hand, in the comedies and most histories the hero does appear in I.i. Again, in the Roman plays, Shakespeare frequently presents a popular view of the hero from the street before he (the latter) appears, then the citizens remain to act as audience to judge him. In the romances, the technique is varied. In Cymbeline, Posthumus and Imogen enter in I.i, while in The Winter's Tale, Leontes does not appear until I.ii. Also, in the romances, the central figure is rarely the first speaker; secondary characters always provide some preparation before he first enters the stage.

This critical analysis points to the fact that Shakespeare's expositions in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth are somewhat different from, and similar to, the expositions of his other plays. It also reveals that the method and function of exposition in the three tragedies chosen for this study have much in common.

(v) The Act and Scene Division in Shakespearean
Drama

Before embarking on an examination of the correspondence between I.i and the complete drama in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, some attention is due the act and scene division in

Shakespearean plays.

The act and scene divisions in modern editions of Shakespeare generally follow the act and scene arrangement first applied to the whole of Shakespeare's plays by Nicholas Rowe in his edition of 1709.²¹ Rowe worked on the neo-classical assumption that the division of plays into five acts was the correct and natural scheme of things. In his view, the First Folio (1623) had led the way by showing a similar concern for neo-classical regularity of act divisions of a play. Emrys Jones mentions that the editors of the Folio wanted "to emulate the dignified classical appearance of Jonson's Works, which had appeared in the year of Shakespeare's death."²²

Strangely enough, the marking of act and scene divisions by the editors of the First Folio did not extend to all plays of Shakespeare. Although the comedies in the Folio are divided into five acts, and some of them into scenes as well, the histories and tragedies are more irregular. Despite this general irregularity of act and scene divisions in the First Folio, I.i is clearly indicated in the three plays to be investigated in this study - Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth. It is worth stressing that a change of scene, in particular, is a critical moment in a Shakespearean play and is typically signaled on stage by a shift in setting, time or character(s) (that is, the exiting of all characters).

In accord with critical tradition and to facilitate reference, this study of the significance of I.i in Hamlet, Othello

and Macbeth uses the act and scene divisions of the plays as found in modern editions. More precisely, Chapters I, II and III are respectively based upon the act and scene divisions as found in H. H. Furness's edition of Hamlet (1877), M. R. Ridley's edition of Othello (1958) and Kenneth Muir's edition of Macbeth (1953).

Having provided some understanding of Shakespeare's dramatic intentions in I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, the thesis shall now examine in greater detail the correspondence between the opening scene and the complete drama in each. For this purpose, the thesis identifies Shakespeare's expository devices and examines their functions in linking the scene with the rest of the drama.

The thesis is divided into three chapters, each dealing with an individual play. Each chapter is organized in the following order: (i) a description of the exposition in I.i of a play; and (ii) an examination of the expository implications of the scene for the complete drama. The latter part is sub-divided into several sections, each describing a specific expository method or device and its function in establishing a relationship between the scene and the complete drama.

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Robert F. Willson, Shakespeare's Opening Scenes (Kansas City: the University of Missouri, 1977), p. 6.

17
Willson, p. 6.

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Willson, p. 6.

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Willson, p. 6.

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Willson, p. 4.

21
Emrys Jones, Scenic Form in Shakespeare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 66.

C. Hinman in The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968) writes that in the Globe edition of 1964 which is based on the 1709 edition by Nicholas Rowe and taken as the "standard for reference," each play is divided into acts and scenes and the consecutive lines in each scene are numbered.

Hinman adds that such act-scene divisions and the line numbers raise problems. Also, although similar act-scene

divisions are found in some Folio texts, none of the Quartos published in Shakespeare's life-time contains them, and as such, they cannot be regarded as authorial. The act and scene divisions found in the Globe edition are generally the inventions of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century editors. According to Hinman, "they tend to foster mistaken notions both of the principles by which Shakespeare constructed his plays and of the manner in which they were meant to be staged."

However, act and scene divisions are being retained by many modern editors only for such usefulness as they have until a better system of reference is available.

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Jones, p. 66.

Chapter I

Hamlet: I.i

A. Introduction

According to Maynard Mack, the pervasive atmosphere of Hamlet's world "finds its point of greatest dramatic concentration in the first act, and its symbol in the first scene."¹ Mack further writes that the great plays present us with something that can be called a world, a microcosm --a world made of people, actions, situations, thoughts and feelings that are significant and coherent. In such a world of drama, states Mack, "each part implies the other parts and lives, each means, with the life and meaning of the rest."²

The essence of Mack's comment is that the imaginative environment created in I.i. of Hamlet is representative of the environment that exists in the rest of the drama. Hence, writes Mack, I.i. of the plays is closely related to the complete drama. This necessitates an examination of the process in which Shakespeare makes the opening scene a part of the organic whole.

Therefore, this chapter shall examine the method and function of Shakespeare's exposition in I.i of Hamlet in making the scene a part of the organic whole of the drama. But first, we will provide a critical analysis of the scene in order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the expository devices and their functions in the scene.

B. I.i. of Hamlet: The Expository Details

I.i. of Hamlet, as the opening dialogue indicates, is set on the dark battlements of Elsinore Castle. Immediately the castle is recognized as the symbol of royalty, the symbol, in fact, of natural order in the Renaissance world. The castle is defended by nervous sentries. Bernardo coming on duty cries in an unusual reversal of custom: "Who's there?" (I.i.1) ³ to the guard at his post, Francisco. The series of anxious questions from these loyal sentries adds to the mood of apprehension which will be predominant in the play. When the clock strikes twelve, all the mysterious associations with midnight are aroused. Likewise, the "bitter cold" (I.i.8) has symbolic value of fear and death. The audience has no doubt that these sentries and the other two men who join them are loyal subjects. Horatio identifies them as "friends to this ground" (I.i.15) and Marcellus calls himself one of the "liegemen to the Dane" (I.i.15). Marcellus refers to Francisco as an "honest soldier" (I.i.16). The defense of the castle is, therefore, in faithful, loyal hands. As it appears, these men are representative of the defenders of the natural order. Why, then, is Francisco "sick at heart" (I.i.9)?

The scene evidently presents Horatio as a scholar who has been urged by the sentries to assess the nature of the Ghost so far referred to as a "dreaded sight" (I.i.25) which has so ⁴ frightened the men twice before. Horatio enters the scene as

the calm voice of educated reason whose skeptical utterance "tush, tush, 'twill not appear" (I.i.30) contrasts with the fear of the sentries. His humorous remark "a piece of him" (I.i.19), spoken in these frightening circumstances, reveals his quiet, wry objectivity.

In the scene, fear is doubled when a ghost appears and this reasonable man, Horatio, admits: "it harrows me with fear and wonder" (I.i.44). The surprise of the Ghost's appearance in the form of the deceased King of Denmark intensifies the horror. A king is the ultimate symbol of good and natural civilized order; he is, to the Renaissance mind, a divinely sanctioned leader. The fact that he stalks in silent misery indicates his spiritual discomfort. The ghost of a dead king forebodes a serious upheaval in the natural order, a supernatural omen of distress in the kingdom, a terrifying message from the grave.

The Ghost is impressive and awe-inspiring in his full battle dress and military bearing. Is he armed for battle against an external or internal foe? Horatio concludes: "This bodes some strange eruption to our state" (I.i.69). His use of the imagery of physical disease is significant in the scene. In the pathological sense, "eruption" refers to the individual's state of health as well as to the body politic. M. M. Mahood writes that in this conjunction of the two meanings, the public and the individual, there is a first faint sounding of the play's major theme. ⁵ Clearly this particular state in Elsinore will suffer calamity. A more generalized fear is, however, aroused by the

appearance of the Ghost. Man's primitive fear of the unknown afterworld raises universal questions about the mysteries of life and death and afterlife.

To intensify the mood of foreboding in the scene, Shakespeare introduces the military threat from Fortinbras of Norway which has caused a "sweaty haste" (I.i.77) in defense preparation in Denmark. Fortinbras is introduced as a courageous pragmatist who is determined to avenge his father's death at the hands of the late King Hamlet of Denmark, and to regain lost land with the aid of "lawless resolute" (I.i.98). With subtle economy, Shakespeare hints at essential questions: What is the nature of revenge? What constitutes justice? What is the role of the dutiful son? What is the nature of the man of action?

Significantly, it is the intellectual Horatio who refers to many evil omens from the past. The reference to the fall of Julius Caesar carries associations of tragic upheaval. The pathetic fallacy underscoring that event is referred to in vivid detail: graves released their dead who "did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets" (I.i.116). The imitative harmony of the line is effective in conveying the shrill, meaningless noises which accompanied the tragedy. The descriptive intensity of the following expression has a cumulative effect of horror:

...stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
(I.i.117-20)

The eclipse of the moon is referred to in imagery of sickness

and destruction. The dreadful omens have the double weight of referring to the death of a great leader, and of revealing the destructive upheaval in states in which evil breeds.

In the scene, the second appearance of the Ghost comes with the same breathtaking surprise as its first. Horatio courageously risks damnation in approaching the Ghost whose nature of good or evil has not yet been established. He risks all for the sake of doing good: "If there be any good thing to be done, / That may to thee do ease and grace to me..." (I.i.130-131). Then, according to the belief that ghosts disappear with the dawn, the apparition vanishes as quickly as it had appeared. This quick pace in the shifting of scenes and moods, and the maintenance of suspense, will carry through the play.

In the scene, one of the most poignant metaphors of the play is spoken by Horatio, who describes the dawn: "But look, the Morn, in russet mantle clad, / Walks o'er the dew of yon eastern hill" (I.i.166-67). The audience, through the poetic quality of the lines, is allowed the relief which comes at day break when nightmares cease. The contrast of darkness with light is significant. The mixture of terse prose and flowing verse in I.i. accurately reflects stylistic features which will be employed throughout the play.

It is the mention of young Hamlet which arouses almost as many questions as those raised by the appearance of the Ghost. The Renaissance mind would have certain expectations of this young man. As son of a dead king, he would likely be rightful

heir to the throne. The loss of his father presumes a certain degree of grief. The proven loyalty and integrity of Horatio and the sentries, and their decision to tell Hamlet of the Ghost, imply a trust and respect for a prince who is part of the natural order of the world which they defend. How will the youthful Hamlet react to the news that a ghost has appeared in the form of his father? What dreadful message may the silent Ghost have for his son? Will the unspecified evil which obviously threatens this state be overthrown by the son? In addition to these questions, those raised about Fortinbras now apply equally to Hamlet.

There is a certain ironic tone at work in this scene. The defense of the castle depends upon the courageous loyalty of mortal men; the threat of the castle, however, seems to emanate from a supernatural, not a natural, source. The intellectual reasonableness of Horatio seems insufficient to deal with the horror and evil which is foreshadowed in the opening scene.

C. Implications Arising from the Exposition
in I.i.

A close examination of I.i. of Hamlet reveals the appropriateness of Maynard Mack's remark that the pervasive atmosphere of Hamlet's world, such as its mysteriousness, "Finds... its symbol in the first scene."⁷ The atmosphere created in I.i. is, no doubt, representative of the general atmosphere of the play. In the scene, having engaged the audience's attention with utmost subtlety, Shakespeare sets the plot in motion. Now attention must be directed forward to see the significance and coherence of the issues raised in this scene as they are carried through to the conclusion of the drama.

I.i of Hamlet introduces a mood of questioning which is characteristic of the tragedy as a whole. In the opening lines of the scene, while a clock far within is tolling twelve, the audience is startled by the nervous challenge to Francisco by Bernardo. With the arrival of Horatio and Marcellus in the scene, such interrogation intensifies and the audience hears questions like "What, is Horatio there?" (I.i.19), "What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?" (I.i.21) and so on. The most abiding question in this respect is raised by Bernardo to Horatio: "What think you on't?" (I.i.55). The opening scene is full of questions and indirections. Such questioning, which produces doubt, uncertainty and mystery, and have no immediate

and specific answers, reflects upon the peculiar atmosphere of the play.

Hamlet's first soliloquy (I.ii) expresses his melancholy state of mind as well as a "world-weary tone."⁸ Such a tone is partially set in the opening scene through the interaction of questions and answers and a sense of doubt and uncertainty.

This sense of doubt and uncertainty is intensified by the equivocal mood of the characters. Throughout the play, Hamlet vacillates between rival options: either to revenge or not to revenge, whether a visitant comes from heaven or hell.⁹

Claudius turns out to be a double-dealer; indeed, so does Hamlet in his "antic disposition." Polonius is presented as an eaves-dropper and "master of palace intrigue."¹⁰ Both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet's two school-fellows, are consummate double-dealers. Foul play is suspected at every moment; in fact, foul play initiates the drama. Except between Hamlet and Horatio, there exists mutual distrust among all other characters.

I.i provides a picture of the Danish state which G. R. Elliott describes as a very organic society.¹¹ The speakers in the scene are "Friends to this ground" (I.i.15) and "liegemen to the Dane" (I.i.15) and they are taking part in a watch which is described as "strict and most observant" (I.i.71). As it appears from the scene, the nation has in its foreground the soldier and the scholar, representing opposite poles of society. Horatio, who is a patriotic scholar and works in close collaboration with the country's soldiers and citizens, is called to

advise soldiers on duty about the Ghost that has been visiting the castle.

In I.i Horatio's remarks are highly significant in the context of the play's major and minor themes. His expressions like "This bodes some strange eruption to our state" (I.i.69) and "A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye" (I.i.112) as well as his dim perception of a relation between the "mightiest Julius" (I.i.114) and the late King of Denmark indicate that tragic events are likely to take place in Denmark. He points out:

And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

(I.i.121-25)

I.i of Hamlet thus provides a cosmic background. Horatio believes that only "heaven and earth" have in some way "demonstrated" and will continue to demonstrate in the play. He makes the audience feel the presence of the heaven and the earth that have "secret influence." G. R. Elliott writes that Horatio's allusion to the death of Julius Caesar in I.i emphasizes the influence on human society of the heaven with its night and day, the stars and the sun, God, grace and justice and of the earth with its stolidity and passion, evil and lovely growths, sickness and health, hells and purgations.¹³ Elliott continues that Shakespeare's imagination has cosmic reaches and develops particularly a vision of "heaven and earth" in the opening scene.¹⁴ This sense of a cosmic vision is maintained throughout the drama.

In I.i, Shakespeare creates a mood of expectancy. He prepares the audience to be "on the watch against something unusual,¹⁵ something fearful." He shows clearly that the sentries who talk so hoarsely and breathe so tensely know or suspect something. The dramatist's purpose here is to build up, with an economy of words, a mood of expectancy at the very beginning of the scene. Robert F. Willson writes: "We learn that the Ghost has appeared twice before, and a sense of anticipation builds in the audience, expecting this third time its identity and purpose will be revealed."¹⁶ Shakespeare keeps the Ghost silent in both its entrances during the scene and creates increased "tension and incomplete release"¹⁷ which allow him to introduce more expository material like the threat from the young Fortinbras of Norway, the conditions of Fortinbras' death and the fall of Julius Caesar - facts that are considered to be linked to the appearance of the Ghost. The juxtaposition of all these details helps develop tension at this point. The dramatist also manages to shift the attention of the audience away from the sentinel's personal fear to a general concern for the state and its ruler.

Further implications of the exposition in I.i of Hamlet can be viewed respectively in terms of the Ghost, the characters of Horatio and Fortinbras, the use of recollection and anticipation, and the setting.

(i) I.i: the Ghost

The first visible sign of upheaval in the natural order of the state of Denmark is the appearance of the Ghost to the sentries. Significantly, the Ghost does not first appear to his son, but to the loyal defenders of the castle. Two aspects are important concerning the Ghost. The first is the audience's familiarity with the notion of ghosts in general. The second is this particular Ghost as a specific character, as a supernatural being with a message, as the deceased King of Denmark, and as the father of young Hamlet.

(a) The Audience's Familiarity with the Notion of Ghosts

The use of the Ghost as an expository device in Hamlet indicates Shakespeare's indebtedness to the tradition of the dramatic ghost used in literature from Aeschylus to John Marston. In such a literary tradition, the usual function of the ghost is that of a prologue; as such, it is a device which a dramatist employs in order to present the preliminary information in an "arresting fashion."¹⁸ In Hamlet, however, Shakespeare humanizes and Christianizes this conventional dramatic machinery and gives it a contemporary spiritual background. For the first time, the audience was to decide on the basis of their religious beliefs whether a stage ghost was a good spirit or an evil

one.

Since his audiences were familiar with the basic beliefs of both Protestants and Roman Catholics, Shakespeare allows them to view the Ghost from both religious points of view. Both Protestants and Catholics agreed on the following methods of testing the identity of a ghost: (a) If the ghost appears at midnight, it is considered a demon. In the popular imagination, any spirit shunning the light of day was necessarily evil. (b) Good and evil spirits could appear anywhere. Graveyards, scenes of horrible crimes, battlefields, gallows, ruined cities, old houses, castles, sites of buried treasures and mines were believed to be their favorite haunts. A ghost wants his victim alone, isolated from his fellow men. (c) Both devils and angels appear luminous to men but the light of a demon is full of shadows, flickering like the fire of Hell, whereas the light of an angel is steady, clear and dazzling like that of the sun. (d) If the voice of a ghost is rough, harsh and loud, it is a demon ; if the voice is soft, agreeable, musical, sweet-sounding and soothing, it is an angel.

In addition to the above criteria for testing the nature of a ghost, both Protestants and Catholics were familiar with the following views: ²⁰ (a) Souls returned from Purgatory ask for masses, alms, fasts, pilgrimages and prayers in order to deliver them from their pains. A purgatorial ghost might appear to warn of an impending

calamity, although this function was normally regarded as that of an angelic spirit. (b) If the Ghost speaks humbly, acknowledges sins and sheds tears and expresses groans, it is a soul returned from Purgatory. (c) Both Protestants and Catholics would suspect a ghost was a demon if it vanished when charged to speak in the name of God, if it appeared in a light suggesting the fires of Hell, or if it incited to vice and expressed anger and malice.

Most Protestant members of the audience would probably have been aware of many tests with which their church did not agree. Even skeptics who doubted the appearance of ghosts were familiar with the ghost-lore. The Catholic traditions were not yet totally destroyed and they were well known to people because of the heated debate over ghosts. Hamlet's contemporary audience must have been familiar with the multiple tests that have been discussed.

Shakespeare's treatment of the Ghost in I.i of Hamlet indicates both Protestant and Catholic suspicions about an apparition. The dramatist does not identify the audience's responses to it as either purely Catholic or Protestant. No one in the scene takes the Ghost to be the true soul of the dead King of Denmark. However, the predominant view seems to be Protestant. Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo consistently refer to the Ghost as "it," not as the soul of the King himself, but as a spirit whose identity is in doubt. When Marcellus asks if this "thing" has appeared again, his

question seems to indicate the Protestant awareness that the Ghost cannot be the actual King.²¹ Again, when Horatio says to the Ghost, "Stay, illusion" (I.i.127), the scholar seems to doubt that it is the soul of the late King. It appears to them as a phenomenon whose nature has to be determined.

It has been noted earlier that the Roman Catholics believe that Purgatory souls and good spirits are spirits of peace, speak humbly, acknowledge and lament their own sins and pray for relief.²² But the Ghost in I.i of Hamlet frowns as had the late King of Denmark once when he was angry with the Polacks (I.i.62-63). Horatio notices that the Ghost of King Hamlet is also in arms and bears a truncheon: "Such was the very armour he had on / When he the ambitious Norway combated;..." (I.i.60-61). It seems probable that Shakespeare's audience believed that armed spirits were demons.²³

After the second appearance of the Ghost in I.i, Horatio decides to step courageously into its path, trying to stop its movement. Fechter infers that Horatio makes the sign of the cross at which the Ghost stops, as a Catholic ghost should.²⁴ Catholics believed that the sign of the cross was an absolute protection against evil spirits.

Although the characters in the scene seem to be predominantly Protestant in their views, Shakespeare further leaves a hint that would encourage the Catholic to consider that the Ghost comes from

Purgatory. Such a hint becomes prominent when Horatio urges the Ghost: "Speak to me; / If there be any good thing to be done / That may to thee do ease and grace to me,..." (I.i.129-31). Horatio's speech suggests the probable Catholic view that ghosts might be "spirits of the departed, allowed to return from Purgatory for some special purpose, which it was the duty of the pious to further if possible, in order that the wandering soul might find rest."²⁵

In his treatment of the Ghost in Hamlet, then, Shakespeare has made use of the current religious views on ghosts and spirits as well as of popular superstitions concerning them. To the Elizabethans, a ghost was a matter of reality and the nature and origin of wandering spirits gave rise to serious questions. Shakespeare's use of the Ghost in Hamlet and other plays reflects popular current concerns. In fact, the use of such popular views partly accounts for the special popularity of the play to the audience. W. J. Lawrence writes that early stage conventions dealing with the supernatural were based upon popular beliefs; otherwise, they would never have been acceptable to or understandable by the audience.²⁶

(b) Further Implications of the Appearance of
the Ghost in I.i

Having examined the popular notions concerning ghosts, it is necessary to look at the Ghost in Hamlet as a

dramatically convincing character whose expository function in I.i is of vital importance to the play in regard to plot, theme and, especially, the character of Prince Hamlet.

I.i reveals that this apparition is the ghost of the late King of Denmark. Later, the truth of his identity is confirmed. Shakespeare emphasizes the soldierly appearance of the Ghost; the characters recollect his courageous deeds in battle. The Ghost is a symbol of the ideal King whose qualities of courage, intelligence and ruthlessness ensure the ordered loyalty and stability of his kingdom.

The Ghost's message provides the motive for the entire plot. The Ghost tells his son he had been murdered; regicide implies the ultimate destruction of the natural order within a royal dynasty. Furthermore, King Hamlet was murdered by his own brother, Claudius, who later admits that his sin has "the primal eldest curse upon't, / A brother's murder" (III.iii.37-38). Such a violent betrayal of family relationships is intensified by the incestuous marriage of Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, and her brother-in-law, Claudius. Indeed, it is Hamlet's effort to accomplish the extraordinarily difficult task of avenging his father's murder without harming his mother that the play is centered upon. The theme of loyalty and betrayal within the natural order of the family is further developed through a comparison with Polonius' family, and with the filial duty of Fortinbras. Hamlet's comparison of his father to

Hyperion, the sun-god and the model of beauty, and Claudius to the half-man-half-animal satyr (I.ii.140), symbolizing uncontrolled sexual desires, is an apt expression of the contrast between good and evil, between the god-like and the bestial within the family.

The encounter between the Ghost of the late King and his son Hamlet invites a comparison of the two characters. That young Hamlet possesses the same nobility of character as his father is emphasized on several occasions. Ophelia understands Hamlet's nobility as she sums up his qualities in these lines:

The courtier's scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue,
sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
(III.i.151-54)

Likewise, Fortinbras echoes these soldierly virtues of Hamlet:

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royal...
(V.ii.382-85)

Horatio sums up the tragic waste of Hamlet's noble qualities: "Now cracks a noble heart" (V.ii.346).

That King Hamlet was ruthless in the defense of his kingdom is explicitly stated in I.i of the play. Young Hamlet's ruthlessness is seen in his recognition of the treachery of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and later in his justification of sending them to their deaths. His implied

opinion that Ophelia weakly succumbs to her father's plots may partly explain his ruthless, brutal treatment of her.

The introduction of the Ghost in I.i of Hamlet has other implications which lead significantly to an understanding of the character of Prince Hamlet. The silent suffering of the Ghost alerts the audience to the essentially silent suffering of Hamlet. The first time the audience sees him, Hamlet is withdrawn in a gloomy cloud, wrapped in black clothing. His isolation, except for the friendship of Horatio, is part of his tragedy. He cannot share his burden with his mother, for she is part of the problem and must not be harmed according to the instruction of his father's Ghost. Ophelia cannot be an equal partner to Hamlet; she seems to be left behind in childhood while Hamlet struggles with an almost unbearable burden. Hamlet insists that all witnesses of the Ghost's appearance swear an oath of secrecy; this eliminates help from his loyal courtiers in effecting revenge.

The silent suffering of the Ghost also symbolizes a spiritual suffering. King Hamlet reveals that he had died without the sacraments of the church:

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head...
(I.v.76-79)

Young Hamlet's spiritual suffering originates during the encounter with the Ghost who hovers as a messenger from death to life. The mystery of dying is a universal concern expressed by Hamlet in his first soliloquy of anguish and despair:

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!...
(I.ii.129-32)

The most famous of the soliloquies "To be, or not to be" occurs in III.i.56-89. Hamlet considers and abandons the idea of suicide. It is the universal, meditative quality of this passage which reflects the depth of Hamlet's spirituality. His acute awareness of spiritual consequences thwarts his one opportunity to kill Claudius (III.iii.73-98).

There is a suggestiveness about the Ghost which alludes to so much of Hamlet's behavior. The mysterious quickness of the Ghost's appearance and disappearance points to Hamlet's impetuosity and his great agility in shifting swiftly from mood to mood. His feigned madness, his teasing of Polonius, the brutal verbal attack on Ophelia, the humorous baiting of Osric, his swift alteration of the play, the impetuous killing of Polonius and the dramatic encounter with his mother are all examples of his impulsive nature. It is, however, the mystery of the Ghost in I.i which alludes to the essential mystery of Hamlet's complex personality revealed later in the play.

(ii) I.i: Horatio

Like the Ghost, the introduction of the character of Horatio in I.i has important expository implications for the rest of the play. Horatio is Hamlet's confidant and makes remarks along the

way which have value as explanations of what is happening. He is the "spokesman for the audience" and the dramatist is an "invisible magician" speaking only indirectly through him.²⁷

In many of his tragedies, Shakespeare chooses a character to be close to the protagonist. Such a character is a man of less magnificence than the hero but also without his shortcomings, and a man of less genius but greater balance of character.²⁸ He is also remarkable in the play's setting for his loyalty, soundness of judgment and humanity. He is the individual who represents the norm of human conduct at its best. Through the boundless good sense and loving concern of these men, Shakespeare points out the flaws or excesses of his gifted heroes. In Hamlet, it is Horatio who is drawn as a learned man, of an even disposition, truly just and honorable and not easily moved by passion.

I.i of Hamlet clearly presents Horatio as a chorus character.²⁹ From the beginning, his voice is one of sanity and judgment. He is politely skeptical about the existence of ghosts and says: "Tush, tush, 'twill not appear" (I.i.30). He is rational but does not push his rationality to the point of fanaticism. As soon as the Ghost of the deceased Hamlet appears, he says, ending his skepticism: "Before my God, I might not this believe / Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes." (I.i.56-58) Although Horatio initially doubts the existence of ghosts, good sense urges him to accept the evidence.³⁰ Throughout the play, his quiet voice urges rationality and moderation upon anyone to whom he speaks. As will be shown later, Horatio's

remarks, from his initial doubts about the Ghost to comments on the death-warrant that Hamlet forged, indicate his poignant and objective critical acumen.

In fact, Horatio is "the perfect balance of 'blood and judgment.'" ³¹ The Elizabethans believed physical and mental health to be a balance of four bodily humors. Horatio's quiet poise suggests that Shakespeare in this "play of secret passions and dark deeds" uses him as a foil to Claudius, Gertrude, Laertes and, especially Hamlet. ³² His bodily humors and consequent mental state are balanced and he personifies moderation as the essence of human virtue. He is also selfless and arguably one of the noblest of Shakespeare's male characters. Quite characteristically, when the queen dreads having to see Ophelia in her madness, Horatio reminds her that "there are more ³³ important considerations than her own thinness of skin."

Horatio is a man of few words and in his friendship with Hamlet, he does not need many words. When Hamlet tries to express affection towards him, he interrupts the former's speech to show that he needs no reassurance:

Ham.

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Hor.

O, my dear lord, --
(III.ii.49-51)

Horatio is loyal to the Prince and quite subordinates himself to his royal friend. The Elizabethans could not conceive of such a friendship in any other way since birth and station ruled ³⁴ society.

However, Horatio never fears to disagree with his friend. When Hamlet quarrels with Laertes at Ophelia's grave, Horatio murmurs: "Good my lord, be quiet" (V.i.253). Hamlet reacts to the insensitivity of the grave-digger who cheerfully sings while shovelling up a skull (V.i.64). Horatio answers him: "Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness" (V.i.65). Hamlet quickly catches the gentle reproof implied by his friend and acknowledges his thoughtlessness in this regard: "'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense" (V.i.66). When Yorick's skull creates a train of gloomy thoughts in Hamlet, Horatio gently tells him that there is neither intellectual nor spiritual profit in indulging the mind in morbid speculations (V.i.194). Horatio implies that it is "part of wisdom to recognize as insoluble the mysteries of life and death, and not to dissipate the health of the mind in attempting to answer the unanswerable."³⁵ The traits of Horatio's character found in the opening scene remain consistent throughout the play. Horatio survives as a perfectly balanced and admirable man even at the end of the tragedy and contributes significantly to the cathartic process.

It is evident that Horatio as scholar represents a mode of behavior sharply contrasting with that of Hamlet. It has been noted that I.i presents Horatio as a scholar among soldiers and a skeptic among the superstitious. The conflict of belief shown in the exchanges between the scholar and the soldiers anticipates

the dilemma with which Hamlet is faced later in the play. Although Horatio and the soldiers know what to do when they encounter the Ghost, ending their conflict of opinion, Hamlet spends his time throughout the play procrastinating in forging a plan of action. Thus, the decisiveness which Horatio demonstrates both illuminates and contrasts with what Robert F. Willson terms "Hamlet's psychic struggle."³⁶

In I.i, Horatio's view that the Ghost's warlike attire is troubling to "the mind's eye" (I.i.112) clearly indicates the predominance of the imagery of disease that plagues the mind more than the body.³⁷ In III.iii, Claudius describes his offense mainly in terms of its effect on his "limed soul, that struggling to be free / Art more engaged!" (III.iii.68-69). And, although Hamlet's madness is feigned, the role similarly suggests a diseased mind. Horatio's observation "A mote...to trouble the mind's eye" in I.i of the play foreshadows Claudius' act³⁸ of poisoning his brother and Hamlet's own troubled mind. Such disease imagery is common in the play. Later Ophelia becomes insane as a result of Hamlet's rashness and her own vulnerability. Laertes' poisoning of the rapier to kill Hamlet, and the cup of poison, intended for the Prince but drunk by the Queen, are other examples of sickness.

As it has been stated earlier, Horatio's allusion to the fall of Julius Caesar in I.i of Hamlet further forecasts the ominous end to Claudius' reign. The allusion establishes a central motif of the play: "...the accidents of tragedy are set

in an inexorable pattern."

Horatio's imagery in I.i, as well as in the rest of the tragedy, demonstrates his classical scholarship. When he recalls "the most high and palmy state of Rome" in the scene, his description of the events which took place at the time of the assassination of Julius Caesar is obviously full of images that exhibit the spirit of the classical world. ⁴⁰ And at the end of the play, Horatio indicates his intention to commit suicide through reference to his being "more an antique Roman than a Dane"(V.ii.328) which indirectly corroborates his noble stature.

(iii) I.i: Fortinbras

Within some one hundred lines of I.i in Hamlet, Shakespeare introduces the theme of the old conflict between Denmark and Norway and thereby the character of young Fortinbras.

In fact, Fortinbras and Hamlet never meet during the play, although both of them are mentioned in I.i. But Claudius' business with Norway concerning Fortinbras is subsequently mentioned in I.ii, and II.ii. Thereafter, Fortinbras is allowed to be forgotten until his first appearance in IV.iv, and his final appearance in V.ii, immediately after the death of Hamlet.

The theme relating to Fortinbras, introduced in I.i, has some structural implications for the play. Fortinbras and his army's advance in IV.iv is intended to establish a contrast to the audience. Fortinbras is daring, honorable and decisive, whereas

Hamlet is a procrastinator. Hamlet himself seems to recognize this contrast when he says:

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge!...
Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
 ...Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?

(IV.iv.32-65)

Fortinbras and his soldiers, who are referred to in I.i and actually seen in IV.iv, seem to provoke Hamlet to renew his efforts to seek revenge on Claudius for a cause of greater importance. Fortinbras' decisive nature changes Hamlet from a wavering man to one more mature in thought and ready for action. Fortinbras, whose uncle is the present ruler of Norway, is the dead king's son and heir to the throne. He feels that the land lost to Denmark by his father should be restored, just as Hamlet realizes that he should avenge his father's death. Hamlet's speech quoted above suggests that he wishes to undertake his duty at the same time Fortinbras undertakes his. Both Hamlet and Fortinbras accomplish their missions; Hamlet destroys evil, while Fortinbras recovers his lands and offers himself as the new king of Denmark. Fortinbras, thus, stands for the rebirth of

order. Furthermore, although Fortinbras "looks on his mission as part of his duty to a father slain," his uncle commands that he abandon the Danish expedition.⁴² The acceptance of the command as in the case of Fortinbras symbolizes an assertion of moral law, although it apparently blunts his original purpose. However, this act of submission is "parallel to the final submission" of Hamlet to the will of God.⁴³

Hamlet can be divided into two parts.⁴⁴ The first part consists of I.i through IV.iv; the second part of the play is IV.v through V.ii. It is notable that Shakespeare, for structural purposes, makes Fortinbras appear at the end of each of these two parts. It is peculiar that Hamlet misses meeting Fortinbras in each of the appearances.

(iv) I.i: Recollection and Anticipation

In Hamlet in particular and the history plays in general, Shakespeare seems to demonstrate "how the past grows into the present and leads on to the future."⁴⁵ An unfulfilled past necessitates fulfillment in the future, while guilt from the past casts its shadow over the present and the future. Especially in the histories, the heroes are carried along by the current of history that flows from the past towards the future and to some extent, it is they who guide this current. In these plays, the protagonists are never allowed to forget that they stand between

a remembered past and an anticipated future.

As noted in the general introduction to the thesis, Shakespeare uses the device of "recollection" and "anticipation" in some of his great tragedies. His use of such an expository device in I.i of Hamlet has implications for the remainder of the play. The appearance of the Ghost in I.i prompts Horatio's narration of a past event in which the late King Hamlet slew Old Fortinbras of Norway who was also forced to sign a treaty to give up conquered lands. Horatio states that for this reason the son of the Norwegian King is preparing to wage war against the present King of Denmark:

Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't; Which is no other
As it doth appear unto our state
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost...

(I.i.95-104)

By informing the audience of an existing military threat to Denmark and of the cause of such a possible invasion, I.i of Hamlet thus provides an expository inset⁴⁷ that has implications for the remainder of the play.

By recalling the hostility between King Hamlet and the King of Norway, and the enterprise of young Fortinbras, Horatio not only links the Ghost's appearance with the historic past of "our last King," but also with another past by recalling the forebodings that had occurred before the fall of Julius Caesar. In this, we see

how a "double past" foreshadows the future. The dramatic effect of these repeated digressions into the past is considerable. The memory of far and near pasts temporarily diverts attention from what is imminent. Such a deviation also serves as indirect exposition by heightening the tension and the sense of anticipation. For example, the passage in which Horatio describes the happenings in Rome before the fall of Caesar has an expository purpose as it foreshadows a similar future happening. Also, these insets in I.i of Hamlet, writes Wolfgang Clemen, are the "devices by which Shakespeare transports us for a moment from the dramatic present into a remote past or a remote future, building up, as it were, a second plane of reference, an imaginative background behind the foreground of the play on the stage."⁴⁸

Hamlet, among all the tragedies, is the play in which Shakespeare has made the most striking use of the past and the future. The narrative of the Ghost is an exposition which tells of an antecedent action of the play. The immediate effect of the Ghost's disclosures to Hamlet is particularly noticeable. The revelation, in fact, becomes the turning point of Hamlet's whole life and the motivating cause of all his future actions. This past is more than a reported event because it is represented in the figure of the Ghost who is a witness of the past and who supervises the future actions of Hamlet. The questions, doubts and uncertainties which are created by the appearance of the Ghost in I.i prepare the audience for the events that follow.

The Ghost, in fact, is a supreme example of the way in which the past and the future may be brought together. Hamlet himself shows a peculiar relationship towards the past and the future. Through his keen memory, he precisely recalls scenes and pictures of the past: the burial of his father, his mother's apparently happy relationship with his father and his father's figure, all of which have a direct impact on his present situation. The Ghost's commands of "remember" (I.v.91) and "revenge" (I.v.25) remain always at the back of his mind.⁴⁹ The tension between "remember" which points to the past and "revenge" which points to the future causes Hamlet's delay and procrastination and provides the source of conflict in the play. In this tension between the past and the future lies the structural principle of the whole play.

(v) I.i: the Setting

Hamlet is a drama of diplomacy and palace intrigue that demands the sophisticated setting of a contemporary Renaissance court consisting of royal, military and diplomatic figures. To fulfill this demand, Shakespeare changed the play from the crude barbarism of the Ur-Hamlet to the comparatively advanced culture of the Elizabethan Age. But, although the dramatist ignores the historical perspectives of Denmark, he takes into consideration the local color of geography.

Like other issues discussed so far, the setting of I.i of Hamlet is also representative of the play. I.i indicates that the setting is Denmark. In fact, a number of Danish characteristics are noticeable in this scene as well as in the rest of the play. Most critics agree that such characteristics have been introduced in order to create a suitable background for the protagonist who is a Danish prince. According to Gunnar Sjogren, Shakespeare takes into account not only the actual conditions in Denmark of the time but also the Elizabethan view of these conditions.⁵⁰

Shakespeare probably had "the prevalent notion among literary men of the severe cold prevailing in the Northern countries."⁵¹ It was a popular belief that in Denmark the cold weather was difficult to endure. In I.i of Hamlet, Francisco's remark "'tis bitter cold" (I.i.8) reminds the audience of this view of the Danish climate. This impression of Denmark's cold climate is maintained throughout the play. In I.iv, as he comes out of the battlements in the middle of the night, Hamlet remarks: "The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold" (I.iv.1). In his response, Horatio confirms Hamlet's view of the existing weather condition: "It is a nipping and an eager air" (I.iv.2).

In I.i, Shakespeare makes use of a peculiar Danish expression. In response to Bernardo's question "What, is Horatio there?" (I.i.18), Horatio answers: "A piece of him" (I.i.19). The reply seems to be a joke on the part of Horatio as well as reflecting one of the shibboleths of the craft guild in Denmark.⁵² In early seventeenth-century Denmark, a wandering journeyman, on entering

a workshop while looking for a job, had to wait by the door. The master of the workshop would probably ask "Fremder Nabelschmied?" (Is the stranger a nailsmith?) to which the answer should be "Ein stuck davon" which means "a piece of one."⁵³ Laurits Pederson writes that this particular popular expression used in craft guilds seems to have been known from Denmark to Switzerland and may be the point of Horatio's feeble joke that craftsmen among the members of the audience at the Globe Theatre could well have relished such a "catch-phrase."⁵⁴

In I.i, Horatio's remark on the martial appearance and mood of the Ghost indicates an incorrect conception presented by Shakespeare that Poland had a common border with Denmark since he mentions that Hamlet's father went to fight "the sledded Polacks on the ice." Later in the play, in his interview with Reynaldo, Polonius says: "Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris"⁵⁵ (II.i.7). The word "Danskers" in Polonius' speech indeed suggests a touch of Danish local color in the play. But at this time "Danskers" did not mean the Danes but the Danzigers.⁵⁶ In fact, Danzig was known as Dansk in Polish and this may have caused some confusion. Seamen and merchants were aware that "Dansk" was just another name for Danzig. However, Shakespeare like many other Englishmen probably had the mistaken notion that "Dansk" was just another name for Denmark. In addition, this Dansk or Denmark was believed to be situated on the borders of Poland. Shakespeare appears to have thought that "Danskers" were Danes and that Poland bordered on Denmark.⁵⁷ This makes plausible the mention in I.i that the

protagonist's father went to fight "the sledded Polacks on the ice" (I.i.63).

The invasion scare introduced in I.i indicates the realistic Danish background of Hamlet. In response to Marcellus' question regarding Denmark's preparations for war, Horatio mentions that the young Fortinbras, nephew and heir to the present king of Norway, is likely to invade Denmark in order to regain lost territory.

Possibly Shakespeare as well as other Englishmen had the misconception that it was Norwegian territory one could see across the "Sound" from Elsinore and that at any moment the Norwegian army might try to take the castle by a surprise attack.⁵⁸ In IV.iv of the play, Hamlet meets Fortinbras' men on his way from the castle to harbor. The stage direction found in some modern editions indicates that the place where Hamlet encounters the advancing army of Fortinbras is a "plain in Denmark." This idea of the proximity of Fortinbras' army to the Danish palace at Elsinore justifies the Danish fear about a Norwegian invasion that could take place at any time. Hamlet's encounter with Fortinbras' army soon after his departure from Elsinore could suggest that Shakespeare had a misconception about Norway's location in relation to Denmark. Hamlet opens and also ends at the palace at Elsinore. Shakespeare makes Hamlet a royal prince, son of the late king and nephew to the present king of Denmark. At that time, Denmark and Elsinore were well known in England.

Throughout the play, Shakespeare appears to have been careful to maintain this Danish setting. The name of the country which appears in I.i is mentioned no fewer than twenty-two times. The Queen's name "Gertrude" is typically Danish and is mentioned fourteen times in the play. The names of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern also appear to be typically Danish.

In III.iv, Hamlet asks his mother: "Look here, upon this picture, and on this, / The counterfeit presentment of two brothers" (III.iv.53-54). Hamlet draws his mother's attention to the portraits of his deceased father and his uncle Claudius. It has been argued that the portraits of kings in the closet scene were meant to call to mind the suits of tapestries in the Great Chamber of Kronborg showing portraits of a hundred Danish kings, both historic and legendary.⁵⁹

Some of Shakespeare's contemporaries may have had some superficial personal knowledge about Denmark and the Danish customs and traditions. Such Elizabethans probably included sailors and merchants engaged in the Baltic trade, and scribes, gentlemen and servants accompanying the English ambassadors to the Danish court. Also, Shakespeare had some other opportunities to obtain information about Denmark. From 1579, English musicians were regularly attached to the Danish court and Laurits Pederson writes that four such musicians accompanied the Danish ambassador Henrik Ramel on a short trip to London in 1586.⁶⁰ The same year a troupe of five English entertainers, two of whom subsequently became members of Shakespeare's company,

visited Elsinore. Furthermore, renowned English lutanists Daniel Norcome and John Dowland stayed and performed at the court of King Christian IV (of Denmark) as part of cultural exchanges between Denmark and England.⁶¹

With such details regarding the country gathered from various sources, Shakespeare attempts to locate the action of the play in Denmark. Although some of the details he presents are not historically or geographically accurate, the picture of Denmark that Shakespeare has drawn is dramatically convincing.

Shakespeare's picture of Denmark emphasizes a Danish court which is spiced with Elizabethan political philosophy and contemporary English views of Denmark. This setting is, in a large part, established through expository details given in I.i and it is maintained throughout the drama.

D. Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 has examined the significance of I.i of Hamlet in five main areas: the mood, tone and atmosphere of the play; the figure of the Ghost; the characters of Horatio and Fortinbras; the dramatic devices of recollection and anticipation; and the setting. Each of these areas has implications for the whole drama. From the beginning, the atmosphere is one of doubt and uncertainty. The Ghost of Hamlet's father is fundamental in establishing the play's mystery, and its appearance sets the plot in motion. Horatio, Hamlet's closest friend, is the voice of "reason" and his comments are important as explanations of what happens in the drama. For example, his reference to Fortinbras in the opening scene clearly introduces the brash Prince of Norway as a character foil to Hamlet. At the same time, the recollection of the battle between Hamlet's father and Old Fortinbras is linked with the Ghost's visitation, which, in turn, anticipates the conflict between Hamlet and Claudius. Finally, Shakespeare's rendering of a sophisticated Danish court full of political maneuvering and palace intrigue provides a suitable setting for the unfolding of the tragedy.

These five areas collectively function to give shape and meaning to I.i of Hamlet, which in turn, again to cite Maynard Mack, "implies... and lives... with the life and meaning" of the complete drama.

Notes to Chapter I

1

Maynard Mack, "The World of Hamlet," The Yale Review, 41, No. 4 (1952), 502-23.

2

Mack, "The World Of Hamlet," p. 502.

3

All quotations from Hamlet are from H. H. Furness's edition of the play (1877; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963).

4

Martin Holmes in The Guns of Elsinore (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), p. 57, writes that Horatio has been brought along as an observer since the soldiers want to have their evidence corroborated by an independent observer -- a civilian, a scholar, an educated man who may be expected to know how to deal with apparitions.

5

M. M. Mahood. Shakespeare's Word-play (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 113.

6

Shakespeare here takes advantage of two eclipses of the moon which occurred in 1598, to the great alarm of the superstitious.

7

Mack, "The World of Hamlet," p. 514.

8

Harry Levin. The Question of Hamlet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 31.

9

Levin, p. 48.

10

Levin, p. 51.

11

G. R. Elliott. Scourge and Minister: A Study of Hamlet as Tragedy of Revengefulness and Justice (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965), p. 6.

12

T. S. Dorsch in his edition of Julius Caesar (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1955), pp. vii-xii, writes that the play, which was most probably written early in the year 1599, was first published in the First Folio of 1623. Quoting Platter, he states that the play was staged in the new Globe Theatre in the autumn of 1599. According to him, Julius Caesar was undoubtedly a popular play that made strong impressions upon the audiences. Hamlet was written between 1598 and 1602. The story of Julius Caesar was still fresh in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote Hamlet. Therefore, it is understandable that Horatio in I.i of Hamlet recalls the ominous happenings that took place in Rome before the fall of Caesar, while speculating on the present omens in Denmark. In fact, there are numerous references to Julius Caesar in Hamlet and some points of correspondence between the two plays can easily be established.

13

Elliott, p. 7

14

Elliott, p. 7

15

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Shakespeare's Workmanship
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), p. 133.

16

Willson, p. 119.

17

Willson, p. 119.

18

Wilson, p. 56.

19

Eleanor Prosser. Hamlet and Revenge (London: Oxford
University Press, 1967), p. 102.

20

Prosser, pp. 108-116.

21

Prosser, p. 118.

22

Prosser, p. 116.

23

Prosser, p. 120.

24

Quoted by Prosser, p. 121.

25

Wilson, p. 62.

26

W. J. Lawrence. Shakespeare's Workshop (New York:
Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928), p. 129.

27

Arthur Colby Sprague. Shakespeare and the Audience (New
York: Russell & Russell, 1966), pp. 244-45.

28

Bernard Grebanier. The Heart of Hamlet (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1960), p. 294.

29

Sprague, p. 209, writes: "A chorus character is one of the dramatis personae -- often not a principal -- who sums up a number of episodes in the play or whose remarks have obvious appropriateness as an interpretation of the play as a whole." A chorus character's interpretation may be regarded as the author's clue to how the play is to be taken. However, such interpretation is not necessarily personal; rather, it is artistic. A principle of Shakespearean dramatic technique is that the audience should always be kept informed of what is going on in the play. Therefore, the importance of the chorus character is undeniable. A chorus character is not dependent on either the length or the dignity of his role and he is often kept removed emotionally from the main conflict. In Hamlet, Horatio plays such a role.

30

Wilson, pp. 60-78, provides a detailed description of contemporary popular beliefs in spirits. He identifies Marcellus as representing the Catholic view, Horatio as a disciple of Reginald Scot and, as such, a skeptic, and Hamlet as a Protestant. Prosser, pp. 118-42, supports Wilson's views regarding such contemporary beliefs in spirits.

31

John W. Draper. The Hamlet of Shakespeare's Audience (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 31.

32

Draper, p. 31.

33

Draper, p. 31.

34

Draper, p. 30.

35

Draper, p. 31.

36

Willson, p. 112.

37

Willson, p. 112.

38

Willson, p. 113.

39

Willson, p. 117.

40

Mikhail M. Morozov. "Individualization of Shakespeare's Characters," Shakespeare Survey, 2 (1949), 83-106.

41

Irving Ribner. Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 87.

42

Maurice Francis Egan. The Ghost in Hamlet and Other Essays in Comparative Literature (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1906), p. 37.

43

Ribner, p. 87.

44

Jones, p. 80.

45

Clemen, p. 126

46

Bradley, p. 10.

47

Francis Berry (The Shakespeare Inset: Word and Picture (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 117) writes that Hamlet is "compact of Insets, salient or recessive" and that these insets connect with each other.

48

Clemen, p. 138.

49

Also notice the line "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" (I.v.25).

50

Gunnar Sjogren. "The Danish Background in Hamlet," Shakespeare Studies, 4 (1968), 221-30.

51

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet" p. 227.

52

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 226.

53

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 226.

54

Quoted by Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 226.

55

H. H. Furness, in his edition of Hamlet (p. 118) writes that Polonius' reference to "Danskens" (II.i.8) implies that "Danske" stands for Denmark.

56

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 225.

57

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 225.

58

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 225.

59

Quoted by Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet,"

pp. 224-25.

60

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 228.

61

Sjogren, "The Danish Background in Hamlet," p. 228.

Chapter II

Othello: I.i

A. Introduction

Here two figures meet as if in the dark to talk scandal and secrets. It is a quiet, mysterious beginning: dramatic interest is coiled up, like a spring, in their whisperings.

1
John Russell Brown

John Russell Brown's statement points to the expository significance of I.i of Othello. It also invites an investigation into the scene's impact for the rest of the drama. Therefore, like Chapter I, this chapter shall identify the expository devices and examine what correspondence they establish between I.i and the complete drama in Othello.

Both the major and the minor settings of the play shall be examined in order to illustrate their expository significance and how they account for the play's popularity in Shakespeare's time. The significance of the expository insets which are either directly narrated or hinted at in the scene shall be discussed.

In addition, Iago's language, which creates an atmosphere of bestiality and subversion in I.i leading to the total collapse of Othello's language, manliness and other human qualities later in

the play, shall be examined. Further, this chapter shall study the exposition of the characters of Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio in I.i and its implications for the drama. Some recurrent patterns and motifs introduced in the scene shall be discussed with a view to determining their significance for the general patterns and motifs in the tragedy. Finally, the chapter shall focus on how Shakespeare in I.i creates an ironic spirit which induces the audience to expect the tragic end of the story.

But first, a critical analysis of I.i shall be provided in order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the method and function of exposition in Othello.

B. I.i of Othello: The Expository Details

I.i of Othello occurs in a street of Venice. The scene, which starts with a conversation between Roderigo and Iago, introduces with utmost vividness facts that are essential to the plot. As soon as Roderigo and Iago enter the stage, Roderigo complains about Iago, and the latter is "seething and incoherent with anger at Othello."² Almost immediately, Iago expresses the cause of his fury and the motives for his hatred of the Moor, and, thus, sets the plot in motion.

In his opening speech, Roderigo's allusion to "this" (I.i.3) provides a vague hint about something that has occurred and affected him personally.³ Through Iago's second speech, Shakespeare introduces another issue of great dramatic consequence in regard to the villain's grievances, and this, in turn, awakens curiosity and stimulates the interest of the audience in the developing plot. Shakespeare intensifies our curiosity even more by not immediately satisfying it. The mystery and vagueness of many of the references in this opening exchange between Iago and Roderigo, help to qualify the scene as occurring at night -- a fact which alerts the audience to the dubious motives of Iago.

As the conversation between Roderigo and Iago continues, the audience is informed that Iago hates the Moor: "Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate" (I.i.7). Iago responds: "Despise me if I do not" (I.i.8). A fact of great dramatic significance is

divulged to the audience. Iago then proceeds to put forward certain reasons for which he apparently hates the Moor so far referred to as "him" (I.i.8). In the speech that follows, Shakespeare begins to expose Iago's character, and indicates that the latter's jealousy of Cassio's promotion to lieutenant is at the root of his hatred of Othello.

The opening scene further reveals the fact that Roderigo is a rejected suitor of Desdemona and bears hatred to the Moor because the latter has succeeded where he had failed. Iago's final speech in the scene points to the drama of the Cyprus wars and Othello's importance to the state of Venice in such wars against the Turks. With utmost rapidity, Shakespeare informs the audience of the circumstances that lead to the unfolding action of the play.

Like the mutiny and marriage night at Cyprus (II.iii) and the last scenes of the tragedy, Shakespeare introduces the first scene at night, and emphasizes its secretive effect by making Iago and Roderigo whisper to each other. Significantly, the identities of the characters are withheld for the time being. Roderigo is not identified until line 56. Othello, the protagonist, is mentioned in line 32 as "his worship"⁴ but only obliquely. Moreover, no clue is provided concerning "this" (I.i.3) and "such a matter" (I.i.5), to which Roderigo and Iago refer in their initial speeches, until line 167. In order to appreciate the dramatic effect of such pointed dialogue, the audience is forced to listen with earnest attention.

After line 164, the atmosphere of quietness suddenly changes, giving rise to excitement in the speaker (Brabantio): "How didst thou know 'twas she? (O thou deceivest me / Past thought!) What said she to you? Get more tapers, / Raise all my kindred,..." (I.i.165-67) The audience recalls Iago's "Do, with like timorous accent, and dire yell, / As when, by night and negligence the fire / Is spied in populous cities" (I.i.75-77). These are provocative remarks that have already introduced a rowdy atmosphere in the middle of the scene. Although this rowdiness is followed by a moment of relative calm, the dramatist's purpose in the scene is to create an atmosphere of "pretended panic"⁵ which matches well with the startled reaction of Brabantio and his frightening dreams:

Strike on the tinder, ho!
Give me a taper, call up all my people:
This accident is not unlike my dream,
Belief of it oppresses me already:
Light I say, light!
(I.i.140-44)

The overall impression of the scene is that Iago who possesses "hellish, destructive, and bestial imagination" is the agent of the irresistible power of evil.⁶ Iago awakens Brabantio and convincingly stirs up a violent clash between Brabantio and Othello. In this way Shakespeare instills the scene with a "preliminary conflict,"⁷ full of excitement and suspense, which suitably introduces a plot based on intrigue.

C. Implications Arising from the Exposition in I.i

An examination shall now be made of the implications arising from the exposition in I.i. This examination of the expository function of I.i (in linking the scene with the complete drama) shall be made in terms of the play's settings; the insets; the effect of Iago's language on the hero and the general atmosphere of the tragedy; the characters of Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio; the recurrent motifs and patterns; and the dramatic irony.

(i) I.i: the settings

Not only the fact that none of Shakespeare's tragedies was performed so often in his life-time as was Othello, but also the many imitations by contemporary dramatists like Philip Massinger, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher and John Ford, indicate that the play was a popular one. One reason for the play's popularity was the choice of Venice as its setting. Venice, and its dependent territories, was famed throughout Europe in Shakespeare's time as a "free state" where people could safely profess any beliefs they wished. Also, Venice was a dukedom that fought a continuous battle against the Turks. It was not only the fairest, but also the strongest and most active part of Italy and possibly of Europe. For the Elizabethans, Venice was looked upon not only as a city that represented the dangers of Italy, but

also its well known inducements, both aesthetic and otherwise. John Russell Brown writes: "For Shakespeare's contemporaries, however, Venice epitomized the dangers of Italy as well as its attractions: it was exotic, corrupt, and destructive, as well as beautiful and cultured. In his novel The Unfortunate Traveller (1594), Thomas Nashe called Italy the 'paradise of the earth,' but warned that it taught those who visited its shores the arts of atheism, epicurism, whoring, poisoning, and sodomy: 'The only probable good thing they have to keep us from utterly condemning it is that it maketh a man an excellent courtier, a curious carpet knight: which is, by interpretation, a fine close lecher, a glorious hypocrite.'"⁹

In 1599, shortly before the first performance of Othello, John Marston wrote Antonio and Mellida and helped develop a craze for plays which were full of intrigue, lust and murder and had settings in Italy.¹⁰ Shortly after this, John Webster, Cyril Tourneur, John Ford and other young dramatists further developed the audience's taste for sensational tragedies set in Italy that portrayed princes, cardinals, courtesans, seducers, incestuous lovers, fools, depraved intellectuals and murderers as their characters.

In Othello, the exotic setting, combined with the hero's alien status, superstitions, royal origins and military prowess, his wooing of Desdemona and subsequent elopement, and the tragic consequences, created a sensational effect on the contemporary audiences. In this play, Shakespeare brings to life the Venetian

setting, and its other settings as well, by using several expository devices.

To begin with, the play's Venetian setting is illuminated by Shakespeare's use of the character of Othello, a Moor of royal blood, converted to Christianity and Venetian loyalties. More interesting is the fact that although the Moor apparently commands respect in the Venetian society and is considered by the senate of Venice to be one who is able to save the dukedom from the Turkish menace, is deeply suspected and feared by Brabantio, a Venetian senator, because of his alien origin to which the Venetians attributed dangerous magic and lechery. Like Brabantio, the Elizabethan audience probably reacted strongly, both consciously and unconsciously, to Othello as an alien figure, as they were not free from the suspicions aroused by aliens whose so-called pagan origins and religions were believed to be associated with dangerous magic and lewdness. Memories of many religious icons and pictures in which devils were represented with naked black bodies may have further fostered such suspicions among the Elizabethans.¹¹

The play's Venetian setting is further illuminated by the reference to the Cyprus wars. Shakespeare seems to have believed that Cyprus belonged to Venice and that the government of Venice had to defend it, since it was a part of the Christendom, constantly being threatened by the Turks.¹² Iago's remark in I.i indicates that Shakespeare brings the action of the play closer to the events of 1570-71 in which Nicosia and Famagusta

fell to the Turks:

However this may gall him with some check,
 Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embark'd,
 With such loud reason, to the Cyprus wars,
 Which even now stands in act,...

(I.i.147-51)

Iago's comment, which demonstrates Othello's importance to the government of Venice, refers to an on-going crusade between the Turks and the Venetians over Cyprus which actually had taken place some thirty years previously. In Othello, Shakespeare has so arranged that the night of the hero's elopement with Desdemona is also the night when news arrives in Venice of the movements of the Turkish fleet. In I.iii, a messenger from the galleys arrives before the Duke and Senators and reports:

"The Ottomites, reverend and gracious, / Steering with due course, toward the isle of Rhodes, / Have there injointed with an after fleet." (I.ii.33-35) The Venetian Senate, alarmed for the safety of Cyprus, decides to send Othello to defend it.

In I.i as well as in the rest of the play, then, Shakespeare emphasizes the necessity of protecting the Christian outpost of Cyprus against the Turkish invaders. Hence, although Othello is, in a major sense, a family tragedy, the public stature of the protagonist indicates that the play is preoccupied with the idea of an on-going crusade against the Turks. This idea of a crusade involving Venice and Cyprus, which provides one of the minor themes of the play and is introduced early in I.i, is carried through to the final scene of the tragedy:

And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him thus.

(V.ii.353-56)

The reference to Othello's heroic deeds in Aleppo and other references to the Turks and their threat to Christendom in the early part of the play indicate an approximate historical and social background of the hero, in particular, and the action of the tragedy, in general. Emrys Jones writes: "...the opening scenes of the play present a world which could not be at all adequately described in private and domestic terms. These scenes evoke a world of public events: affairs of state, war, and military heroism. This is the world in which history is made; and it is accordingly in this part of the play -- the Venetian part - that Othello comes closest to the public and historical concerns of the other tragedies."¹⁵

The Venetian setting, in which I.i takes place, serves one important dramatic function. It is a prelude to the main action in Cyprus. Furthermore, the conflict of Othello and Brabantio introduced in I.i foreshadows the conflict of Othello and Iago in Cyprus just as I.iii anticipates the justice in the final scene of the drama.

References to Florence (I.i.20), Rhodes and Cyprus (I.i.29), Christian and heathen (I.i.30), the Moor (I.i.39), the Barbary (I.i.111) and the Cyprus wars (I.i.150) in I.i, invite an investigation into the minor settings and the approximate historical background of

the story of Othello.

In addition to the two major settings, Venice and Cyprus, Othello has two minor settings -- Florence and Africa. Florence is referred to as the "abode" of Michael Cassio and Africa forms the background of the hero. Act I of the play takes place in Venice and the rest in Cyprus. Africa and Florence appear only as flashbacks.

North Africa and the Levant provide the remote settings of the play. In I.i, Iago calls Othello a "Barbary horse" (I.i.111), referring to the latter's North African origins. Barbary comprises part of northern Africa bounded on the east by Egypt, on the west by the Atlantic, on the south by the Sahara desert and on the north by the Mediterranean sea. It largely includes what is now Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, and probably Mauritania. The name "Barbary" is derived from the Berbers, the chief inhabitants of the region. In I.iii, Othello's own description of events and places through which he passed, and Desdemona's reactions to his accounts further draw our attention to this remote and vague setting of the play. Expressions such as "antres vast, and deserts idle" (I.iii.140), "Rough quarries, rocks and hills, whose heads touch heaven" (I.iii.141), "the Cannibals" (I.iii.143) and others hint at the North African setting of the play.

In I.i, Othello is referred to as "an old black ram" (I.i.88), "the devil" (I.i.91), the "Barbary horse" (I.i.111), "the Moor" (I.i.116) and so on, all of which suggest lechery and emphasize Othello's North or North-west African origin. Later in the play,

Othello mentions Egypt (III.iv.53-56) as the origin of the handkerchief he had given to Desdemona as a token of his love. In IV, Iago speaks of Othello's Mauritanian "abode:"¹⁶ "...he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be linger'd here by some accident, wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio" (IV.ii.224-27). It becomes evident from the play that the region Othello came from existed in the form of some "organized monarchies"¹⁷ in North and North-west Africa. In I.ii, Othello's speech implies his royal origin: "I fetch my life and being / From men of royal siege,..."(I.ii.21-22).

The Ottoman empire was a rising power at the time when the play was written¹⁸ and the Turks were extending their Empire across North Africa, while "the Barbary kingdoms were falling one by one"¹⁹ before them. The Berbers of North Africa as well as the Venetians feared the Turks to whom Shakespeare refers in the play as the "general enemy Ottoman" (I.iii.49).

Both the major and the minor settings of Othello are significant in that they add romantic glamor to the story. Venice was regarded as a city of fashion and culture where Englishmen loved to visit. The Barbary and the Levant acted as the lands of wonders to Shakespeare's audiences. Othello's African origins, a background view of the existing wars between the Moslems and the Christians provided in I.i, and the fascinating accounts of Othello's early life in a country far removed from England given in I.iii, undoubtedly created a great interest in the minds of Shakespeare's audiences. We can conclude

that the dramatist is able to arouse and maintain this interest, in part, because he skillfully creates from the very beginning of the play its various settings through subtle and detailed exposition.

(ii) I.i: the Insets

In I.i of Othello, as in Hamlet, Shakespeare introduces insets or what Francis Berry calls "narrative deposits."²⁰ As Othello begins, Roderigo remarks, in a typical Shakespearean inset: "...I take it much unkindly / That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse, / As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this." (I.i.1-3) In the speech, Roderigo obliquely refers to the marriage of Othello and Desdemona by using the demonstrative pronoun "this." Other references in I.i such as "such a matter" (I.i.5), "the Moor" (I.i.39), "your daughter" (I.i.80), "the devil" (I.i.91), "the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor" (I.i.126), "are they married" (I.i.167), and so on, by Roderigo, Iago and Brabantio, further draw the audience's attention to the elopement and marriage of Othello and Desdemona. Such indirect references have an impact on the audience which becomes curious to know the origin of the affair. Later in the scene, when Iago is informed by Roderigo that Othello and Desdemona are married, Brabantio accuses Othello of having used witchcraft and black magic in winning Desdemona. In I.iii, Othello answers the charges

of witchcraft and black magic brought against him by Brabantio in I.i of the play. In his answer to the Duke, Othello describes the circumstances in which he wooed and won Desdemona. He tells the Duke that the stories of his early life and the dangers he had passed through moved Desdemona and that this has been the only witchcraft to have influenced her.

Although Shakespeare does not show in I.i how Othello lived his early life in Africa and how the wooing began, he prepares the ground for the unfolding of these (inset) stories in the scene, arousing a curiosity in the audience to know the origin of the love-affair. Othello's response to the Duke in I.iii satisfies this curiosity of the audience. Hence, the expository inset in I.iii, which is necessitated by the exposition in I.i, helps develop an organic unity within the play.

The obvious purpose of the dramatist in using the expository inset in I.iii is to provide a fuller picture of the hero's background, thereby increasing the audience's interest in the action of the play. Also, by introducing the expository insets or "narrative deposits" in the scene, Shakespeare tries to emphasize the dignity of the love of Othello and Desdemona, which is one of the central themes of the play. In addition, since it was impossible to produce such scenes on the Elizabethan stage, the dramatist intended to give an imaginary picture of events and places far removed from England.

In this particular tragedy, Shakespeare employs his method of exposition following a certain pattern. As in I.iii, so in the

final scene of the play, the hero narrates what he did to a "malignant" Turk in Aleppo. Here, before his suicide, the hero recalls his past glories and dangers. It is evident that his love ends the way it began. His final speech demonstrates that since his success in love with Desdemona was the outcome of his past glories, he dies recalling them.

In Othello, the hero's past glories contribute to his future actions. Furthermore, his wooing of Desdemona establishes the dignity upon which their relationship is based. Hence, the inset stories which are either directly narrated or hinted at in I.i form an organic part of the action of the play as a whole.

I.i directly exposes another inset story of how Iago was deprived of his rank and Michael Cassio was promoted as Othello's lieutenant. This story, like the insets in I.iii, has organic relation to the play since it accelerates the action. Othello's apparent injustice to Iago leads the latter to ruin the Moor's marriage and thereby bring about the catastrophe. In Iago's view, Othello "observes the practices of an unjust world instead of the more honorable questions of qualification, experience and loyalty."²¹ This inset story of how Othello ignored Iago's qualifications as a soldier is an incident of crucial dramatic importance. The incident gives Iago sufficient cause to revolt and bring Othello's destruction.

(iii) The Effect of Iago's Language on the Hero
and the General Atmosphere of the Tragedy

As stated in the introduction to the thesis, Shakespeare's intent is, generally, though not necessarily, to inform the audience about the hero in I.i. As part of this expository technique, he has his minor characters speak about the hero who does not appear in the scene. In Othello, although the dramatist does not introduce the hero in I.i, he tries to establish him "as 'manly' on all possible grounds,"²² primarily using Iago, and then, Brabantio and Roderigo, who are expressly antagonistic to the character.

(a) Speaking Disparagingly of Othello in I.i
and Its Effect

In I.i, Iago begins to speak of Othello as "an extravagant and wheeling stranger" (I.i.136), and cynically refers to the hero's rhetoric of war: "But he, as loving his pride and purposes, Evades them, with a bombast circumstance, / Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war:" (I.i.12-14) Iago, while revealing news of the wars between the Turks and the Venetians over Cyprus, tacitly recognizes Othello's importance to the state:

It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produc'd, as if I stay I shall,
Against the Moor, for I do know the state...
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embark'd,

With such loud reason, to the Cyprus wars,..
(I.i.145-50)

Later in the scene, Brabantio speaks of Othello's use of "charms"
in running away with Desdemona:

...O treason of the blood!
Fathers from hence, trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act, is there not charms,
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abus'd?
(I.i.169-73)

Here, although Iago and Brabantio are trying to create what
Terence Hawkes calls an "alienation-effect,"²³ they are
indirectly revealing Othello's noble and manly virtues. When
Othello addresses the Duke, he not only emphasizes his own
bravery and courage, but also reveals his qualities of simplicity
and directness:

That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true: true, I have married her,
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little blest with the set phrase of peace,..
(I.iii.78-82)

In I.ii, Othello adds:

My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints;...
May speak unbanned to as proud a fortune
As this that I have reach'd;...
(I.ii.18-24)

Such speeches by Othello as are provoked by the accusations
against him introduce him as a "man possessed of a serene and
powerful confidence in the straightforward 'speaking'
qualities."²⁴ Terence Hawkes calls this "the dimension of
calm clarity that distinguishes and makes memorable the irony,

dignity, and fearlessness of the language with which he initially encounters Brabantio." ²⁵ Thus, as stated earlier, although Shakespeare does not introduce Othello in I.i, he presents characters who, while speaking disparagingly of the hero, help develop an impression of his noble qualities.

(b) Bestial and Demonic Imagery in I.i
and Its Effect

Robert F. Willson writes that in Othello Shakespeare "traces ²⁶ the metamorphosis of men into beasts." In I.i, Iago tries as part of his fundamental mode of deception to give a view of the reduced manliness of the hero who in time ceases to act like a civilized human being. His instruction to Roderigo in the scene is notable: "Call up her father, / Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight, / Proclaim him in the street, incense her kinsmen,..." (I.i.67-69) Shakespeare uses the verb "rouse" ²⁷ in the sense of driving a wild animal from its lair. Iago howls in a bestial manner to Brabantio under the darkness of night. His function is to eventually reduce Othello to a raging beast. In the scene, the prevailing images are of beasts that ²⁸ represent foolishness, lechery and other loathesome vices. Iago sees a faithful servant as an "ass" (I.i.47) and calls Othello "an old black ram" (I.i.88) and Desdemona a "white ewe" (I.i.89). He further adds to the atmosphere of bestiality

by calling Othello a "Barbary horse." (I.i.111)

Later in the play, such use of animal imagery continues as Iago calls Desdemona a "guinea-hen" (I.iii.315), meaning a prostitute, and goes on to say: "I would change my humanity with a baboon" (I.iii.316). In II.i, Iago describes women as: "...wild-cats in your kitchens;... / Players in your housewifery; and housewives in your / beds." (II.i.110-112)

He later compares himself to a spider: "...as little a web as this will ensnare as great / a fly as Cassio" (II.i.168-69).

"Dog" is one of the recurrent images in the play. Iago thinks that when drunk, Cassio will be as quarrelsome as Desdemona's dog (II.iii.46-47). He further describes Cassio and Desdemona as lecherous as goats, monkeys and wolves (III.iii.409-10) and compares a married man to a yoked ox (IV.i.66). Othello himself comments: "A horned man's a monster, and a beast" (IV.i.62). To this, Iago responds: "There's many a beast then in a populous city, / And many a civil monster" (IV.i.63).

In I.i, Shakespeare also introduces almost all the key images of the play, including the "demonic motifs." Iago's expressions such as "I do hate him as I do hell's pains" (I.i.154) and "Do, with like timorous accent, and dire yell, / As when by night and negligence, the fire / Is spied in populous cities" (I.i.75-77) indicate his demonic character. Later in the play, the demonic motif is reinforced when Shakespeare describes jealousy as the "green-ey'd monster" (III.iii.169-71).

The dramatist's purpose of using the imagery of beasts and demons is to reduce the sublimity of the love of Othello and Desdemona. Robert F. Willson writes that Iago's bestial nature and crude vision of sex described in I.i signal the hero's fall.³⁰ The immediate effect of the use of such imagery is that the hero and the heroine, at the first report of their adversary (Iago), seem to be devoid of human qualities. They appear as animals preoccupied with erotic activities. When Othello demands proof of the charges against Desdemona, Iago answers in his usual tone: "And may, but, how, how satisfied, my lord? / Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on, / Behold her topp'd?" (III.iii.400-401) He then tries to arouse Othello's jealousy by using similarly erotic language. His images of "goats," "monkeys" and "wolves" (III.iii.407-10) which help create in the play an atmosphere of bestiality, hatred and suspicion speak of his own base animal nature. Terence Hawkes writes that "more than any other character in the play, Iago refers to human beings and their actions in words appropriate to animals. And in return, at the end, such epithets attach themselves to him: 'viper,' 'dog,' 'monster.' They help to suggest, finally, the extent of his decline from the level of ordinary manhood."³¹ Iago brings love to a level where it becomes "...merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will" (I.iii.335).

Iago's view of man, to cite Hawkes once again, is one of "aggressive masculinity."³² This becomes evident from Iago's

urging of Roderigo: "Come, be a man; drown thyself? drown / Cats and blind puppies" (I.iii.336-37). Later in the play, he provokes Othello in a similar manner: "Are you a man, have you a soul or sense?" (III.iii.380). He further addresses Othello in words that imply such "aggressive masculinity:" "I mock you? no, by heaven. ' Would you would bear your fortunes like a man!" (IV.i.60-61). Throughout the play, he constantly uses such abusive terms as "knave," "thief," "barbarian," "foul," "villainous," "trash," "fool," and so on, all of which become "part of the play's felt rhythm," and with his appearance on the stage, "the atmosphere quickly becomes contentious, abusive..."³³ By using abusive language Iago tries to poison the hero's mind and thereby reduce his (the latter's) manliness to bestiality consonant with the atmosphere created in I.i.

What is evident is that Iago's vile language, used in I.i as well as elsewhere in the play affects Othello who, like the villain, "gradually begins to see the world in fittingly reduced 'manly' terms."³⁴ Iago's persistent, devilish efforts bring Othello down to his own level of cynicism and abusiveness. After he is sufficiently instigated by the villain to hate his own wife, Othello strikes her publicly (IV.i), calls her a "lewd minx" (III.iii.482), a "fair devil" (III.iii.485), a "subtle whore" (IV.ii.21) and the "cunning whore of Venice, / That married with Othello" (IV.ii.91-02). In Othello's language, like that of Iago, terms of abuse and contempt become dominant. Emilia's remark gives testimony of such a change in the language

of Othello: "Alas, my lord hath so bewhor'd her, / Thrown such despite, and heavy terms upon her, / As true hearts cannot bear."
(IV.ii.117-18)

Othello's growing obsession with the imagery of animals indicates a significant change in his use of language. The picture of his manliness, "free and open" (I.iii.397), "constant, noble, loving nature" (II.i.284), being a "most dear husband" (II.i.286) and of "his serene and powerful confidence in the straightforward 'speaking' qualities"³⁵ emphasized at the beginning of the play, is overshadowed by the picture of his bestiality later in the play. Iago himself acknowledges this change in Othello:

Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known; you shall observe him,
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech; do but go after,
And mark how he continues.
(IV.i.273-77)

Othello's speech pattern begins to indicate his confusion, and he loses some of his former straightforwardness and communicativeness:

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not,
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not;
I'll have some proof: my name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd, and black
As mine own face.
(III.iii.390-94)

His language becomes repetitious, circular and inward-looking, as he says:

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars:

It is the cause, yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth, as monumental alabaster;
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men,
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
(V.ii.1-7)

This superficially contradictory dimension of Othello's language here signifies his mounting internal struggle.

Iago's language of bestiality and subversion used in I.i anticipates this quality in Othello's language later in the play. As a "subverter of language,"³⁶ Iago decides to speak no more when he has achieved his end: "Demand me nothing, what you know, you know, / From this time forth I never will speak word" (V.ii.304-05). In both Iago and Othello, we witness men reduced to a level below that of genuine humanity (because of evil). Iago, who begins his machinations in I.i, is the sole instrument of this reductive effect (on the manliness of Othello) which corresponds to the increasingly tragic atmosphere of the play.

(iv) I.i: The Character of Iago

I.i introduces the character of Iago, the main mover of the action of the play. Engaged in his scheme to destroy Othello, the villain appears in the scene as keenly sensitive to anything that touches his pride or self-esteem. In the scene, Iago expresses a high opinion of himself and great contempt for his rival:

...I am worth no worse a place..
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife,
That never set a squadron in the field,
...mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership:
(I.i.11-27)

From an historical and dramatic point of view, Iago is a conventional stage villain, and although there are other facets to his character, Shakespeare relies heavily on this traditional characterization. As such, what motivates Iago is "the need to war perpetually against love and happiness, trust and virtue, harmony and beauty."³⁷

Self-exposition is typical of such conventional stage villains. Arthur Colby Sprague writes: "Shakespeare's characters, it is asserted, are given to self-exposition. They say of themselves things which would come with dramatic propriety only from somebody else. And the villains, in particular, are charged with recognizing, what they would be unlikely to perceive, their own wickedness and virtues of the good characters."³⁸ Iago displays a proud candor in respect to his real nature and intentions which he expresses in asides and soliloquies throughout the play.

In I.i, Iago begins to show his characteristic nature. Of his loyalty to Othello, he says:

Though I do hate him, as I do Hell's pains,
Yet, for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag, and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign.
(I.i.154-57)

As Othello's flag-bearer, he intends to raise his flag not out of love, but out of hatred. He expresses his belief in duplicity and hypocrisy earlier in I.i: "In following him, I follow but myself. / Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty, / But seeming so, for my peculiar end". (I.i.58-60) As in this scene, so in II.iii, Iago reveals himself:

And what's he then, that says I play the villain,
When this advice is free I give, and honest,
Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
To win the Moor again?
(II.iii.327-30)

In the same soliloquy, Iago further expresses his intentions to prove a traditional stage villain:

When devils will their blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now:...
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh 'em all.
(II.iii.342-52)

Ranting and roaring are typical of a traditional stage villain. In I.i, Iago suggests to Roderigo to shout in order to arouse Brabantio from sleep (I.i.75-77). He himself strikes on the door of Brabantio's house and yells out to awaken the Senator: "Awake! what ho, Brabantio! thieves, thieves, thieves!" (I.i.79). Similarly, in IV.i, as Othello falls into a trance, Iago stands over him and cries out:

Work on.
My medicine, work: thus credulous fools are caught,
And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus
All guiltless, meet reproach. What ho, my lord,
My lord, I say! Othello!
(IV.i.44-48)

Stanley Edgar Hyman writes that Iago preserves many traces of the Vice of the old morality plays.³⁹ Like a typical Vice figure, Iago's purpose is to bring about the moral and spiritual ruin of his victim in order that he can demonstrate thereby the destructive force and characteristic effect of the evil he personifies.⁴⁰ His typical act, says Hyman, is the "sly insinuation of moral evil into the human breast" and carrying on "Vice's hereditary work" through his "vulgarity, insolence, cynicism and triumphant hilarity",⁴¹ all of which he demonstrates clearly in I.i of the play.

One can even go so far as to say that Iago is the embodiment of Satan. Iago's remark in I.i, "I am not what I am" (I.i.65), reveals not only the typical stage villain's duplicity, but also his satanic nature. Brabantio calls him a "profane wretch" (I.i.114) and thereby suggests his quality as a devil. Iago's Satanic temperament can be further seen through his own expression "I do hate him as I do Hell's pains" (I.i.154). The remark indicates his dread of future torment which is equivalent to Satan's hatred of such torments.⁴² Like Satan also, he is full of pretense and guile. In I.ii, he states to Othello:

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff of conscience
To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerck'd him here, under the ribs.
(I.ii.1-5)

Here, Iago seems to be trying to convince Othello that he could have killed Brabantio but conscience had prevented him from doing

so. However, the audience is aware that in I.i he had shown himself to be a friend of Brabantio, while provoking the latter to start a scuffle with Othello on the issue of Desdemona's elopement. In I.ii, as he meets Othello, he poses as the latter's friend and says that it is conscience that always guides him -- a further deceit which emphasizes his Satanic nature.

Cynicism and jealousy, which are fundamental to the Satanic character of Iago, are recurrent throughout the play as well. G. Wilson Knight comments that the play is basically concerned with a "cynical intellect pitted against a lovable humanity" endowed with the qualities of heroism and grace.⁴³ He calls Iago "a demon of cynicism, colourless, formless, in a world of colours, shapes and poetry's music."⁴⁴ Knight further compares the harmony in the life of Othello and Desdemona with the tuning of music. Iago's purpose in the play is to untune that music. The villain is constantly busy working against what Knight calls "the domesticity, the romance, and the idealized humanity of the Othello world."⁴⁵ I.i, like the rest of the drama, presents Iago as a vulgar and cynical person. As Iago delivers to Brabantio the news of Desdemona's elopement, his words are indicative of such vulgarity, cynicism and scorn: "Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul; / Even now, very now, an old black ram / Is tuppung your white ewe:..." (I.i.86-89)

Iago is the embodiment of another evil character-type so popular at the time; namely, the Machiavellian. As such, he is power-mad, possesses boundless energy and egoism and is "ruthless

and diabolically cruel." He abandons all religious or ethical values in favor of his own advancement, and we find him expressing to Roderigo his cold contempt and scorn for selfless servitude:

You shall mark
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
 That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
 Wears out his time much like his master's ass,
 For nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd
 Whip me such honest knaves:...

(I.i.44-49)

He also appears to have cynical contempt for human ideals such as reputation, friendship, loyalty and honesty later in the play. He is a stage Machiavellian character who rejects all traditional values.

Just as the action of the play moves from Venice to Cyprus, from an organized society to anarchy, so rise the anarchic forces in Iago. This movement from Venice to Cyprus, where Othello goes to fight the Turks and, thus, to encounter the forces of anarchy, is, according to Alvin Kernan, "the geographical form of an action that occurs on the social and psychological levels as well."⁴⁷ Shakespeare sees forces at work in society and man that are equivalent to the raging seas, the "Cannibals that each other eat" (I.iii.43) and the threat from the Turks. Such anarchic forces are embodied in Iago. Early in I.i, Iago appears as a threat to marriage, the traditional symbol of order and harmony in society. Later in the play, he is full of unfounded suspicion about his own wife. Iago tries to subvert the operation of law and order in society and, as such, he is the symbol of

anti-social forces. In I.i, the dramatist uses "fire" (I.i.76) as the symbol of destruction and panic to describe Iago as the embodiment of anarchic forces.

In fact, Iago represents a direct challenge to the order and harmony of the universe. He possesses the Renaissance skepticism that defies the world of order, degree and cohesion which Shakespeare describes in Troilus and Cressida:

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportions, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order.
(I.iii.85-88)

48

As a threat to this degree, order and harmony of the universe, Iago begins his operation in I.i. He admires evil servants who secretly betray their masters:

...others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms, and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
And throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by 'em, and when they have lin'd
their coats,
Do themselves homage, those fellows have some soul,
And such a one do I profess myself,...
(I.i.49-55)

In the harmonious order of the Elizabethan world, servants had their just place. They were expected to be loyal to their masters, and in return for their loyalty and service, their masters showed them care and protection. This was all part of a social order whose perfection reflected the love of God for

49

man. Iago shares none of the love and duty that hold together the social order and link it to God. I.i of the play makes it clear that he controls his passion by an act of will

which is unrelated to the will of God.

(v) I.i: The Character of Roderigo

Just as Philo is used by Shakespeare in I.i of Antony and Cleopatra to introduce the protagonists and the major theme of the play, so is Roderigo in Othello. Such use of a minor character is typical of Shakespeare's method of exposition in Hamlet, Othello and Antony and Cleopatra. As an expository device, Roderigo sets the plot in motion by attempting (before the play opens) to court Desdemona with the help of Iago. The reference to "this" in Roderigo's opening speech in I.i draws the audience's attention to his unsuccessful courtship, and the elopement and eventual marriage of Othello and Desdemona. So, his opening speech provides thematic information by indirectly mentioning the news of the affair.

In I.i, Roderigo gives Iago the opportunity to reveal himself to the audience by accusing the villain and having him answer the charges, sufficiently drawing the audience's attention towards the latter's dishonesty and unscrupulousness. Through Roderigo's accusation of Iago, moreover, the audience becomes aware of the presence of evil in the play. He, therefore, performs a key role of exposition in the play.

Although Roderigo is presented by Shakespeare as a shallow creature and disappointed lover, and as the only one who knows about Iago's disloyalty to the Moor, much of the plot is

introduced through him. In his opening speech, Roderigo doubts Iago, but weakly. In his second speech, he asks Iago: "Thou tolds't me, thou didst hold him in thy hate" (I.i.7). Roderigo's remark in this respect indicates a note of urgent suspicion which pervades the atmosphere of the play.⁵¹

I.i presents Roderigo as one who has a sense of civility. Inspired by his affection for Desdemona and respect for Senator Brabantio, he addresses the latter as "reverent" (I.i.93) and "grave" signior (I.i.106). Although his utterance, "I think I can discover him..."(I.i.179), demonstrates that his civility and prudence are too weak,⁵² his civility seems to stand in contrast with the grossness and bestiality of Iago in I.i.

Thus, as an expository device, Roderigo's role in I.i points our attention to the very atmosphere and characterization of the play.

(vi) I.i: The Character of Brabantio

Brabantio is first mentioned in line 67 of I.i; then he actually appears on the stage at line 81, showing amazement and confusion. He is seen peering out into darkness, unable to see clearly, and uttering: "What is the reason of this terrible summons? / What is the matter there?" (I.i.81-82). Like the naive honesty of Roderigo and the scorn, energy and bestial imagination of Iago, Brabantio has a sense of "a distrustful propriety" which prevents Roderigo from giving the news of his daughter's

elopement. This trait of his character becomes evident when he reacts to Roderigo, saying:

The worse welcome;
I have charg'd thee, not to haunt my doors;..
...dost thou come
To start my quiet?

(I.i.95-101)

At the news of his daughter's elopement, Brabantio becomes speechless and looks oppressed. While referring to his dream, he sadly murmurs: "This accident is not unlike my dream / Belief of it oppresses me already" (I.i.142-143). The dream that he refers to indicates his superstitious nature. This sense of superstition is heightened when he mentions to Roderigo: "...is there not charms, / By which the property of youth and maidhood / May be abus'd" (I.i.171-73).

I.i indicates that Brabantio is an influential person of the society; he is mentioned as a senator in the government of Venice. Also, Brabantio points out an important aspect of the Venetian society when he remarks in the scene: "My house is not a grange"
54
(I.i.106). His remark implies the existing law in Venice, and stands in sharp contrast with Iago's instruction to Roderigo to create chaos and disorder. It not only indicates Brabantio's authority and influence in the society, but also the strength of the love of Desdemona who, in spite of being a Venetian senator's daughter, runs away with and marries a man of different race and
55
customs, an act that defies the laws of Venice.

Throughout the play, Brabantio expresses a sense of racial discrimination and seems to be obsessed with the idea of

Othello's use of witchcraft in marrying Desdemona. Such an attitude of racial discrimination and an obsession with the idea of enchantment become evident in his speech in I.ii:

O thou foul thief, where has thou stow'd my
daughter?
Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,
For I'll refer to all things of sense,
(If she in chains of magic were not bound)
Whether a maid, so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
Would ever have (to incur a general mock)
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou?
(I.ii.62-71)

Brabantio's reaction to Othello's alien origins has implications for the play since it is partly responsible for the catastrophe. Iago succeeds in his scheme to make Othello believe that Desdemona loves Cassio, a man of her own color. Othello's color complex, his sense of racial discrimination (III.iii.267-77) and his consequent belief that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him, lead to her death, and finally, to the tragic end of the play. Part of Brabantio's function in I.i, then, is to anticipate through his preoccupation with color, Othello's idee fixe on the same subject later in the play.

(vii) I.i: The Recurrent Motifs and Patterns

In the exposition in I.i Shakespeare introduces some motifs and patterns which recur in the rest of the play. It is the intent of this section to discuss the expository function of these motifs and patterns.

Early in I.i, he introduces the popular contemporary notion of evil. He uses the color "black" as a poetic symbol by which he emphasizes the theme of the unnatural. It is obvious that he intended the audience to think of Othello as a "black" man.⁵⁶ Also, it is possible that his audience viewed the marriage of a white Venetian girl with a black man as contrary to nature. In the Renaissance, the color black was a symbol of lechery and also of the devil.⁵⁷ Consequently, Othello's marriage with Desdemona would appear unnatural to the audience. In I.i, Iago's description of such a marriage seems to indicate this popular contemporary notion:

Zounds, sir, you are robb'd, for shame put on your gown,
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;..
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you,..
(I.i.86-91)

In his dialogue with Brabantio, Iago conveys both the senses in which the color black was taken -- of lechery and of the Devil. Roderigo emphasizes the first symbolic meaning of the color when he refers to Othello as a "lascivious Moor" (I.i.126). As far as the second meaning is concerned, Brabantio finds that his daughter's defiance of so-called reason is due to the unnatural powers of a devil.

The references to the blackness of Othello and the use of witchcraft which emphasize the motif of the unnatural (union of Othello and Desdemona) run throughout the tragedy. In the Council Scene, while he tries to establish the dignity of the

relationship and thereby defend himself against the charge of "lechery," Othello confirms the superstitious belief of the contemporary audience that his color stands for lechery. To alleviate this popular notion, he emphasizes that his love of Desdemona is not necessarily to "comply with heat" -- meaning lust, which his color apparently signified to the audience:

I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply with heat, the young affects
In my defunct, and proper satisfaction,
But to be free and bounteous of her mind;..
(I.iii.261-65)

Later in the play, although in an attempt to create jealousy in Othello, Iago further points out the unnaturalness of the marriage: "Fie, we may smell in such a will most rank, / Foul disproportion; thoughts unnatural" (III.iii.236-37).

In fact, as a result of Iago's insinuations, Othello himself seems to have developed a color complex which becomes evident from the following lines:

Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declin'd
Into the vale of years,-- yet that's not much -
(III.iii.267-70)

The motif of the "black devil" continues even after the murder of Desdemona. As soon as Emilia discovers the murder, she cries out and contrasts an angel and a devil: "O, the more angel she, / And you the blacker devil!" (V.ii.131-32). Emilia further condemns Othello: "Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil" (V.ii.134).

Although Shakespeare does not introduce Othello in I.i of the play, he attributes to the character of Brabantio certain traits which recur in the hero's character later in the play. As mentioned earlier, on hearing of Desdemona's elopement with the Moor, Brabantio speaks of his dream (I.i.142-43). This dream is a superstition that confirms his view of Desdemona's guilt and in a similarly suspicious manner, he accuses Othello of witchcraft. This establishes a link between his character and that of Othello. The latter too believes in dreams and confirms his view of Desdemona's guilt through a dream he has heard about. Iago tells Othello that he has heard Cassio in his dream muttering words of love for Desdemona. Othello believes this and reacts to his wife's supposed guilt by saying: "But this denoted a foregone conclusion" (III.iii.434). The expression reminds us of Brabantio's sad remark: "This accident is not unlike my dream." (I.i.142).

Brabantio's angry outburst at Desdemona's betrayal of him is dramatic in I.i:

Now Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her? (O unhappy girl!)
With the Moor, say'st thou? (Who would be a
father?)
How didst thou know 'twas she? (O thou deceivest me
Past thought!)

(I.i.162-66)

Othello's speech later in the play bears resemblance to Brabantio's speech in this scene:

By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it:
Thou said'st (O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,

Boding to all) he had my handkerchief.
(IV.i.19-22)

Brabantio's questioning of Roderigo that "bears uncanny
resemblance" to this "tortured outburst of Othello"⁵⁸ is part
of a pattern that Shakespeare builds up in the play. The "raven"
referred to in the above speech implies a contemporary popular
superstition. In Shakespeare's day, it was believed "to be not
only a bird of ill-omen and a harbinger of death, but also a
carrier of"⁵⁹ diseases. Brabantio's imagery here clearly
corresponds to the deteriorating state of Othello's situation.

In addition, as it appears from I.i, Brabantio's loss of
Desdemona is like that of a pet animal; he sees her as one who has
"escaped because he failed to lock her cage."⁶⁰ Later in the
play, Othello seems to echo this feeling of Brabantio when he
says: "Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings, / I'd
whistle her off, and let her down the wind, / To prey at
fortune." (III.iii.265-67) Like Brabantio, Othello considers
Desdemona as his pet hawk whose legs are fastened to him by the
leash and with whom he sports. For Othello, Desdemona is reduced
to a wayward beast.

Brabantio's inability to understand Desdemona's goodness and
noble love in I.i of the play has thematic significance. Like
him, Othello is unable to comprehend the noble nature of Desdemona
and to appreciate the nature of her innocent relationship with
Cassio. Like Brabantio, Othello fails to distinguish between
Desdemona's goodness and Iago's villainy, and it is this

fundamental confusion which lies at the core of his disintegrating world.

In addition to Brabantio, the minor characters in the play reflect upon the principal characters in some ways. The emotions and thoughts that dominate the latter more or less dominate the former. Desdemona deceives her father, as Brabantio points out in (I.i.165). Apparently, she also deceives her husband. Similarly, Emilia deceives Desdemona about the handkerchief. Again, Iago and Othello are jealous and suspicious. Similarly, Roderigo and Bianca are jealous and suspicious.

Finally, what is clear in Othello is that the motifs and patterns which Shakespeare introduces in the exposition in I.i relate to the general motifs and patterns in the play.

(viii) I.i: The Dramatic Irony

In I.i of Othello, Shakespeare creates an ironic spirit which induces the audience to expect the final catastrophe of the play. The audience is made aware of the presence of a force, personified through Iago's machinations, which will ultimately cause the disintegration of Othello's world. The irony in this opening scene lies in the fact that the audience, while watching the play, knows the presence of this force, while the hero does not. With their superior knowledge the audience understands the ironical situation and quite naturally expects the ensuing

disaster.

This knowledge which the audience receives is given shape, direction and momentum by Iago who creates in the audience a certain attitude of mind towards the marriage of Othello and Desdemona.⁶¹ At the beginning of I.i, the villain develops the sense that the marriage, though romantic and noble, is subject to great risks. As soon as the news of the marriage is announced, this ironic sense is awakened by Iago:

And though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on 't,
As it may lose some color.

(I.i.70-73)

Later in Act I, the audience comes to know that there is something heroic and noble about Othello and his love and marriage. But Iago's deceit which leads to the reversal of Othello's fortunes, is already taking effect. In I.ii, soon after Iago's destructive influence is apparent, Othello is presented, and says of himself:

...I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege; and my demerits
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
As this I have reached,...

(I.ii.21-24)

He further expresses a sense of pride and contentment about himself, when he says: "My parts, my title, and my perfect soul, / Shall manifest me rightly" (I.ii.31-32). Such remarks by Othello indicate his calm confidence about himself and also give the audience a sense of his "ironic ignorance"⁶² about the imminent and inescapable destruction. In this way, Shakespeare

builds up an expectation in the mind of the audience which not only accepts the catastrophe at the end of the tragedy but also expects its coming.

D. Chapter Summary

Chapter II has examined the exposition of I.i of Othello and the implications arising from the exposition in terms of the play's settings; the insets; the effect of Iago's language on the hero and the general atmosphere of the tragedy; the characters of Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio; the recurrent motifs and patterns; and dramatic irony.

This chapter has demonstrated that the exotic nature of the play's major and minor settings not only provides necessary information for a full understanding of the action, but also accounts for the popularity of Othello in Shakespeare's time. Expository insets early in the play perform much the same function as its settings. It has been shown as well how Shakespeare begins to reveal in I.i the perverse and evil nature of Iago through the language he uses, and how later on this language works insidiously to undo the noble and trusting Moor. In addition to these two major characters, Roderigo and Brabantio also play important roles in exposition and help establish a logical link between I.i and the rest of the drama. Certain recurrent motifs and patterns, such as black / white color imagery, have been traced to illuminate their ironic unity to the overall drama. Lastly, the ironic spirit of Othello, which makes itself felt early in I.i, has been studied to show how it induces the audience to expect a catastrophe. Each of the above expository devices is woven with others and each in some sense verifies John Russell Brown's contention noted above

that the play has "a quiet, mysterious beginning" in which
"dramatic interest is coiled up, like a spring."

Notes to Chapter II

1

John Russell Brown, Shakespeare in Performance: An Introduction through Six Major Plays (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1976), p.

2

G. B. Harrison, Shakespeare's Tragedies (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1951), p. 131.

3

All quotations from Othello are from M. R. Ridley's edition of the play (7th ed. (1958; rpt. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1959)).

4

The Folio prints of Shakespeare refer to Othello as "his Moore^ship" at line 35 of I.i.

5

Brown, p. 304.

6

Brown, p. 305.

7

Bradley, p. 65.

8

Brown, p. 292.

9

Brown, p. 292.

10

Brown, p. 292.

11

Brown, p. 294.

12

According to John W. Draper (The Othello of Shakespeare's Audience (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), p. 193), Shakespeare may have known through Cinthio that for a while the Venetians ruled Cyprus, although they had actually lost it to the Turks about thirty years before the play was written. As a matter of fact, in 1489, the mother of the last crusading King of Cyprus, unable to defend it against the Turks, gave it to Venice which oppressively ruled it for eighty-two years. In 1570, writes Draper (p. 198), the Turks took over Nicosia and Famagusta. Emrys Jones (in "'Othello,' 'Lepanto' and the Cyprus Wars," Shakespeare Survey, 21 (1968), 49) writes that at the time of Othello's composition (1602-1603) Cyprus had been in Turkish hands for over thirty years.

13

Jones, "'Othello,' 'Lepanto' and the Cyprus Wars," p. 50.

14

Jones, "'Othello,' 'Lepanto' and the Cyprus Wars," p. 49.

15

Jones, "'Othello,' 'Lepanto' and the Cyprus Wars," p. 49.

16

Draper, (The Othello of Shakespeare's Audience, pp. 199-200), writes that the local color of North Africa or Barbary and Mauritania appears but little in the play, although English merchants traded for horses and leather goods in Morocco. In addition, the text of the play gives nothing of the white Moorish towns, their mosques, palaces and bazaars. He further mentions that by birth Othello must have been a Moslem but here

as elsewhere, Shakespeare does not directly refer to Islam as a religion, that such key words of local color as Mohammed, Koran and Mosque appear nowhere in his plays and that Shakespeare seems to vaguely include the Moslems, along with other non-Christians, merely as pagans.

17

Draper, The Othello of Shakespeare's Audience, p. 200.

18

Since the character of Othello is not historical, it is difficult to determine precisely when and where he had grown up before he came to Venice. But the time implied here is when the play was written.

19

Draper (The Othello of Shakespeare's Audience p. 200) adds that all such information about North Africa is fragmentary and superficial. He maintains that Turkish and Barbary merchants in London could have given the dramatist "a plethora of pictorial details and endless facts about trade and commerce" but Shakespeare's emphasis was on men rather than on mere things.

20

Berry, pp. 3-6.

21

Willson, p. 122.

22

Terence Hawkes, Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society (New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1973), p. 133.

23

Hawkes, p. 132.

24

Hawkes, p. 133.

25

Hawkes, p. 134.

26

Willson, p. 126.

27

G. R. Elliott, Flaming Minister: A Study of Othello As Tragedy of Love and Hate (New York: AMS Press, 1965), p. 7.

28

Morozov, "Individualization of Shakespeare's Characters," p. 87.

29

Morozov, "Individualization of Shakespeare's Characters," p. 88.

30

Willson, p. 133.

31

Hawkes, pp. 135-36.

32

Hawkes, p. 137.

33

Hawkes, p. 138.

34

Hawkes, p. 139.

35

Hawkes, p. 133.

36

Hawkes, p. 141.

37

Stanley Edgar Hyman, Iago: Some Approaches to the Illusion of His Motivation (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 8.

38

Sprague, pp. 253-54.

39

Hyman, p. 25.

40

Hyman, p. 25.

41

Hyman, p. 25.

42

Hyman, p. 30.

43

G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1959), p. 112.

44

Knight, p. 116.

45

Knight, p. 117.

46

Hyman, p. 123.

47

Alvin Kernan, ed., Othello in The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), p. 1091.

48

E. M. W. Tillyard (in The Elizabethan World Picture (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), pp. 23 and 60-61), while speaking of Shakespeare's vision of cosmic order, writes that the Elizabethans pictured the universal order under three forms: a chain, a series of corresponding planes, and a dance. He speaks of a hierarchical order of creation in which man occupies the middle position and also refers to the Pythagorean doctrine of the universe of gods, the four elements,, the dumb beasts, and

the plants in which man possesses the godlike faculty of reason and the qualities of nourishment, growth and reproduction.

49

Ribner, pp. 96-97.

50

Ribner (p. 98) adds that in denying the purposes and the power of God, Iago strikes at the root of Christian humanism, for the "natural law" which it saw as the guiding principle in human affairs was a reflection of the divine law of God, an emanation of God's love for His creation and of the harmonious order by which He ruled the universe. Ribner further mentions that Iago, like Edmund, stands outside morality.

51

Elliott, Flaming Minister, p. 3.

52

Elliott, Flaming Minister p. 11.

53

Brown, p. 305.

54

A "grange" means an isolated house. In Shakespeare's time, Venice was regarded as a civilized society. By referring to a "grange," Brabantio probably implies that he is a senator in Venice which is ruled by law and that Othello's act of running away with Desdemona is a grave offense in the eye of the Venetian authorities.

55

Draper, The Othello of Shakespeare's Audience, p. 195. He further writes that marriage with foreigners was legally forbidden and, in fact, Desdemona legally

could not even talk with Othello and, strictly speaking, Brabantio could not invite Othello to his house.

56

Bradley, p. 198. He writes: "...there is a question, which, though of little consequence, is not without dramatic interest, whether Shakespeare imagined Othello as a Negro or as a Moor. Now I will not say that Shakespeare imagined him as a Negro and not as a Moor, for that might imply that he distinguished Negroes and Moors precisely as we do; but what appears to me nearly certain that he imagined Othello as a black man, and not as a light-brown one."

57

Ribner, p. 101.

58

Willson, p. 130.

59

Ridley ed., Othello, p. 136.

60

Willson, p. 130.

61

G. G. Sedgewick, Of Irony: Especially in Drama (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), p. 92.

62

Sedgewick, p. 104.

Chapter III

Macbeth: I.i

A. Introduction

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

The above lines draw attention to the expository significance of I.i of Macbeth, which opens with the three Witches meeting in an open place amidst thunder and lightning. The scene, which is precise in detail, sharply imaginative and swift in exposition, anticipates the play's tone, atmosphere and theme.

The effects of thunder and lightning capture the attention of the audience until the Witches briefly emerge in the scene, chanting their ambiguous dirge to evil; the platform becomes shrouded in mist while they dance grotesquely and sing. Thunder, lightning and storm also reinforce the impression of the presence of evil spirits which are eventually to work Macbeth's destruction.

This final chapter of the thesis shall examine the method and function of exposition in I.i of Macbeth. This chapter, as the preceding two chapters, is divided into two main sections: (i) an analysis of I.i of Macbeth; and (ii) the implications arising

from the exposition.

B. I.i of Macbeth: The Expository Details

I.i of Macbeth opens with flashes of lightning through the rain and fog. The thunder is muffled and ominous, not loud but deep.¹ The three weird creatures, although they might be things of the imagination, approach the stage from above, now vague in the drifting masses of mist, now hellishly illuminated by flaring lightning. As Banquo describes them later in I.iii.40-46, the creatures are "wild in their attire," with indistinct faces bearded and "withered," and skinny gesturing fingers that rise towards their lips when they are about to utter a certain name.²

The Witches in I.i signify a world of dire evil, disorder, and incessant sudden questioning as they address each other:

1 Witch. When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

2 Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

3 Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

1 Witch. Where the place?

2 Witch. Upon the heath.

3 Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.³
(I.i.1-8)

The liquid and soft sounds in the first five lines, "distillations seemingly of rain and dim air," as G. R. Elliott calls them, are in contrast with the distant clashes of battle that mingle with

the low sounds of thunder.

The name "Macbeth," which triggers an outburst of laughter from beyond, superseding the shrill voices of the Weird Sisters, is thus introduced in the scene. Simultaneously, one can imagine summoning catcalls, croaks and shrieks from the witches' familiar spirits who appear in animal forms.⁵ The three mystic figures sway, retreat, rise and hover away, chanting in unison.

The three Witches who are the "emissaries of evil" are to "meet with" Macbeth as with an accomplice.⁶ The Witches' proposal to meet with Macbeth is significant since they embody "some foul trend in the very will of him" against which he struggles confusedly. The mystic opening of the scene with the swaying, retreating and hovering of the Witches represents not only the overall atmosphere of the play, but also the inner battle of the hero. Although there are possibilities that Macbeth may dispel the evil by making it vanish into the air, or incorporate it into his own life, the play will show that Macbeth, like the hovering of the Witches, vacillates between fair and foul throughout the action.

The Witches' opening remarks in the scene are thematically related to the rest of the play. The question that begins the drama is difficult to answer for any of the Witches: "When shall we three meet again? / In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" The question indicates that an "uncertain future always broods over the elusive present."⁷ The Second Witch does not directly answer the First Witch's question. But her response creates a

sense of ambiguity, since a battle cannot be lost and won at the same time. Although paradoxical, the Second Witch's reference to a battle lost and won, suggests that the Witches are ambiguous, and may be fateful to the course of the action of the play.

I.i hints at the antecedent action of the rebellion by Donwald and his allies against King Duncan, an action which Macbeth was sent to put down. In the scene, the Witches further reveal that they represent wickedness and that they themselves are mysterious, speaking in equivocal tones. This equivocation is a method of exposition which connects the scene with the complete drama.

I.i also indicates that the play has an action animated by prophecies. The action implies that the play is future-oriented. In a few quick lines, the Witches announce that they are going to meet Macbeth near a lonely heath before "the set of the sun." As the audience hears the name of Macbeth, they begin to wonder why the Weird Sisters are proposing to meet him. They also begin to experience the mystery of the play and are charged with expectations about what is going to happen to Macbeth whose name significantly excites the Weird Sisters.

The final two lines of the scene: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair, / Hover through the fog and filthy air!" suggest the "collapse of the polarity"⁸ between fair and foul since things cannot be both fair and foul at the same time. They give rise to several questions in the minds of the audience. Marvin Rosenberg writes: "In the spreading ripples of dissonance from the Sisters'

jarring juxtaposition of incongruities, subliminal impressions take shape: Is it a fair Macbeth who is foul? Does fair-foul relate to the changing weather, next mentioned, that the Sisters may control? To the battle? To the appearance of the Three, whether they look fair or foul, or transform themselves? To any stage property they manipulate? To fortune?...Does fair become foul? Is fair foul only from the Witches' point of view? From a human being? A cosmic? Are things both fair and foul?"⁹ These questions are difficult to answer. However, the opening lines of I.i indicate the thematic pattern and the conflict of good and evil which runs throughout the play. They also state two of the play's main themes: that of the reversal of values and of unnatural disorder, and that of consequent doubt, uncertainty and confusion. In this way the scene expresses the same movement as the play.

As in IV.i, Shakespeare uses trochaic tetrameter catalectic verse in I.i. In this verse, the stress is on the first syllable rather than the second of each foot. The verse is used with the freedom of doggerel peculiarly suited to form the speech of the Witches. As in the fairies' songs in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare uses this kind of verse with disregard of rule, since doggerel permits this irregularity. He often lengthens the fourth syllable to emphasize a word strongly, or he may omit the fourth syllable altogether, producing a long caesura, as in the seventh line of the scene: "Upon the heath."¹⁰ By this means, the full portentous significance of the words "There to meet with

Macbeth" (I.i.8) is brought out. Also, the Third Witch who utters these words is forced to pause for the devilish laughter which emphasizes their questionable intentions. The effect is that the audience is made conscious of the Witches' readiness to aid in the destruction of Macbeth.

From the expository point of view, the impact of the scene is enormous. The scene throws light on issues that become the subject in I.ii in which the battle and Macbeth's victory are discussed. I.i of Macbeth thus serves as a prologue to I.ii. The entrance of the wounded Captain in the second scene and his description of the battle link the two scenes as he provides visual evidence of "fair news emerging out of foul circumstances."¹¹ In I.iii, Macbeth and Banquo return from the battlefield and are met by the Weird Sisters. Their encounter with Macbeth and Banquo is of crucial dramatic importance since Macbeth's existing inner desires are provoked and brought into action by the Witches' prophecies, in as much as they stir within him first his curiosity, and ultimately, his ambition. In this way I.i is logically linked with scenes ii and iii as well as with the rest of the drama.

C. Implications Arising from the Exposition in I.i

The preceding analysis of I.i of Macbeth reveals certain expository devices which are pertinent to the tragedy as a whole. The significance of some of these dramatic devices shall be discussed in terms of the following: witchcraft; the theme of contradiction; the order-disorder antithesis; the use of equivocation; the atmosphere of questioning, mystery and abnormality; and dramatic irony.

(i) I.i: The Use of Witchcraft as An Expository Device

The Witches constitute Shakespeare's most important expository device in Macbeth. The question may arise -- why does Shakespeare open the play with the three Witches? As an expository device, what significance do they have for the play and its audience? Was there any special reason for using the Witches in the play?

In a general way, I.i of Macbeth gives testimony to the popularity of the Elizabethan ideas of witchcraft, sorcery, magic and necromancy. The play was apparently written and staged in honor of King James I and his brother-in-law, King Christian IV of Denmark, in the summer of 1606. It seems likely that Shakespeare's use of the Witches as an instrument of exposition

in I.i was a courteous recognition of King James's personal
interest in witchcraft.¹²

In his work, Daemonologie (1597), King James describes the world inhabited by an innumerable number of these evil spirits wandering through the world as God's "hang men."¹³ He believed that the evil spirits served master devils who were permitted by God to do evil in this world as part of the divine decree to punish evil-doers or to try the patience of the faithful.¹⁴

Macbeth appears to at least partially agree with King James's view of witchcraft. According to this view, witches were grouped in covens and had an infernal ritual when they met to worship the devils and reported upon their evil deeds. In I.i of Macbeth, there is just such a coven of the three Witches, the purpose of which is to learn how to work mischief. Each of the three Witches in the play has near her one devil acting as her private evil spirit, commanding her to do evil and teaching her how and when to do it.

To a certain extent, however, Shakespeare deviated from King James's Daemonologie, which gives the Scottish rather than the English view of witches. English witches, as opposed to the Scottish belief, were believed to be lean, foul and bearded old women. A. C. Bradley describes English witches as follows: "They are old women, poor and ragged, skinny and hideous, full of vulgar spite, occupied in killing their neighbours' swine or revenging themselves on sailors' wives who have refused them chestnuts."¹⁵ Shakespeare, perhaps in order to make his play

more appealing to the English audience, adopted a more "english view" of witches; and they are depicted as withered, with rough fingers, skinny lips and beards.

In I.i of Macbeth, the Witches have with them their spirits who transport them through the air. When they finish their reports, the three Witches themselves proclaim:

The Weird Sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! -- the charm's wound up.
(I.iii.32-37)

"Thine" means "thy devil" and "mine" means "my devil." The three spirits bring the Witches to the heath where they are to meet Macbeth on his return from the battlefield. They perform their circle of charms, circling first one of the spirits and then another in order to obtain their aid in an attempt to destroy Macbeth. The round of charms which is intended to incite them to destroy Macbeth involves a ceremony of obeisance to the three devils who are their masters. The lines indicate that the three Witches circle the devils thrice and bow thrice to each of them.

The Witches are equivocal and circumlocutory in their speeches and avoid uttering even numbers. Shakespeare was keenly conscious of these popular notions, which he, writes Henry N. Paul, may have learned in his Warwickshire childhood. In Macbeth, there are three Witches and correspondingly three devils. The lines spoken by the Witches, as in I.i, also abound

in triplets: "When shall we three meet again? / In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" (I.i.1-2). Such a verse form is maintained throughout the play. In I.iii, the First Witch again speaks in triplet, uttering the word "mounch'd" three times: "A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap, / And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd" (I.iii.4-5). Later in this scene, she says: "I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do" (I.iii.10). In the necromantical scene (IV.i), Graymalkin mews thrice, while Paddock breaks the rule by whining four times, as the Second Witch says: "Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whin'd" (IV.i.2). The Second Witch does not directly mention that Paddock or "the hedge-pig" has whined four times but that it has whined "thrice, and once." Both thrice and once are uneven numbers and as such are significant to the Witches. The adoption of this common numerological superstition by Shakespeare is not accidental; it has associations with sorcery and magic so popular in his day.

It appears that the Witches are always visible as they stand on earth but invisible while being transported by the spirits that are their conductors through the air. At the end of I.i, they themselves propose to "Hover through the fog and filthy air" (I.i.12) and then they disappear.

In Holinshed's Chronicles, King Duff is reported to have made a visit to the Western Isles of Scotland in order to purge those isles of "Barretors and idle persons as sought to live only on other men's goods."¹⁷ This is said to have provoked a rebellion of the Islesmen. The witches of Forres sympathized with the rebels and tried to harm the King with their sorcery and

enchantment as a result of which the King fell ill. There was a murmuring among the people about how the King was made sick by sorcery and the magical art of the witches dwelling near Forres. Later, Donwald and his wife, being incited by the witches, treacherously murdered King Duff, a story which Shakespeare probably used as the pattern for part of his account of the murder of King Duncan in Macbeth.¹⁸

In addition, Shakespeare certainly borrowed from the sections of the Chronicles which describe how Mackbeth, driven by the prophecies of the three sisters and the urging of his wife, murdered Duncan. The point here is that both the story of Donwald and that of Mackbeth in Holinshed probably provided Shakespeare with the background which prompted him to relate the Weird Sisters with evil and especially temptation.¹⁹

As stated earlier, in the expository scenes Shakespeare sets in motion a set of forces which advances, in secret or open opposition to the respective protagonists who are ultimately driven downward to defeat by the reaction it provokes. In Macbeth, he uses the three Weird Sisters as the expository device to show the working of this particular dramatic pattern. As symbols of evil²⁰ in this pattern, the Weird Sisters are deceptive in nature. In order to dramatize this deceptive nature of evil, Shakespeare introduces in I.i an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty through the Witches.

Darkness is predominant in such an atmosphere which is marked by the absence of clear, rational certainty that

characterizes the natural order of good. The unnatural appearance and sinister activities of the Witches in I.i help create an atmosphere of darkness, confusion, disorder and uncertainty in Macbeth. In addition, the treatment of the Witches in the scene is in harmony with the time and place in which Macbeth and Duncan lived and died.²¹ Besides, the use of the three Witches as an expository device in I.i not only helps add local color to the play but also engages the audience's minds in the play's atmosphere, plot and meaning as the action begins to unfold.

(ii) I.i: The Use of Contradiction as
An Expository Device

I.i of Macbeth introduces darkness and contradiction as two elements that contribute to the play's setting and mood. The two thematic elements together give the play much of its essential character.²²

In I.i, contradiction occurs in two forms. First, there is the expression: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair." Second, we find that the Weird Sisters are bearded women, contrary to nature. Both of the instances of contradiction symbolize chaos and overturned hierarchy in the play.

The theme of darkness is suggested in the opening lines of I.i: "When shall we three meet again? / In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" The answer to the question of the First Witch embodies

the theme of contradiction. It also gives a sense of chaos which is reinforced by another line suggesting darkness: "That will be ere the set of sun." This is followed by the reference to "the fog and filthy air" which further reinforces the sense of gloom.

These two predominant thematic elements -- darkness associated with gloom and contradiction -- surface later in the play. The effects of darkness and contradiction can be felt in I.ii as the Captain says:

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection,
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come,
Discomfort swells.

(I.ii.25-28)

This speech, which suggests a black storm supposedly caused by the sun, reinforces the sense of darkness. Again, in I.iii, Macbeth's remark "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (I.iii.38) echoes the fair-foul contradiction mentioned at the end of I.i.

The more one considers the atmosphere of the play, the more obvious is the element of contradiction. This note of contradiction is found in Macbeth as he soliloquises:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all--here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come.--But in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredience of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,

Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murtherer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself.

(I.vii.1-16)

This conflict (contradiction) between his recognition of his duty and his desire leads to a conflict of moral choice in Macbeth. In the rest of the play, Macbeth never seems to be free from such a conflict of choice and emotions. The initial setting of darkness and contradiction largely represents the setting and mood of the remainder of the play.

(iii) I.i: The Use of the Order-Disorder Antithesis
as An Expository Device

At the beginning of I.i of Macbeth, Shakespeare sets in motion the great order-disorder antithesis which is characteristic of the play as a whole. The initial speech of the First Witch and the initial stage direction both indicate thunder and lightning which suggest disorder in the physical universe. The questions of the First Witch further imply that the Witches are disorder figures and the universe is always in a condition of disorder²³ whenever they meet. The Second Witch's reply to the First Witch's question makes this clear: "When the hurlyburly's done, / When the battle's lost and won." The response, which indicates disorder or confusion in human society, is re-emphasized in the eleventh line of the scene: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair."

The final two lines of I.i are of great significance since they show the prevailing weather conditions, reinforcing the impression of disorder. What is good according to the law of nature is "foul" to the Witches. Conversely, what is "foul" to that law is "fair" to them. According to George Ian Duthie, the Witches are seeking out a good man (fair) in order to turn him into an evil man (foul).²⁴ The major theme of the reversal of values with which are associated "premonitions of the conflict, disorder and moral darkness into which Macbeth will plunge himself"²⁵ is thus presented in I.i.

In Macbeth, then, three different levels of disorder can be distinguished -- disorder in the physical universe, appearing in the form of thunder and lightning; disorder in human society (the rebellion which serves as an antecedent action of the play); and disorder in human figures, since the Witches are supposedly women with beards of men and can "raise haile, tempests and hurtfull weather."²⁶ Either the antecedent action or I.i itself represents all these levels of disorder, and as such establishes the tone and milieu of the play in twelve compact and superbly effective lines.

The second scene offers a picture of Macbeth as the valiant upholder of order, as he is the brave defender of his rightful king against invasion or rebellion. The impression of him is that of an order figure; but when Macbeth encounters the Witches for the first time in I.iii, his opening words "So foul and fair a

day I have not seen" (I.iii.38) recall the words of the Witches in I.i. This opening remark of Macbeth, the so-called order figure, associates him with disorder. In the remainder of the play, Macbeth struggles to resist evil (disorder), but finally succumbs to it.

(iv) The Use of Equivocation

The pattern of equivocation is part of Shakespeare's expository method in Macbeth in which the dramatist is concerned with the idea that evil can produce a state of affairs in which a given entity is both one thing and its opposite at the same time.²⁷ Hence, in I.i of the play, the dramatist emphasizes that a battle can be lost and won and that "fair" can be "foul" and "foul" can be "fair" at the same time.

Since evil involves an abnormal relationship between opposites, Shakespeare's purpose in I.i of Macbeth is to produce the effect that in the atmosphere of evil, every species of created things would lose its individuality, all identities would lose their separateness and the whole natural world would be destroyed.²⁸ While using equivocation as an expository device in I.i, Shakespeare provides throughout Macbeth a consistent impression of a world of confusion created by evil.

As stated earlier, Shakespeare creates in Macbeth a dramatic situation in which opposites co-exist in the same action just as Lady Macbeth sleeps and watches at the same time.

Banquo's ghost which had "no speculation in those eyes" which it did "glare with" (III.iv.93-94), is an unnatural phenomenon against which Macbeth, himself the architect of disorder, protests. Furthermore, near the end of this scene of the disastrous banquet, Macbeth asks his wife: "What is the night?" (III.iv.125). Lady Macbeth replies: "Almost at odds with morning, which is which" (III.iv.125). Lady Macbeth's answer implies that night and day are disputing which is which because their identities are indistinct. But the time referred to is twilight in which night and day are simultaneously present and indistinguishable. Lady Macbeth's failure to draw distinction between night and day is related to the atmosphere of confusion in I.i in which evil predominates and in which good and evil are indistinguishable.

The pattern of equivocation built in I.i prevails throughout the tragedy, emphasizing the presence of evil accompanying confusion and disorder. Macbeth seems to comprehend this lack of clarity only when he has been completely defeated by evil. He says:

And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.

(V.viii.19-22)

(v) I.i: Two Basic Patterns as Expository Devices

This examination further reveals that Shakespeare, in opening Macbeth, uses two basic dramatic patterns as part of his expository method: (a) questioning, doubt and uncertainty, and

(b) darkness, horror and abnormality.

I.i opens with such questions as "When shall we three meet again?" and "Where the place?" I.ii opens with the question "What bloody man is that?" (I.ii.1) and the whole scene is full of questions. The atmosphere of "amazement and mystery"²⁹ that is built in I.i continues throughout. In I.vii, for example, the questions are terse and evocative:

Macb. . . .How now! What news?

Lady M. He has almost supp'd: Why have you left the chamber?

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady M. Know you not, he has?
(I.vii.27-30)

Or again, after the murder of Duncan, Macbeth's speeches to Lady Macbeth express his fear in the form of questions:

Macb. I have done the deed.--Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream, and the crickets cry.
Did you not speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?
(II.ii.14-18)

The scene of the murder and that of its discovery are also conveyed through a series of questions: "But wherefore could not ' pronounce 'Amen'?" (II.ii.30) and "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" (II.ii.60). The amazed questions of the guests and Lady Macbeth at the banquet

(III.iv), Macbeth's continual questioning of the Weird Sisters in the cauldron scene (IV.i), those of Macduff's son to Lady Macduff (IV.ii) and of the Doctor to the Gentlewoman (IV.i) are also in keeping with the general atmosphere of questioning, fears and amazement.

Macbeth's failure to understand how he can become the Thane of Cawdor parallels the surprise and amazement which characterizes the play. He asks: "The Thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me / In borrow'd robes?" (I.iii.108). Likewise, Lady Macbeth is startled at the news of Duncan's visit (I.v.33). Later in the play, she is baffled by Macbeth's enigmatic utterance:

Macb.

...Ere the bat hath flown:
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-born beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung Night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

Lady M.

What's to be done?
(III.ii.40-44)

While on the one hand these questions reveal the agitated states of mind of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, they also support the general tone of uncertainty and doubt which pervades the play.

The atmosphere of amazement, confusion and mystery is enhanced by the use of rumors and "vague knowledge reported during the play's progress."³⁰ Throughout the play, communication is often made through rumors that help support the feeling of disquietude. Rosse says to Lady Macduff:

...when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and move--...

(IV.ii.19-22)

Rosse's speech, which can be called the microcosm of the play, describes the predicament of the people of the world of Macbeth: they are lost, bewildered and baffled, and seem to "float upon a wild and violent sea."

Besides this pattern of doubt, uncertainty and irrationality, a second and related pattern contributing to the atmosphere of Macbeth is the image of darkness. Like I.i, most of the scenes of the play take place in darkness. The vision of the dagger, the murders of Duncan and Banquo and the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth all occur at night. Macbeth calls the Witches who receive him in a dark cave amid thunder and lightning the "secret, black, and midnight hags" (IV.i.47).

Like I.i, the rest of the play is characterized by thunder, storm and tumult all of which contribute to an atmosphere of horror and disorder. This world of horror and disorder gives birth to strange and hideous creatures. Animal-disorder symbolism is recurrent in the play. The animals mentioned in the play are mostly of a fierce, ugly or ill-omened nature. They are the "Hyrcan tiger" and the "arm'd rhinoceros" (III.iv.100), the "rugged Russian bear" (III.iv.99), and the wolf "whose howl's his watch" (II.i.54). Also, Lady Macbeth speaks of a raven that "...is hoarse, / That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan" (I.v.38-39). In addition, there are the bat and his "cloister'd

flight," (III.ii.41), "the shard-born beetle," (III.ii.42), the crow making wing to the "rooky wood," (III.ii.51), the snake that Macbeth has "scotch'd ,...not kill'd" (III.ii.13) and Macbeth's mind which is full of scorpions (III.ii.36), all of which bear unpleasant suggestions. Shakespeare also describes how a falcon is "hawk'd at, and kill'd" by a "mousing owl" (II.iv.13) and how Duncan's horses "Turn'd wild in nature" and "eat each other" (II.iv.14-19):

Old M. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd.

Rosse. And Duncan's horses (a thing most strange and
certain)
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

Old M. 'Tis said, they eat each other.

Rosse. They did so; to th' amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon 't.

(II. iv. 10-20)

If the falcon in this passage is taken as the symbol of a king, thereby of authority and order in society, its death in the hands of an owl indicates a reversal of values. Similarly, with the murder of Duncan, such authority and order are lost, and abnormality and hideousness take their place. G. Wilson Knight writes: "We are confronted by mystery, darkness, abnormality, hideousness: and therefore fear. The word 'fear' is ubiquitous. All may be unified

as symbols of this emotion. Fear is predominant. Everyone is afraid. There is scarcely a person in the play who does not feel and voice at some time a sickening, nameless terror. The impact of the play is thus exactly analogous to nightmare, to which state there are many references."³²

The atmosphere of abnormality, hideousness and consequent "fear" which exists throughout the play is the result of an overturned hierarchy symbolized by the fall of a falcon. The rebellion, which serves as a prologue to the action of the play and is hinted at in I.i, is essentially a thing of disorder and gross violation of the Elizabethan view of degree and order. That such degree and order, so valued by the Elizabethans, is threatened, becomes apparent from Macduff's speech later in the play:

Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious Murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building!

(II.iii.66-69)

In summary, it appears that two basic patterns dominate the overall atmosphere of the play: (a) doubt, uncertainty and irrationality; and (b) darkness, horror and abnormality. The two patterns which repel "the intellect and the heart of man"³³ are clearly reflected in the play's opening scene.

(vi) I.i: The Dramatic Irony

In I.i, Shakespeare introduces a sense of irony which creates a special tone. A. C. Bradley calls it a "Sophoclean

irony" by which a speaker is made to use words bearing to the audience a further and ominous sense, hidden from himself and usually from others on the stage. ³⁴ Macbeth's initial remark ("So foul and fair a day I have not seen" I.iii.38) has a much further and more ominous sense which is hidden from himself and others, but is intelligible to the audience, since, as noted, it echoes the words of the Witches in I.i.

Contributing to the dramatic irony of Macbeth are the many speeches, words and actions which have secondary meanings. Duncan's words are notable here:

There is no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust--

(I.iv.12-14)

The moment the King expresses his view about doubleness in human nature, Macbeth enters the stage. His appearance gives a sense of irony since Duncan does not know that Macbeth, upon whom he has likewise built "an absolute trust," may prove as traitorous as the earlier Thane of Cawdor. Similarly, while Macbeth emerges from his murderous reverie, his own words to the nobles "Let us toward the king,--" (I.iii.153) may seem to be innocent; but to the audience they have a double meaning. Such remarks by Macbeth, Duncan's remark in I.iv.12-15 and his greeting of Macbeth with overwhelming gratitude and "absolute trust" all have deep ironical implications which go back to the opening scene.

In addition to the duality expressed through speeches, words and actions in the play, there is a dual nature in Macbeth. While

recalling Macbeth's heroic deeds, Duncan acknowledges his loyalty and courage and addresses him as "valiant cousin! worthy gentleman" (I.ii.24) and "noble Macbeth" (I.ii.68), emphasizing the latter's nobility of nature. When the audience first hears of Macbeth, it hears of a man of noble and unambiguous action; but when Macbeth first appears with Duncan, the audience hears of Macbeth's deep-rooted ambition, contrary to the impression they have received so far:

...Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.
(I.iv.50-53)

Macbeth's nobility, on one hand, and unnatural desires, on the other, create a conflict within him, although he finally chooses the bloody way to fulfill his ambition. This conflict or doubt in his character echoes the play's general pattern of equivocation which is well established in I.i.

D. Chapter Summary

Chapter III has examined the function of various expository devices employed by Shakespeare in linking I.i to the rest of the drama. In the chapter, it has been suggested that these expository devices -- the three Witches; the theme of contradiction; the order-disorder antithesis; equivocation; the two basic patterns of (a) questioning, doubt and uncertainty, and (a) darkness, horror and abnormality; and dramatic irony -- link I.i logically and emotionally with the rest of the tragedy. To begin with, it has been seen that Shakespeare made use of the contemporary notions of witchcraft to enhance the local color of the play. It has been demonstrated that the theme of contradiction introduced in I.i leads to a conflict of moral choice in Macbeth. Further, the whole drama, in keeping with I.i, is based on an order-disorder antithesis in which the protagonist, an order figure in the beginning, struggles to resist disorder in the form of evil, but fails. Shakespeare's masterly use of equivocation as an expository technique helps to depict this world of confusion created by evil, as do the two basic patterns -- questioning, doubt and uncertainty, on the one hand, and darkness, horror and abnormality, on the other -- of the drama's overall atmosphere. Finally, the essential function of dramatic irony is to elucidate the duality within Macbeth, which, in turn, reflects the general mood of ambiguity well established in I.i.

Notes to Chapter III

1

G. R. Elliott, Dramatic Providence in Macbeth: A Study of Shakespeare's Tragic Theme of Humanity and Grace (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 35.

2

Elliott, p. 35.

3

All quotations from Macbeth are from Kenneth Muir's edition of the play (7th ed. (1951; rpt. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1959)).

4

Elliott, p. 35.

5

See Muir's comments on line 8 in his edition of Macbeth, p. 4.

6

Elliott, p. 36.

7

Marvin Rosenberg, The Masks of Macbeth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 33.

8

Rosenberg, p. 35.

9

Rosenberg, p. 35.

10

Henry N. Paul, The Royal Play of Macbeth (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), p. 295.

11

Willson, p. 152.

12

Sylvan Barnet, ed., Macbeth in The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare, p. 1230, writes: "...Macbeth is indebted to the fact that a Scot had acceded to the English throne. More specifically, James I had written a book called Daemonologie, and in it Shakespeare could have learned, for example, that witches can foretell the future. If Shakespeare had wanted to please or honor James, who was supposedly descended from Banquo, he would naturally write a play about Scottish history showing James's ancestor in a favorable light and making use of James's interest in witchcraft."

13

King James I, Daemonologie (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., 1969), p. 4.

14

Paul, p. 255.

15

Bradley, p. 341.

16

Paul, pp. 271-72.

17

Paul, p. 257.

18

Paul, p. 258.

19

See Holinshed's Chronicles of Scotland in Appendix A in Muir's edition of Macbeth, p. 179.

20

Irving Ribner, "Macbeth: The Pattern of Idea and

Action," Shakespeare Quarterly, 10 (1959), 147-159.

21

Fleming, p. 53.

22

Brents Sterling, "The Unity of Macbeth," Shakespeare Quarterly, 4 (1953), p. 385-194.

23

George Ian Duthie, Shakespeare (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966), p. 157.

24

Duthie, p. 158.

25

L. C. Knights, "Macbeth," Shakespeare: The Tragedies, ed. Alfred Harbage (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 95.

26

Bradley, p. 341.

27

George Ian Duthie, "Antithesis in Macbeth," Shakespeare Survey, 19 (1966), p. 25.

28

Duthie, "Antithesis in Macbeth," p. 29.

29

Knight, p. 141.

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Knight, p. 143.

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Knight, pp. 145-46.

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Knight, p. 146.

33

Knight, p. 149.

34

Bradley, p. 339.

General Conclusion

(i) What Are Shakespeare's Devices of Exposition in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth? Do They Logically Link I.i with the Complete Drama?

This thesis had one major purpose -- to illustrate the significance of I.i in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth for the complete drama, i.e., to determine the relationship between the scene and the rest of the drama in each of these tragedies. This necessitated an examination of the method and function of exposition in each play.

Chapter I was an investigation into the expository method and function of I.i in Hamlet. The scene has been examined in terms of the play's mood, tone and atmosphere; the figure of the Ghost; the characters of Horatio and Fortinbras; recollection and anticipation and the setting. The Ghost has been seen as a traditional dramatic machinery to introduce the preliminary data in an arresting fashion. It was noted that Shakespeare used the current religious and superstitious views of ghosts and spirits and that such conventional dramatic machinery accounted for the special popularity of the play to the audience. This investigation has established that the Ghost in I.i provides the motive for the plot and facilitates the exposition of the

character of Prince Hamlet.

The character of Horatio was seen to have expository implications for the entire play. The character has been seen as Hamlet's confidant whose remarks have value as explanations of what happens in the drama. The reference to young Fortinbras in I.i has structural implications for the play. Fortinbras who is referred to in I.i, but actually seen in IV.iv, inspires Hamlet to renew his efforts in seeking revenge on Claudius for a greater cause.

The use of recollection and anticipation as an expository device has significance for the play. By recalling in the scene the battle between King Hamlet and the King of Norway and the recent enterprise of Young Fortinbras, Horatio links the appearance of the Ghost with the forebodings that had occurred before the fall of Julius Caesar. This expository inset of the double past in I.i foreshadows the tragic happenings in the play.

Finally, the setting of I.i establishes the setting of the entire play. A number of Danish characteristics which are introduced in the opening scene in order to create a suitable background for the Danish prince are noticeable in the remainder of the play; therefore, the setting in I.i is representative of the entire play.

This examination of the expository method and function of I.i of Hamlet has revealed that the impressions produced in the scene are coherently maintained throughout the play, establishing echoes and correspondences between the scene and the rest of the play. Thus, the scene is, as Maynard Mack suggests, a symbol for

the complete drama.

The purpose of Chapter II was to investigate that the issues raised in I.i of Othello are coherently carried through to the conclusion of the play, establishing an organic relation between the scene and the remainder of the play. The purpose and function of exposition of the scene have been examined in eight main areas: the settings; the insets; the effect of Iago's language on the hero and the general atmosphere of the tragedy; Iago; Roderigo; Brabantio; recurrent motifs; and dramatic irony.

Both the major and minor settings of Othello as revealed in I.i have been studied to find how they accounted for the play's popularity to the contemporary audience. It has been demonstrated that a background view of Othello's origins and of the crusade between Moslems and Christians concerning Cyprus, provided in the I.i and maintained throughout the drama, probably created a great interest in the contemporary audience.

It has been demonstrated that "the expository insets" which are either directly narrated or hinted at in I.i form an organic part of the play's action. It has been further concluded that Iago's language in I.i which creates an atmosphere of bestiality and subversion, points the way to the total collapse of Othello's language, manliness and other human qualities later in the play. In Iago, and for some time, in Othello, human beings are reduced to a level below that of genuine humanity due to the presence of evil. Iago, who begins his machinations in I.i, has been seen as the sole instrument of this reductive effect in Othello's manliness

as well as in the general atmosphere of the play.

This investigation has shown that I.i of Othello fully exposes the character of Iago, the main mover of the action of the play. Iago has been seen as a traditional stage villain, the Vice of the old morality plays, a Machiavellian and a challenge to the Renaissance concept of the order and harmony of the universe. Similarly, two minor characters, Roderigo and Brabantio, have been viewed as Shakespeare's additional instruments of exposition in I.i of the play.

Certain recurrent patterns and motifs of the play have been examined. It has been shown that the patterns and motifs which Shakespeare introduces in I.i are echoed and re-echoed in the rest of the play, establishing an organic relation between the scene and the complete drama. The chapter has further examined how in I.i the dramatist creates an ironic spirit which induces the audience to expect the tragic end of the story. In the scene, the audience is made aware of the presence of evil as a force causing the catastrophe. It has been concluded that in I.i, Shakespeare builds up an expectation in the audience who not only accepts the catastrophe at the end, but also expects its coming.

It has been concluded that the sinister whisperings of Iago and Roderigo and the secretive effect of darkness in which I.i opens have significance for the play. Shakespeare's expository devices in I.i of Othello help create a dramatic effect which justifies John Russell Brown's view that the scene provides "a quiet, mysterious beginning in which dramatic interest is coiled

up, like a spring."

Chapter III has examined how certain expository devices help create a logical and emotional link between I.i and the complete drama in Macbeth. While noting Shakespeare's reliance on Holinshed's accounts (of Donwald and Mackbeth) and how those accounts complement his dramatic purposes in the play, this chapter has found that the opening scene is in harmony with the time and place in which Macbeth and Duncan lived. In short, it has examined how Shakespeare, by employing the three Witches as an expository device, makes use of the then contemporary witchcraft lore, and adds local color to the play.

It has been stated that the theme of contradiction introduced by means of the Three Witches in I.i leads to a conflict of moral choice in Macbeth. This theme is reinforced throughout the play by the setting of darkness. In addition, it has become apparent that the play Macbeth, in keeping with I.i, is based on an order-disorder antithesis. We have found a hero who is apparently an order figure in the midst of disorder, struggling to resist evil, although finally succumbing to it. As in I.i, Shakespeare uses throughout the drama the stylistic device of equivocation in order to provide a consistent impression of a world of confusion resulting from evil.

What emerges from this investigation is that there are two basic patterns that are predominant in the overall atmosphere of Macbeth. They are: (a) questioning, doubt and uncertainty,

and (b) darkness, horror and abnormality. It has been argued that both patterns, which repel "the intellect and the heart of man," are reflected in the play's opening scene.

We have further found that in I.i of Macbeth, Shakespeare is able to introduce a sense of irony and create a special tone of Sophoclean irony. The duality of Macbeth's character, revealed through such irony, is inevitably related to the general mood of equivocation well established in I.i.

Finally, this chapter has concluded that the issues presented in I.i have significance and coherence for the rest of the drama and so fulfill their respective expository functions.

(ii) How Are Shakespeare's Methods of Exposition in
Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth Similar?

In some respects, Shakespeare's methods of exposition in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth are similar. To illustrate the theme of evil in all three tragedies, the dramatist makes use of certain special expository devices, e.g., the figure of the Ghost in Hamlet, Iago the villain in Othello and the three Witches in Macbeth. In all three plays, these devices help provide the audience with the foreknowledge of a force destructive to the hero and link the opening scene with the complete drama. In Othello, it is Iago who opens the play, and at the very outset the audience receives a strong impression of the force which later proves fatal to the hero. In Macbeth, such a force is

represented by the Witches, and in Hamlet by the Ghost. The Ghost, Iago and the three Witches are essentially at the root of the tragic action that follows in the plays. Also, they are presented as a group of characters possessing independent interests which are different from those of the heroes. In each play, the second or the third scene (or both together) are wholly devoted to the exposition of such characters.

In Hamlet, the Ghost is Shakespeare's key expository device. The mystery of the Ghost in I.i alludes to the essential mystery of Prince Hamlet's complex personality revealed later in the play. There is a suggestiveness about the Ghost which alludes to so much of Hamlet's behavior. The mysterious quickness of the Ghost's appearance and disappearance in I.i points to Hamlet's impetuosity and his great agility in shifting swiftly from mood to mood. In Othello, Iago is Shakespeare's key device of exposition. His bestiality and demonic imagery in I.i anticipates this quality in Othello's language later in the play. In both Iago and Othello, we witness men reduced to a level below that of genuine humanity because of evil. Iago, who begins his machinations in I.i, is the sole instrument of this reductive effect on the manliness of Othello, which corresponds to the increasingly tragic atmosphere in the play.

Like the Ghost in Hamlet and Iago in Othello, the three Witches constitute Shakespeare's most important expository device in Macbeth. As in the other two tragedies, in this play Shakespeare sets in motion a set of forces (of evil) which

advances, in secret or open opposition to the hero, and is ultimately driven downward to defeat by the reaction it provokes. The three Witches are the dramatist's sole expository instrument to illustrate the working of this pattern. As symbols of evil, the Witches are deceptive in nature and in order to dramatize the deceptive nature of evil, Shakespeare introduces in I.i an atmosphere of darkness characterized by confusion and uncertainty. The unnatural appearance and sinister activities of the Witches help create this atmosphere. Also, like the Ghost in Hamlet and Iago in Othello, the three Witches in I.i of Macbeth further help engage the audience's minds in the play's atmosphere, plot and meaning. The Ghost, Iago and the three Witches have been seen as Shakespeare's appropriate expository devices in presenting the preliminary information in an arresting fashion.

The thesis has found some other points of similarity and difference in terms of Shakespeare's expository methods. In both Hamlet and Othello, Shakespeare uses some minor characters as expository devices -- Horatio and Fortinbras in Hamlet and Roderigo and Brabantio in Othello. Such minor characters as contribute to the exposition of the heroes are missing from Macbeth. Again, of all three tragedies studied in this thesis, dramatic irony as an expository device appears in only Othello and Macbeth. Also, Hamlet is the only tragedy in which Shakespeare uses recollection and anticipation as an expository device. In addition, an extensive use of recurrent patterns and motifs and of expository insets occurs in only Othello, while

contradiction, order-disorder antithesis, equivocation, and questioning and doubt form some of the expository devices in Macbeth in creating a logical and emotional link between I.i and the complete drama. However, in each of the three tragedies examined in this thesis, Shakespeare clearly creates the kind of setting and atmosphere appropriate to the very theme and nature of the play.

(iii) How Are Shakespeare's Expository Devices in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth Different from the Devices in any Other of His Plays?

This investigation into I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth demonstrates that Shakespeare's major expository devices in all three tragedies are somewhat similar, although the minor devices may vary. It is also evident from this examination that his expository devices in these three tragedies are different from those in his other plays.

As stated earlier, it is difficult to generalize about Shakespeare's methods of exposition since no consistent formula appears to have been employed in the plays, whether they are comedies, histories, tragedies or romances. In keeping with the various types of plays and their plots and themes, Shakespeare employed various expository devices such as prologue speakers (e.g., Philo in Antony and Cleopatra), choruses and mythic

figures (such as ghosts and bloody men). Except for the Ghost in Hamlet, none of these devices is used in the tragedies studied. Finally, in these three tragedies (Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth), Shakespeare seems to have moved more in the direction of symbolism and foreshadowing. (That is, the life of the complete drama is symbolized or foreshadowed in the expository part of the play). Such symbolism may take place in the form of some words, images, metaphors, motifs or stylistic devices. For example, the disease imagery and the metaphor of the fall of Julius Caesar in I.i of Hamlet, the bestial imagery and the motif of the black devil in I.i of Othello and the order-disorder antithesis; equivocation and the imagery of darkness introduced in I.i of Macbeth respectively symbolize the main issues of the plays. As the action continues, the audience finds the fuller significance of these words, images, metaphors or motifs for the play concerned. Such symbolism, in fact, carries the very meaning inherent in a play.

One other outstanding difference in Shakespeare's methods of exposition is that in the comedies, and most histories the heroes do appear in I.i. In none of the tragedies studied in this thesis, this is the case.

Furthermore, in the Roman plays, Shakespeare frequently presents a popular view of the hero from the street before he (the hero) enters the stage; then the citizens remain to act as audience to judge him. In the romances, however, the technique is varied. Posthumus and Imogen enter the stage in I.i, while

Leontes does not do so until I.ii. Also, in the romances as well as in the tragedies, the central characters are rarely the first speakers. Usually, secondary characters provide some preparation before they first enter the stage.

This thesis, then, stresses that Shakespeare's methods of exposition in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth are somewhat different from those applied in any other of his plays. Also, it establishes that his methods of exposition in these three tragedies have much in common.

(iv) Conclusion

This thesis has established the correspondence between I.i and the complete drama in Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth and has analyzed the opening scene as part of an organic whole for the respective plays. It has identified Shakespeare's expository devices and examined their functions in each of the three tragedies. In all three tragedies examined, it has been emphasized that each scene follows the preceding one naturally and has a similarly natural link with those that follow. In this dramatic progression from one scene to the other, there exists a sense of inevitability.

Finally, this investigation into I.i of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth stresses that there exist numerous "echoes" and "correspondences" between the scene and the rest of the drama. Such "echoes" and "correspondences" which, according to Wolfgang

Clemen, help "bind the parts of the play together and make it a living organism of which all parts are interrelated," establish a logical and emotional link between I.i and the complete drama in the plays studied.

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