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THE COMEDIES OF GEORGE CHAPMAN

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THE COMEDIES OF GEORGE CHAPMAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The eight comedies of George Chapman (1559?-1634), which form the subject of this study, were written in the relatively short period of time from about 1596 to about 1606. Chapman had apparently first attracted attention as a writer with his earliest extant published work, two difficult, cryptic, allegorical poems appearing under the title The Shadow of Night (1594). In The Shadow of Night and indeed in almost all of his original non-dramatic poetry, Chapman, who had claimed from the first that obscurity itself was a virtue, wrote often in a knotty impenetrable style, which he defended in a letter affixed to Ovid's Banquet of Sense (1595):

> The prophane multitude I hate, & onelie consecrate my strange Poems to these serching spirits, whom learning hath made noble, and nobilitie sacred....But that Poesie should be as perviall as Oratorie, and plainnes her speciall ornament, were the plaine way to barbarisme....It serves not a skilfull Painters turne, to draw the figure of a face onely to make knowne who it represents; but hee must lymn, give luster, shaddow, and heightening; which though ignorants will esteeme spic'd, and too curious, yet such as have the judiciall perspective, will see it hath, motion, spirit and life....In my opinion, that which being with a little endevour serched, ads a kinde of majesite to Poesie; is better then that which every Cobler may sing to his patch.
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> Obscuritie in affection of words, & indigested concets, is pedanticall and childish; but where it shroudeth it selfe in the hart of his subject, utterd with fitnes of figure, and expressive Epethites; with that darkness wil I still labour to be shadowed:

> rich Minerals are digd out of the bowels of the earth, not found in the superficies and dust of it....I know, that empty, and dark spirits, will complaine of palpable night: but those that beforehand, have a radiant, and light-bearing intellect, will say they can passe through Corynnas Garden without the helpe of a Lanterne.[1]

Chapman's poetry was sometimes crammed with scholarly and esoteric references and allusions.[2] His "characteristic texture," Douglas Bush observes, "is tough and knotted with emblematic images and symbols...."[3] Chapman has written great poetry--his continuation of Hero and Leander and his translations of Homer have won him a general if not exactly unanimous acclaim--but it is ordinarily only after careful and extensive qualification that the critic of Chapman's original poetry is able to bestow anything except occasional praise. Phyllis Bartlett, the most recent editor of Chapman's poetry, remarks that "he was not a careful craftsman," and that though "energetic," his brain was "disorganized."[4] And the editors of a recent anthology of Renaissance writing say that "Chapman's poetry is generally graceless and obscure."[5]

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[1] George Chapman, The Poems, ed. Phyllis Brooks Bartlett (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp. 49-50.

[2] As a result of Franck L. Schoell's Etudes sur l'Humanisme Continental en Angleterre a la Fin de la Renaissance, we now know that Chapman was more dependent on Renaissance than classical sources. Schoell has shown that Chapman has used extensively Comes' Mythologiae, The Plutarch of Xylander, the Epictetus of Wolfius, and Ficino's translations of Plato. Many troublesome passages in Chapman's poetry are cleared up once his sources have been identified.

[3] Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 128.

[4] Chapman, p. 15.

[5] Hyder E. Rollins and Herschell Baker (eds.) The Renaissance in England (Boston: Heath, 1954), p. 445.

Similarly Chapman's tragedies,[1] of which there are several recent (and thorough) examinations, do not by any means enjoy unreserved praise. The heavy moralism of these plays, the great gasping lumps of didacticism and hard doctrine that clog the flow of action and choke the life out of character, are frequent targets of attack. It is generally agreed, however, that on occasion, Chapman will write greatly and movingly in his tragedies (as in his poetry). For the most part, though, the general impression one would derive from a reading of Chapman's critics is that his writing was hard, abstruse, tenebrous, crossed with flashes of pellucid beauty and clarity.[2] What Lucretius said of Hereclitus would seem to apply to Chapman: "He was a man illustrious for the darkness of his thought." Also there is generally the feeling among Chapman's critics and readers that the personality of the author himself is strange and enigmatic, full of lights and shadows, and disturbing thunders of thought. Chapman, a Stoic, a Christian, a Platonist, a humanist, a cynic, is capable almost simultaneously of tender sensuous beauty and ghastly doctrinal austerities.

Such a combination is not unusual in the Renaissance; nor is a dualism of thought uncommon in the whole Christian tradition. Augustine, Herschel Baker writes,

> in his great symbol of the two cities...unforgettably enunciated that basic Christian dualism which gives meaning to all its

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[1]For the specific dates of the tragedies, which range probably from 1603 to at least 1613, see note, page 208.

[2]Chapman, p. 4. Bartlett, speaking of Chapman's poetry, remarks that "there are splendid passages, genuinely emotional with the energy of a sustained figurative language, but there is no single poem that would have been likely to satisfy him more than us." And Bush, p. 40, states that "in Chapman generally flashes of pure fire often break through the blanket of the dark...."

> dichotomies of earth and heaven, nature and grace, man and God, the relative and the absolute, time and eternity.[1]

Chapman's thinking was profoundly dualistic; as a Christian he belonged to both the heavenly and the earthly cities; and as a Platonist he found himself both the envisioner of a world of absolute categories of virtue and love and the occupant of a temporal world that was filled with the blundering, the blind, and the unprincipled. An idealist and a cynic Chapman was apparently never able to reconcile what he thought should be with what he knew already was.

This dualism of fact and value (inherent in a Christian philosophy and in a Platonic metaphysic) was almost certainly aggravated by the whole social and political world Chapman was a witness to, and, like his great contemporary Jonson, a critic of. The structure of Chapman's thought, its Christian, Platonic, and Stoical origins, and the contradictions inherent in it between what might be called sense and soul cannot be dismissed in the attempt to understand the war of intellectual and moral opposites that takes place in his art; but the age Chapman lived in may have played the greater role in shaping the bitter and anguished cynicism of his work, especially that written after about 1604 or 1605. Chapman's comedies, like his tragedies, call attention to a malaise of the time; and his last comedy in particular bespeaks a profound disenchantment, perhaps in part with himself, though we cannot be certain of this, but assuredly with his whole age. The sense of loss of widespread meaning and the feeling that the forces of "valor and virtue" had been largely shattered, is a theme of Chapman's

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[1] The Wars of Truth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 43.

tragedies. But the sense of loss and the defeat of value by an actual real world is a message of Chapman's comedies as well; and this defeat is presaged in Chapman's comedies from the first by his inability in them to give flesh and bone to the abstract tenets of his own etherial idealism.

Recent critics of the late Elizabethan, early Jacobean period have recognized that the theme of defeat is symptomatic of a problem much larger in scope than any individual. Una Ellis-Fermor writes that

> Marlowe, the leader of the earlier age in tragic thought already points it towards the sense of defeat that was so marked a characteristic of the Jacobeans.[1]

Robert Ornstein speaks of the "dramatists' preoccupation with evil and their heightened awareness of the tragic anguish and disorder of experience."[2] Douglas Bush calls attention to a "Jacobean pessimism" and to "the permanently unsettled state of the seventeenth century man's inner and outer world." He goes on to remark that

> . . . it is not unnatural that melancholy has been taken as a conspicuous, even a dominant, characteristic of late Elizabethan and Jacobean literature....Certainly we find much disgust with men and society, much vague bitterness against a world which seems out of joint, against the apparent futility of life.[3]

Irving Ribner has called the early seventeenth century "the age of paradox." "Jacobean tragedy," the same critic states, "reflects the uncertainty of an age no longer able to believe in the old ideals, searching almost frantically for new ones to replace them, but incapable

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[1] Jacobean Drama, (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 1.

[2] The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 3.

[3] Bush, p. 3.

yet of finding them."[1] Further on, Ribner suggests that "the tragedies of the period...reflect a search for a moral order in a world which seems in its senility, giving constant evidence of death, decay, and eternal change."[2]

Herschel Baker has devoted an entire book to an examination of the dissolution of Christian humanism in the earlier seventeenth century.[3] The sanguine humanism of the early Renaissance, based on the unquestioned acceptance of the values of order, degree, and hierarchy, and calling for the corollary moral commitments of devotion to monarchs both temporal and divine had begun to disintegrate near the end of Elizabeth's reign, and writers began to reflect the disintegration. At opposite extremes in this period are Donne and Bacon. Donne represents a habit of mind shared, substantially, by many of his learned contemporaries: his profound awareness of death, decay and uncertainty link him closely to his age and to the past. But Bacon, unlike many of his contemporaries, welcomed innovation and change. He saw in the new science the possibility of progress, melioration, even perfectibility for man. But Bacon in the apostle of a future vision and his rational orderliness, his practicality and his doctrines of expediency are all aspects of an attitude towards human life that sees man as master, as manipulator, as creator even, of a new, planned society. Change to such a thinker does not, then, imply decay and

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[1] Jacobean Tragedy (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962), pp. 2-3.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

[3] The Wars of Truth.

degeneration, nor does it breed despair, cynicism, and bitterness. But Bacon is not typical at all of the literary figures writing near the turn of the century. The decay of Christian humanism was not to him a source of disillusionment at all. To such a man, the break-up of old ground merely made possible the appearance of new growth.

Nevertheless, even though Donne may be taken to be more representative of his age than Bacon, I do not think that the collapsing structures of traditional knowledge and value affected others as they affected Donne. Perhaps more clearly than any of his contemporaries Donne realized that values--intellectual, moral, religious, social, political, and scientific--were splintering. I do not think that many were as perceptive as Donne in this respect. Donne knew, as some of his contemporaries may not have (Chapman, for example) that the causes of melancholy, anxiety, and uncertainty could not simply be attributed to the evil in man and in his institutions but to forces which were thrusting new patterns of thought and value upon man. Of course there were special, socal causes of discontent, too. Una Ellis-Fermor, commenting on these causes, observes:

> Apprehensions and...dissillusionment...spread through political and social life with the death of Elizabeth, the accession of James, the influence of his court and the instability of the first of his reign. This mood, culminating as it did in and about the year 1605, took the form for public and private man alike of a sense of impending fate, of a state of affairs so unstable that great or sustained effort was suspended for a time and a sense of the futility of man's achievement set in. One immediate corollary of this is a preoccupation with death where the Elizabethan had been in love with life.[1]

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[1]Ellis-Fermor, p. 2. In a note on the same page she states that "this period of despondency or anxiety appears to last, in one form or another, from some four or five years before the death of Elizabeth, to some five or six years after the accession of James."

There is then, evidence of social and cultural disintegration which we can point to outside the context of any particular writer's work. But signs of disintegration, moral perturbation, and ethical conflict are unquestionably mirrored in a great body of writing which appeared in England during the late Elizabethan-early Jacobean period. Chapman, like other Christian humanists--Donne is an exception--may well have oversimplified the source of confusion in his age by attributing it to a decay of virtue. Chapman may have made such an attribution--his tragedies and comedies so testify--but he would certainly have been short-sighted in doing so. He may too have occasionally felt within some deep psychic doubt over the classical and Christian values he espoused in his writing. His hostility and defensiveness suggest that this may be so. But even if Chapman may have assigned too much emphasis to a historically cumulative decay of virtue, he was thereby led to examine deeply the whole moral structure of his society and to dramatize that examination not just in tragedy but in comedy as well. The present study will deal with Chapman's sometimes contradictory though finally profound vision of his world as he projected it forth in his comedies.

There is no full length study of Chapman's comedies. A meagre handful of essays dealing with individual plays exists, but at least four of Chapman's comedies--half his entire output--have not received individual consideration. In histories of English literature and in texts on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, a chapter is sometimes given over to Chapman; but of course his tragedies are also discussed, and this necessarily limits the attention that can be given the comedies. On occasion Chapman's comedies do not get considered at all. David Daiches, for example, dismisses them with one civilized sentence:

> His comedies, deriving both from the intrigue of Latin comedy and the 'humours' of Ben Jonson, are less individual, but at least one, All Fools, in its deftly constructed plot (from Terence) and kindliness of tone, is still capable of affording civilized pleasure.[1]

In this study I will deal with each comedy in turn, hopeful that I will be able to describe the kind and the quality of comedy Chapman wrote. My thesis will be twofold: first I am convinced that Chapman's most mature comic work--his greatest achievement in fact--was reached after All Fools (which is generally regarded as his masterpiece and which is the most frequently anthologized of all his comedies), and I hope to demonstrate this. Second, and perhaps more important, I hope to show that one special problem, the elucidation of which is necessary for a full understanding of Chapman, runs through all of his comedies. This problem has to do with the conflict, which the plays give evidence of, between Chapman's philosophical idealism and the "real" world of human imperviousness to the values of this idealism. The problem in short derives from the difficulty of giving to his idealism a dramatic force of life and animation after this idealism has come up against the ponderous impasse of human folly, stupidity, irrationality, and baseness. The wise and the foolish characters in most of Chapman's comedies are mimetic creatures from two distinct and inimical moral universes. Chapman sought with what I think was an uncertain and sometimes faltering success in most of his comedies to harmonize the two moral universes of what might be called value and fact. Even in Chapman's first comedy the problem of interrelating the two is adumbrated; thereafter it becomes increasingly important. How Chapman dealt with this problem

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[1] A Critical History of English Literature (2 vols., New York: The Ronald Press, 1960), I, 324.

in his comedies will be part of my concern, then, in this study, as well as with how he finally resolved it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BLIND BEGGAR OF ALEXANDRIA

Chapman's first comedy and for that matter his first play was produced in February 1595-6.[1] The Blind Beggar of Alexandria is a short,[2] boisterous, rowdy play that has offended and puzzled readers for years. Despite an apparently untrustworthy text, Chapman has been on the whole, at least until quite recently, unforgiven for his authorship of it. T. M. Parrott, arguing that the first edition, printed for William Jones in 1598, was probably transcribed from a stage copy which had been badly mutilated, remarks:

> The original version seems to have been heavily cut in...the stage copy for the printed play contains only about 1,600 lines, and the omissions are such as to render the serious part of the play almost unintelligible. It is plain...that it was the farcical scenes, in which the beggar displayed...his humours and not the romantic story of Aegiale and Cleanthes, which caught the fancy of the public. It is not unlikely that the former scenes have been enlarged beyond their original form; it is certain that the latter have been cut down. As a consequence the play, as it now stands, totally lacks unity, coherence, and proportion. That the author is to be charged with this lack appears to me more than doubtful.[3]

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[1] Henslowe's Diary, ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), p. 34.

[2] It consists of ten scenes.

[3] The Comedies of George Chapman, ed. Thomas Marc Parrott (2 vols., New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1961), II, 673-674.

Swinburne in his well known essay on Chapman deals summarily with The Blind Beggar, calling it a "crude and graceless piece of work" with a plot more "childish...than we find in the rudest sketches of Greene or Peele." The play deals, Swinburne continues,

> ...solely with the impossible frauds, preposterous adulteries, and farcical murders committed by a disguised hero....The story is beneath the credulity of a nursery, and but for some detached passages of clear and vigorous writing the whole work might plausibly have been signed by any...[Grub Street] dunce.[1]

William Lyon Phelps similarly concludes that "from every point of view...The Blind Beggar is absolutely worthless,"[2] and more recently, Paul V. Kreider, calling it a "coarse, crudely constructed, extravagant play," regards it as "incontrovertible proof of the debased popular taste in the early days of Chapman and Shakespeare."[3]

To be sure The Blind Beggar viewed as a mangled romance does indeed deserve the condemnations that have been heaped so unreservedly upon it. A recapitulation of the plot lines and some of the problems they give rise to will serve to make clear why critics have generally been dissatisfied with the play; such a recapitulation will also serve to introduce the ideas of two recent critics whose insights into the play make a new reading not only possible but obligatory.

King Ptolemy and Queen Aegiale are rulers of Egypt. Queen Aegiale, falling in love with Duke Cleanthes, has done away with his

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[1] Algernon Charles Swinburne, George Chapman: A Critical Essay (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), pp. 44-45.

[2] George Chapman, ed. William Lyon Phelps (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), p. 12.

[3] Paul V. Kreider, Elizabethan Comic Character Conventions (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935), p. 163.

duchess to remove a dangerous rival for his love. Cleanthes, angered at his loss, rejects the Queen's adulterous passion. Furious, she unjustly accuses him of an attempt upon her honor and has Ptolemy banish him from Egypt. In seeking revenge Cleanthes assumes serveral disguises: as Irus, he is the blind beggar who is also a celebrated holy man and magician; as Count Hermes, he is the bellicose "mad-brain Count"; and as Leon, he is the usurer with a great nose.

In time we learn that Cleanthes, in name and rank, is merely one more mask of the central character (after whom the play takes its name): Irus-Count Hermes-Leon-Cleanthes. For the sake of convenience I shall hereafter refer to this multiple personality as Irus (the blind beggar). Irus explains early in the play who and what he is:

> I am Cleanthes and blind Irus too,
> And more than these, as you shall soon perceive,
> Yet but a shepherds son at Memphis born;
> And I will tell you how I got that name:
> My father was a fortune-teller and from him I learnt his art,
> And, knowing to grow great was to grow rich,
> Such money as I got by palmistry
> I put to use, and by that means became
> To take the shape of Leon, by which name
> I am well known a wealthy usurer;
> And more than this I am two noblemen:
> Count Hermes is another of my names,
> And Duke Cleanthes whom the Queen so loves;
> For, till the time that I may claim the corwn,
> I mean to spend my time in sports of love,
> Which in the sequel you shall plainly see,
> And joy, I hope, in this my policy.
> (sc. i, 110-126)

Most of the future action of the play is suggested here. Through the greater body of the play, appearing in one or the other of his various comic disguises, Irus will engage in deceptions centered around "sports of love." Later, donning his "serious" disguise (Cleanthes), he will seize the crown of Egypt. Two tonally different attitudes,

corresponding to two separate plots, are the result. In the serious, quasi-romantic plot, the tone is somber, and the diction and verse are consciously heightened. This plot line concerns the relationship between Ptolemy, the King of Egypt, his Queen Aegiale, and the (presumed) noble warrior, Cleanthes. There is no attempt to relate organically these two "plots." Indeed many of the scenes in the play are episodic and isolated. The play as a whole in fact is little more than a skit or a series of fragments. After the antic scenes in which Irus, scrambling hurriedly out of one costume into another, seduces two women and cuckolds himself, cheats merchants of their money, and gulls a braggart, he is roused to martial action and effortlessly defeats whole armies, foreign and domestic, and gains the crown of Egypt.

Before I move on to discuss what Chapman may be doing in this play, I would like to pause to examine several confusing details of the serious or romantic plot that seem to lend support to those critics who view The Blind Beggar as a romance that has been hideously amputated by pit-loving actors who reduced the original script into gross farce by deletions and absurd interpolations.

In scene six Aegiale enters and soliloquizes solemnly about her estrangement from Cleanthes. She is apparently standing near a small tree, perhaps in a courtyard or inner garden. The mad-brain Count (Irus' disguise as a humourous lord with a quick temper and absurd speech habits) bursts forcefully in upon her, despite being told by a guard that "We are commanded to keep out all comers, because of the branch wherein the King's life remains." Once in the Queen's presence the Count, turning to the tree, says:

> ...here's a branch, forsooth, of your little son turned to a mandrake tree, by Hella, the sorceress.
> (sc. vi, 43-45)

The Queen thereupon admits that the tree is indeed her bewitched son:

> Aeg. 'Tis true Hella has done this and kills me to remember it.
> Count. Tut, tut, remember it and be wise! Thou wouldst have Cleanthes come again, wouldst thou not?
> Aeg. The King is so advis'd to give him death.
> Count. The King! Come, come, 'tis you rule the King. Nowwould any wise woman in the world be so hunger-starved for a man, and not use the means to have him? Think'st thou Cleanthes will come again to have his head chopped off so soon as he comes? But had you plucked up this branch wherein the King thy husband's life consists and burnt it in the fire, his old beard would have stunk for't in the grave ere this, and then thou shouldst have seen whether Cleanthes would have come unto thee or no.
> (sc. vi, 46-58)

The Queen's son and Hella and the magical tree all are details which appear cryptically and without preparation in this scene and may well represent the truncated remains of a larger romance theme in the original script. The play at about this point in its fragmentary development seems almost to have become a comic ritualistic romance.[1] Ptolemy, King of Egypt, is old, and his kingdom suffers from the real threat of foreign devastation. The old King appears to be powerless to take decisive action. He is ruled by the Queen who in turn is in love with the vigorous and youthful Cleanthes whose origins are obscure. Cleanthes (though impure because he is deceptive, dishonest, and unscrupulous) is distantly comparable to the young knight of romance who, as fertility, potency, and life, restores health to a blighted kingdom.

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[1]By "romance" here and elsewhere in this chapter, I am referring to a mythic pattern of unconscious projection, analyzed by Jessie Weson in From Ritual to Romance. In future chapters "romance" will refer to a spiritualized love relationship between man and woman.

In the play Ptolemy is in one place actually presented as an oppressive king.[1]

The King's life, as the passage makes clear, is linked mysteriously to that of his son's: "But had you plucked up this branch wherein the King thy husband's life consists," the Count tells Queen Aegiale, "and burnt it in the fire, his old beard would have stunk for't in the grave ere this." The Queen tells the Count that his counsel is "execrable," after which the following dialogue occurs:

> Count. Go to, 'tis good counsel; take the grace of God before your eyes, and follow it. To it, wench, corraggio! I know I have gotten thee with child of a desire, and thou long'st but for a knife to let it out. Hold, there 'tis! [giving her a knife] Serve God and be thankful.
> . . . . . .Exit
> Aeg. This serpent's counsel stings me to the heart,
> Mounts to my brain, and binds my prince of sense,
> My voluntary motion and my life,
> Sitting itself triumphing in their thrones;
> And that doth force my hand to take this knife,
> That bows my knees and sets me by thy branch,
> Oh, my Diones, oh, my only son;
> Canst thou now feel the rigour of a knife?
> No, thou art senseless, and I'll cut thee up,
> I'll shroud thee in my bosom safe from storms,
> And trust no more my trustless guard with thee.
> Come then, return unto thy mother's arms,
> And when I pull thee forth to serve the fire,
> Turn thyself wholly into a burning tongue,
> Invoking furies and infernal death
> To cool thy torments with thy father's breath.
> (sc. vi, 60-88)

Here at the very height of the serious action Queen Aegiale unaccountably, and to the great confusion of the narrative line, drops completely out of the play.

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[1] In scene viii, 9, King of Ethiopia, speaking to the Kings of Arabia, Phasiaca, and Bebritia, says that if Ptolemy should conquer their lands, they would be "subject to his tyranny."

The Queen's last speech is an interesting one and quite helpful in explicating the romance elements which appear, though in corrupted form, in the play. The old King's virility is here set forth in the image and symbol of the tree or branch. That the branch is also his son merely enforces the fact that in the tree lies his "life," that is, his potency and his physical life itself. By cutting off the branch, so the Count informs the Queen, and by burning it, she will be ridding herself of her hated husband. His death, in other words, is here foreshadowed as a sexual sacrifice. The branch, also of course her son, she is going to "cut...up" and "pull...forth." That the son's death is linked to the father's (symbolically they are the same) is indicated when the Queen asks the dead son to become a "burning tongue" and to invoke "furies and infernal death/ To cool thy torments with thy father's breath."

The corrupted romance pattern that emerges is at this point fairly clear. An aged King rules over a kingdom threatened by foreign invasion. The King is dominated by his Queen and is helpless himself to act. The Queen lusts after a vigorous young warrior who is seeking to gain the crown of the beseiged land. The Queen, to make way for the young man who she hopes will become her lover, symbolically destroys the King's potency, which he had already surrendered in fact by his helplessness and his age; yet despite his debilitations he has managed to acquire the reputation of being a tyrannical ruler. He is then, comparable to the romance figure of the barren king ruling over an oppressed people. The young knight who in romance brings regeneration to the barren land and who often replaces the old impotent king is in this play the degenerate Cleanthes whose political machinations and

ethical nonchalance make him an unworthy regeneration figure.

I do not of course presume to suggest that the so-called "romance" elements that are curiously present in the play are to be used in an interpretation of it. They may indicate only something of the nature of Chapman's source, or perhaps one of his sources. In any event, their presence in the play is at first glance disturbing and confusing, as the play, at least in its fragmentary form, appears to be neither romance nor mock-romance. The romance plot, as some further inquiry will reveal, does not get clearer. In scene nine still more new plot detail, this time centering around a love relationship between Doricles and Aspasia, the King's daughter, is introduced. It should be mentioned that the young prince of Arcadia, Doricles, has appeared only once, and then quite briefly, prior to the present scene. In his first appearance he was presented as a young romantic lover, suing in an innocuous and innocent way for the hand of Aspasia. In the scene now under discussion Doricles enters with Aspasia:

> Dor. Sweet madam, grant me once a cheerful look
> To glad my dying heart with sorrow kill'd;
> Your father hath resign'd his free consent,
> You bound by duty to obey his will.
> Asp. Nay, rather let him hale me to my death,
> Than gainst my will constrain me match myself.
> (sc. ix, 1-6)

One or more scenes between Doricles and Aspasia may have dropped out, since the relationship between them appears, in the play as we have it, in such abbreviated dramatic form as to be almost unintelligible. We are never told, for example, why Aspasia refuses the suit of Doricles or in fact if she really intends to refuse him. After Aspasia's remark Irus, as Count Hermes, enters and calmly murders Doricles:

Count. Die, thou vile wretch, and live, Aspasia!
Even now I heard thy father Ptolemy,
With words that still do tingle in mine ears,
Pronounce him heir to Alexandria.
'Tis time for me to stir when such young boys
Shall have their weak necks over-pois'd with crowns,
Which must become resolved champions
That for a crown's exchange will sell their souls.
He kills him.
(Sc. ix, 7-14)

As the same scene soon attempts to explain, in some unannounced way the life of Ptolemy is no longer dependent upon the continued fertility of the "branch," his son, but upon the life of the insouciant foreign prince of Arcadia, young Doricles. When told of the murder of Doricles, Ptolemy replies:

Oh, tell no more; instead of tears,
My beating heart dissolves in drops of blood,
And from mine eyes that stares upon this corse
Leaps out my soul, and on it I will die.
Oh Doricles, oh dear Arcadian prince,
The bulwark and supporter of my life, [Italics mine]
That my decree of fates was promised
To add four neighbour kingdoms to my crown,
And shield me from a most abhorred death! [Italics mine]
Now shall my kingdom leave me with my life,
And suddenly look for some monstrous fate,
Shall fall like thunder on my wretched state.
(Sc. ix, 56-67)

What that abhorred death is we never know as Ptolemy some forty lines later drops mysteriously out of the play never to return and never to be mentioned again. In the scene at hand Ptolemy is presented, not as the feeble king of an oppressed people, but, inconsistently as the leader of men whose country is under attack:

Ptol. How suddenly is weather overcast
How is the face of peaceful Egypt chang'd,[1]
Like as the smiling flowers above the ground
By keenest edge of Eurus' breath is cut.

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[1]An inconsistency. In scene ii, Bragadino refers to Egypt's "present wars."

Clean. To arms, my lord, and gather up your strength!
Your bands in Memphis and in Caspia,
Join'd with your power of Alexandria,
Will double all the forces of these kings.
Ptol. All shall be done we may.
(sc. ix, 81-89)

Here Ptolemy is presented as a warrior king defending his country, not as the jelly king ruled by his Queen. In some way according to the new developments the death of Ptolemy is to be linked ("by decree of fates," Ptolemy says) to the death of Doricles. Here it seems to be Doricles who is to bring renewal to Ptolemy, for it is Doricles who is "the bulwark and supporter of...[Ptolemy's] life," and who was, by his marriage with Aspasia, thereby to enable Ptolemy to conquer four kingdoms, the "bordering lands." It is possible with some guess work and a little extrapolation to reconstruct the romantic plot line that is obscured in the action and exposition of scenes eight and nine: to get the crown of Egypt and apparently to win Aspasia for himself, Cleanthes must kill Doricles, upon whose continued life the King's life itself is in some unexplained way curiously contingent.

Ptolemy then has been doubly hexed, rendered doubly impotent by two occurrences: his wife's cruel sacrifice of the tree; and Irus's brutal slaying of Doricles. Perhaps his "most abhorred death," which is never described, refers symbolically to his sexual death. What, however, of the relation between the two accounts--mutually antagonistic it would seem--of Ptolemy's death? It is possible, I think, allowing for some speculative freedoms, to see all of the serious plot, fragmentary as that plot sometimes is, as a distortion, perversion, or corruption of romance elements. Viewed in this way the play appears to be a kind of unconscious, diabolic anti-romance in which the young "resolved champion" who would sell his soul for a throne, overthrows an old but

not, as it turns out finally, particularly tyrannical king, and becomes King of Egypt. Doricles, in this interpretation, is a dimly perceptible recasting of the original romance knight whose journey to the afflicted kingdom brought restitution. He is, in other words, the youthful "hero" of romance whose vigor is necessary to an aged and ailing king. Thus, in the Doricles section of the play, Ptolemy appears for an instant to be a "good" king who needs help.

For those critics who view the play as a mangled romance there is, then, some supporting evidence. Unquestionably the scenes just discussed are fragments of a romance plot. Furthermore the scenes which are not part of this serious or romantic plot appear to be absurdly clownish and would seem to lend weight to Parrott's pronouncements

> ...that it was the farcical scenes, in which the beggar displayed... his humours and not the romantic story of Aegiale and Cleanthes, which caught the fancy of the public. It is not unlikely that the former scenes have been enlarged beyond their original form; it is certain that the latter have been cut down. As a consequence the play, as it now stands, totally lacks unity, coherence, and proportion.[1]

If the purpose of the original play is taken to be centrally concerned with the presentation of the romantic story of Aegiale and Cleanthes, then without question the play would have to be called a monstrous hodge-podge of crude jest and unmotivated tragedy. With such a view of the play in mind it would be inconceivable that a reader could discover a unifying principle or a coherent development.

Recently, however, two critics have offered something new to the traditional interpretations of the play. One, Helen Kaufman, has supplied some helpful ideas; and the other, Ennis Rees, has presented a view of the play that has made older criticism of it appear almost without

[1]Parrott, II, 673-674.

exception bamboozled and blind. Rees' essay on The Blind Beggar has done more than any other single piece of criticism to point out the existence in the play of a unified dramatic structure.

Kaufman suggests "the possibility that The Blind Beggar is simply Chapman's version of an actual commedia dell'arte."[1] In outlining resemblances, she remarks:

> The clown-heroes, usually called Zanni, were the most popular "masks" of Italian improvised comedy. A combination of the clever-servant of classical comedy and the Italian country bumpkin, they were in turn modified to suit the whims of the actors. It is to this group that Cleanthes belongs. He displays the same agility of mind and body which had characterized all his famous prototypes, and in the celerity with which he changes his clothes and personality illustrates one of the favorite devices of improvised comedy.
>
> Since many of the extemporary plays were popularized versions of written comedies of intrigue they often combined romantic love stories with comic subplots. The actors, however, catering as they did to public taste, tended to minimize the romantic plot and to develop the comic episodes and characters, sometimes actually pushing the serious plot off the boards, leaving nothing but the comic plot.[2]
>
> This comic plot...is neatly tied to the vestiges of an enveloping serious plot....The serious plot is fragmentary and puzzling. There are unexplained allusions; the motivation is inadequately developed and two characters simply disappear.[3]

Kaufman further suggests that

> Chapman while abroad[4] witnessed a commedia dell'arte in which the serious plot had already been radically cut, and upon the basis of this "mutilated" Italian comedy developed his own version of The Blind Beggar. That such a procedure was possible is evidenced by the fact that in 1632 Sir Aston Cokain was writing his Trappolin

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[1]Helen A. Kaufman, "The Blind Beggar of Alexandria: a Reappraisal," PQ, XXXVIII (1959), 103.

[2]This view accords with Parrott's.

[3]Kaufman, pp. 103-104.

[4]Mark Eccles, "Chapman's Early Years," Studies in Philology, XLIII (1946), 176-193, offers proof that Chapman was abroad, probably between 1594 and 1600. However, Kaufman, p. 106, adds that "there are records of Italian actors in England as early as 1573, hence Chapman could have seen such a performance had he never left England."

> Supposed a Prince, a play directly based on a commedia dell'arte which he had just seen in Venice.[1]

Noting the resemblances between the central character of the blind beggar in his multiple identities and the Zanni of popular Italian comedy, Kaufman mentions another "significant factor which links Chapman's play with commedia dell'arte," and that is "the blending of two folk motifs:"

> In The Blind Beggar are combined two such themes long popular in the repertories of the travelling comedians. One of these is the familiar folk-tale of a disguised king or nobleman moving unrecognized among his people; the other is the farce of a clown suddenly raised to great rank.[2]

Kaufman's treatment of the play, although not in the least condemnatory, is nevertheless based on the now traditional assumption that there is no demonstrable artistic or unified satiric purpose in the play. Her approach is historical and taxonomic. She attempts to account for the present form and characterization of the play by assigning it to a dramatic type--commedia dell'arte--which it resembles. In other words Kaufman tacitly acknowledges that the play consists largely of scenes of farcical slapstick which, through accretions by actors, gradually crowded out scenes from the serious plot line. In effect Kaufman is not out of harmony with earlier critics of the play.

Ennis Rees, however, has given us a long-needed and enlightening interpretation of the play in which he is able to assign a significance to it that has customarily been denied. Rees' central idea was first suggested by Tucker Brooke:

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[1] Kaufman, pp. 104-105.

[2] Ibid., p. 105.

Chapman's first surviving comedy, The Blind Beggar of Alexandria, produced at the Rose in February, 1596, was phenomenally popular. There is a great deal of Marlowe in this flippant but amusing play. The hero is a conquering Tamburlaine, "yet but a Shepherd's son at Memphis born." He is also a great lover like Faustus, and a master of craft and multiple disguise like the Jew of Malta. There are some quite lovely Marlovian echoes, and also some lines of rank burlesque, like

> And stern Bebritius of Bebritia.

The public evidently delighted in the lively mixture of moods and the complete cynicism with which the women are handled. The text has probably been a good deal corrupted, but at its best the Blind Beggar cannot have been much more than a clever skit....[1]

Rees believes that the play, "essentially a burlesque of the Marlovian hero,"[2] is

> a satirical treatment of the sort of thing the public expected from Marlowe's mighty line.
>
> What they expected and got is pretty well indicated on the title page of Tamburlaine, which tells us that "Tamburlaine the Great" rose "from a Scythian Shepherd" to become "a great puissant and mighty Monarch" and was called "the Scourge of God." The 1598 title page of Chapman's...comedy tells us to expect a play about the "variable humours" of a blind beggar, presented "in disguised shapes full of conceit and pleasure." The blind beggar is Irus, "a shepherd's son at Memphis born" who, in ludicrous accord with the Tamburlaine tradition, rises to become Cleanthes, King of Egypt.... Irus is in reality a rascal, who speakes of himself to conquered kings as one
>
> Elect and chosen by the peers to scourge
> The vile presumption of your hated lives.

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[1] A. C. Baugh (ed.), A Literary History of England (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), p. 554. Somewhat similarly, Havelock Ellis, George Chapman (Bloomsbury: The Nonesuch Press, 1934), p. 16, remarks that "throughout, we often hear...a charming echo of the music of Marlowe's lines. Marlowe's influence, also, may be traced in the conception of the hero's ambition." Also, Jean Jacquot, George Chapman (Paris: Societe D'Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1951), p. 81, remarks: "Irus ressemble aux mystificateurs de la comedie italieene, mais il possede plusieurs des traits qui ont rendu populaires les heros de Marlowe. Il est avide de richesses de plaisirs et de gloire, c'est un usurpateur depourvu de scrupules, et confiant en son etoile."

[2] Ennis Rees, "Chapman's Blind Beggar and the Marlovian Hero," JEGP, LVII (1958), 60.

> Further reminiscent of Tamburlaine is Count Hermes, one of Irus's "humourous" disguises. He is a "mad-brain" fellow with Tamburlaine's ruthlessness but, like the other "humours" of Irus, completely without dignity or verisimilitude. And not only are we reminded of Tamburlaine by the overall rags-to-riches pattern and many of the particulars of the play, but other characteristics and identities of the blind beggar recall other of Marlowe's figures. Thus the supposed learning and magical hocus-pocus of the fortune-telling Irus recall Dr. Faustus, and the avaricious antics of Leon the usurer, another disguise, bring the Jew of Malta to mind.[1]

Speaking further of the disguise figure at the center of the play,

Rees remarks that

> [Irus spends] his time in sports of love (he marries a pair of sisters and cuckolds himself) and he ends, hilariously[2] enough, as King of Egypt. In other words, he spends his time in what seems to be a deliberate parody of the erotic element in Marlovian poems and drama (compare, in particular, Dr. Faustus) and ends with a final ridiculous reminder of Tamburlaine. What happens in the play is to a large extent unified and coherent, in spite of a probably mutilated text, in that...Irus in one or another of his disguises...[is] always successful in his ridiculous pursuit of power and pleasure....The farce, though coarse, was not absurd. It was a direct, and really quite comical burlesque of all that the Tamburlaine tradition stood for.... The poet is saying that a God-defying figure such as Tamburlaine actually is ridiculous rather than magnificent....It is...a good deal more meaningful and worthwhile when read, not as a rather confused and anomalous imitation of Marlowe, but as the fairly amusing satire it is.[3]

Rees admits the accuracy (while his further insights suggest the limits)

of Kaufman's treatment of the play:

> If one considers the play, with Parrott, as a potentially fine romantic drama twisted out of shape probably by public demand for farcical scenes, it may follow that the Blind Beggar "totally lacks unity, coherence, and proportion." But read for what it is, with the farcical and satirical plot the very heart of the play, such a critical judgment cannot be supported. Rather, there would seem to be organization comparable to that in a fairly clever and witty burlesque having a central, commedia dell'arte kind of character

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[1] Ibid., p. 62.

[2] The reader should perhaps decide the hilarity of the scene for himself.

[3] Rees, p. 62.

> in four disguises, who in the first scene gives a brief description of the play's structure by announcing his ambition to gain the crown and his intention to spend the interim "in sports of love."[1]

As some further evidence which I shall supply will further demonstrate, there can really be no question that Chapman was spoofing the popular Marlovian hero.[2] Other critics, of course, have recognized the many Marlovian touches in the play, and indeed such touches are quite unmistakable, but on the whole these critics have been content generally to assume, to use Parrott's words, that The Blind Beggar is "the work of a follower of Marlowe...who is attempting to restrain and temper the super-abundant energy and over-elaborate ornamentation of much of his master's verse."[3]

From the first in fact critics have assumed that The Blind Beggar was a work done by Chapman while under the direct influence of Marlowe's work.[4] Parrott points out the similarity between the line spoken by Tamburlaine, "What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?" and a line in The Blind Beggar which reads "Why, what is dalliance, says my servant then?"[5] Another such echo occurs in the line "None ever lov'd, but at first sight they love'd. "But the lengthiest imitation of Marlowe--and a remarkably conscious one, too--that occurs in the play is part of a speech delivered by the mad-brain Count Hermes

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[1] Rees, pp. 62-63.

[2] Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, and The Jew of Malta were enormously popular plays in the 1590's as Henslowe's Diary will indicate.

[3] Parrott, II, 676.

[4] Thus Swinburne, p. 45, remarks that "in the better passages... we catch a faint echo of the 'mighty line' of Marlowe...."

[5] The respective passages occur in I Tamburlaine, V, i, 160; and The Blind Beggar, i, 160.

to Aspasia, daughter of the King and Queen of Egypt:

> I'll fly no more than doth a settled rock,
> No more than mountains or the steadfast poles;
> But come, sweet love, if thou wilt come with me,
> We two will live amongst the shadowy groves,
> And we will sit like shepherds on a hill,
> And with our heavenly voices tice the trees
> To echo sweetly to our celestial tunes.
> Else will I angle in the running brooks
> Seasoning our toils with kisses on the banks;
> Sometime I'll dive into the murmuring springs,
> And fetch thee stones to hang about thy neck,
> Which by thy splendour will be turn'd to pearl.
> (sc. ix, 22-33)

Rees' contribution, then, does not lie in his recognition of mere echoes and imitations of Marlowe, for these are obvious to even a casual reader of Marlowe, but in making clear that far from being a deferential follower of the master, Chapman is actually indicting the whole conception of character as Marlowe, particularly in Tamburlaine, conceived it.

It will be helpful in understanding just how Chapman is using such passages as his imitation of "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," and in understanding more completely just what he has achieved in The Blind Beggar to pause long enough to examine this figure whom Rees calls "the Marlovian hero," especially as he is bodied forth in that grand-iloquent titan Tamburlaine.

The passion and the bombast, the glorious rant of Tamburlaine's rhetoric, and the sheer beauty of his aesthetic perception are, it will be recalled, the meretricious, the anomalous trappings of a brutal, ruthless political tyrant. Tamburlaine's ornateness of speech is a rococo-sinister irrelevancy--much as a poetic gift in Stalin would have been. His uncircumscribed ego, his insatiate lust for unlimited power receive only temporary gratification from the abject submission of great kings and whole peoples.

> Tamburlaine is aloof from man as well as from God. His quest of terrestrial power is only incidentally an entry into the affairs of the world; in its essence it is a lofty and remote aspiration, pitched in ideal regions. He does not consider himself a member of human society but stands far withdrawn as the sole and unique being of the world, regarding mankind much as a child regards the supply of colored blocks with which he builds beautiful houses. The most obvious instance is his ruthlessness to all who oppose his march towards world dominion.[1]

He is, anachronistically speaking, somewhat like the Byronic hero though he is not limited by an incapacity to act brought on by introspection and feelings of inexplicable guilt. Tamburlaine is a super mortal relieved from the restraints of conscience and bent on the acquisition of infinite power; a perverted Prometheus who would rob the gods of their fire to use it singly at his own hearth. Unscrupulous, ruthless, above men, gods, and morality, this "Renaissance ideal," as he has fatuously been described, is a vicious despot in blank verse, a psychopath for whom the means to political dominion are contemptibly inconsequential, even irrelevant, so long as they succeed. Tamburlaine, regardless of Marlowe's intentions, is a study of political evil. Indeed as the Prologue warns us, we "shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine/ Threatening the world with high astounding terms/ And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword." The responsibility of judging Tamberlaine is pointedly and surely ironically left up to us: "View but his picture in this tragic glass,/ And then applaud his fortunes as you please." It would be interesting to speculate on what Marlowe may have thought was tragic in this play. But regardless of how Marlowe felt about the

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[1]Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 302.

character of his Tamburlaine,[1] could we not tenably argue that the tragedy that Tamburlaine gives rise to lies in the nondramatic fact that Tamburlaine's fortunes were and are sure to be applauded in some quarters rather than deplored? And that the tragedy does not lie at all in the reversal of fortune Tamburlaine undergoes, or in the pity and fear his overthrow arouses, or in a flaw of character which initiates an inexorable and disasterous concatenation of events?

Such a conjecture is of course a trifle fanciful. Tamburlaine was not an English national hero disguised in a Mongolian hat and was surely never consciously mistaken for one. As an embodiment of power, force, mastery, however, there must certainly have been many among Elizabethan audiences who were willingly awed temporarily out of their rational and moral perception by his powerful aggressiveness. Tamberlaine is after all an objectification, duly exaggerated and theatrically glamorized for effect, of irrational and unconscious impulses. Once these impulses are personified we have a type of superman, and supermen have always excited strong and therefore pleasurable emotions in weak, frightened and admiring men, who are after all mere humans with their myriad frailties of sense and soul. If this superman can enhance his spellbinding appeal by speaking in a hypnotically beautiful rhythm, he has only bent another human power (beauty)--as he bends all others--to his own destructive and self-aggrandizing ends.

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[1] Kocher, pp. 5-6, sees all of Marlowe's protagonists as, I suppose, alter egos of Marlowe: "Many critics have noted that Tamburlaine, Faustus, Barabas, Gaveston, Mortimer, and Guise are but embodiments of a craving for illimitable power in varied forms and few have hesitated to attribute this passion to the dramatist himself." Kocher, p. 79, goes on to say, "all told it seems quite likely that the Tamburlaine creed is what Marlowe himself believed." Harry Levin, The Overreacher (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 55, states that in Tamburlaine, Marlowe was "celebrating the idea of conquest," and "dramatizing geopolitics."

This is not to say that Tamburlaine, like some divine thief of good sense, had only to walk on stage to pluck from his audience their capacity to reason. Such a view is ridiculous. That Tamburlaine's character is evil and his political rule tyrannical would be obvious to many Elizabethans. But like Satan, of whom he is an analogue, his appeal is thereby enhanced. Man wants to master the unmasterable universe, and Tamburlaine is a projection of that wish; the very illicitness of his attempted mastery, its terrifying destructiveness and powerful denial of humane values only make such a figure (abstractly speaking as this is a drama that is being discussed) more dangerous.

Of course from our post-Freudian vantage point and with our knowledge of chemical and subliminal persuasion, Tamburlaine as a political dictator may seem crude and even ridiculous. But he is no more crude, ridiculous, and I might add immoral than our own twentieth century tyrants, and we are aware of the folly of our despots no more perspicuously, even with Freud, technology, and pharmacology, than were some of Marlowe's contemporaries aware of Tamberlaine's folly. George Chapman, for example.

> To adapt Sidney's definition of comedy, we may say that the Blind Beggar is "an imitation of the common errors" in the life of a Marlovian hero, represented "in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be," making it "impossible that any beholder can be content" to imitate or admire "such a one." The poet is saying that a God-defying figure such as Tamburlaine actually is ridiculous rather than magnificent, a "blind beggar" who would need as many lives as Irus has disguises and as much incredible luck in order really to attain "the sweet fruition of an earthy crown."[1]

If there is still doubt in the reader's mind as to the essential validity of Rees' central assertion, he need read only the first thirty

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[1] Rees, p. 63.

lines of scene ten to see an unmistakable parody of Tamburlaine. The absurdity of Chapman's scene is heightened by the fact that Irus, who has been antically philandering (in his Faustus disguise), and extorting honest people (in his Jew of Malta disguise), without the least scruple of conscience--as befits a Marlovian super-mortal--is, just prior to the opening of scene ten, suddenly roused to exert himself along Tamburlanian lines. Examine the following passage and note the absurdity of Irus (here Cleanthes), who has already committed a vicious, wanton murder, suddenly sounding ethical and righteous. Clearcus enters and in Marlovian language informs Cleanthes that Cleanthes' two friends (Acates and Acanthes, who are straw men invented for this scene alone) have been killed in battle against the armies of the four kings who are invading Egypt:

> Clear. Where may I seek to find Cleanthes out,
> That martial prince, whom Ptolemy, unkind,
> Hath banished from out the Egyptian land?
> Our warlike troops are scattered and overthrown,
> And his dear friends, Acates and Acanthes,
> Lie in the field besmired in their bloods.
> I'll run through all these groves to find him out. EXIT
> Clean. My sweet Acates and Acanthes slain!
> Grief to my heart and sorrow to my soul!
> Then rouse thyself, Cleanthes, and revenge
> Their guiltless blood on these base miscreants.
> Oh, let the canker'd trumpet of the deep
> Be rattled out and ring into their ears
> The dire revenge Cleanthes will inflict
> On these four kings and all their complices.
> (sc. ix, 141-155)

Now immediately after these lines are spoken the stage empties. The next entrance begins scene ten, at which time the conquering Cleanthes enters with captive kings. The celerity and ease with which Cleanthes has been able to subdue whole armies is matched nowhere except in the equally effortless way in which Tamburlaine, that swift avenger, is

able to dispatch whole acres of enemy armies. Let this scene attest that Cleanthes has been to the Rose to see Tamburlaine:

> Enter Cleanthes, leading Porus, Rhesus, Bion, Bebritius; Pego, Clearchus, Euribates
>
> Clean. Thus have you strove in vain against those gods
> That rescues Egypt in Cleanthes' arms.
> Come, yield your crowns and homages to me.
> Though Ptolemy is dead, yet I survive,
> Elect and chosen by the peers to scourge
> The vile presumption of your hated lives;
> Then yield as vanquish'd unto Egypt's king.
>
> Por. First, by thy valour and the strength of arms,
> Porus, the wealthy Ethiopean king,
> Doth yield his crown and homage unto thee,
> Swearing by all my gods whom I adore
> To honour Duke Cleanthes whilst he live,
> And in his aid with twenty thousand men,
> Will always march gainst whom thou mean'st to fight.
>
> Bion. Bion, whose neck was never forc'd to bow,
> Doth yield him captive to thy warlike sword.
> Command whatso thou list, we will perform,
> And all my power shall march at thy command.
>
> Rhe. Rhesus doth yield his crown and dignity
> To great Cleanthes, Egypt's only strength;
> For if Cleanthes lives, who ever lived
> More likelier to be monarch of the world?
> Then here accept my vow'd allegiance,
> Which as the rest I render unto thee.
>
> Beb. So saith Bebritius of Bebritia,
> And lays his crown and homage at thy feet.
>
> Clean. Hold, take your crowns again,
> And keep your oaths and fealties to me.
> So shall you live as free as heretofore,
> And ne'er hereafter stoop to conquest more.
>
> (sc. x, 1-30)

Out of context this entire passage could easily pass for a snippet of Tamburlaine.[1] The scourge motive and the yielding of the crowns are unmistakable thefts from Marlowe's play.

Viewed as a part of a serious-romantic plot the entire episode of Cleanthes' rise to power is unintelligible in all its details. But the very preposterousness of the transition of the central character

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[1] The reader can compare Chapman's writing in this scene with that which appears in II Tamburlaine, I, iii, 129ff.

from shepherd to King, together with his calculated ruthlessness, his exploitation of others, and the sheer absence of plausible motive from his actions are, once seen as parts of a deliberately conceived pattern of burlesque, perfectly consonnant with each other.

There are other parallels between The Blind Beggar and Tamburlaine which I shall not mention, but I do wish to look again at one passage, already referred to, for further elucidation of Rees' argument. An examination of the scene in which this passage occurs may help clear up what is a problem to the critics of the play who find the romantic story per se the original core of this comedy. In this scene Aspasia, daughter to the King and Queen of Egypt, is talking to the innocent Doricles when Irus, disguised as the mad-brain Count, walks on stage and without provocation kills him. "Crowns," so the Count says as he murders Doricles, are not for boys but for "resolved champions/ That for a crown's exchange will sell their souls." Viewed as a detail in a romantic plot of a comic play this act is puzzling and illogical. Viewed as a comic representation of the Tamburlaine character it makes perfect sense. Aspasia, quite rightly horrified at the Count's crime, denounces him:

> Wicked Count Hermes, for this monstrous deed,
> Egypt will hate thee and thou sure must die;
> Then hie thee to the hills beyond the Alps,
> Fly to unknown and unfrequented climes,
> Some desert place that never saw the sun;
> For if the King, or any of his friends
> Shall find Count Hermes, thou art surely dead.
> (ix, 15-21)

It is at this point in the play that the Count delivers in excellent Marlovian language the poetic variation of "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love":

> I'll fly no more than doth a settled rock,
> No more than mountains or the steadfast poles;

> But come, sweet love, if thou wilt come with me,
> We two will live amonst the shadowy groves,
> And we will sit like shepherds on a hill,
> And with our heavenly voices tice the trees
> To echo sweetly to our celestial tunes.
> Else will I angle in the running brooks,
> Seasoning our toils with kisses on the banks;
> Sometime I'll dive into the murmuring springs,
> And fetch thee stones to hang about thy neck,
> Which by thy splendour will be turn'd to pearl.
> (sc. ix, 22-33)

The incongruity of a brutal murderer, amorally insensible of his crimes, who is opportunistically advancing his own political career, suddenly becoming a rhapsodic lover is a comic indictment of the grotesque disparity between Tamburlaine's magnificent, golden rhetoric and the depravity of his deeds. A murdering political despot without conscience, Tamburlaine lisped and the lovely images came. The Tamburlaine sensibility, if we can call it that, is ridiculous and immoral as Chapman's play in general and this scene is particular demonstrates. Underneath the beautiful lyrical poetry of Tamburlaine lies nothing more than raw murderous opportunism.

Chapman, then, is satirizing the Marlovian hero. Thus we can account for the unscrupulousness of the central figure, his ambition for great kingly power, his lecherousness, and his desire for riches. In short, the play though admittedly in fragmentary form, satirizes the Marlovian hero in his grand quest of wealth (Barabas), women (Faustus), and God defying power (Tamburlaine). Now to argue that Chapman has dealt fairly with all the motives that inspire Marlowe's protagonists is, needless to say, mistaken. To see Faust as a mere lecher is an injustice to the "Marlovian hero"; and to omit the theme of the quest of knowledge is to neglect a significant part of Marlowe's conception of heroic endeavour. Perhaps then we should qualify Rees' "Marlovian

hero" to read "those aspects of the Marlovian hero which are ridiculous," for it would clearly be no part of Chapman's desire as a satiric dramatist to laugh at what is dignified and worthy. It is probably for this reason that Chapman concentrates on ridiculing the Tamburlaine (or unethical conquest) motive in The Blind Beggar.

In the light of Chapman's future development as a comic dramatist, it is clear that The Blind Beggar is an experiment, an exercise as much as anything else in a genre which for the next six years Chapman was to concern himself with. It would be a genre--satiric drama--to which Chapman would hereafter bring a characteristic set of problems and a characteristic set of solutions. The conflict between these problems and Chapman's solutions in his remaining seven comedies makes up a pattern, which I shall be at some pains to explore, both because of what that pattern tells us of Chapman's comedies, and what, inferentially, it tells us, by 1606, of the dramatist himself.

The Blind Beggar is the only comedy Chapman has written which exists not in its own right as a self-contained unit but rather as a criticism of something that lies outside the play; also the problems which hereafter concern Chapman in his comedies are not yet clearly present. Nevertheless, there is evidence in even this play that Chapman may not have fused his original romance plot and the satiric-burlesque purpose of his theme. The romance elements of The Blind Beggar do appear to be functionally disconnected from the comic elements; and in six of Chapman's remaining seven comedies the disunifying separation of serious and romance elements on the one hand and comic and "realistic" elements on the other takes on a progressively increasing importance. The disjunction that such a division is responsible for is present,

if it is present at all, in only embryonic form in The Blind Beggar, but the very fact that it is possible to ascertain what appear to be signs of structural and thematic disharmony between romance and comic materials in a play that exists in only fragmentary form suggests, to anyone familiar with the rest of Chapman's comedies, the great, nearly insuperable, difficulty he had relating comic and non-comic elements from the very first of his career as a comic dramatist.

This play also stands in a curious and unintentionally ironic relation to Chapman's last comedy, The Widow's Tears. These two comedies, his first and his last, represent in more than a chronological sense, a beginning and an end. The Blind Beggar is an outrageous, tongue-in-cheek play. It is racy, youthful, and vigorous, and there is in it an unhesitating brashness and enthusiasm, especially in its ridicule of cynicism, immorality, and brutality in public life. In The Widow's Tears the cynicism of the central character (and a similar cynicism was the subject of mockery, jeers, and laughter in The Blind Beggar), is no longer flippantly dismissed as a mere literary offense taken too seriously by theater audiences but accepted as a profound point of view from which Chapman scrutinizes the whole human scene; Chapman of course would never sanction Tamburlain's brutality, but by 1606 he may have felt that Tamburlaine was not a mere creature of fiction, an ogre furiously stamping the boards of the Rose Theater in passionate accents of blood that was never spilled and terror that was merely vicarious; he may have felt instead that Tamburlaine indeed was all conquering and that man's own moral and rational nature was in the end defeated after all. An understanding of Chapman's whole development from an early comedy of irrepressible levity to a final cynical comedy of philosophical irony

is one of the objects that we will be concerned with in the following pages.

CHAPTER III

AN HUMOUROUS DAY'S MIRTH

On May 11, 1597, Henslowe entered a performance by the Admiral's Men at the Rose of a new comedy which he called The Comodey of Umers.[1] This is now thought to be Chapman's An Humourous Day's Mirth[2] which was printed in 1599 by Valentine Syms. In this play "Chapman instead of echoing Marlowe...is a pioneer in the comedy of humours of which Ben Jonson was soon to be the master."[3] It has been said of Chapman that "his chief contribution to the drama seems to have lain in the provision of models for better men, and that although he practiced almost every literary form of the day...he never succeeded in devising a satisfactory mode for himself."[4] Commenting on the relation between Chapman's play and early Jonsonian comedy, Una Ellis-Fermor remarks that An Humourous Day's Mirth "anticipates every essential characteristic of the humour

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[1] Henslowe, p. 58.

[2] Proof that it is Chapman's: Henslowe, p. 318n; Parrott, II, 605, Frederick G. Fleay, Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642 (2 vols., London: Reeves & Turner, 1891), I, 55.

[3] Frederick S. Boas, An Introduction to Stuart Drama (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 14.

[4] M. C. Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), p. 171. See also: Ben Jonson, ed. by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (11 vols., Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925-52), I, 345; C. F. Tucker Brooke, Tudor Drama (Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1911), pp. 405-406; E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), III, 251.

play as it was produced in the following years by Ben Jonson." She lists as characteristics of humour comedy the following:

> The isolation of the humour within the character, the choice of characters primarily for the possession of this quality, the humour parade which often sacrifices the intrigue, the crowded stage which, though not an essential of humour comedy, seems to have been almost an inseparable condition with Jonson's early plays also.[1]

Paul V. Kreider feels that critics may be correct in feeling "that Chapman was an experimenter who did not develop any finished products illustrative of the genre," but, Kreider continues, "the humour motif is clearly evident in the entire range of his comedies."[2]

To Jonson and to Chapman the old medical theory of humours offered a way in which character could be comically presented. Since Jonson is the unchallenged master of so-called humour comedy, and since at best Chapman's An Humourous Day's Mirth is incipient and rude humour comedy, it might be useful to see what Jonson meant by the term "humour." In the Introduction to Every Man Out of His Humour, Jonson defines humour as a condition in which

> Some one peculiar quality
> Doth so affect a man that it doth draw
> All his effects, his spirits, and his powers
> In their confluctions, all to run one way.

What Jonson, then, means by humour is a fixation or obsession which completely governs behavior. Rather than present behavior as an obscure combination of powers, moods, motives and feelings in which good and evil are intermingled, Jonson chose to isolate perennial features or motives of human folly and to allow each such motive to become the whole psyche of a comic character. Thus the exaggeration and caricature that are

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[1]Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 56.

[2]Kreider, p. 146.

typical of Jonsonian characterization are deliberate aspects of Jonson's comic presentation. The relation between such characterization and that of Roman comedy is not accidental. Jonson began his career as a dramatist in conscious imitation of Plautus, and character "types" are said to appear in Jonson as well as in classical New Comedy. Thus the braggart, the jealous husband, the bawd, appear in both. Kreider, suggesting influences on humour comedy, states that

> ...humour psychology, the personification of abstractions (in the morality plays and elsewhere), the example of eccentric but wholly conventional characters in Latin and Italian comedy, the idea of decorum (which welded specified traits to character types), and the interest in books of 'Characters' (English examples of which, however, did not appear in final form until the early years of the seventeenth century), all contributed to the development of the comedy of humours.[1]

In Jonson's comedy one or two traits or biases often rule a single character throughout; a whim or eccentricity may become the whole motive force accounting for the whole behavior of a particular character. The avaricious man, the cowardly man, the braggart, the poetaster, the mountebank--these and other Jonsonian figures are, however, not really types. "The Humour," T. S. Eliot observes, is not a type...but a simplified and somewhat distorted individual with a typical mania."[2] It is useful, I think, to see Jonsonian comic characters as fictional representations of deliberately isolated aspects of human folly which for the purposes of satire have been magnified into grotesque proportions so that human folly itself may be viewed with the enormous clarity of a slide enlarged upon a screen.

Jonson is interested in exposing a social disease--moral folly. It is true that his characters often reveal idiosyncrasies [illegible]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] T. S. Eliot, Elizabethan Essays (London, Faber & Faber, 1934), p. 74.

which, deliberately exaggerated, simplified, and distorted, become caricatures, though Jonson is not revealing superficialities of conduct but rather exhibiting behavior rooted in the moral folly that springs from hypocrisy, vanity, affectation, and avarice. Jonson is like a physician probing a mentally and morally diseased body politic[1] in an effort to isolate only those factors which are detrimental to its health. Once isolated, Jonson, still ministering to the mind, not the body of man, presents these diseased fragments as characters in his comic drama so that we can view them all the better for being, first, magnified, and second, unobscured or softened by elements of rational or sane behavior. Again like a physician Jonson's purpose is curative:

> If men may by no meanes write freely, or speake truth, but when it offends not, why doe Physicians cure with sharpe medicines, or corrosives? Is not the same equally lawfull in the cure of the minde, that is in the cure of the body?[2]

To Jonson the humour theory was, as Schelling observes, a metaphorical description of his "particular variety of...comedy of manners."[3] What Jonson means by humours ultimately is, then, manners. In the Prologue to The Alchemist, Jonson writes:

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[1]Humour comedy, as Jonson created it, is more accurately called Old Comedy, where, in addition to presenting characters satirically, the dramatist at the same time satirizes the socio-political structure in which the fools operate. Because An Humourous Day's Mirth has in it a King who rules a society of fools, an Old Comedy note is sounded. But Chapman is hardly interested in large social questions in this play, which remains fundamentally a comedy in which various "humours" are exhibited. See also this Chapter, p. 41; and for a fuller discussion of Old Comedy, see Chapter IV, pp. 78-81.

[2]Ben Jonson, Discoveries, 1641; Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden, 1619. (London: John Lane, Bodley Head, 1923), p. 88.

[3]Felix E. Schelling, Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1642 (2 vols., Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908), I, 470.

No country's mirth is better than our own.
No clime breeds better matter for your whore,
Bawd, squire, imposter, many persons more,
Whose manners, now call'd humours, feed the stage.

Jonson was always a profoundly serious dramatist whose plays were from first to last the work of not just a great scholar, critic, and theorist but a great artist as well. His comedies, informed by a deep social ethic, relentlessly exposed and ridiculed socially undesirable conduct with a strange power of animation and life "for which,"--as T.S. Eliot observes, "...no theory of humours will account." Continuing, Eliot touches incisively on a subject critics in general have been content to neglect:

> Neither Volpone nor Mosca is a humour. No theory of humours could account for Jonson's best plays or the best characters in them. We want to know at what point the comedy of humours passes into a work of art.[1]

Eliot further says that Jonson's satire is great finally not because it achieves its satiric object but because it creates it.[2] Continuing, Eliot remarks that

> ...in Every Man in His Humour there is a neat, a very neat, comedy of humours. In discovering and proclaiming in this play the new genre Jonson was simply recognizing, unconsciously, the route which opened out in the proper direction for his instincts. His characters are and remain...simplified characters; but the simplification does not consist in the dominance of a particular humour or monomania. That is a very superficial account of it. The simplification consists largely in reduction of detail, in the seizing of aspects relevant to the relief of an emotional impulse which remains the same for that character, in making the character conform to a particular setting. This stripping is essential to the art, to which is also essential a flat distortion in the drawing; it is an art of caricature, of great caricature....It is a great caricature, which is beautiful; and a great humour, which is serious. The 'world' of Jonson is sufficiently large; it is a world of poetic imagination; it is sombre.

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[1]Eliot, pp. 80-81.

[2]Ibid., p. 82.

> He did not get the third dimension, but he was not trying to get it.[1]

Jonson, as artist and moralist--and in him they are inseparable--painstakingly controlled every detail of his comic drama so as to make it a coherent expression of the satirist's vision.

In turning from Jonson back to Chapman, in turning, that is, from Every Man In His Humour to An Humourous Day's Mirth, there is an inevitable and bathetic descent from, to use Eliot's phrasing, humour comedy that has become transfigured into an art with a great independent life, to an expression of humour comedy that has failed to achieve greatness. On one level this is an admission that Chapman's powers as a comic dramatist were greatly inferior to Jonson's. This is certainly so; yet I think Chapman's early work, his first two comedies in particular, suffers from a weakness that, unlike constitutional unimaginativeness, is avoidable and hence less excusable. I refer here to what appears to be Chapman's unwillingness in his early comedy to take his work seriously. He appears to have been hampered by the very lack of earnestness toward his subject that, with great philosophical, religious and moral care, he was so watchful of in his poetry, his late comedies, and in his tragedy. In An Humourous Day's Mirth in other words, Chapman seems tied to littleness by his own apparent refusal to consider comedy as a significant artistic expression in which a whole and important view of man can be bodied forth. There are, however, recognizable structural advances over his first comedy. An Humourous Day's Mirth, in other words, is an uneven play in which progress is indicated no less clearly than the need for further improvement.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

In writing a comedy in which he would seek to create characters each of whom was to exhibit a particular comic foible, Chapman may well have initiated a form of comic drama which Jonson was shortly to transform into great art. In any case for Chapman the idea of a comedy in which plot would be subordinated to the exhibition of character was one that helped conduct the play along more orderly and unified plot lines than those sometimes entangled ones running through The Blind Beggar. The very conception of humour comedy, at least in the rudimentary expression of it that appears in this play, the conception that characters are each to be gripped by a particular folly, was a unifying device that helped give a structural regularity and uniformity to An Humourous Day's Mirth absent in Chapman's first comedy. The idea, crude and stumbling as it is sometimes projected into drama in Chapman's second comedy, is of course fundamentally satiric. I say fundamentally because Chapman's comic portraits in An Humourous Day's Mirth do not always materialize as satiric portraits, though I think they are meant to. Also the foibles of characters are sometimes so sketchy and indistinct as to be almost unrecognizable as significant and substantial comic weaknesses. Chapman, in other words, was probably working toward--or groping perhaps--for a unified and artistically meaningful direction which his comedies could explore. In An Humourous Day's Mirth it is clear, I think, that the chief failure is one of execution and not of conception, though Chapman at this stage of his development as a comic dramatist seems curiously willing to treat the satirist's function itself, and I regard this as a failure in conception, with an occasional disrespect that stems, if I may guess, from his reluctance to consider comedy as a serious art. Or it may stem from the fact that he was deliberately writing down to

an audience or that he as yet lacked a coherent comic theory which would permit him to exercise that absolute control of his materials so characteristic of Jonson's technique. A close look at the play may serve to clarify both its strengths and weaknesses.

"No source is known for the plot of this play, and it may well be doubted if any exists."[1] It may be doubted because Chapman's chief purpose seems to be to exhibit a series of comic characters who are paraded across stage so that they may be made to reveal, respectively, their absurdities. The slightness of the plot, as well as its too frequent dramatic implausibility (even on its own comic grounds)--an implausibility that has resulted from the dramatist's desire to get his characters together on stage as often as possible with too little concern for their motives for being there--help support the contention that the plot of the play, such as it is, is Chapman's own.

The play takes place in Paris and employs a figure, Lemot, similar in function to Irus of The Blind Beggar, who controls and directs almost all the action of the play. In retaining this characteristic of his earlier play, Chapman had seized the one feature which served as well as anything could to help keep the plot of The Blind Beggar unified; and in relegating in An Humourous Day's Mirth the romantic theme to a subordinate position he very nearly eliminated the henceforth profoundly troublesome problem of relating comic and romantic elements integrally.

Chapman seems in this humour-comedy play to be combining features of New Comedy, the feature, for example, of having the clever servant control the action, with implications that suggest Jonson's vetus comoedia

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[1] Parrott, II, 686.

or Old Comedy.[1] To illustrate, the plot situations in An Humourous Day's Mirth, like those in New Comedy, are domestic and involve sexual suspicions and marital jealousies, yet the tone of the play is satiric (as is true of all humour comedy) in most places and, while it involves domestic relationships, the play has social and political overtones--though to be sure these are imperfectly worked out--which are suggestive of Old Comedy.[2] Humour comedy, as Elizabethan-Jacobean expression of Old Comedy, refers only to a satiric conception of character, whereas Old Comedy proper also satirically presents a socio-political framework within which individual folly ("humours") flourish.

In the play the old Count Labervele is married to a young Puritan lady named Florilla of whom he is "humourously" jealous. Conversely, the aged Countess Moren has taken as a husband the youthful Moren of whom she is passionately jealous. Similarly old Foyes scorns all suitors for his daughter Martia's hand except the foolish and puerile Labesha, currently penniless, but soon to come into an estate. The other relationship between man and wife which the play touches on deals with the Queen's justly founded suspicions of the King. Little comes of this relationship, as will be shown, because Chapman is unable to make the Queen much of a satiric butt and hence the baiting of her by Lemot has little point except tedious foolery. There are a number of other characters, courtiers mostly, who are so weakly drawn as to be, except in name,

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[1]See note, p. 41, this chapter.

[2]The social and political overtones I do not wish to stress as they appear incidental to Chapman's main purpose, which is the exhibition of several humours. Nevertheless, the King partakes of the folly of the largely foolish society he rules over. There is an excellent discussion of the relationship between Old Comedy, New Comedy, and humour comedy in Calvin Thayer's Ben Jonson: Studies in His Plays (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 17-21; 25-28.

indistinguishable. Furthermore, their humours are not very clearly or interestingly portrayed, with the result that they are often mere confusing presences on stage. And finally there is Dowsecer, son to the old jealous Count Labervele by his first wife. Dowsecer, who has presumably lost his mind from excessive scholarship, has become a melancholic satirist. He is somewhat like Jacques in As You Like It.

Lemot appears in the second scene and announces what in effect is to become the structural germ of the play. The dialogue that occurs here is between him and his courtier friend, Colinet.

> Lem. How like you this morning, Colinet? What, shall we have a fair day?
> Col. The sky hangs full of humour, and I think we have rain.
> Lem. Why, rain is fair weather when the ground is dry and barren, especially when it rains humour, for then do men like hot sparrows and pigeons, open all their wings ready to receive them.
> Col. Why, then, we may chance to have a fair day, for we shall spend it with so humourous acquaintance as rains nothing but humour all their lifetime.
> Lem. True, Colinet, over which will I sit like an old king in an old-fashion play, having his wife, his council, his children, and his fool about him, to whom he will sit, and point very learnedly, as followeth:--
>
> 'My council grave, and you, my noble peers,
> My tender wife, and you, my children dear,
> Any thou, my fool--'
>
> Col. Not meaning me, sir, I hope!
> Lem. No, sir: but thus will I sit, as it were, and point out all my humourous companions.
>
> (sc. ii, 1-21)

There is expressed here a unity of conception which is both structural and thematic; structural in that a set of humourous characters are going to be paraded across the stage and exhibited by the puppet master who will make them perform for the audience; thematic in that their humours presumably are going to be expressive of comic foibles of character which Chapman will expose through laughter. Chapman then has begun

this play with a unified view of action and theme clearly in mind. As long as Lemot exhibits character in order to expose vanity and affectation he functions as a satirist. As such he works within the play to create an action in which he will, by making others participate in, cause them to reveal their respective follies. This is an unimpeachable comic plan; unfortunately, Chapman does not always satisfy the expectations that Lemot's master plan arouses.

Lemot puts his idea into immediate practice and in so doing enlarges further upon his own purpose. He is still talking to Colinet:

> Lem. ...Colinet, thou shalt see Catalian bring me hither an odd gentleman presently, to be acquainted withal, who in his manner of taking acquaintance will make us excellent sport.
> Col. Why, Lemot, I think thou send'st about of purpose for young gallants to be acquainted withal, to make thyself merry in the manner of taking acquaintance.
> Lem. By heaven, I do, Colinet; for there is no better sport than to observe the compliment, for that's their word, compliment--do you mark, sir?
> Col. Yea, sir, but what humour hath this gallant in his manner of taking acquaintance?
> Lem. Marry thus, sir: he will speak the very selfsame word to a syllable after him of whom he takes acquaintance, as, if I should say, 'I am marvellous glad of your acquaintance,' he will reply 'I am marvellous glad of your acquaintance'; 'I have heard much good of your rare parts and fine carriage,' 'I have heard much good of your rare parts and fine carriage.' So long as the compliments of a gentleman last, he is your complete ape.
> Col. Why, this is excellent!
> Lem. Nay, sirrah, here's the jest of it: when he is past this gratulation, he will retire himself to a chimney or a wall, standing folding his arms thus: and go you and speak to him so far as the room you are in will afford you, you shall never get him from that most gentlemanlike set, or behaviour.
> (sc. ii, 24-48)

Blanuel, the gentleman with the odd manner of taking acquaintance, enters and faithfully mimics Lemot's greeting. In a later scene he behaves similarly and then retires to a corner to assume his studied pose. Apparently he is a sketch of a false gentleman and scholar. Lemot, for example, says that in meeting Blanuel a bit of Latin must be used,

"for these Latin ends are part of a gentleman and a good scholar." What is at fault in the portrait of Blanuel, however, is that it is too undeveloped; it is like the cartoon for a future painting. Blanuel in fact is so indistinctly presented that his particular folly is hardly recognizable. Nothing substantial, in other words, is actually satirized in him. Tiring of him quickly, perhaps because he was unable to hit him off satirically or perhaps because his powers were unequal to the occasion, Chapman drops the "exposure" of Blanuel; indeed, he forgets about Blanuel's pose as a gentleman and a scholar, and Blanuel hereafter becomes a courtier who has no humour to display. This is a mere detail, but it is of importance because it suggests that Chapman's failures in execution have to do with his lack of concern to be dramatically consistent. Jonson, for example, was never casual about drama because it meant so much to him, nor would he leave loose ends dangling with such obtrusive obviousness in a play. The "satire" directed briefly against Blanuel, then, is ineffective in that it is neither particularly amusing nor indicative of a recognizable moral blemish.

Taking charge of the action Lemot, as the master strategist outlining comic action, remarks to his courtier acquaintances: "Gentlemen, this day let's consecrate to mirth." Such a remark is perfectly consonant with Lemot's original plan of sitting in kingly judgment of the fools who are made by his own scheming to dance in attendance upon him, and in so doing to reveal their humours. Of course we are spoiled by what we expect of humour comedy because of Jonson's incomparable mastery and may forget that when Chapman displays a humour he may be presenting nothing more than a whim or eccentricity of character that may amuse irrespective of any connection that may exist between such a whim or

eccentricity and moral folly. Jonson knew much better than the early Chapman that the wearing of a particular hatband, a superficial habit of dress, that is, was not in itself an object of satire. "Mirth," then, to Chapman allowed not just the amusement and laughter afforded by well presented satire, but the horseplay that we associate with farce. It is necessary to remember, in other words, that the early Chapman was much more naive in what he meant by humour comedy than Jonson, and that whereas Jonson was always the satirist who hoped to please audiences, Chapman may at first have been the crowd pleaser who employed satire as one technique to achieve his end.

It might be well at this point to explore rather closely the function of Lemot since his importance is central to both plot and theme. Both the strengths and weaknesses of Chapman's central design as well as his execution of details should emerge from such a study.

The figure of a character in a play whose function was like that of the clever servant in Latin comedy is not an unfamiliar figure in English comedy prior to Chapman. John V. Curry refers to these characters as "mischief-makers"[1] whose principal aim is to stir up fun through trickery and deception. Diccon in Gammer Gurton's Needle is a better example of this figure than Merrygreek in Ralph Roister Doister, for whereas Merrygreek, Ralph's parasite, sets about methodically to exhibit the gross folly of his cowardly bragging master, Diccon functions merely to stir up fun for the sake of fun and not for the sake of any satiric insights which might be offered. Nevertheless, like the clever slave of Roman comedy, he devises and controls the action. So too do the pages

[1]John V. Curry, Deception in Elizabethan Comedy (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1955), p. 9.

of John Lyly's Mother Bombie stir up confusion and misunderstanding in an attempt to provide sport as they direct the course of action throughout the play. Since Lemot, however, as Curry points out

> ...has been marked out by scholars[1] as exercising a new function in dramatic structure, we shall classify him with Shakespeare's Maria and Jonson's Macilente as a separate type which is really a branching out and more sophisticated development, in certain respects at any rate, of the mischief-maker. The members of this group may be called exhibitors of folly.[2]

It is of course to Chapman's credit that he could increase the dramatic stature of this figure of the plot manipulating intriguer, by amplyfying his significance to include the function of satire; but if Lemot prefigures Jonson's Macilente on the one hand, he still atavistically reflects the more naive and crude Diccon of whom, as well be shown, he appears to be a lineal descendant.

It will be Lemot's intention to gather his humourous victims at a tavern to which he either invites, attracts, lures, or deceives them into coming. As the first step in his plans, Lemot sends his friend Colinet, who is attracted to the young Martia, to Foyes' house so that he may enjoy the company of Martia, who is being forced by her father, Foyes, to attend to the "vain gull Labesha," who though wonderfully short of mind, is soon to inherit riches. Lemot takes it upon himself to visit the old Count Labervele in an attempt to get access to his closely guarded Puritan wife, Florilla. This is scene four of the play and in it Chapman is at his best, for here Lemot is allowed to function with a pure satiric

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[1]See Charles Read Baskervill, English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy (Bulletin of the University of Texas, No. 178; Humanistic Series, No. 12; Studies in English, No. 1, Austin: The University of Texas, 1911), pp. 135, 167-68. See also Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), pp. 66-68.

[2]Curry, p. 16.

intention, exposing the foolish jealousy of the old Count as he carefully lifts the mask from the hypocritically Puritanic Florilla. Count Labervele in an earlier scene has placed in Florilla's garden two jewels upon which he has inscribed posies which he hopes will increase her devotion to him despite his barrenness and age. In exposition that is also self-revealing the old Count soliloquizes:

> Fair is my wife, and young and delicate,
> Although too religious in the purest sort;
> But pure religion being but mental stuff,
> And sense indeed all careful for itself,
> Tis to be doubted that when an object comes
> Fit to her humour, she will intercept
> Religious letters sent unto her mind,
> And yield unto the motion of her blood.
> Here have I brought, then, two rich agates for her,
> Graven with two posies of mine own devising,
> For poets I'll not trust, nor friends, nor any.
> She longs to have a child, which yet, alas!
> I cannot get, yet long as much as she.
> (Sc. i, 13-25)

Later Florilla enters the garden and "discovers" the planted jewels:

> Flo. What have I done? Put on too many clothes;
> The day is hot, and I am hotter clad
> Than might suffice health.
> My conscience tells me that I have offended,
> And I'll put them off.
> That will ask time that might be better spent;
> One sin will draw another quickly so;
> See how the Devil tempts. But what's here, jewels?
> How should these come here?
>
> Enter Labervele
>
> Lab. Good morrow, lovely wife! What hast thou there?
> Flo. Jewels, my lord, which here I strangely found.
> Lab. That's strange indeed; what, where none comes
> But when yourself is here? Surely the heavens
> Have rained thee jewels for thy holy life,
> And using thy old husband lovingly;
> Or else do fairies haunt this holy green,
> As evermore mine ancestors have thought.
> Flo. Fairies were but in times of ignorance,
> Not since the true pure light hath been revealed;
> And that they come from heaven I scarce believe,

For jewels are vain things; much gold is given
For such fantastical and fruitless jewels,
And therefore heaven, I know, will not maintain
The use of vanity. Surely I fear
I have much sinned to stoop and take them up,
Bowing my body to an idle work;
The strength that I have had to this very deed
Might have been used to take a poor soul up
In the highway.

Lab. You are too curious, wife; behold your jewels.
What, me thinks there's posies written on them!

(Sc. iv, 1-30)

Florilla, however, dismisses her husband's verses as "vain poetry" and does not show a rent in her mask until, some time later in the same scene, Lemot enters with a proposal that Florilla finds acceptable.

Lem. [To Count Labervele] ...I must crave a word with my lady.

Lab. These words are intolerable, and she shall hear no more.

Lem. She must hear me speak.

Lab. Must she, sir? Have you brought the King's warrant for it?

Lem. I have brought that which is above kings.

Lab. Why, every man for her sake is a Puritan. The devil, I think will shortly turn Puritan, or the Puritan will turn devil.

Flo. What have you brought, sir?

Lem. Marry this, madam; you know we ought to prove one another's constancy, and I am come in all chaste and honourable sort to prove your constancy.

Flo. You are very welcome, sir, and I will abide your proof. It is my duty to abide your proof.

Lab. You'll bide his proof; it is your duty to bide his proof! How the devil will you bide his proof?

Flo. My good head, no otherwise than before your face in all honourable and religious sort; I tell you I am constant to you, and he comes to try whether I be so or no, which I must endure. Begin your proof, sir.

Lem. Nay, madam, not in your husband's hearing, though in his sight; for there is no woman will show she is tempted from her constancy, though she be a little. Withdraw yourself, sweet lady.

Lab. Well, I will see, though I do not hear; women may be courted without offence, so they resist the courtier.

Lem. Dear and most beautiful lady, of all the sweet, honest, and honorable means to prove the purity of a lady's constancy kisses are the strongest. I will, therefore, be bold to begin my proof with a kiss.

Flo. No, sir, no kissing!

Lem. No kissing, madam? How shall I prove you then sufficiently, not using the most sufficient proof? To flatter yourself by affection of spirit, when it is not perfitly tried, is sin.

Flo. You say well, sir; that which is truth is truth.

Lem. Then do you well, lady, and yield to the truth.
Flo. By your leave, sir, my husband sees; peradventure it may breed an offence to him.
Lem. How can it breed an offence to your husband to see your constancy perfectly tried?

(Sc. iv, 142-184)

Shortly hereafter Florilla is brought to admit to Lemot that "to say, 'prove my constancy,' is as much as to say, 'kiss me.'" When he agrees she invites him to "prove my constancy." After he kisses her, and after the old Count swears by his forehead, Florilla remarks that the test has come to an end. The following dialogue then ensues:

Lem. ...You the most constant lady in France? I know an hundred ladies in this town that will dance, revel all night amonst gallants, and in the morning go to bed to her husband as clear a woman as if she were new christened, kiss him, embrace him, and say, 'no, no, husband, thou art the man'; and he takes her for the woman.
Flo. All this can I do.
Lab. Take heed of it, wife!
Flo. Fear not, my good head; I warrant you for him!
Lem. Nay, madam, triumph not before the victory; how can you conquer that against which you never strive, or strive against that which never encounters you? To live idle in this walk, to enjoy this company, to wear this habit, and have no more delights than those will afford you, is to make virtue an idle huswife, and to hide herself in slothful cobwebs, that still should be adorned with actions of victory; no, madam, if you will worthily prove your constancy to your husband, you must put on rich apparel, fare daintily, hear music, read sonnets, be continually courted, kiss, dance, feast, revel all night amongst gallants; then if you come to bed to your husband with a clear mind and a clear body, then are your virtues ipsissima; then have you passed the full test of experiment, and you shall have an hundred gallants fight thus far in blood for the defence of your reputation.
Lab. Oh, vanity of vanities!
Flo. Oh, husband, this is perfect trial indeed!
Lab. And you will try all this now, will you not?
Flo. Yea, my good head; for it is written, we must pass to perfection through all temptation, Habakkuk the fourth.[1]
Lab. Habakkuk!--cuck me no cucks! In a doors, I say! Thieves, Puritans, murderers! In a doors, I say.

Exit with Florilla

---

[1]As Parrott points out, there are only three chapters in Habakkuk.

> Lem. So now is he start mad, i'faith; but...as this is an old lord jealous of his young wife, so is ancient Countess Moren jealous of her young husband; we'll thither to have some sport, i'faith.
> (Sc. iv, 213-249)

This is a fine and well constructed scene. It had been carefully prepared for by the old Count Labervele's earlier fretting about his wife's religion as well as her feelings about him; and by the remarks of Lemot who had already informed the audience of the Count's temperament:

> Of Florilla is the old Count so jealous that he will suffer no man to come at her; yet I will find a means that two of us will have access to her, though before his face, which shall so heat his jealous humour till he be start mad....
> (Sc. ii, 88-92)

Also the scene ends with a transition deftly provided to like the scene to a future one. This transition is naturally and organically related to the scene it grows out of and gives evidence of Chapman's skillful and artful plotting. The finest feature of this scene, however, is the character of Florilla, the exposure of whose hypocrisy is subtly foreshadowed in the brief glimpse we are allowed beneath her mask of piety. I would say that in this scene Chapman is able to combine a well conceived structure with a function of comedy that would satisfy even Jonson himself: his aim here is to probe the social scene for signs of moral decay and weakness and in comically presenting them, satirize and thus render them ridiculous. Regrettably, it is one of the chief weaknesses of the play that Chapman does not always insist on such a combination. That he is capable of it this scene, I think, sufficiently demonstrates; but that he was deeply concerned at this point in his career as a comic dramatist to keep his writing at this skillful a pitch, I doubt.

Florilla is the most interesting satiric figure in the play, and I attribute this to the fact that she is the only figure upon whom

Chapman has conferred any complexity. She is not what she seems and goes to great lengths to rationalize her behavior. Thus to unmask her--which Lemot proposes to do--is to unmask an imposter. The ancient countess Moren, on the other hand, simply rants, and rather tediously at that, when she has reason to suspect that her husband is in the least inattentive; and Lemot plants doubts of her husband's fidelity in the old Countess' mind with no other purpose than to hear her browbeat her easily intimidated husband. Lemot capitalizes on the foibles of each; on the Countess' immoderate jealousy and suspicion of her young husband; on her irrational conduct when she thinks he is neglectful of her; and on the cowering hen-pecked weakness of her husband who, a feebly drawn character, is made to do nothing more than tremble when his wife is in her fury.

After a scene in which he has aroused the old Countess' jealous anger, Lemot comments on the present action at the same time that he looks forward to the resumption of an old one; and he introduces at the same time, in the reference to the King's interest in old Foyes' daughter, Martia, an entirely new but related plot development:

> So this is but the beginning of sport between this fine lord and his old lady. But this wench Martia hath happy stars reigned at the disposition of her beauty, for the King himself doth mightily dote on her. Now to my Puritan, and see if I can make up my full proof of her.
>
> (Sc. v, 206-211)

Lemot then is making the rounds of the humourous characters to introduce them and their private desires and private follies to us before he arranges an action in which he can bring them all together at Verone's tavern for the "sport" it will give him.

Lemot returns to visit Florilla, and in another finely done

scene wins her over. Florilla, dressed in rich finery, has again withdrawn from the old Count Labervele to enable Lemot to test her constancy. She has arranged a series of signs with her husband which will indicate, so he thinks, her virtue even while it is under attack:

Flo. [To Lemot] Now, sir, your cunning in a lady's proof.
Lem. Madam, in proving you I find no proof
Against your piercing glancings,
But swear I am shot through with your love.
Flo. I do believe you: who will swear he loves,
To get the thing he loves not? If he love,
What needs more perfit trial?
Lem. Most true, rare lady.
Flo. Then we are fitly met; I love you too.
Lem. Exceeding excellent!
Flo. Nay, I know you will applaud me in this course;
But to let common circumstances pass,
Let us be familiar.
Lem. Dear life, you ravish my conceit with joy.
Lab. [aside] I long to see the signs that she will make.
Flo. I told my husband I would make these signs:
If I resisted, first, hold up my finger,
As if I said 'i'faith, sir, you are gone,'
But it shall say, 'i'faith, sir, we are one.'
Lab. [aside] Now she triumphs, and points to heaven,
I warrant you.
Flo. Then must I seem as if I would hear no more,
And stop your vain lips. Go, cruel lips,
You have bewitch'd me, go!
Lab. [aside] Now she stops in
His scorned words, and rates him for his pains.
Flo. And when I thrust you thus against the breast,
Then are you overthrown both horse and foot.
Lab. [aside] Now is he overthrown both horse and foot.
Flo. Away, vain man, have I not answered you?
Lem. Madam, I yield and swear I never saw
So constant, nor so virtuous a lady.
Lab. [To Lemot] Now, speak, I pray, and speak but truly,
Have you not got a wrong sow by the ear?
Lem. My lord, my labour is not altogether lost,
For now I find that which I never thought.
Lab. Ah, sirrah, is the edge of your steel wit
Rebated then against her adamant?
Lem. It is, my lord; yet one word more, fair lady.
Lab. Fain would he have it do, and it will not be:
Hark you, wife, what sign will you make me
Now, if you relent not?
Flo. Lend him my handkerchef to wife his lips
Of their last disgrace.

Lab. Excellent good! Go forward, sir, I pray.
Flo. [To Lemot] Another sign, i'faith, love, is required.
Lem. Let him have signs enow, my heavenly love.
Then know there is a private meeting
This day at Veron's ordinary,
Where if you will do me the grace to come,
And bring the beauteous Martia with you,
I will provide a fair and private room,
Where you shall be unseen of any man,
Only of me; and of the King himself,
Whom I will cause to honour your repair
With his high presence
And there will be music and quick revellings
You may revive your spirits so long time dulled.
(Sc. vi, 69-124)

The movement of the play toward Verone's ordinary, which gets its first impetus in this scene, is at this point in the play interrupted so that Chapman can introduce the melancholy, malcontent, satirist, Dowsecer, who like Shakespeare's Jaques has little or nothing to do with a plot action. As Chapman has not yet learned to create with consistency satiric or "humour" characters whose own behavior gives rise to intrinsically interesting dramatic action, most of the characters in All Fools exhibit their humours in dissociation from a plot action. Dowsecer accordingly enters and exhibits his humour mechanically.

Dowsecer, son of Count Labervele by his first wife, stands apart from the other figures in the play damning with a withering scorn the world from which he has retired to contemplative aloofness. The King and his retinue--indeed, most of the cast--are invited to Count Labervele's house to see his son's humour. The King, however, does not regard Dowsecer as a lunatic:

...they say the young Lord Dowsecer
Is rarely learned, and nothing lunatic
As men suppose,
But hateth company and worldly trash;
The judgment and the just contempt of them
Have in reason arguments that break affection
(As the most sacred poets write) and still the roughest wind.

And his rare humour come we now to hear.
(Sc. vii, 15-21)

Dowsecer has a humour but he is not laughable, and, as a matter of fact, Chapman nowhere presents him satirically. Dowsecer does, however, introduce what is, though momentary, a rather jarring note of seriousness that seems not quite in keeping with the play. We have at this point in the comedy come to accept Lemot as our guide through the largely foolish society of the play, though the King, despite his desire and indiscreet attempt to dally with Martia, is neither fool nor knave. As "minion" of the King, Lemot is not only allowed but sanctioned and encouraged by the King. As the center of the intrigue he is of course the chief agency through which Chapman can expose the folly of the society of the play. Therefore, we view the action of the fools through Lemot's eyes. The audience from the first is aware of his double dealing and trickery, and in identifying with him accept him as normative. And this he is. Yet Lemot's activities are restricted to exposing and discomfiting others. He is not a spokesman; he is out for sport and mirth and, as will be shown later, descends from his position as satirist to that of mere clown stirring up mischief and discord for their own sake. Dowsecer, not Lemot, becomes Chapman's spokesman in the play. Those who came to view the melancholy freak stay to admire him. And for one scene the movement of the action is interrupted in order that Dowsecer may soliloquize on the trumperies and vanities of the world. His charges appear to be part of the stock in trade of the conventional malcontent, and as such, Dowsecer, structurally, performs little plot function. Insofar, however, as he represents the serious , Platonic, and romantic thread that appears, more hinted at than developed, in the play his position as

spokesman of a higher ethic and a higher conception of love than that reflected by the "realistic" members of his society raises the problem of the relationship between comic and non-comic elements (so noticeably at variance in most of Chapman's comic work).[1] That is, Dowsecer stands withdrawn from the frippery and vanity and folly of his society until he is compelled to re-enter it by virtue of the Platonic ideal he envisions in Martia, a member of the comic world being exploited by Lemot. Chapman seems to be suggesting that there is no cure for Lemot's world--Lemot himself is not in the least interested in curing the follies of his humourous acquaintances--only perhaps an escape from it. Finally, then, Dowsecer's function in the play cannot be considered apart from the thematic thread of the play, for his role, though not sufficiently clarified through dramatic action, is clearly a thematic one in that he is the representative of a nobler conduct than he finds around him. Discovering in Martia an embodiment of a Platonic ideal, Dowsecer, declares his love for her and, once he discovers that Martia returns his love, takes part in the world he has hitherto scorned and forsaken in malcontent cynicism, in order to achieve an ideal he thought unavailable in his society. Once united with Martia, however, Dowsecer again retires from the world, the possessor of a spiritual ideal. Since his function thematically suggests (through philosophical exposition rather than through ideas dramatically presented) an answer to the folly of the play,[2] Dowsecer is at once performing thematic and structural functions.

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[1]Even in The Blind Beggar the romance thread seems not to have been perfectly blended into Chapman's burlesque and satiric purpose.

[2]Despite the fact that it could be argued that Dowsecer escapes rather than confronts the problem of human folly, such a cure, except metaphorically, is not the artist's problem anyway.

As a spokesman of ideal behavior he functions thematically; as an agent through which comic and romantic elements are brought together, he functions structurally. It is worth while, I believe, to look in detail at the scene dominated by Dowsecer, for Chapman is here working with ideas that will be of importance to him later. It is possible, of course, to see Dowsecer simply as another humour character, and in one sense he is, but his humour is not really a comic one, nor is his behavior affected. Dowsecer as a too-deep scholar and Platonist is hardly a figure Chapman could ridicule.[1] With the King and most of the cast in hiding to view him, Dowsecer walks on stage and finds a pair of pants, a codpiece, a picture of a woman, and a sword which have been placed "to put him by the sight of them in mind of their brave states that use them, or, at the least, of the true use they should be put unto."

Enter Dowsecer

> Dow. Quid ei potest videri magnum in rebus humanis cui aeternitas omnis totiusque nota sit mundi magnitudo.
> 'What can seem strange to him on earthly things,
> To whom the whole course of eternity,
> And the round compass of the world is known?'
> A speech divine, but yet I marvel much
> How it should spring from thee, Mark Cicero,
> That sold for glory the sweet peace of life,
> And made a torment of rich nature's work,
> Wearing thyself by watchful candle-light,
> When all the smiths and weavers were at rest,
> And yet was gallant, ere the day-bird sung,
> To have a troop of clients at thy gates,
> Armed with religious supplications,
> Such as would make stern Minos laugh to read.
> Look on our lawyers' bills, not one contains
> Virtue or honest drifts; but snares, snares, snares;
> But when the oak's poor fruit did nourish men,

---

[1] Nevertheless, Boas, p. 15, does not regard Dowsecer's Platonism with any seriousness: "By an unconvincing volte-face the confirmed 'isolationist' becomes the immediate victim of Martia's charms, though he covers his surrender with a characteristic Platonic interpretation of it."

Men were like oaks of body, tough, and strong;
Men were like giants then, but pigmies now;
Yet full of villanies as their skin can hold.
Lem. How like you this humour, my Liege?
King. This is no humour, this is but perfit judgment.
. . . . . .
Martia. Oh, were all men such,
Men were no men, but gods; this earth a heaven.
Dow. [seeing the sword] See, see, the shameless world,
That dares present her mortal enemy[1]
With these gross ensigns of her levity,
Iron and steel, uncharitable stuff,
Good spital-founders, enemies to whole skins,
As if there were not ways enough to die
By natural and casual accidents,
Diseases, surfeits, brave carouses, old aqua-vitae, and too base wives,
And thousands more. Hence with this art of murder!
[Seeing the hose and codpiece] But here is goodly gear, the soul of man,
For 'tis his better part; take away this,
And take away their merits, and their spirits.
Scarce dare they come in any public view,
Without this countenance-giver,
And some dares not come, because they have it too;
For they may sing, in written books they find it.
What is it then the fashion, or the cost?
The cost doth much but yet the fashion more;
For let it be but mean, so in the fashion,
And 'tis most gentleman-like. Is it so?
. . . . . .
A large hose and a codpiece makes a man.
(Sc. vii, 65-112)

Dowsecer shortly hereafter sees the picture of a woman and launches out in a new vein, but before he does so the old Count Labervele, Dowsecer's father, expressing the hope that seeing the picture will "make him more humane and sociable," draws the following remark from the King: "Nay, he's more humane than all we are." Dowsecer continues:

She is very fair; I think that she be painted.
And if she be, sir, she might ask of me,
How many is there of our sex that are not?
'Tis a sharp question: marry and I think
They have small skill; if they were all of painting,

---

[1]Parrott, II, 692, points out that this is "Dowsecer himself, as the satirist of the world's customs."

'Twere safer dealing with them; and indeed
Were their minds strong enough to guide their bodies,
Their beauteous deeds should match with their heavenly looks,
'Twere necessary they should wear them,
And would they vouchsafe it, even I
Would joy in their society.
Mar. And who would not die with such a man?
Dow. But to admire them as our gallants do,
'Oh, what an eye she hath! Oh, dainty hand!
Rare foot and leg!' and leave the mind respectless,
This is a plague that in both men and women
Make such pollution of our earthly being.
Well, I will practice yet to court this piece.
. . . . . .
King. Methinks I could endure him days and nights.
(Sc. vii, 139-158)

A few lines later, Lemot asks the King how he likes "this humour." The King replies, "As of a holy fury, not a frenzy." The company departs but not before Dowsecer has seen Martia. The "shameless world" can still compel his attention:

What have I seen? How am I burnt to dust
With a new sun, and made a novel phoenix.
Is she a woman that objects this sight,
Able to work the chaos of the world
Into digestion? Oh, divine aspect!
The excellent disposer of the mind
Shines in thy beauty, and thou hast not changed
My soul to sense, but sense unto my soul;
And I desire thy pure society,
But even as angels do to angels fly.
(Sc. vii, 207-216)

This is interesting doctrine to see reflected in such a play as An Humourous Day's Mirth. It is a part of the neo-Platonism that was so congenial to Chapman's mind;[1] nevertheless, its appearance here is lifelessly mechanical. Perhaps, though, this is unfair. Would it not be more accurate to say that Chapman fails in the presentation of this exclamatory Platonism only because he does not render it sufficiently

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[1] See Roy Battenhouse, "Chapman and the Nature of Man," EIH, XII (June, 1945), 87-107.

dramatic? This, I think is undeniable. Yet what Chapman does do, by introducing with so little preparation and development a piece of Platonic doctrine into his play, is to suggest (rather than present with dramatic persuasiveness) an answer to the sexual promiscuity and irrational folly that is characteristic of virtually the entire cast. The society around him, so Dowsecer suggests, is formless, chaotic, unanimated by spirit. The sight of Martia literally re-makes Dowsecer into a new, revitalized man. The old cynical, world-weary malcontent becomes the enraptured discoverer of an ideal with a mortal habitation. Martia, a neo-Platonic ideal, redeems Dowsecer's world and orders it meaningfully. Both his life and presumably his society are now informed with a harmony that gives birth to new life. Dowsecer's speech on Platonic love, then, has some connection with the action and ideas of the rest of the play. What, however, of his entire commentary? How suitable to the present context are the other remarks and judgments Dowsecer makes? He states, for example, that lawyers are dishonest and that men are full of villanies. As a matter of fact the play contains no lawyers, nor are there any other references to legal embroilments and chicaneries; also the play deals, not with the villanies, but the follies of men. Dowsecer's first speech, in fact, seems to take us out of the context of the play into the arena of real, socio-political life; this is the world usually explored in tragedy and tragicomedy. Dowsecer's comments on murder and death likewise seem unsuited to the events and dialogue of a day otherwise consecrated to mirth:

> As if there were not ways enough to die
> By natural and casual accidents,
> Diseases, surfeits, brave carouses, old aqua-vitae, and too base wives
> And thousands more. Hence with this art of murder!
> (sc. vii, 96-99)

Brave carouses, aqua-vitae, and too base wives have demonstrable connection with the rest of the play, but not so diseases, surfeits, and murders. Dowsecer is a Hamlet figure who has walked from some tragic scenario into the script of An Humourous Day's Mirth; and while several of his comments are tellingly relevant, on the whole his presence is not altogether harmonized into the total structure of the play.

To Lemot Dowsecer has a "humour." To the King he seems to speak with a "holy fury." After Dowsecer's Platonic outburst Lemot, still unaffected by him or his doctrine, thinks to give Dowsecer's father ease by telling him to "bear with [Dowsecer]..., 'tis but his humour." Lemot, then, has not understood Dowsecer's Platonism. As will be shown Lemot shortly degenerates into a clown stirring up confusion, forgetful of his earlier and more artistic function as moral satirist. Insofar as Lemot may be taken to represent comedy itself (to Chapman, that is), is it not within reason to suggest that Chapman may at this time in his career have regarded comedy as an endeavour inferior to tragedy? Lemot cannot understand Platonism nor does he always distinguish his victims with the satirist's keen eye for moral weakness. He will discomfit and expose the foolish and on occasion the innocent alike if by so doing he will find sport for himself. Lemot's role in the rest of the play requires special attention, I think, if we are to judge with care Chapman's particular position as a comic writer at this stage in his development.

Lemot inveigles or invites to gather at Verone's tavern Count Moren (the meek, abashed husband of an old jealous wife), Florilla (the affectedly Puritanic wife of an aged jealous husband), Martia (the daughter of an old calculating father who would compel her to

marry the fatuous but soon-to-be-wealthy suitor, Labesha), and the King, who is eager to cheat on his wife. Having assembled them (as well as a number of courtier-gulls), Lemot cuases to be brought to the tavern the respective wife, husband, father, and Queen of those already present, with the expectation of viewing the great sport that must follow such a confrontation.

There is satire in Lemot's experiment, but there is also clownery. However, some of the satire itself does not come off even when Lemot is functioning as the satirist who exposes the gulls and fools. Examine the following scene where Lemot, still dynamically at the center of the comic action--creating it as he projects it forward--rather dully mocks the courtiers who are present at the tavern. This scene also bears out the charge that Chapman's minor characters are feebly and indistinctly drawn. He is speaking to his friend Catalian:

> Thou seest here's a fine plump of gallants, such as think their wits singular, and theirselves rarely accomplished; yet to show thee how brittle their wits be, I will speak to them severally, and I will tell thee before what they shall answer me.
>
> Cat. That's excellent, let's see that, i'faith!
>
> Lem. Whatsoever I say to Monsieur Rowley, he shall say, "Oh, sir, you may see an ill weed grows apace."
>
> Cat. [aside] This is excellent; forward, sir, I pray!
>
> Lem. [aside] Whatsoe'er I say to Labesha, he shall answer me, 'Black will bear no other hue,' and old Foyes...as greedy of a stale proverb,...shall come in the neck of that and say, 'Black is a pearl in a woman's eye.'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Look thee, here he comes hither.--Labesha, Catalian and I have been talking of thy complexion, and I say that all the fair ladies in France would have been in love with thee, but that thou art so black.
>
> Labes. Oh, sir, black will bear no other hue.
>
> Foy. Oh, sir, black is a pearl in a woman's eye.
>
> (Sc. viii, 214-232)

This continues rather tediously, and is intended, I suppose, to be satire on the use of "stale proverbs" and clichés. Still, the fact that it is

not in the least witty satire should not cause to go unnoticed Lemot's structural function in the scene as the satirist who instigates the exposure of human foibles. Chapman's conception, in other words, is not at fault, nor his awareness of the comic possibilities latent in the scene; his failure here is one simply of execution. In other words, we recognize Chapman's idea in this scene but are disappointed to see it fail to achieve successful dramatic life.

In his wooing of Florilla in the street before the tavern there are, however, what I regard as unmistakable traces of the "mischief-maker" impulse in the character of Lemot. This is a disfigurement of Lemot's generally more advanced function of satirizing the fools around him:

> Lem. I'll go with you through fire, through death, through hell.
> Come, give me your own hand, my own dear heart,
> This hand that I adore and reverence,
> And loathe to have it touch an old man's bosom.
> Oh, let me sweetly kiss it. [He bites]
> Flo. Out on thee, wretch! He hath bit me to the bone.
> Oh, barbarous cannibal! Now I perceive
> Thou wilt make me a mocking stock to all the world.
> Lem. Come, come, leave your passions! They cannot move me; my father and my mother died both in a day, and I rung me a peal for them, and they were no sooner brought to the church and laid in their graves, but I fetched me two or three fine capers aloft, and took my leave of them, as men do of their mistresses at the ending of a galliard.
>
> (Sc. xi, 42-55)

Yet even though Lemot here demonstrates a kind of moral insensitiveness inappropriate to the satirist, and seems to exercise the complete freedom from responsibility of the Zanni, his biting of Florilla's hand was a payment that in some measure was deserved. "Go, Habbakuk, go!" he tells her, expressing his perfect awareness of her moral shamming--a shamming he has used tellingly against her. This is not true, however, in his lying and deceitful conduct toward the Queen who, since she has

no humour, no detectable moral weakness, no comic shortcoming, no "defect of the soul," is not a suitable butt for Lemot's jesting. Feigning, before the Queen, to have received a wound in defense of the King, he misleads her in order that some rather dull jokes may be made. Labesha, Foyes, and the Countess Moren are also present at this scene:

Lem. . . . . .
Ache on, rude arm, I care not for thy pain;
I got it nobly in the King's defense,
And in the guardiance of my fair Queen's right.
Queen. Oh, tell me, sweet Lemot, how fares the King,
Or what my right was that thou didst defend?
Lem. That you shall know when other things are told.
. . . . . .
What, would you have me then put poison in my breath,
And burn the ears of my attentive Queen?
Queen. Tell me whate'er it be, I'll bear it all.
Lem. Bear with my rudeness, then, in telling it,
For, alas, you see, I can but act it with the left hand!
This is my gesture now.
Queen. 'Tis well enough.
Lem. Yea, well enough, you say;
This recompence have I for all my wounds.
Then thus:
The King, enamoured of another lady,
Compares your face to hers, and says that yours
Is fat and flat, and that your nether lip
Was passing big.
Queen. Oh, wicked man!
Doth he so suddenly condemn my beauty,
That, when he married me, he thought divine?
For ever blasted by that strumpet's face,
As all my hopes are blasted, that did change them!
Lem. Nay, madam, though he said your face was fat,
And flat, and so forth, yet he liked it best,
And said a perfect beauty should be so.
. . . . . .
Queen. If he did so esteem of me indeed,
Happy am I.
Countess. So may your Highness be that hath so good a husband...
Lem. Indeed, madam, you have a bad husband. Truly, then did the King grow mightily in love with the other lady,
And swore no king could more enriched be
Than to enjoy so fair a same as she.
. . . . . .
But, says the King, 'I do enjoy as fair,
And though I love her in all honour'd sort,
Yet I'll not wrong my wife for all the world.'
Foy. This proves his constancy as firm as brass.

Queen. It doth, it doth; oh, pardon me my lord,
That I mistake thy royal meaning so.
. . . . . .
Lem. But when he view'd her radiant eyes again,
Blind was he strooken with her fervent beams..
(Sc. xiii, 3-53)

Lemot continues this baiting of the Queen until she is moved to say, "What mocking changes is there in 'thy words.'/ Fond man, thou murtherest me with these exclaims." But Lemot persists in his fabrications--everything he says here, except that the King is interested in Martia, is of his own invention. When the Queen tells him to "forth and unlade the poison of [his] tongue," Lemot embroiders further upon his elaborate lie:

Another lord did love this curious lady,
Who hearing that the King had forced her
As she was walking with another earl,
Ran straightways mad for her, and with a friend
Of his and two or three black ruffians more,
Brake desperately upon the person of the King,
Swearing to take from him, in traitorous fashion,
The instrument of procreation
With them I fought awhile, and got this wound;
But being unable to resist so many,
Came straight to you to fetch you to his aid.
(Sc. xiii, 78-89)

This rather cruel tormenting of an innocent Queen is similar to the tricking of Count Moren, who though somewhat hen-pecked, is not really presented as reflecting any clearly admonishable moral infirmity. Lemot lied to Count Moren to get him to come to the tavern by promising that there would be no women present. Thus the Count could avoid offending his wife--something he was deeply concerned to do. Once Count Moren is at the tavern, where Lemot has already stationed Florilla and Martia, Lemot informs the Countess that her husband has tricked her with lies and that he is dallying. Clearly the point here has little or nothing to do with the character of Count Moren, which Chapman unfortunately

chose to do so little with, but rather with the "humour" which the fiercely jealous Countess would give vent to as soon as she thought her husband to be with another woman. Thus, since the Queen and Moren are not guilty of any folly, the ridicule of them loses the point, zest, and sting that we enjoy in satire. Lemot becomes in the rushed, scatter-brained scenes that close the play, too much the clown making all people his victims irrespective of their characters, and in so soing he sacrifices his integrity as a satirist.

In the end everything is untangled: the false-Puritan Florilla retreats back behind her mask and returns to her foolish husband; the Countess Moren is restored to her anxious-to-please husband; the King, rejoining the Queen, gives Martia willingly over to her Platonic lover Dowsecer, and promises the puerile Labesha a wife who will appreciate him. And for the double-dealing and trickery of Lemot, the King finds excuse: "Pardon my minion...'twas but to make you merry in the end." And this is just what Lemot has attempted, with varying degrees of success, to do. In the last scene of the play Lemot hits off another merry jest that is neither dramatically organic, funny, nor satiric. The scene is the King's court. Verone, the tavern keeper, has disguised one of his maids, Jaquena, as Queen Fortune and Lemot has devised posies on the principal characters, all here assembled, for her to read. She, like Verone, is a minor figure who appears momentarily some six scenes back, only long enough for us to get a glimpse of. And yet in the present scene, Lemot makes an off-color jest at the expense of Verone and Jaquena that with justice could be directed at them only if it had some satiric intention. It does not, however, though apparently

it contributed to Lemot's idea of mirth. Lemot is here reading Verone's posie, which of course Lemot has written:

> Lem. 'To tell you the truth, in words plain and mild,
> Verone loves his maid, and she is great with child.'
> King. What, Queen Fortune with child! Shall we have young Fortunes, my host?
> Maid. I'll play no more.
> Lem. No, faith, you need not now, you have played your bellyful already.
> Ver. Stand still, good Jaquena, they do but jest.
> Maid. Yea, but I like no such jesting.
> (Sc. xiv, 317-326)

Thus the play ends with a Lemot still devising the action, but it is a somewhat degenerated Lemot (devising a somewhat clumsy and unsophisticated comic action that appears in the last scenes of the play. Nevertheless, progress is certainly shown in this play. The conception of a comedy based on a satiric exposure of human follies is, though not consistently carried out, the conception upon which at least three-quarters of the play is based. Still apparent, however, is the fact that Chapman has not as yet achieved in his comedy a consistent artistic maturity. Taking in his next play, All Fools, another step forward, Chapman moves from the simpler humour comedy where perversions and follies of individual characters are revealed (almost as if in isolation from the goings-on of an actual society of people) toward a kind of comedy--Old Comedy--where man's private, individual folly is an explicit part of the larger world of human society. Yet at the same time that Chapman's comic world becomes enlarged, his ideal world of value and principle seems to draw more and more in upon itself, as if retreating before an unopposable enemy of fact, the fact of man's recalcitrant moral perversion. (Such a statement may be anticipating too early a later development in Chapman; nevertheless it is true that in All Fools

fact and value clash more discordantly than in An Humourous Day's Mirth, and in All Fools and in the following play, May-Day, this conflict, which takes the form of a split between an ideal world and an actual one, begins to lose its peripheral status as it moves toward the center of Chapman's comic art.) Apparently Chapman is already beginning to struggle to push his norms and his ideals, embodied as characters, back into action against a foolish, irrational, value-denying world, but increasingly these characters will be swallowed up by that world. Chapman seems to be simultaneously immersed in the world and withdrawn from it. The tension and conflict generated by such forces of attraction and repulsion (which correspond respectively to Platonic and satiric impulses in Chapman himself) will now begin to take on a more central position in Chapman's comedies.

CHAPTER IV

ALL FOOLS

Swinburne said of *All Fools* that it was "one of the most faultless examples of high comedy to be found in the whole rich field of our Elizabethan drama."[1] Subsequent criticism has generally not disagreed with Swinburne's judgment of the play, though Swinburne himself is often uncritically impressionistic. Passing over the satiric function of the play, Swinburne goes on to remark that

> over all the dialogue and action there plays a fresh radiant air of mirth and light swift buoyancy of life which breathes...of joyous strength and high-spirited health.[2]

The comedy, he continues, except for one spot near the end, is "light, bright, and easy in all its paces."[3] Schelling says of Swinburne's estimate that it does not "seem excessive."[4] A. W. Ward refers to the play as "a very admirable comedy";[5] and Havelok Ellis, though he

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[1]Swinburne, p. 48.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 49.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 50.

[4]Schelling, I, 461.

[5]Adolphus W. Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature* (3 vols., London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1899), II, 434.

does "not regard [All Fools]...with all the enthusiasm felt by some critics," still finds it to be "the work in which...Chapman reached maturity as a dramatist."[1] To William Lyon Phelps it is Chapman's comic "masterpiece."[2] Though some critics, such as Tucker Brooke and M. C. Bradbrook do not pass judgment upon the play but instead talk objectively about plot, analogues and sources, criticism on the whole has been favorably disposed toward the play, despite the fact that some of this criticism seems to be restating the not always critical attitude toward the play which originated with Swinburne.

There are, however, dissident voices. Charles M. Gayley writes testily that

> few expositions in comedy are more primitive, puerile, and obscure. The opening scenes abound in long-winded moralizings--twenty-five to thirty lines apiece of clumsy blank verse--and each surcharged with cheap cynicisms about women....Through all this verbosity the translator of Homer is making a fatuous struggle to tell us who's who, without letting out too soon what's what....The passion is of fustian and classical allusion; and the mirth, of stinking Satyrs, two-legged stallions, purblind parents, and the inevitable 'horn.' From the dramatic point of view, the only relief is in a half-dozen comic situations, which, however, do not contribute to the solution....The value today is purely historical.[3]

Chapman assuredly does not deserve such a response for his All Fools. To praise the play unstintedly and uncritically as Swinburne has, however, provides us with no more real understanding of Chapman's achievement than does Gayley's somewhat menacing acerbity. To do justice to Chapman, All Fools must be viewed with a searching thoroughness disinterestedly alert to strengths and weaknesses.

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[1] Ellis, p. 21.

[2] Phelps, p. 13.

[3] Charles M. Gayley (ed.), Representative English Comedies (3 vol., New York: Macmillan Co., 1913), II, 1.

The Prologue to All Fools, a play first performed early in 1599,[1] is alternately and at times simultaneously ironic and inquiring. It is ironic in that it appears to be making an appeal for the audience's favor when it is actually reminding them of their unpredictableness and of their lack of good judgment. "Fortune," the Prologue says, "governs in these stage events" and "merit bears least sway." "We must refer," the Prologue acidly concludes, "to the magic of your dooms, that never err." The remarks on the lack of taste and understanding among his audience that Chapman satirizes in his Prologue, are, however, mixed with comments of a very different kind; comments first that sincerely acknowledge the truth that however irrational and unpredictable the taste that makes up the likes and dislikes of an audience, the fact remains that to a writer dependent for his livelihood upon a favorable audience, approval is necessary: "Without your applause, wretched is he/

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[1]Parrott, II, 701, traces the early history of the play:
All Fools was first published in 1605 in quarto form with the following title-page:
Al Fooles A Comedy, Presented at the Black Fryers, And lately before his Maiestie. Written by George Chapman. At London, Printed for Thomas Thorpe, 1605.
It had, however, been composed some years before this date. In Henslowe's Diary under the date of January 22, 1598 (i.e., 1598-9) there occurs the entry: Lent unto thomas dowton... to Leand unto Mr. Chapman in earneste of a Boocke called the world Rones a whelles the some of iii". Further advance payments were made by Henslowe...and finally there occurs an entry which identifies this play with All Fools: Lent unto thomas dowton the 2 of July 1599 to pay Mr. Chapman in full payment for his Boocke called the world Rones a whelles and now all foolles but the foolle some of xxx^{s}. Parrott goes on to say, p. 701, that the identification of The World Runs on Wheels with Chapman's All Fools "has always been regarded as certain." Parrott suggests that the play as we have it may have been a revision of the original play. He advances the possibility, p. 701, "that the gulling of Rinaldo, which makes the title All Fools appropriate was wanting in the older form which might therefore well be called All Fooles but the Fool...."

That undertakes the stage...." More important, Chapman, in the Prologue, seems to be musing out loud about a problem that confronts him as an artist engaged in making a living. Chapman seems, in other words, in some places in this Prologue, to be inquiring into the nature of the validity of audience acceptance as an aesthetic criterion.

> Who can show cause why th' ancient comic vein
> Of Eupolis and Cratinus
> . . . . . .
> Should be exploded[1] by some bitter spleens,
> Yet merely comical and harmless jests
> (Though ne'er so witty) be esteemed but toys,
> If void of th' other satirism's sauce?

Why, Chapman is here asking, should comedy in the tradition of Eupolis and Cratinus who, like their contemporary Aristophanes, were writers of Old Comedy ("Th' ancient comic vein") be driven off the stage when even witty but non-satiric clowning and jesting do not necessarily please. "Who can show cause," the Prologue continues,

> ...why quick Venerian jests
> Should sometimes ravish, sometimes fall far short
> Of the just length and pleasure of your ears.

"The mystery," the Prologue ironically argues, is that playwrights must "submit" to the "inspired censure" of the audience who, like the characters in the play about to be performed, are also fools: "Auriculas asini quis non habet?" What, however, I find especially interesting in this Prologue, aside from the reference to Old Comedy, about which I will have more to say later, is a note of uncertainty that seems to reflect more than the uneasiness that springs from Chapman's awareness of the vagaries of a London audience. Perhaps Chapman is unsure as to what kind of comedy he should compose. The Blind Beggar had been quite

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[1] Driven off.

popular and yet Chapman must have been aware of the imperfections of that play. On the other hand, audiences had not always approved comedy of "merely comical and harmless jests," and had seemed to demand the more thoughtful comedy of satire. Yet this comedy too, so the Prologue insists, had not always met with favor. Chapman, so it seems, is willing to write either if it will meet with success. The point I would make here is that Chapman, even as late as All Fools does not appear to approach the writing of comedy with anything approaching the moral earnestness and categorical certainty that animated Jonson as a dramatic theorist and as a practicing playwright. In the Epilogue, as if still in search of a secure footing, Chapman returns to the same question of the fickleness of audiences and to the fact that satire pleases some while it offends others for whom mere "mirth" alone is often sufficient. The members of the audience are here described as guests at a feast:

> Our dishes we entirely dedicate
> To our kind guests; but since ye differ so,
> Some to like only mirth without taxations,
> Some to count such works trifles, and such like,
> We can but bring you meat....

Perhaps the attempt to satisfy the different tastes among his audience helps account for the weaknesses of An Humourous Day's Mirth. In any event evidence from All Fools seems to point to the conclusion that while Chapman has taken a vast step forward in his development as a comic writer, he is still at odds with himself in that he has not entirely--though very nearly--rejected the practice of linking satire of manners with what is unduly complicated intrigue and deception and confusion for the mere sport that the resulting entanglements will provide, irrespective of the fact that for the entanglements to be a part of a satiric technique and structure, comic foibles must be released in

and exploited by these entanglements. Chapman, in other words, though writing in All Fools what is essentially satiric comedy of manners--"mirth" with "taxations"--still occasionally draws upon the less sophisticated comic impulse and horseplay.[1]

Still All Fools represents easily the most coherently constructed of Chapman's comedies to date and by far the most maturely conceived insofar as comic purpose is concerned. In a word All Fools is the most artistically skillful comedy Chapman had yet produced.

One of the strengths of All Fools lies in its plot structure, and for this Chapman is chiefly indebted to the Heautontimoroumenos and the Adelphi of Terence. Of equal or perhaps greater importance, however, is the conceptual basis upon which the play is as surely constructed as it is upon the fundamentally Terentian plot. This conceptual basis is the theory of Old Comedy[2] itself, "th' ancient comic vein" which Chapman refers to in the Prologue. Fragments of An Humourous Day's Mirth can, as I have shown, be attributed to an impulse which, though inchoate, can be called Old Comedy in nature. It might be well to pause here to examine the kind of comedy which Aristophanes and Jonson wrote and which Chapman has strong impulses toward.

Old comedy has as one of its chief characteristics the satiric presentation of man's private and social folly. Generally opposed to romance and sentiment, Old Comedy's characteristic setting is social and political[3] and its weapon is a scathing satire. Characterization

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[1]Despite the satiric and burlesque elements in The Blind Beggar, some of Irus' antics involved horseplay and farce.

[2]See note, p. 41, Chapter III.

[3]Except for The Gentleman Usher and The Widow's Tears, this

is deliberately one-sided so as to emphasize inherent and socially dangerous human moral foibles.[1] By presenting folly as the entire basis of dramatic personality the writer of Old Comedy forces us to view life (symbolically) as being composed of or motivated by this folly alone. In summary, Old Comedy deals principally with only the follies of man, private follies which have egregious social consequences and which are therefore follies affecting man's life in society.

Chapman's All Fools by virtue of its title alone seems to belong to the tradition of Old Comedy and indeed in many respects it does. A curious aspect of this play is the fact that while the technique and characterization belong to Old Comedy the plot structure itself is taken directly from Terentian New Comedy of domestic intrigue. This does not, however, make the play anomolous and sui generis, for plot is secondary in Old Comedy to the presentation of character and manners. In the best plays in the Old Comedy tradition, such as Volpone and The Alchemist, human moral folly is revealed dramatically in brilliantly conceived plot situations, but the chief virtue of even these plays lies in their satiric portrayal of character. A principal difference between Jonsonian Old Comedy and Chapman's All Fools is that the context of Jonson's comedies[2] represents a wider range of society than is seen in Chapman's play. This difference is due, I believe, in part to the fact that Chapman has borrowed a plot from New Comedy, where the typical

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political setting is either absent or present as a plot, not a theme, function in Chapman's comedies.

[1]In this respect humour comedy and Old Comedy are the same.

[2]At least those after The Case is Altered and Every Man in His Humour, which are heavily indebted to Plautine comedy.

setting is familial and domestic, not widely social or political.[1] Nevertheless courtiers and citizenry alike appear in Chapman's play and, as the title indicates, they are all fools. Chapman, then, presumably is out to present a picture of the irrational and morally perverted conduct of folly. Since such conduct is as surely a constituent part of human behavior as human nobility, the isolation of human folly for the purposes of satiric portrayal represents the comic writer's deliberately restricted "truth" about human experience. Let me restate this, with the reminder that I am speaking expecially and most often exclusively about what is called Old Comedy. In typical Old Comedy--that written, for example, by Aristophanes and Jonson--only the moral folly of our experience is transformed into comic drama. Each species or type of this folly, each moral stigma (as previously discussed in the section on humour comedy in chapter three), becomes by the dramatist's art, an entire character.

Old Comedy, then, characteristically presents a picture of inherent human irrationality and folly. By magnifying and directing this part of our experience the comic dramatist turns loose and elevates this experience into a kind of master metaphysic. The resulting play--at any rate those written by the great practicioners of Old Comedy--gains vitality precisely because it gives a coherence, an order, a directed and hence logical life to something that is continually though erratically part of our own experience, namely, our private and social

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[1] It may also be due to the fact that Chapman remained tied longer to humour comedy per se than did Jonson who, almost from the first, sought, by expanding the humour comedy theme of individual folly, to present a view of a universal folly in the greater world of society outside the individual.

irrational folly. Thus, in that inherent human folly is transformed into drama, we can speak of a comic truth or a comic vision. We characteristically find in Old Comedy, then, an artistic ordering of human absurdity which, to borrow a phrase from writers and critics of tragedy, is part of the human condition. The characters in Old Comedy are strange--strange because the experience that comprises the motive for their action recognizes only the folly in human experience. By presenting this folly as the entire basis of dramatic personality, the dramatist forces us to view his play, which in effect is a view of life, as being composed of and motivated by this folly alone.

The framework of Chapman's All Fools, despite the Terentian plot, is essentially that of Old Comedy. The strategy Chapman pursues--and it would be interesting to discover if Chapman were not learning how to write comedy directly from Ben Jonson--if we can take the Prologue and Epilogue as indexes of this strategy, is to universalize folly by extending it outward to include even the audience.[1] The last lines of the Epilogue, and therefore the last lines of the play, read:

> We can but bring you meat, and set you stools,
> And to our best cheer say, you all are ( ) welcome.

Chapman, however, encounters some difficulty carrying out this strategy in the body of the play proper; difficulty which perhaps can be traced to the fact that a motif of New Comedy collides with the technique or strategy of Old Comedy. In Terence's Heautontimoroumenos, from which the plot of All Fools was directly taken, and in Terence's

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[1]It is this effort which makes it possible to call this play not just a humour comedy, though I think such a designation accurate, but humour comedy on the way to becoming Old Comedy.

Adelphi, from which Chapman took hints of characterization, there are two fathers and two sons.[1] The chief problem explored by Terence deals with the education of the father and the son; and in each play a harmonic and right filial relation is defined. Four "types" appearing in Terence are familiar figures in Latin comedy: the prodigal son, the good son, the severe niggardly father, and the generous indulgent father.

Since Chapman has borrowed almost the whole of the plot of the Heautontimoroumenos, he has necessarily borrowed something of Terence's theme of interfamilial education, a theme that views the most fruitful relation between son and father as one which balances the desires and attitudes of the young with judgment tempered by experience and age. In adapting Terence Chapman was virtually forced to retain the characters of the good son and the good father. That is to say, if the definition of the right method of handling the young is to occur within the play, as it does in Terence, some of the Old Comedy strategy is going to be sacrificed, and this is what happened in All Fools, where, to take an important example, the wise, tolerant, and indulgent father, Marc Antonio, is the good father of Terentian comedy. How to make Marc Antonio at once the good father, and hence a normative center of the play, and yet a fool was a task that, quite simply put, was insoluble. Chapman's contrived "solution" to this particular problem, to be discussed later, may indicate that he has not yet earnestly committed himself to his art. The consistent artistry of his late comedies and the concern revealed in them to have even small details interlock meaningfully and not merely factitiously support such a hypothesis.

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[1] In the Adelphi though Aeschinus is really the son of Demea, he has been adopted and reared by his uncle.

In the Heautontimoroumenos there are two fathers, Mendemus and Chremes. Before the action of the play opens, Mendemus, as we subsequently come to learn, has through his harshness driven his son Clinia from home because Mendemus refused to accept Clinia's penniless fiancee. As the play opens Mendemus has repented of his severity and expresses every wish to indulge his son completely if he would only return home. Chremes, his neighbor, knowing that Mendemus' son has just returned, upbraids Mendemus for his leniency and cautions him to be strict. Chremes' own son, Clitipho, unknown to his father, has taken up with an extravagantly wasteful courtesan. A slave--the typical clever servant of Latin comedy--of one of the sons devises a plan whereby Clitipho can have his mistress nearby without his father's knowledge. The plan involves pretending that the courtesan is the mistress of Clinia, and having Clinia's fiancee pose as one of the courtesan's servants. Thus, since Clinia--who is unaware of his own father's change of heart and still fears his old wrath--has moved in with Clitipho in the house of Chremes, both sons and both women are housed together. For a plot reason unimportant to this discussion it is arranged, in what amounts to a double deception of the parents, to pretend finally that the courtesan is Clitipho's mistress and that Clinia's fiancee is really his fiancee. Thus this "deception" simply returns to the real situation. In the end Clinia is reconciled to his father; his fiancee is discovered to be of high birth and Mendemus gives his consent to their marriage. Clitipho agrees to abandon the courtesan and to marry someone his father chooses.

In the Adelphi, Demea, living a laborious and miserly life, has brought up his son, Ctesphio, with harshness and strictness, while Micio, living in ease and comfort in town, has raised his son with

liberality of purse and spirit and has indulgently allowed him great freedom. Demea regards his son as a paragon of prudential solidity and sober piety and is so overbearingly confident that his system of education is superior to Micio's that he is completely blinded to his own son's debauchery. The authority of Demea is founded on fear, that of Micio on affection. Demea believes that his son has learned frugality and sobriety in the country and thinks Micio's son has been corrupted by city vices.

The parallels between the two Terence plays and All Fools are obvious. From the Heautontimoroumenos comes the basic plot structure of the two fathers and the two sons.[1] Marc Antonio, father of Fortunio, is an indulgent, affectionate, and tolerant father, while Gostanzo, father of Valerio, is a hypocritical opportunist who insists on an exterior of conventional decorum. The courtesan Bacchis becomes in All Fools Gratiana, the secret wife of Valerio. Like his prototype in both Latin plays, Gostanza is a farmer who has inculcated, so he thinks, an aversion to profligacy in his son, Valerio. In Chapman also, then, two systems of education are in conflict.

The same deception that is practiced upon Chremes in the Heautontimoroumenos is practiced upon Gostanzo in All Fools. Rinaldo, who is like the clever servant of Terence, arranges to have Gratiana, the secret wife of Valerio, move into Gostanzo's house posing as the wife of Fortunio. Since Fortunio is in love with Gostanzo's daughter, Bellanora, he agrees to the deception. Gostanzo immediately rushes to tell Marc Antonio that Fortunio has married without Marc Antonio's

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[1] Rinaldo is the second and younger son of Marc Antonio, but he corresponds to the clever slave of Terence's play.

consent and that his wife is penniless. Though distressed Marc Antonio overlooks his son's "folly" and appears quite forgiving. Gostanzo is alarmed at such generosity and urges Marc Antonio, since he will not cast his errant son off, to let him, Gostanzo, deal awhile with Fortunio before Marc Antonio reveals that he is not displeased.

Eventually, as in the Heautontimoroumenos, a double deception is practiced upon Gostanzo: after Gostanzo orders the woman he mistakenly believes to be Fortunio's wife out of the house, Rinaldo devises a strategem to get her housed at Marc Antonio's. This strategem is simply to tell the truth to Gostanzo (who will believe it to be a lie), namely, that his son Valerio is married to Gratiana. Gostanzo fatuously enters into this double gull. In the end the couples are mated to their own and their parent's satisfaction, and Gostanzo has been reformed. This is the essential plot of both All Fools and the Heautontimoroumenos, though the characters of the two fathers are drawn more from the Adelphi than the Heautontimoroumenos. Into this plot Chapman has introduced the entirely new plot line of a jealous husband, Cornelio, his wife Gazetta, and her supposed suitor, Dariotto.

In brief, then, we have Terence adapted to the English stage. But All Fools is Terence with a profound difference, and it is this difference I am concerned to explore to see how well Chapman has made New Comedy over into something different. Perhaps the most radical departure from Terence's plays and that feature of All Fools which most clearly distinguishes it from its Latin sources is the satiric characterization Chapman employs. In each of Terence's plays the country father who is mistaken in his attitudes toward the young is presented as a sincere but misled figure, not a figure of pretence or hypocrisy.

The sons, too, even the prodigal ones, are not fools: they are motivated throughout by respect for their parents and for each other. The fathers and sons in Terence's two plays, for the most part, do not, in other words display moral follies. They simply make mistakes and have their mistakes rectified. The Roman notion of pietas, filial dutifulness, is always carefully upheld. In Chapman, however, changes in the direction of Old Comedy have been made. The character of Gostanzo is his happiest alteration of Terence, and it is an alteration which adds complexity and depth to the corresponding character in Terence, for Chapman's Gostanzo is a fool whose moral strictness and frugality are shams which conceal a self-seeking opportunist. Thus we are dealing not with a man who believes, mistakenly, that rigorous and stern control of his son is the best educational system, but with a man who believes that his son, to advance himself in the world, must mask cunning and avarice with sobriety and temperance.

The character of Valerio, the son of Gostanzo, is likewise much more complicated than the corresponding son in either the Heautontimoroumenos or the Adelphi. In general, the changes which Chapman has made, including the addition of the humour character, Cornelio, are changes (creating greater dramatic complexity) which result from his far wider--in fact almost total--use of satire. It is quite important to an understanding of Chapman's increasing command of his materials to look with close attention to what he has done in All Fools; nevertheless, this is a play which despite an over-all competence, has a few defects that to my knowledge have never been sufficiently pointed out. I do not think with many others, that Chapman by any means has written his comic masterpiece in

All Fools, nor do I feel that by indicating defects I will be doing any more than indicating a stage in his development toward artistic maturity.

As the play opens Chapman gives expression to what may have been a conflict in his own mind between a Platonic-Petrarchan idealization of love on the one hand, and a disappointedly cynical awareness that women necessarily failed to measure up to his philosophical expectations on the other. The problem of discovering a working relationship between ideal and real must of course be a continuing one for a Platonist. In any case Chapman has allowed what may have been a metaphysical perplexity to become a dramatically disturbing dualism of thought in All Fools, where characters sometimes appear to be mere mouthpieces for either Chapman's basic philosophical idealism or his mundane cynicism. In other words, if a figure in All Fools is out of character as either a Platonist or a cynic, we may be able to attribute this to an incompletely controlled dramatic objectification of an unresolved philosophical problem of Chapman's. Even if this is not accurate, we can correctly say that the relationship between fact and value engenders a confusing disharmony . . in All Fools. Further discussion will, I think, bear out such an assertion.

Rinaldo, the catalyst, the figure who corresponds structurally to the clever slave of Roman comedy, opens the play with anti-feminist commentary that offsets the love-stricken behavior of both Fortunio (Rinaldo's older brother), son to Marc Antonio, and Valerio, son to Gostanzo. Valerio, unknown to his father, has secretly married a dowerless nobody and is eager to have her company and to keep his father ignorant of the match. Fortunio, still unmarried, longs for Gostanzo's daughter,

Bellanora, whom Gostanzo guards closely. Rinaldo, cynic and relativist, upbraids Fortunio for believing love to be enobling and women to be true:

> ...are you not asham'd to make
> Yourself a slave to the base Lord of love
> Begot of Fancy, and of Beauty born?
> And what is Beauty? A mere quintessence,
> Whose life is not in being, but in seeming;
> And therefore is not to all eyes the same
> But like a cozening picture, which one way
> Shows up a crow another like a swan.
> And upon what ground is this beauty drawn?
> Upon a woman, a most brittle creature.
> (I, i, 41-50)

When Fortunio asks him, "Did you never love," Rinaldo explains that it is because he once did that he has turned against all women:

> You know I did, and was belov'd again,
> And that of such a dame as all men deem'd
> Honour'd, and made me happy in her favours.
> Exceeding fair she was not; and yet fair
> In that she never studied to be fairer
> Than Nature made her; beauty cost her nothing.
> Her virtues were so rare, they would have made
> And Ethiop beautiful, at least so thought
> By such as stood aloof, and did observe her.
> . . . . . .
> Only I found her such, as for her sake
> I vow eternal wars against their whole sex,
> Inconstant shuttlecocks, loving fools and jesters,
> Men high in dirt and titles, sooner won
> With the most vile than the most virtuous,
> Found true to none; if one amongst whole hundreds
> Chance to be chaste, she is so proud withal,
> Wayward and rude, that one of unchaste life
> Is oftentimes approv'd a worthier wife:
> Undressed, sluttish, nasty to their husbands;
> Spung'd up, adorn'd, and painted to their lovers;
> All day in ceaseless uproar with their households,
> If all the night their husbands have not pleas'd them;
> Like hounds, most kind, being beaten and abus'd;
> Like wolves, most cruel, being kindliest us'd.
> . . . . . .
> Egypt heretofore
> Had temples of the richest frame on earth,
> Much like this goodly edifice of women;
> With alabaster pillars were those temples
> Upheld and beautified, and so are women;

> Most curiously glaz'd, and so are women;
> Cunningly painted too, and so are women;
> In outside wondrous heavenly, so are women;
> But when a stranger view'd those fanes within,
> Instead of gods and goddesses he should find
> A painted fowl, a fury, or a serpent;
> And such celestial inner parts have women.
> (I, i, 53-91)

Rinaldo, then, early establishes himself as a spokesman for cynical love, though because his disillusionment has developed from his experience with only one woman, it sounds rather shallow and strident. Valerio next offers to rebutt Rinaldo's attack on love by defending it as the ennobling source of human virtue. "I tell thee," Valerio remarks,

> Love is Nature's second sun,
> Causing a spring of virtues where he shines;
> And as without the sun, the world's great eye,
> All colours, beauties, both of Art and Nature,
> Are given in vain to men; so without Love
> All beauties bred in women are in vain,
> All virtues born in men lie buried;
> For love informs them as the sun doth colours;
> And as the sun, reflecting his warm beams
> Against the earth, begets all fruits and flowers;
> So Love, fair shining in the inward man,
> Brings forth in him the honourable fruits
> Of valour, wit, virtue, and haughty thoughts,
> Brave resolution, and divine discourse:
> Oh, 'tis the Paradise, the Heaven of earth;
> And didst thou know the comfort of two hearts
> In one delicious harmony united,
> As to joy one joy, and think both one thought,
> Live both one life, and therein double life,
> To see their souls met at an interview
> In their bright eyes, at parley in their lips,
> Their language kisses, and t'observe the rest,
> Touches, embraces, and each circumstance
> Of all Love's most unmatched ceremonies,
> Thou wouldst abhor thy tongue for blasphemy.
> Oh, who can comprehend how sweet Love tastes
> But he that hath been present at his feasts?
> (I, i, 97-123)

Clearly Chapman has made it evident that at least one aspect of the play will deal with the relationship between what in effect are two attitudes toward love, one cynical, disillusioned, and physical, the

other neo-Platonic and Petrarchan. Unfortunately Chapman does not, as will be shown later, resolve the opposition; indeed, he does not seem to be able--and again this is a problem that will turn up again and again in his comedies--to dramatize meaningful interconnections between the doctrine of ennobled love and the doctrine of debased love.

Valerio, in the passage above, is the impassioned neo-Platonic lover who is giving voice to a typically Renaissance disquisition on the subject. His eloquence, for example, could almost pass for a versified redaction of Bembo's arguments in Book IV of The Courtier. Chapman, a neo-Platonist himself,[1] is quite clearly not poking fun at doctrine he himself regarded with great solemnity. To get on with his Terentian plot, however, Chapman presents the Platonist Valerio quite suddenly in his plot function as a country putt. Valerio, in other words, suddenly becomes a figure of comedy. Rinaldo, seeing that Valerio is romantically inclined, reminds him what his father expects of him:

> 'Twere fitter you should be about your charge,
> How plough and cart goes forward; I have known
> Your joys were all employ'd in husbandry,
> Your study was how many loads of hay
> A meadow of so many acres yeilded,
> How many oxen such a close would fat.
> And is your rural service now converted
> From Pan to Cupid, and from beasts to women?
> Oh, if your father knew this, what a lecture
> Of bitter castigation he would read you!
> (I, i, 125-134)

Valerio's answer introduces the Terentian theme of education, but it also introduces something not in Terence, the theme of self identity:

> My father? Why, my father? Does he think
> To rob me of myself? I hope I know

---

[1]See Roy Battenhouse, "Chapman and the Nature of Man," ELH, XII (June, 1945), 87-107.

I am a gentleman; though his covetous humour
And education hath transform'd me bailie,
And made me overseer of his pastures,
I'll be myself, in spite of husbandry.
(I, i, 135-140)

Now the desire to be one's self may well be a part of the behavior of the sons in Chapman's Terentian sources, but the nature or the identity of the self is never in doubt--that is to say, the behavior of the sons in Terence is always predictable. I do not mean to seem to be darkly referring to the fact that Terence creates characters who represent types and that Chapman does not, but to the fact that Chapman deliberately ascribes different identities to Valerio--as if one theme of the play were to be Valerio's discovery about his real or true self. Notice, for example, what Rinaldo, speaking accurately, says of Valerio almost immediately after Valerio's Platonic outburst:

...thou canst skill of dice,
Cards, tennis, wenching, dancing, and what not,
And this is something more than husbandry!
Th' art known in ordinaries, and tobacco-ships,
Trusted in taverns and in vaulting-houses
And this is something more than husbandry!
Yet all this while, thy father apprehends thee
For the most tame and thrifty groom in Europe.
(I, i, 154-160)

Thus in the first scene of the play there have been established with an emphasis that cannot be overlooked at least two themes or motifs which the play will presumably work out: one dealing with the relationship between cynical love and a courtly form of Platonic love, and the other dealing with the education of Valerio, related to which is the problem of the true identity of Valerio.

Of course Valerio's dicing and drinking and wenching are difficult to interpret only because Valerio is used as a spokesman for a very lofty idealism. Only shortly before Rinaldo announces how Valerio

spends much of his time, Valerio had declared: "I tell thee Love is Nature's second sun/ Causing a spring of virtues where he shines." His profligacy is hardly commensurate with his Platonism. It is undeniably a characteristic comic practice to reverse our expectations of how a particular character is to behave, and this is true of Valerio in that he is far from "the most tame and thrifty groom in Europe." It is also true that his dissipation completely reverses what would be expected of a Platonist; yet for this reversal to be meaningful Valerio's Platonism would have to be presented ironically as an affectation, and it is not so presented. The Platonism is straight Chapman doctrine. It might tentatively be suggested that Chapman has somewhat inconsistently imposed Platonic doctrine upon a character who is to be presented as a fool. However, Chapman has the rest of Act I and four complete acts to resolve any apparent inconsistencies of characterization, and it is of course necessary to defer final judgment until the entire play has been allowed to speak for itself.

Valerio's father, Gostanzo, enters and Rinaldo tells, on the spur of the moment, a lie which initiates the central (Terentian) plot action. Noticing that Fortunio and a strange woman (Gratiana who, unknown to Gostanzo has secretly married his son Valerio), and Valerio shrink at his entrance, Gostanzo asks Rinaldo if in truth his son had just been present;

> Gos. Sure 'twas my son; what made he here? I sent him
> About affairs to be dispatch'd in haste.
> Rin. Well, sir, lest silence breed unjust suspect,
> I'll tell a secret I am sworn to keep,
> And crave your honoured assistance in it.
> Gos. What is't, Rinaldo?
> Rin. This, sir; 'twas your son.
> Gos. And what young gentlewoman grac'd their company?
> Rin. Thereon depends the secret I must utter;

That gentlewoman hath my brother married.
Gos. Married? What is she?
Rin. 'Faith, sir, a gentlewoman:
But her unnourishing dowry must be told
Out of her beauty.
(I, i, 175-186)

A few lines later Rinaldo tells Gostanzo that Valerio had admonished Fortunio for his rash marriage, and Gostanzo asks to be told what Valerio had said:

Rin. Oh, sir, had you heard
What thrifty discipline he gave my brother
For making choice without my father's knowledge
And without riches, you would have admir'd him.
Gos. Nay, nay, I know him well; but what was it?
Rin. That in the choice of wives men must respect
The chief wife, riches; that in every course
A man's chief load star should shine out of riches'
Love nothing heartily in this world but riches;
Cast off all friends, all studies, all delights,
All honesty, and religion for riches;
And many such, which wisdom sure he learn'd
Of his experient father; yet my brother
So soothes his rash affection, and presumes
So highly on my father's gentle nature,
That he's resolv'd to bring her home to him,
And like enough he will.
Gos. And like enough
Your silly father, too, will put it up;
An honest knight, but much too much indulgent
To his presuming children.
Rin. What a difference
Doth interpose itself 'twixt him and you!
Had your son us'd you thus!
Gos. My son? Alas!
I hope to bring him up in other fashion;
Follows my husbandry, sets early foot
Into the world; he comes not at the city,
Nor knows the city arts--
Rin. But dice and wenching. Aversus
Gos. Acquaints himself with no delight but getting,
A perfect pattern of sobriety,
Temperance, and husbandry to all my household.
(I, i, 194-222)

The close similarity and the profound gulf between Terence and Chapman is pointed out in this scene. The plot situation here is the same as

Terence's, and the characters in Chapman's play correspond to characters in both Latin plays from which All Fools was adapted. The great difference, however, lies in what Chapman has added to character. Gostanzo is not just a morally narrow and niggardly father who is misguided; he is a calculating dissembler who sacrifices all principles to avarice. He is thus a man whose folly borders on or has perhaps become vice. Chapman in effect is transforming New Comedy into Old. Thus we can say of Gostanzo that he is morally blinded by his own folly and that he is deserving of the deceptions practiced upon him. "I know him well," he says of his son when, not only does he not know his son at all, but his son does not himself seem to know who or what he is.

Gostanzo, who has promised Rinaldo to remain silent about what he has been told, immediately upon seeing Marc Antonio, Fortunio's father, tells him that his son has secretly married a poor woman. Marc Antonio, like his prototypes in the Heautontimoroumenos and the Adelphi, is a good man. He tells the incredulous Gostanzo that

> ...if my son
> Have in her birth and virtues held his choice
> Without disparagement, the fault is less.
> (I, i, 264-266)

and that

> ...if my enamour'd son
> Have been so forward, I assure myself
> He did it more to satisfy his love
> Than to incense my hate, or to neglect me.
> (I, i, 270-273)

How then to make Marc Antonio a fool? This was a problem that must have occurred to Chapman, just as the problem of how to make Rinaldo, who spends his time gulling others, a fool must have occurred to him. His solution to this thematic problem creates an essential weakness

in that it factitiously depends on making a fool of a man who does not have a basic moral weakness. That is to say, Rinaldo and Marc Antonio qualify as fools, and hence fit the title and overall plan of the play only because they are deceived (or "gulled," as it is rather unfunctionally described in the play). If the deception of them is to function as an aspect of satiric, Old Comedy, they must be deceived as a result of their own moral blindness and not simply because a trick has been played upon them.

Marc Antonio, it is true, can be made out to be a fool, but to do so requires, so it seems to me, some distortion. Take, for example, the continuation of the dialogue between Gostanzo and Marc Antonio begun above. Gostanzo has suggested extreme measures: "Cast him off, receive him not," he tells Marc Antonio. But this is far too harsh a measure for Marc Antonio to take:

> Marc. What should I do?
> If I should banish him my house and sight,
> What desperate resolution might it breed
> To run into the wars, and there to live
> In want of competency, and perhaps
> Taste th' unrecoverable loss of his chief limbs,
> Which while he hath in peace, at home with me,
> May, with his spirit, ransom his estate
> From any loss his marriage can procure.
> Gos. Is't true? Nay, let him run into the war,
> And lose what limbs he can; better one branch
> Be lopp'd away, than all the whole tree should perish;
> And for his wants, better young want than old.
> . . . . . .
> ...let him buy wit
> At's own charge, not at's father's....
> Marc. I cannot part with him.
> (I, i, 303-322)

Seeing that Marc Antonio is adamant, Gostanzo suggests a solution:

> Let him come home to me with his fair wife.
> . . . . . .
> At my house,
> With my advice, and my son's good example,

> Who shall serve as a glass for him to see
> His faults, and mend them to his precedent,
> I make no doubt but of a dissolute son
> And disobedient, to send him home
> Both dutiful and thrifty.
> (I, i, 329-339)

Marc Antonio's reply to this offer to reform his errant son is, assuming Marc Antonio to be a norm, unexpectedly grateful:

> Oh, Gostanzo!
> Could you do this, you should preserve yourself
> A perfect friend of me, and me a son.
> (I, i, 339-341)

It can be said that Marc Antonio is a simpleton for permitting this, that he is morally blind to Gostanzo's selfishness, his viciousness, and his unscrupulousness, and that he is almost criminally willful in turning his son over to such a man. Yet what has happened, as the rest of the play makes quite clear, is that Marc Antonio must, as a plot necessity, surrender his son to Gostanzo, without surrendering his function as a normative ideal. That is to say, Marc Antonio is a good and honest man without any very demonstrable moral fault though his honesty makes him rather poorly equipped to deal with the dishonest world of Gostanzo. But this can hardly be to his discredit. Yet, in order not to do violence to the basic Terentian structure, it is necessary for Marc Antonio to accede to the plan of Gostanzo. I would, then, describe Marc Antonio's willingness to permit his son to learn moral strength from Gostanzo as a plot necessity, though it seems also to be a slight thematic blemish.

Rinaldo, however, is completely aware of Gostanzo's folly and takes it upon himself to continue the gulling deception of Gostanzo that he had already begun:

> See, this old, politic, dissembling knight,
> Now he perceives my father so affectionate,
> And that my brother may hereafter live

> By him and his with equal use of either,
> He will put on a face of hollow friendship.
> But this will prove an excellent ground to sow
> The seed of mirth amongst us....
> (I, i, 401-407)

Here Rinaldo is the satirist who sets people into motion for the purpose of exposing and ridiculing their respective follies. The clever servant of Latin comedy who created entangled intrigues and mix-ups which served as a smoke screen under cover of which the young man and the young woman could get together, has become the clever satirist who creates a complex action so as to heighten and expose foolish human behavior. This is a strategy of humour comedy and Old Comedy and was used with great consistency and forcefulness by Ben Jonson in such characters as Macilente in Every Man Out of His Humour, Mosca in Volpone, and Face in The Alchemist. Rinaldo, though he does not bear comparison with any comparable figures from Jonsnn's comic world, is Chapman's best effort thus far in his career as a comic dramatist towards the creation of a central figure who makes an effort to control the action of the play in order to catch characters dramatically in typically absurd poses. The speech above of Rinaldo's is quite Jonsonian--at least it is like the Jonson of the early and middle comedies--which is another way of saying that it belongs to the domain of Old Comedy. Rinaldo has announced that as a result of the moral perversity of Gostanzo, an "old, politic, dissembling knight," a whole comic action can be set into motion. Gostanzo's moral weaknesses are follies and among the ground of these follies Rinaldo will plant the seed of mirth. Rinaldo will, in other words, create an action which, hinging on Gostanzo's basic moral blindness, will give rise to still other actions in which human absurdities will be laughed at as they are viewed satirically. The seed of mirth, then, grows in the ground of

folly where, nurtured by satire, it blossoms into laughter.

Into the story of the two fathers, the two sons and the two women, Chapman adds the entirely new episode of Cornelio, the jealous husband, and his wife Gazetta. Though the portrait of Cornelio is a fine enough presentation of irrational and absurd jealousy, he lies outside the plot action taken from Terence and already set into being in this play and is rather clumsily worked into the action. It at first seems possible that Chapman has a special purpose in mind in addition to simply presenting a so-called humour character satirically, and that is to create a third man-woman relationship which, together with the other two--that between Valerio and Gratiana and that between Fortunio and Bellanora--will in the end help define either negatively or positively the proper or meaningfully decorus relationship that should obtain between man and wife. Notice that in the Cornelio-Gazetta relationship the theme of decorum is suggested. Gazetta is complaining to Bellanora and Gratiana of her husband:

> Indeed I have a husband, and his love
> Is more than I desire, being vainly jealous.
> Extremes, though contrary, have the like effects;
> Extreme heat mortifies like extreme cold;
> Extreme love breeds satiety as well
> As extreme hatred; and too violent rigour
> Tempts chastity as much as too much license.
> There's no man's eye fix'd on me, but doth pierce
> My husband's soul. If any ask my welfare,
> He straight doubts treason practis'd to his bed,
> Fancies but to himself all likelihoods
> Of my wrong to him, and lays all on me
> For certain truths; yet seeks he with his best
> To put disguise on all his jealousy,
> Fearing, perhaps, lest it may teach me that
> Which otherwise I should not dream upon.
> Yet lives he still abroad at great expense,
> Turns merely gallant from his farmer's state,
> Uses all games and recreations,
> Runs races with the gallants of the Court,
> Feasts them at home, and entertains them costly,

And then upbraids me with their company.
(I, ii, 20-41)

Cornelio enters and orders her into the house whereupon she remarks to her friends:

Ye see, gentlewomen, what my happiness is,
These humours reign in marriage; humours, humours!
(I, ii, 52-53)

After she and Cornelio have left the stage, Gratiana remarks to Bellanora that "'twere indecorum" that Cornelio "should want horns."

Chapman, however, chooses not to develop thematically the idea, hinted at rather strongly already in the Valerio-Gratiana marriage and in the Cornelio-Gazetta marriage, of a proper or decorus relationship between man and woman. It is true that unseemly marital conduct is described: Valerio, an impassioned lover who sees in his wife the embodiment of a divine ideal, still takes his custom to the vaulting-houses; and Cornelio, whose wife is patient and long-suffering, is not above examining her water to see if he can discover there a lover. But I do not think Chapman was sufficiently interested to work in All Fools very determinedly with what seems early in the play to be an effort to define, even though negatively, a serious or romantic relationship between man and woman, despite the fact that the play early seems to pose as one of its purposes the formulation of a meaningful decorum. I think that the rest of the play will bear out what I have said here.

The character of Gostanzo is an important one both structurally and thematically. He is, in these respects, of equal importance with Rinaldo, who manipulates action that exposes people satirically. It is because of Gostanzo's ingrained and vice-ridden folly that he can be so monumentally deceived, and it is the deception of him that launches the

central plot action of the play. This central plot action, however, is more than just a single action in which Gostanzo is gulled. It is an action that involves all the characters of the play. Once involved they too display their individual foibles--at least this is the conceptual basis upon which the satiric structure of the play is built, though as I have suggested, the play does not always seem to abide strictly by this plan. Thus from Gostanzo's individual folly there germinates a plot action which is at the same time a satiric action. Satire has thus assumed a structural function in the play.

Gostanzo makes quite clear what kind of person he is in an interview with his son, Valerio, whom at this point in the play he still believes to be obedient, dutiful, and thrifty. "Here comes my son," Gostanzo tells Marc Antonio, "Withdraw...you shall hear odds betwixt your son and mine." Valerio is of course aware of his father's hidden presence.

> Val. [to his Page] Tell him I cannot do't; shall I be made
> A foolish novice, my purse set a-broach
> By every cheating come-you-seven, to lend
> My money and be laugh'd at? Tell him plain
> I profess husbandry, and will not play
> The prodigal, like him, gainst my profession.
> Gos. [aside] Here's a son.
> Marc. [aside] An admirable spark!
> Page. Well, sir, I'll tell him so. Exit Page
> Val. 'Sfoot, let him lead
> A better husband's life, and live not idly,
> Spending his time, his coin, and self on wenches!
> Gos. Why, what's the matter, son?
> Val. Cry mercy, sir! Why, there come messengers
> From this and that brave gallant, and such gallants
> As I protest I saw but through a grate.
> Gos. And what's this message?
> Val. Faith, sir, he's disappointed
> Of payments, and disfurnish'd of means present;
> If I would do him the kind office therefore
> To trust him but some seven-night with the keeping
> Of forty crowns for me, he deeply swears,
> As he's a gentleman, to discharge his trust;

And that I shall eternally endear him
To my wish'd service he protests and contests.
Gos. Good words, Valerio; but thou art too wise
To be deceiv'd by breath; I'll turn thee loose
To the most cunning cheater of them all.
Val. 'Sfoot, he's not asham'd besides to charge me
With a late promise; I must yield, indeed,
I did (to shift him with some contentment)
Make such a frivol promise.
Gos. Ay, well done!
Promises are no fetters; with that tongue
Thy promise pass'd, unpromise it again.
Wherefore has man a tongue of power to speak,
But to speak still to his own private purpose?
Beasts utter but one sound; but men have change
Of speech and reason, even by Nature given them,
Now to say one thing and another now,
As best may serve their profitable ends.
Mar. By'r-lady, sound instructions to a son!
Val. Nay, sir, he makes his claim by debt of friendship.
Gos. Tush, friendship's but a term, boy! The fond world
Like to a doting mother glazes over
Her children's imperfect one with fine terms;
What she calls friendship and true human kindness,
Is only want of true experience:
Honesty is but a defect of wit;
Respect but mere rusticity and clownery.
Marc. [aside] Better and better!
(II, i, 40-86)

Gostanzo here reveals the kind of thinking he has sought to develop in his son. Honest is a defect of wit, and friendship but a term. Gostanzo is here not the foolish and self-deceived father but a scheming and unscrupulous opportunist who, is he were allowed to act upon meanly utilitarian philosophy, would alter the whole tone and tenor of the play. In effect what we have in this scene is a Gostanzo whose behavior consists of vices instead of follies.

It is ironically appropriate that Valerio, in talking to his wife Gratiana, should say of his father:

Well, wench, the day will come his Argus eyes
Will shut, and thou shalt open. 'Sfoot, I think
Dame Nature's memory begins to fail her!
. . . . . .

...threescore years and ten, yet Death call not on him;
But if she turn her debt-book over once,
And finding him her debtor, do but send
Her sergeant, John Death, to arrest his body,
Our souls shall rest, wench, then, and the free light
Shall triumph in our faces, where now night,
In imitation of my father's frowns,
Lowers at our meeting.
(I, ii, 70-85)

That Valerio, with such calculating cynicism, should wish for his father's death may well be an appropriate end result of Gostanzo's own philosophy, but the tone here is rather sinister and approaches the world of tragedy or tragicomedy where human crimes are sometimes examined. Another point to be made in connection with this unfilial speech of Valerio's is that it hardly seems a fitting utterance of an impassioned Platonist. His wife, Gratiana, is here referred to twice as "wench." "Love, fair shining in the inward man," this same man has said earlier:

Brings forth in him the honourable fruits
Of valour, wit, virtue, and haughty thoughts,
Brave resolution, and divine discourse:
Oh, 'tis the Paradise, the Heaven of earth.
(I, i, 108-111)

This is doctrine that Valerio everywhere else in the play seems entirely to neglect. The character of Valerio, as it is the most complicated one in the play, bears a close examination, for he has, as has been mentioned, several sides. His Platonism notwithstanding, he is presented as a dissolute young rowdy; but notice in the following scene that his character takes on still another complication when, appearing in his already established role as a kind of drinking swaggerer, he takes on the characteristics of the satirist and, strangely, some of those that we usually associate with the Restoration fop. The jealous Cornelio, his wife Gazetta, and the courtiers Dariotto and Claudio are present.

Dariotto addresses Valerio:

Well, wag, well; wilt thou still deceive thy father,
And being so simple a poor soul before him,
Turn swaggerer in all companies besides?
. . . . . .
Val. I do not doubt
But t'have my pennyworths of these rascals one day;
I'll smoke the buzzing hornets from their nests,
Or else I'll make their leather jerkins stay.
The whoreson hungry horse-flies! Foot, a man
Cannot so soon, for want of almanacks,
Forget his day but three or four bare months,
But straight he sees a sort of corporals
To lie in ambuscado to surprise him.
Dar. Well, thou hadst happy fortune to escape 'em.
Val. But they thought theirs was happier to scape me.
I walking in the place, where men's lawsuits
Are heard and pleaded, not so much as dreaming
Of any such encounter, steps me forth
Their valiant foreman, with the word, 'I rest you.'
I made no more ado, but laid these paws
Close on his shoulders, tumbling him to earth;
And there sate he on his posteriors,
Like a baboon; and turning me about,
I straight espied the whole troop issuing on me.
I stepp'd me back, and drawing my old friend here,
Made to the midst of them, and all unable
T'endure the shock, all rudely fell in rout,
And down the stairs they ran with such a fury,
As meeting with a troop of lawyers there,
Mann'd by their clients, some with ten, some with twenty,
Some five, some three--he that had least, had one--
Upon the stairs they bore them down afore them;
But such a rattling then was there amongst them
Of ravish'd declarations, replications,
Rejoinders and petitions, all their books
And writings torn and trod on, and some lost,
That the poor lawyers coming to the bar,
Could say nought to the matter, but instead,
Were fain to rail and talk besides their books
Without all order.
Clau. Faith, that same vein or railing
Became now most applausive; your best poet is
He that rails grossest.
Dar. True, and your best fool
Is your broad railing fool.
Val. And why not, sir?
For, by the gods, to tell the naked truth,
What objects see men in this world but such
As would yield matter to a railing humour?
When he, that last year carried after one
An empty buckram bag, now fills a coach,

> And crowds the senate with such troops of clients
> And servile followers, as would put a mad spleen
> Into a pigeon.
> (II, i, 296-346)

Valerio begins this scene not only as the boastful bully but as an antisocial figure of destructiveness. Almost immediately, however, he inconsistently becomes a social satirist. The incidental slap at lawyers, as in An Humourous Day's Mirth, is not organic to the plot, though it does enlarge verbally, not of course dramatically, the world of fools which is the subject of the play. The same enlargement of the world of folly occurs with Valerio's Horatian pronouncement that it is impossible not to rail at what goes on in the world:

> For, by the gods, to tell the naked truth,
> What objects see men in this world but such
> As would yield matter to a railing humour?
> (II, i, 339-341)

Continuing in this vein he remarks that

> ...all the world is but a gull,
> One man gull to another in all kinds:
> A merchant to a courtier is a gull,
> A client to a lawyer is a gull,
> A married man to a bachelor, a gull,
> A bachelor to a cuckold is a gull,
> All to a poet, or a poet to himself.
> (II, i, 360-366)

Upon hearing this Cornelio and Dariotto, respectively a jealous fool and a courtier-dandy, decide to gull the guller. Cornelio is the father of the jest which is intended to make a laughing stock of Valerio, the young would-be-wit and man about town. Chapman is here carrying out his satiric strategy, for fools are jesting with fools.

> Corn. Of all men's wits alive
> I most admire Valerio's, that hath stol'n
> By his mere industry, and that by spurts,
> Such qualities as no wit else can match
> With plodding at perfection every hour;
> Which, if his father knew each gift he has,

I mean, besides his dicing and his wenching,
He has stol'n languages, the'Italian, Spanish,
And some spice of the French, besides his dancing,
Singing, playing on choice instruments:
These has he got, almost against the hair.
(II, i, 369-380)

Valerio puffs up at this ironic praise though he can neither sing nor play an instrument: "Toys, toys, a pox!" he says,

And yet they be such toys
As every gentleman would not be without.
Corn. Vain-glory makes ye judge 'em lite i'faith!
Dar. Afore heaven, I was much deceiv'd in him;
But he's the man indeed that hides his gifts,
And sets them not to sale in every presence.
I would have sworn his soul were far from music,
And that all his choice music was to hear
His fat beasts bellow.
Corn. Sir, your ignorance
Shall eft soon be confuted. Prithee, Val,
Take thy theorbo for my sake a little.
Val. By heaven, this month I touch'd not a theorbo!
Corn. Touch'd a theorbo! Mark the very word.
Sirrah, go fetch. Exit Page
Val. If you will have it, I must needs confess
I am no husband of my qualities. He untresses and capers
Corn. See what a caper there was!
Clau. See again!
Corn. The best that ever; and how it becomes him!
Dar. Oh that his father saw these qualities!

Enter a Page with an instrument

Corn. Nay, that's the very wonder of his wit
To carry all without his father's knowledge.
Dar. Why, we might tell him now.
Corn. No, we could not now,
Although we think we could; his wit doth charm us.
Come, sweet Val, touch and sing.
Val. Foot, will you hear
The worst voice in Italy?

Enter Rinaldo

Corn. Oh God, sir! He sings
Courtiers, how like you this?
Dar. Believe it, excellent!
Corn. Is it not natural?
Val. If my father heard me,
Foot, he'd renounce me for his natural son!
Dar. By heaven, Valerio, and I were thy father,

And lov'd good qualities as I do my life,
I'd disinherit thee; for I never heard
Dog howl with worse grace.
Corn. Go to, Signor Courtier!
You deal not courtly now to be so plain,
Nor nobly, to discourage a young gentleman
In virtuous qualities, that has but stol'n 'em.
Clau. Call you this touching a theorbo?
Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!
(II, i, 382-416)

In this scene, Valerio is the false gentleman, the vainglorious courtier--in short, the fop. Unlike the Restoration fop, however, Valerio is not impotent and can devise an action himself, for, upon discovering that he has been played for an ass, he devises a way to gull both Cornelio and Dariotto. It may be unnecessary to point out that this entire scene, dealing as it does with Cornelio, has nothing to do with the central plot action; nevertheless, it is of a piece with the satiric intention of the play and helps make it possible to categorize the play as Old Comedy.[1]

The next appearance of Gostanzo deals with his follies and not his crimes. Chapman must have sensed that to make Gostanzo a figure of vice would be acceptable in a comedy only if Gostanzo could be rendered

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[1] We could as accurately call it humour comedy except that, as further discussion will show, Chapman in places implies that the world of the fools in the play constitutes a travesty of social life. The humour character disengaged from a social context can be viewed as a harmless accident of nature, an impotent freak; but once this same figure becomes an important civic figure, we are forced to view his folly as potentially harmful and destructive. If a humour comedy says that moral folly is wrong and that fools are laughable, Old Comedy characteristically goes one step farther and says or implies that all men are fools. It then characteristically entrusts fools with power and position, thereby forcing us to view folly as not simply ever present in man but also tyranically (at least potentially) in control of him. Of course Gostanzo as he is only a parent has very limited social control and it will not be until May-Day that Chapman invests a great fool with social power. Nevertheless, the proposition that all men are fools is one theoretical base of the entire play; and Gostanzo's advice to his son on how to succeed in the world has definite social implications.

fatuous. In this scene Gratiana has been brought to Gostanzo's house as Fortunio's mistress; and Valerio, still deceiving his father, behaves like a rustic ignorant of the polite world. Gostanza, in berating him for his incivility to Gratiana, unknowingly reveals to us that in his own youth he too had been a foppish and absurd courtier:

> Ah, errant sheepshead, hast thou liv'd thus long,
> And dar'st not look a woman in the face?
> Though I desire especially to see
> My son a husband, shall I therefore have him
> Turn absolute cullion? Let's see, kiss thy hand!
> Thou kiss thy hand? Thou wip'st thy mouth, by th'mass!
> Fie on thee, clown! They say the world's grown finer'
> But I for my part never saw young men
> Worse fashion'd and brought up than now-a-days.
> 'Sfoot, when myself was young, was not I kept
> As far from Court as you? I think I was;
> And yet my father on a time invited
> The Duchess to his house; I, being then
> About some five-and-twenty years of age,
> Was thought the only man to entertain her;
> I had my conge--plant myself of one leg,
> Draw back the tother with a deep-fetch'd honour,
> Then with a bel-regard advant mine eye
> With boldness on her very visnomy.
> . . . . . .
> And for discourse in my fair mistress' presence
> I did not, as you barren gallants do,
> Fill my discourses up drinking tobacco;
> But on the present furnish'd evermore
> With tales and practis'd speeches; as sometimes,
> 'What is't a clock?' 'What stuff's this petticoat?'
> 'What cost the making? What the fringe and all?'
> And 'What she had under her petticoat?'
> And such like witty compliments; and for need,
> I could have written as good prose and verse
> As the most beggarly poet of 'em all,
> Either acrostic, Exordium,
> Epithalamions, Satires, Epigrams,
> Sonnets in dozens, or your Quatorzains
> In any rhyme, masculine, feminine,
> Or Sdruciolla, or couplets, blank verse;
> Y'are but bench-whistlers nowadays to them
> That were in our times. Well, about your husbandry!
> Go, for, i'faith, th'art fit for nothing else.
> (II, i, 141-179)

So we discover that the unscrupulous and avaricious Gostanzo is a

former fop and false wit. Chapman has reduced the potentially vicious character into a comic weakling in this excellent satiric snapshot of Gostanzo's young manhood.

Once the two couples are housed under Gostanzo's roof, the groundwork is laid, as in Terence, for the double deception of Gostanzo; for overhearing his son in a passionate address to Gratiana, whom Gostanzo takes to be Fortunio's mistress, he decides to remove her from the house. Notice, however, that for this Terentian development to occur some inconsistencies of characterization are necessary. Valerio, for example, though he has just recently seen Gratiana (his "wench"), returns inexplicably to his neo-Platonic attitude toward her:

> Do I dream? Do I behold this sight
> With waking eyes? Or from the ivory gate
> Hath Morpheus sent a vision to delude me?
> Is't possible that I, a mortal man,
> Should shrine within mine arms so bright a goddess,
> The fair Gratiana, beauty's little world?
> (III, i, 13-18)

Let me mention here another unmanageable detail. Gostanzo is disturbed to discover that his son is successfully courting the woman he takes to be Fortunio's mistress. He feels this is an abuse to his son's friend and an abuse to his own friend Marc Antonio. And yet this honorable feeling comes from the man who regards honesty a defect of wit and friendship a word breathed upon the air. My point here, to repeat myself, is that in transforming the characters of Terence's New Comedy into the fools of Old Comedy, Chapman cannot plausibly present them behaving suddenly in an honest capacity unless he commits a slight inconsistency. That is what I think has happened here. Gostanzo, in fearing that his son may cuckold his friend's son, is performing a plot, not theme, function when he subsequently orders the girl Gratiana out

of the house. "My friend's son shall not be abus'd by mine," he tells Rinaldo.

Rinaldo then begins to put into execution the second deception of Gostanzo (which involves telling him the truth, knowing that he will not believe it); and it is done with such fine comic artistry--fine because by revealing the great folly of Gostanzo, it does much more than the parallel scene in Terence where a mere plot action itself is all that occurs.

> Rin. Troth, sir, I'll tell you what a sudden toy
> Comes in my head; what think you if I brought her
> Home to my father's house
> Gos. Ay, marry, sir;
> Would he receive her?
> Rin. Nay, you hear not all:
> I mean with use of some device or other.
> Gos. As how, Rinaldo?
> Rin. Marry, sir, to say
> She is your son's wife, married past your knowledge.
> Gos. I doubt last day he saw her, and will know her
> To be Fortunio's wife.
> Rin. Nay, as for that,
> I will pretend she was even then your son's wife,
> But feign'd by me to be Fortunio's,
> Only to try how he would take the matter.
> Gos. 'Fore heaven 'twere pretty!
> . . . . . .
> Rin. And do you think
> He'll swallow down the gudgeon?
> Gos. O' my life,
> It were a gross gob would not down with him;
> An honest knight, but simple, not acquainted
> With the fine sleights and policies of the world,
> As I myself am.
> (III, i, 78-120)

Gostanzo then departs and Rinaldo muses:

> Heaven, heaven, I see these politicians...
> are our most fools.
> . . . . . .
> A man may grope and tickle 'em like a trout,
> And take 'em from their close dear holes...
> (III, i, 114-120)

Rinaldo at this point in the play is still controlling the central action which is at the same time a satiric, Old Comedy action.

The Cornelio subplot touches on the main plot but is not really a part of it, and is allowed to interrupt from time to time the course of the main plot so that Cornelio may reveal his "humour." At times this part of the play constitutes mere busy-work that becomes extremely tedious.[1] This subplot is virtually static: Cornelio simply walks on stage and mechanically voices his jealousy. Chapman, it is true, successfully incorporates him into dramatic action when he and Dariotto cleverly gull Valerio, but for the most part Cornelio is dramatically apart from the main plot or the characters in it. At the end he is allowed to devise and execute the gulling of Rinaldo, but though this again brings him into contact with characters from the main plot his gulling of Rinaldo is, as will be pointed out, almost an afterthought of Chapman's, designed to permit Rinaldo to qualify as a member of a world in which all are fools.

This consideration returns me to the problem Chapman faced in making a fool out of a man who was not a fool--Marc Antonio. Chapman's treatment of this problem I regard as unacceptable, for it rests on the pretext that the man who has been tricked will automatically belong, in a manner of speaking, to the world of the fools. That is to say, Chapman knew very well that the role of Marc Antonio demanded that he be the "good" father. To solve the problem of keeping him normative and yet a member of the foolish world of Gostanzo, Chapman permitted him to be deceived by Rinaldo and Gostanzo. Thus he is tricked, or, to use the

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[1] See II, i, 142-445, for example.

term employed in the play, "gulled." Yet for gulling to have any satiric significance it must employ a deception that depends for its success upon the exposure of the moral folly of the person being gulled. Appropriately, Gostanzo and Valerio are gulled, that is, tricked into exposing further their own absurdity. Marc Antonio, on the other hand is simply tricked, not gulled, for honesty is not a humour, that is, not a moral weakness. Here is the scene in which Marc Antonio is hoodwinked. He is speaking to Gostanzo:

> Marc. You see how too much wisdom evermore
> Out-shoots the truth: you were so forward still
> To tax my ignorance, my green experience
> In these gray hairs, for giving such advantage
> To my son's spirit that he durst undertake
> A secret match so far short of his worth:
> Your son so seasoned with obedience,
> Even from his youth, that all his actions relish
> Nothing but duty and your anger's fear.
> What shall I say to you, if it fall out
> That this most precious son of yours has play'd
> A part as bad as this, and as rebellious;
> Nay, more, has grossly gull'd your wit withal?
> What if my son has undergone the blame
> That appertain'd to yours, and that this wench
> With which my son is charg'd, may call you father?
> Shall I then say you want experience,
> Y'are green, y'are credulous, easy to be blinded?
> Gos. Ha, ha, ha!
> Good Marc Antonio, when't comes to that,
> Laugh at me, call me fool, proclaim me so,
> Let all the world take knowledge I am an ass.
> Marc. Oh, the good God of Gods!
> How blind is pride! What eagles we are still
> In matters that belong to other men,
> What beetles in our own! I tell you, Knight,
> It is confess'd to be as I have told you;
> And Gratiana is by young Rinaldo
> And your white son brought to me as his wife.
> How think you now, sir?
> Gos. Even just as before,
> And have more cause to think honest credulity
> Is a true loadstone to draw on decrepity.
> You have a heart too open to embrace
> All that your ear receives: alas, good man,
> All this is but a plot for entertainment
> Within your house; for your poor son's young wife

My house, without huge danger, cannot hold.
Marc. Is't possible? What danger, sir, I pray?
Gos. I'll tell you, sir; 'twas time to take her thence:
My son, that last day you saw could not frame
His looks to entertain her, now, by'r-lady!
Is grown a courtier; for myself, unseen,
Saw when he courted her, embrac'd and kiss'd her,
And, I can tell you, left not much undone
That was the proper office of your son.
Marc. What world is this?
Gos. I told this to Rinaldo,
Advising him to fetch her from my house,
And his young wit not knowing where to lodge her
Unless with you, and saw that could not be
Without some wile, I presently suggested
This quaint device, to say she was my son's;
And all this plot, good Marc. Antonio,
Flow'd from this fount only to blind your eyes.
Marc. Out of how sweet a dream have you awak'd me!
By heaven, I durst have laid my part in heaven
All had been true; it was so lively handled,
And drawn with such a seeming face of truth:
Your son had cast a perfect veil of grief
Over his face, for his so rash offence
To seal his love with act of marriage
Before his father had subscrib'd his choice.
My son (my circumstance lessening the fact)
Entreating me to break the matter to you,
And, joining my effectual persuasions
With your son's penitent submission,
Appease your fury; I at first assented,
And now expect their coming to that purpose.
(IV, i, 1-67)

In the sense that deception is widespread and that the lack of understanding between all parties has resulted in the use of masks beneath which real feelings lie hidden, all can be said to be a part of a foolish world. But I insist that it is an inaccuracy to argue that Marc Antonio is a fool. He is simple, honest, and rather baffled by the shifting intrigue he has become a part of; and I think it is closer to the truth to say that he is more a victim of others in his society than he is victimized by his own folly, as are Gostanzo, Valerio, and Cornelio. Marc Antonio, not knowing what to believe, finally confesses to Gostanzo that he is "no...politician" and that "...plain believing,/ Simple

honesty, is my policy still." Gostanzo tells him that these are "the visible marks of folly" and then goes on to praise his own son, Valerio. To this praise Marc Antonio replies that in Valerio there is "not much honesty." Gostanzo's answer to this is completely in character:

> Oh God, you cannot please me better, sir!
> H'as honesty enough to serve his turn,
> The less honesty ever the more wit.
> (IV, i, 190-192)

The point I wish to make here is that the gulling--or simple tricking, as it turns out--of Marc Antonio loses efficacy when it is remembered that he has been included among the camp of the fools by virtue of the fact that he has been deceived by them. I think that Chapman, aware of the injustice of the continuing deception of Marc Antonio, has Rinaldo calm any outraged feelings that this injustice may have aroused by saying, immediately after Marc Antonio's almost despairing recognition that he cannot recognize the truth, that

> ...for all these sly disguises,
> Time will strip Truth into her nakedness.
> (IV, i, 211-212)

As long as sly disguises themselves serve, satirically, to strip truth into her nakedness, Chapman is working with the tradition of Old Comedy. When, however, trickery and deception are employed for their own sake, or for a plot function only, he is falling back on practices characteristic of An Humourous Day's Mirth and even The Blind Beggar. There is not much of this trickery in All Fools but any is excessive.

The trick played upon Rinaldo near the end of the play will serve further to illustrate what I mean; here to, as in the deception of Marc Antonio, a plot function alone is served. The plot function served is, it is true, an important one, but merely because Rinaldo has been

gulled or tricked he becomes, like Marc Antonio, ipso facto, a member of the community of fools; and I would argue that this is a factitious way to round out a plot in which all are supposed to be fools. Here is what happens to Rinaldo. After Cornelio and Dariotto had gulled Valerio into touching the theorbo, Valerio, by counsel of Rinaldo, gulled them in turn by spreading rumours about an affair between Cornelio's wife and Dariotto. When Cornelio learns that Valerio and Rinaldo have been the cause of his new jealous paroxysms, he decides to return the gull:

> Now I perceive well where the wild wind sits,
> Here's gull for gull, and wits at war with wits.
> (IV, i, 376-377)

Thus Rinaldo is to be gulled by a fool because he, Rinaldo, is a wit who gulls others. Immediately after Cornelio's last statement, Rinaldo walks on stage and delivers a soliloquy:

> Fortune, the great commandress of the world,
> Hath divers ways to advance her followers:
> To some she gives honour without deserving,
> To other some, deserving without honour;
> Some wit, some wealth, and some wit without wealth;
> Some wealth without wit, some nor wit nor wealth,
> But good smock-faces, or some qualities
> By nature without judgment, with the which
> They live in sensual acceptation,
> And make show only, without touch of substance,
> My fortune is to win renown by gulling
> Gostanzo, Dariotto, and Cornelio,
> All which suppose, in all their different kinds,
> Their wits entire, and in themselves no piece,
> All at one blow, my helmet yet unbruis'd,
> I have unhors'd, laid flat on earth for gulls.
> (V, i, 1-16)

Is this pride? Does this statement make Rinaldo a fool? The people mentioned here, Gostanzo, Dariotto, and Cornelio, are all fools whom Rinaldo, functioning as the satirist, has exposed. Is Rinaldo, then, a suitable comic butt for the fool Cornelio to trick? I think Chapman is straining a bit to include Rinaldo among the fools, but the reader can

decide this for himself. In any case, as the following scene makes clear, a jest is played upon Rinaldo and Valerio by Cornelio:

Corn. ...are not you engag'd
In some bonds forfeit for Valerio?
Rin. Yes, what of that?
Corn. Why, so am I myself;
And both our dangers great; he is arrested
On a recognizance by a usuring slave.
Rin. Arrested? I am sorry with my heart;
It is a matter may import me much;
May not our bail suffice to free him, think you?
Corn. I think it may, but I must not be seen in't,
Nor would I wish you, for both are parties,
And liker far to bring ourselves in trouble,
Than bear him out; I have already made
Means to the officers to sequester him
In private for a time, till some in secret
Might make his father understand his state,
Who would perhaps take present order for him
Rather than suffer him t'endure the shame
Of his imprisonment. Now, would you but go
And break the matter closely to his father,
(As you can wisely do't) and bring him to him,
This were the only way to save his credit,
And to keep off a shrewd blow from ourselves.
Rin. I know his father will be mov'd past measure.
Corn. Nay, if you stand on such nice ceremonies,
Farewell our substance; extreme diseases
Ask extreme remedies; better he should storm
Some little time than we be beat for ever
Under the horrid shelter of a prison.
Rin. Where is the place?
Corn. 'Tis at the Half Moon Tavern.
Haste, for the matter will abide no stay.
Rin. Heaven send my speed be equal with my haste.
Exit
Corn. Go, shallow scholar, you that make all gulls,
You that can out-see clear-eyed jealousy,
Yet make this sleight a millstone, where your brain
Sticks in the midst amaz'd. This gull to him
And to his fellow guller shall become
More bitter than their baiting of my humour;
Here at this tavern shall Gostanzo find
Fortunio, Dariotto, Claudio.
And amonst them, the ringleader, his son,
His husband, and his Saint Valerio,
That knows not of what fashion dice are made,
Nor ever yet look'd towards a red lettice,
(Thinks his blind sire) at drinking and at dice,
With all their wenches, and at full discover

> His own gross folly and his son's distemper;
> And both shall know (although I be no scholar)
> Yet I have thus much Latin....
> (V, i, 27-74)

The truth appears to be that Chapman did not originally plan to make Rinaldo a fool. The play apparently was first called The World Runs On Wheels, then All Fools but the Fool and finally revised again to All Fools.[1]

However this may be, Cornelio's jest does serve to end the play. Gostanzo comes to the tavern where he discovers his son's folly and presumably discovers also the deficiencies of his own philosophy of education. All is forgiven, the couples receive their parents' sanction; and Cornelio receives a lecture on the irrationality of his jealousy and is supposedly so enlightened that he is cured.

Whatever blemishes it may be felt the play has, we should not fail to recognize Chapman's real achievement. The verse is excellent throughout; characters are, except for the women, whose roles are quite minor anyway, for the first time clearly distinguished;[2] the intrigue, complicated as it is, is never confusing; and, most imporant of all, Chapman has finally indicated that he is capable of conceiving and executing mature satiric comedy. The lapses from his satirical plan--the gulling of Marc Antonio and perhaps the gulling of Rinaldo--may demonstrate that Chapman is still willing, for the sake of a false unity, to abandon the conceptual basis that makes the play for the most part mature comedy.

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[1] See note, p. 75.

[2] Dariotto, who is intended to be a satire on courtiers never comes off. I suspect that this was the result of the fact that Chapman, in expanding Valerio's character to absorb this function, had nothing left over for Dariotto.

At the risk of carping I would like to suggest further that the sometime superficial and mechanical unity of the play may cause to be overlooked the apparently neglected and undeveloped themes that are raised in the play. The relationship between cynical love and a courtly form of Platonic love may have been simply insoluble to Chapman at this time, but the Terentian question of the proper education of Valerio is left unanswered as well as the question of his true identity. All these problems, if such they are, may stem directly or indirectly from what reveals itself to be, in the comedies, a perplexity of thought--an analysis and understanding of which is one of the chief concerns of the present study. Let me pause a moment to make two generically distinct kinds of statements about the nature of this central perplexity in Chapman's comedies. One kind of statement is conjectural and the other is accurately descriptive of what appears in the play themselves. First as a prelude to some conjectural commentary, what does the figure of Valerio represent? He is among other things a Platonist, a wench chaser, and a fool. These roles in All Fools are inconsistent and, as has been mentioned, the identity of this figure is never clarified in the play. Is it not possible to see Valerio as an unconscious adumbration of what may be Chapman's own ambivalent attitudes toward Platonism? Platonism is after all a philosophy which demands the suppression and repression of certain fundamental human impulses. What then is the "identity" of the Platonist who discovers without and in the psychic world within the same moral ambivalence and waywardness? Certainly in the immediate world outside himself the Platonist is not going to find that his ideals animate the behavior of men or that they help shape his institutions. Yet as long as the Platonist's inner

experiences give unweakening assurance as to the viability of these ideals, the Platonist can find inner solace. Whether Chapman experienced inner doubt, I cannot say, but judging from his comedies, I would argue that the great growing chasm between ideals and fact in his plays derives at least in part from a metaphysical division that has its counterpart in Chapman's own psychological makeup.

The second kind of statement, which has appeared in the commentary above scrambled in with supposition, has to do with the mere recognition of the dualism between Platonic value and physical fact as that dualism appears in the plays themselves. Most if not all of the succeeding commentary on this central problem, or perplexity as I have called it, will be objective and will deal with the problem as it finds concrete expression in the comedies themselves. To speculate further on Chapman's psyche is not only largely irrelevant but presumptious.

In May-Day, probably his next play, Chapman continues to evince the essential disunity between the ideal and the factual that we have already seen early evidence of in both An Humorous Day's Mirth and in All Fools. In May-Day Chapman seems to lack complete assurance that romantic and neo-Platonic sex relations can define actual human behavior. As a result the Platonic characters, as is true of Valerio in All Fools, appear to be sullied and foolish. Platonism in a word does not mix easily and meaningfully with the given facts of human desire and motive. Rather than create dramatic characters who are both Platonic and convincingly human (which I judge to be impossible anyway), Chapman, after May-Day, withdraws his idealists from life. After May-Day, for example, Chapman never again presents characters who are both Platonic and foolish. Instead he tends increasingly, as I have previously

suggested, to hypostatize his lovers and his idealists right out of life, thereby widening still farther the rift between ideals and fact. Despite this split, however, Chapman after All Fools never again introduces a factitious order into his comedies, nor does he ever again give evidence that he does not regard his comedies with the uttermost concern of an artist creating a well ordered commentary on man's private and social life. In a word, despite a growing problem in relating harmoniously what man is and what he should be, Chapman henceforth approaches the writing of comedy as an artist bent upon giving aesthetic expression to a moral vision.

CHAPTER V

MAY-DAY

May-Day was apparently written sometime between 1600 and 1602. It may have been written after Sir Giles Goosecap and The Gentleman Usher,[1] but as it is conceptually closer to An Humourous Day's Mirth and All Fools, I shall consider it here. Stiefel[2] was apparently the first critic to show that the play is an adaptation of Alessandro Piccolomini's Alessandro. A summary of Stiefel's findings, in which Chapman's debt to Piccolomini is established in detail, will indicate the close similarities, both in characterization and in plot, between the two plays as well as the changes made by Chapman.

In the Alessandro there are three plots. In the first, Cornelio, in love with Lucilla, the closely guarded daughter of Gostanzo, gains admittance into Lucilla's chamber by means of a rope ladder. Gostanzo, believing he has seen a man, but not recognizing Cornelio, leaves to get a policeman. Cornelio is rescued from discovery at this point by

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[1]I have followed Parrott's chronological grouping of the plays: The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (1596), An Humourous Day's Mirth (1597), All Fools (1599), May-Day (c.1600-1602), Sir Giles Goosecap (c.1601-1603), The Gentleman Usher (c.1603), Monsieur D'Olive (c.1604), and The Widow's Tears (c.1605-6).

[2]A. L. Stiefel, "George Chapman und das italienische Drama," Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XXXV (1899), 180-213.

Brigida, Captain Malagigi's wife, who dresses as a man and takes Cornelio's place. Gostanzo arrives with help, and the intruder is discovered to be the Captain's wife in men's clothing. Brigida, capitalizing upon her certain knowledge of Gostanzo's lecherous interest in her, allays his suspicions about his daughter by telling him that, loving him, she had sought him out and, because she did not wish to arouse the suspicions of the community, had come disguised. The ruse succeeds. In the end of this particular plot line Gostanzo gives Lucilla in marriage to Cornelio.

A second plot is concerned with old Gostanzo's courting of Brigida. He is gulled into thinking that she welcomes his attentions and will receive him if he comes disguised while her husband is absent. Gostanzo accordingly disguises himself as a locksmith and gains access to Brigida's house where he is locked up in a closet and later discovered and ignominiously discomfited.

The third plot, developed in detail by Piccolomini, involves the figures of Aloisio and Lucrezia. Aloisio, a man, separated from his beloved Lucrezia, has disguised himself as the maid Compridia. Lucrezia, on the other hand has disguised herself as the man servant Fortunio. The two, at first unaware of the other's identity, begin to woo one another. The sex of each is eventually revealed, and they are in time married.

Chapman, as is immediately evident from this cursory recapitulation of Piccolomini's plot, is heavily indebted to his source. He has retained the first two plots in their entirety as well as the principal characters from them, though he has changed names freely. However, it should be mentioned that Chapman has deleted and added scenes, passages, and even characters, to suit his own sense of

coherence. The serious love plot, which Piccolomini presents in prolix detail, is reduced by Chapman to the merest sketch. Chapman has in effect cut out the entire dramatic development of the anxieties of the separated lovers, a major concern of Piccolomini, and probably retained as much of this plot line as he did for the sake of one scene only--that in which Lodovico sneaks into Lucretia's room in the happy expectation of an amour only to be chased out noisily by a man who had been disguised as a woman.

Chapman's play then is obviously not an original work. But neither is it a translation.[1] It can probably best be described as a brilliant adaptation of an Italian play. Or, and I do not think this is unfair to the Alessandro, a redaction, for Chapman, in his expunging and bending, in his lopping off as well as in his copying; in his inserting of totally new material, and in his economizing in the direction of a dramatic unity that makes the Alessandro, in comparison, appear lumpishly inert, has made of Piccolomini's play, though not a completely new work, at least an artistic drama. For this Chapman deserves great credit. By the time he came to the writing of May-Day Chapman had developed into a comic artist of great ability. His sense of dramatic form was far superior to that demonstrated by Piccolomini's Alessandro and is nowhere

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[1] Boas, p. 18, calls it an "adaptation"; Marvin T. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana; University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 110, says that Chapman "adapted" his source; Havelock Ellis, p. 44, says that May-Day is "little more than an adaptation...." Daniel C. Boughner, The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), p. 306, says that "Chapman transplanted the Italian play to Jacobean London...." M.C. Bradbrook, p. 172, and Henry W. Wells, Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 248, both refer inaccurately to May-Day as a "translation."

more evident than in Chapman's reorganization of Piccolomini's whole play around a central structural figure (analogues of whom we have already seen in the figures of Irus, Rinaldo and Lemot)--the figure of Lodovico. This figure alone, I think, illustrates a profound difference between the comic-dramatic powers of the two playwrights and in their respective abilities to view and use comedy as a formal tool in the anatomizing of human folly. The figure whom Lodovico is based on in Piccolomini's play is Alessandro (who gives the play its name). Yet Alessandro is not at the center of Piccolomini's play. In fact he is a dull peripheral figure of little plot or theme importance. The very fact that the play is named after him points to the single greatest defect of Piccolomini's play; namely, its lack of a center, its sprawling formlessness. If the title is a paradigm, as it perhaps should be, suggesting a whole pattern of meaning, Chapman could well have called his play the Lodovico. Had he done so, his title alone would have been a valid criticism of his source. Chapman's Lodovico is in effect a throughly new character and one of the most scintillating improvements upon his source. Lodovico (and Angelo who shares equally Lodovico's duties and who, except superficially, is indistinguishable from him) manipulates a plot action which, in its flowing satiric movement through five acts, flushes out the flotsam of human absurdity for our inspection and amusement. Lodovico's main function and that of Angelo, in other words, has to do with form, and it is Chapman's bringing the diffuseness of the Alessandro to order that, more than anything else, makes of his play something different. What Chapman has done, put another way, is to give a structure to the centerless mass of Piccolomini's play--a structure that extends beyond an intelligently woven plot action to a unity of

theme which rests ultimately on the comic view of man as an unavoidably foolish creature whose desires and ideals are hopelessly at cross purposes. To see the play as no more than a medley of "buffoonery and Latinized romance"[1] or a "farrago...of vulgar plots and counterplots...."[2] is to miss entirely the intellectual function of satire (as opposed to the compassionate function of religion) to make the pronouncement, "thou fool." Man is both equal and unequal: equal in the ease with which his blood flows in pain--and religion fastens onto his painful finitude as it erases all distinctions--and unequal in ability and accomplishment; unequal, in other words, as a social being. Satire must deal with man as he clothes his nakedness (and all religions hearken back to this nakedness) in the garb that we call society. It is man the social creature, man the solipsistic, rationalizing intellect that Chapman is interpreting in May-Day. The play is a commentary on man the social figure whose self interest is undiminishable. Comedy like May-Day then can be said to possess a vision, for it rests on a whole view of man as a social being, a view that is not the less profound for finding expression in the satiric framework of Old Comedy.

The overwhelming impression that is good-naturedly produced by the whole of May-Day is that man, even though he knows what course is wisest and best for him to follow, inevitably finds himself pursuing another. Man in Chapman's play does not (like the anecdote told of Thales) gaze at the stars only to fall into a well. Instead he has one

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[1] Brooke, p. 404.

[2] Ward, p. 440. Hazlett, William, Complete Works, ed. P.P. Howe (21 vols., London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1931), VI, 234, also expressed dissatisfaction with the play, pronouncing it "not so good."

eye cocked at the stars and one at the not unattractive pit beneath, into which he will utlimately leap. Man aspires to the best but falls into degradation anyway. This picture of man does not fit all the characters in the play in exactly the same way. Some are foolish and degrading in their behavior, unaware of what they are. The sharking Captain Quintiliano, a wonderful comic figure who resembles Jonson's Tucca on the one hand and Shakespeare's Falstaff on the other, and his two gulls, Innocentio and Giovanello, are cut off from virtue and right action. They belong to the tapestry figures of humour comedy and, as grotesques are unchanging imprints of fools. They are in other words portraits of incorrigible folly. They are un-rescuable, outside the pale of what is correctable. It is we, the readers or audience, who unconsciously supply the rational norms which such creatures unwittingly violate. But other characters in the play behave in ways which, upon reflection (or detection by others!) cause them mortification. They are mortified because they acknowledge a body of precepts which they feel should, but, because of their own moral waywardness, do not always direct their behavior.

At the time he wrote May-Day the informing spirit of Chapman's drama was still amiable, not foolishly blithesome of course, for May-Day is satire, but it is satire that grows, or seems to grow, out of the conviction that folly is not a dangerous but only a mildly abrasive antagonist of wisdom. Folly is like a child who could be but has not yet been taken into hand. Put another way, Chapman could still write comedy at the time of the composition of May-Day, in which man's folly, though deep seated was of the nature of a misdemeanor which he had to live with. There is no evidence in May-Day of what appears in Chapman's

later work to reflect a gradual breakdown of his conficence in the social efficacy of human reason and in the viability of ethical values. In this play values still have teeth and at least some of the characters in the play wince when they are bitten by them. Thus Chapman's satire can be pointed and certainly uneffeminate without being viciously slashing, caustic, and bitter, though in time his satire will become as excoriating and as ironic as that of Wycherley and Swift. Chapman, in a word, at the turn of the century, could still smile at man's foolishness. Very shortly, it is true, the smiles were to become cynical and bitter, but in May-Day Chapman was apparently still confident that folly was part of man's secondary nature, or at least controllable. Folly could and did jostle virtue and wisdom but human silliness has in May-Day the harmless tameness of the domestic, not the wild animal. Chapman is soon to realize that folly, irrationality and absurdity are rampant and that they leap easily the picket fence of morality and religion (so easily erected by art). I am, however, anticipating somewhat a later development in Chapman, for it is not until near the end of his career as a comic dramatist--sometime around 1605-1605--that he apparently began to despair about man's moral health. May-Day though is not naive. Chapman nowhere sentimentalizes human nature. The picture of man in this comedy is not in the least flattering: man is like a full length statue, noble in countenance and torso but with his pants ignominiously down about his ankles. Still, man is shamed by this condition and exerts some effort to regain his dignity. In The Widow's Tears, Chapman's last comedy, man has lost this desire and, of more importance, probably lacks even the capacity for moral improvement.

May-Day has a complicated plot full of personal entanglements and relationships, but without exception these are made to illustrate character defect (among both "humour" and serious characters) and not just to pace a swiftly moving linear action. As the play opens a chorus of children are singing, and Lorenzo, a decayed January figure, remarks, "Well done, my lusty bloods, well done! Fit, fit observance for this May morning!" Fitness, or seasonable action will become a theme of the entire play, and Chapman will use lust and spring, bestiality and idealism, rationality and irrationality as coordinates with which to pin point man's moral imperfections.

Lorenzo, father to Aemilia, is a lecherous senex figure who is also avaricious. He covets Franceschina, Captain Quintiliano's wife, and fancies himself a not unattractive suitor. He also desires that his daughter, Aemilia, marry the rich but old Gasparo. Lorenzo is an aged cock crowing incongruously of lust, oblivious of his shabby, worn plume. His poem to Franceschina, is self-revealing:

> This could I send: but person, person does it. A good presence to bear out a good wit; a good face, a pretty Court leg, and a deft dapper personage; no superfluous dimensions but fluent in competence; for it is not Hector, but Paris, not the full armful, but the sweet handful, that ladies delight in.
> (I, i, 45-50)

All that he needs now, he feels, is "means for access." "An honest bawd," he goes on to remark, "were worth gold now." The vanity and moral blindness of this old fool are heightened by what his daughter calls "impiety." She is referring, in such a phrase, to Lorenzo's unfeeling wish to barter her off to old Gasparo. He has in fact spoken to Gasparo about her:

> ...I have talked with my daughter, whom I do yet find a green young plant, and therefore unapt to bear such ripe fruit--I think I

might have said rotten--as your self. But she is at my disposition, and shall be at yours in the end; here's my hand, and with my hand take hers.
(I, i, 169-174)

Aemilia, in a soliloquy that serves as one of the few unsullied moral landmarks in a landscape whose muddiness tends to obscure distinctions between what is real and what is affected, and between what is preached and what is practiced, castigates her father:

'Tis strange to see the impiety of parents,
Both priviledg'd by custom, and profess'd.
The holy institution of heaven,
Ordaining marriage for proportion'd minds,
For our chief human comforts, and t'increase
The loved images of God in men,
Is now perverted to th' increase of wealth;
We must bring riches forth, and like the cuckoo
Hatch others' eggs; join house to house; in choices
Fit timber-logs and stones, not men and women.
(I, i, 185-194)

Lorenzo speaks of his own lust fondly as "my infirmity," and accurately describes his sexual behavior, though he is proudly uncritical of the import of what he says, as "these tricks of youth in me." The gulling of this egregious fool occupies a great part of the play and provides some of the finest entertainment of the entire comedy. Angelo, eager to gull Lorenzo, offers to be his go-between. Unknown to Lorenzo, and for that matter to Captain Quintiliano himself, Angelo is Franceschina's lover, and he thus has no difficulty persuading her to assist in the gulling of Lorenzo. Angelo and Franceschina, in deciding that Lorenzo shall come disguised, reveal a fact about Lorenzo that is new to the reader, namely, that he is an important city official:

Ang. He shall come in disguised, wench, and do thou devise for our mirth, what ridiculous disguise he shall come in, and he shall assume it.
Fran. What, a Magnifico of the city, and one of the Senate! Thinkest thou he will not see into that inconvenience?

> Ang. No more than no senator; for, in this case, my assurance is that Cupid will take the scarf from his own eyes, and hoodwink the old buzzard....
>
> (II, i, 391-400)

Angelo is right. The scene in which he broaches the disguise to Lorenzo is an excellent one, and as it points up the theme of human debasement (in a realistic action that happens also to be symbolic), I will transcribe a part of it here:

> Ang. And to avoid all sight of your entrance, you must needs come in some disguise, she says; so much she tenders your high credit in the city, and her own reputation, forsooth!
>
> Lor. How! Come in some disguise?
>
> Ang. A toy, a very toy, which runs in her head with such curious feet, sir, because if there be any resemblances of your person seen to enter her house, your whole substantial self will be called in question; any other man, she says, might better adventure with the least thing changed about 'em than you with all, as if you were the only noted mutton-monger in all the city.
>
> Lor. Well, Angelo, Heaven forgive us the sins of our youth.
>
> Ang. That's true, sir; but for a paltry disguise, being a Magnifico, she shall go snick up.
>
> Lor. Soft, good Angelo, soft, let's think on't a little. What disguise would serve the turn, says she?
>
> Ang. Faith, I know not what disguise she would have you come like a calf with a white face, I think; she talks of tinkers, pedlars, porters, chimney-sweepers, fools, and physicians, such as have free egress and regress into men's houses without suspicion.
>
> Lor. Out upon 'em, would she have me undergo the shame and hazard of one of those abjects?
>
> Ang. I' faith, I told her so; a squire of that worship, one of the Senate, a grave justicer, a man of wealth, a Magnifico!
>
> Lor. And yet, by my troth, for the safeguard of her honour, I would do much; me thinks a friar's weed were nothing.
>
> (II, i, 444-474)

Angelo remarks that a friar's disguise has been "worn threadbard upon every stage" and that unless Lorenzo disguises his face he will be detected. Lorenzo is not at a loss for an idea:

> Lor. And what, shall I then smirch my face like a chimney-sweeper, and wear the rest of his smokiness?
>
> Ang. I'll tell you, sir, if you be so mad to condescend to the humour of a foolish woman, by consideration that Jove for his love took on him the shape of a bull, which is far worse than a chimney-sweeper, I can fit you rarely.

Lor. As how, I prithee?
Ang. There is one little Snail, you know, an old chimney-sweeper.
Lor. What, he that sings, 'Maids in your smocks, hold open your locks'? sings
Ang. The very same, sir, whose person (I borrowing his weeds) you will so lively resemble that himself in person cannot detect you.
Lor. But is that a fit resemblance to please a lover, Angelo?
Ang. For that, sir, she is provided; for you shall no sooner enter but off goes your rusty scabbard, sweet water is ready to scour your filthy face, milk and a bath of fernbrakes for your fusty body, a chamber perfumed, a wrought shirt, night-cap, and her husband's gown, a banquet of oyster-pies, potatoes, skirret-roots, eringoes, and divers other whetstones of venery--
Lor. O let me hug thee, Angelo!
Ang. A bed as soft as her hair, sheets as delicate as her skin, and as sweet as her breath, pillows imitating her breasts, and her breasts to boot, hippocras in her cups, and nectar in her lips; ah, the gods have been beasts for less felicity!
(II, i, 493-519)

The scene speaks for itself. Lorenzo, a Magnifico of the city, a member of the Senate, willingly transforms himself into a snail, almost indifferent to the physical and moral disfigurement that he must undergo. I think that Chapman, in such a scene as this, gives us a telling glimpse at the backside of the coin of human nature. He will present or imply a similar debasement with the other principal figures in the play, who, generally, are manipulated by Lodovico or Angelo. These two are satirists. Angelo, in a remark addressed to Lodovico, which applies equally well to himself, makes this quite clear: "By this light, you'll be complained on; there cannot be a fool within twenty mile of your head but you engross him for your own mirth." The two main plots, that involving Lorenzo and Franceschina, and that involving Aurelio and Aemilia, are engineered respectively by Angelo and Lodovico. Of noteworthy interest is the fact that the two plots blend naturally and plausibily: Angelo, in drawing Lorenzo away from home makes possible a visit to Aemilia by Aurelio, and Lorenzo's "courtship" of Franceschina can take place only after Lodovico

has drawn Captain Quintiliano, Franceschina's husband, away to a tavern. A brief look at what Chapman does with the Aurelio-Aemilio love relationship will provide some insight into how Chapman handled romantic or serious love midway in his career as a comic dramatist.

After May-Day Chapman will often treat love with a solemnity that is lacking in May-Day. Yet Chapman is not yet willing, apparently, to treat the theme of love with the cynicism and the blistering acidity that is found in The Widow's Tears. He seems to be indecisively suspended somewhere between two conceptions of love, one romantic and neo-Platonic in nature and the other cynical and physical. Aurelio at first appears to be either a conventional, romantic, neo-Platonic lover or a parody of one. When he sees Aemilia for the first time (in the play), he says, "O stay and hear me speak, or see me die," upon which he falls prostrate. Lodovico, performing an anti-Petrarchan function reminiscent of Shakespeare's Touchstone,[1] ridicules Aurelio and becomes the spokesman of physical love:

> He that holds religious and sacred thought of a woman, he that bears so reverend a respect to her that he will not touch her but with a kissed hand and a timorous heart, he that adores her like his goddess, let him be sure she will shun him like her slave. (I, i, 260-265)

The play will apparently have to decide something about the relationship between these two views of love, and it is interesting to note how Chapman "settles" the conflict between Lodovico and Aurelio, or between the real and the ideal in May-Day. I think the fullest understanding of his handling of this conflict is to be had only after his later comedies

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[1]The conflict here is the same that Chapman dealt with in the early part of All Fools in the characters of Rinaldo and Valerio.

are studied. At any rate I am going to assume this, in order to justify drawing on at least one of them to help in the interpretation of May-Day.

When we first saw Aemilia she was delivering a speech on the impiety of avaricious parents. She was clearly serving, in this scene, a normative role; and had we to judge from this speech alone, we would unhesitatingly say that she was a figure who would supply at least part of the moral bedrock of the play. She appears to be not unlike the conventional creature poets and dramatists had for sometime apotheosized in sonnet and drama. Yet when we next see her she appears to be somewhat coquettish and foolish, and Aurelio's haste to get into her bedroom makes us take a more searching look into his Petrarchan protestations.[1] Again Chapman seems to be saying that if we peer beyond what man professes we become aware of a gaping disparity. Notice in the following exchange between Lodovico and Aemilia that Aemilia is not the grave maid she at first appeared to be:

> Aem. But, good coz, if you chance to see my chamber window open, that is upon the terrace, do not let him [Aurelio] come in at it in any case.
> Lod. 'Sblood, how can he? Can he come over the wall, think'st?
> Aem. O sir, you men have not devices with ladders of ropes to scale such walls at your pleasure and abuse us poor wenches.
> (II, i, 212-218)

When Aurelio arrives beneath Aemilia's window, he is full of the rhetoric and dilatoriness of romantic love, and Lodovico is full of incitements to overt action:

> Lod. ...Come, sir, mount!
> Aem. O cousin Lodovic, do you thus cozen and betray me?
> Lod. Coz, coz, thou hast acted thy dissembling part long

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[1] The lack of what Swinburne, p. 66, calls a "touch of romance" may account for his coolness toward the play.

enough, in the most modest judgment, and passing naturally; give over with thy credit then, unmask thy love, let her appear in her native simplicity, strive to conceal her no longer from thy love, for I must needs tell thee he knows all.

Aem. What does he know?

Lod. Why, all that thou told'st me, that thou lov'st him more than he can love thee, that thou hast set up thy resolution, in despite of friends or foes, weals or woes, to let him possess thee wholly, and that thou didst woo me to bring him hither to thee; all this he knows--that it was thy device to prepare this ladder, and, in a word, all the speech that passed betwixt thee and me, he knows. I told him every word truly and faithfully, God's my judge!

Aem. Now, was there ever such an immodest creature?

Lod. Via with all vain modesty! Leave this colouring, and strip thy love stark naked. This time is too precious to spend vainly. Mount, I say!

Aur. Model of heavenly beauty!

Lod. Zounds, wilt thou melt into rhyme o' the tother side? Shall we have lines? Change thy style for a ladder; this will bring thee to Parnassus; up, I say!

Aur. Unworthy I t'approach the furthest step to that felicity that shines in her.

Lod. O purblind affection! I have seen a fellow to a worse end ascend a ladder with a better will; and, yet this is in the way of marriage, and they say marriage and hanging have both one constellation. To approve the which old saying, see if a new ladder make 'em not agree. [Aurelio mounts]

Aem. Peace, somebody comes!

Lod. That you heard was but a mouse. So, boy, I warrant thee.

Aur. O sacred goddess, whatsoe'er thou art,
That, in mere pity to preserve a soul
From undeserv'd destruction, hast vouchsaf'd
To take Aemilia's shape--

Lod. What a poetical sheep is this! 'slife, will you stand rhyming there upon a stage, to be an eye-mark to all that pass? Is there not a chamber by? Withdraw, I say for shame; have you no shame in you? Here will come somebody presently, I lay my life on't.

Aur. Dear mistress, to avoid that likely danger
Vouchsafe me only private conference,
And 'tis the fulness of my present hopes.

Exeunt (Aurelio and Aemilia into the house)
(III, iii, 70-117)

At this point Chapman would seem to be committed to the ridicule of a romantic love that turns out to be after all just plain sex dressed up in a verbal rococo. But this is not what he does; risking, I feel, implausibility he undertakes to rescue Aemilia's honor along with Aurelio's worshipful attitude toward women, only after having brought these ideals

to the very brink. Chapman, that is, foregoes the opportunity to be cynical about romantic love and does not let his lovers fornicate. If he has supplied a heretofore risque excitement to the courtship of Aurelio and Aemilia, he draws himself up and halts. When we next see these two lovers they are entering from Aemilia's chambers, no longer foolish and giddy but pompously staid:

> Aur. Dear life, be resolute that no respect,
> Heightened above the compass of your love,
> Depress the equal comforts it retain;
> For since it finds a firm consent in both,
> And both our births and years agree so well,
> If both our aged parents should refuse,
> For any common object of the world,
> To give their hands to ours, let us resolve
> To live together like our lives and souls.
> Aem. I am resolv'd, my love; and yet, alas!
> So much affection to my father's will
> Consorts the true desires I bear to you,
> That I would have no spark of our love seen
> Till his consent be ask'd, and so your father's.
> Aur. So runs the mutual current of my wish;
> And with such staid and circumspect respects
> We may so serve and govern our desires,
> That till fit observation of our fathers
> Prefer the motion to them, we may love
> Without their knowledge and the skill of any,
> Save only of my true friend Lodovic.
> (IV, ii, 1-21)

While Lodovico is waiting outside, wrapped up in his cloak, he is mistaken for another man and becomes privy to a plan to rape Lucretia. Sometime earlier the old bawd Temperance, Lucretia's leering, carnal-minded maid, had informed the young respectable gentleman Leonoro that at a certain time each day Lucretia napped and that he could then steal into her room and possess her. Lodovico, a professed anti-feminist is mistaken for Leonoro by Temperance, and, sizing up the situation immediately, surreptitiously substitutes himself for Leonoro. He is accordingly ushered off stage and into Lucretia's chamber. A short

time later Lodovico comes flying on stage pursued by a man, for, unknown to any of the characters in the play Lucretia was actually the Sicilian Lucretio, disguised as a woman.

Woven between these checkered love games, in which man appears at best to be a tarnished king and at worst a noble jackass, lie those generally static scenes in which the magnificent fool, Captain Quintiliano, a gull himself, and his own gulls, Innocentio and Giovanello (who are not in the Alessandro) parade their incredible folly. The Captain makes them both officers in a company that never materializes, plays them off against one another, bilks them in such a way that they think he is doing them a favor, and provokes them into continual absurdity. Yet in doing so, the Captain also reveals to the readers his own brand of folly. It is a folly that springs from a higher intelligence--or cunning perhaps--than the shallow mindedness of his two gulls: but it is folly nonetheless, for the Captain, foppishly certain of his wife's devotion, is a cuckold from the opening of the play; he is a cheater and and a swaggerer; and he is avaricious and monstrously vainglorious. Like Falstaff he is also good humored and witty and manages to win some sympathy for himself from his audience. Of course, once he begins to take on "human" attributes he ceases to be a strict humour character, and this is why I say he is, technically speaking, a cross between Tucca and Falstaff. He is a great comic creation, and, as Stiefel and Parrott both observe, vastly superior to the Captain Malagigi of Piccolomini's play.

The principal action which the rest of the play deals with involves the further deception of Lorenzo, who, with blackened face and the dirty clothes of the chimney sweep, hotly pursues Franceschina.

There is superb comedy in these scenes. And there is about them a purgative quality that might well support a theory that at least some comedy is cathartic.[1] It is as if, in the figure of Lorenzo, some deep seated human absurdity were lugged to the surface and laughed, figuratively speaking, out of existence. It is possible to see in these scenes what the satirists mean when they say their satire is curative.[2] Not that Lorenzo himself is brought to any deep understanding of his moral obtuseness, or that the onlookers, either those in the play who observe his folly or the audience who eavesdrop on him as he crawls about on his lecher's mission, are morally better for having witnessed the punishment of a comic scapegoat. The "cure" is of course aesthetic.[3] In our "participation" in the various roles of the play we can identify with Lorenzo--in that we all probably have secret desires and disguises that are grotesque and which we entertain only privately--and yet when Lorenzo is exposed (for his private folly is objectified

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[1] There have been writers since the time of the Tractatus Coislinianus who have defended a cathartic theory of comedy. Thus Louis Kronenberger, The Thread of Laughter (New York: Knopf, 1952), p. 5, speaks of the purging through laughter "of certain spiteful and ungenerous instincts," though, he cautiously adds that this is "not quite the whole" of comedy.

[2] Bergson's view (see Laughter; an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, Brereton and Rothwell, trans. (New York: Macmillan, 1911), p. 197). is that we punish the comic figure for his wrong anti-social behavior by humiliating him with our laughter.

[3] It appears to me that in satire the view of comedy that could be called Hobbesian, namely, that the spectator takes malicious pleasure in recognizing his superiority to the comic figure; and the Bergsonian view of laughter as a social corrective which censures and attempts to reform the comic figure, can be reconciled. For in satire the comic figure is morally defective, and presumably the recognition of this defect by the spectator gives rise to feelings of superiority which are based on the spectator's knowledge of moral norms which the comic figure has violated. If the spectator's response to satire involves malice, perhaps the response itself is also morally defective.

into public life) we can step back and figuratively cleanse ourselves by heaping our moral scorn punishingly on him.[1] This is at least one way to attribute validity to the concept of poetic justice. The comic scapegoat is the fool in us and his punishment is, aesthetically or figuratively, corrective. This is a function that only literary art can perform, and art in this sense becomes a vehicle for the dramatization of a morality that has its roots, not in convention, but in human psychology itself. Psychological and moral disfigurement are perhaps ultimately the same.[2]

Look at the scenes in which Lorenzo is gulled by a whole gallery of spectators, and see if it would not be meaningful and accurate to describe him as an archetypal scapegoat or fool. He is, first, in his nephew Lodovico's words:

> ...an old Senator, one that has read Marcus Aurelius, Gesta Romanorum, the Mirror of Magistrates, etc., to be led by the nose like a blind bear that has read nothing. Let any man read how he deserves to be baited.
>
> (III, i, 58-62)

He is a man who, in other words, has willed his own folly and who has

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[1] Compare a different point of view expressed by Alfred Harbage, Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 171: "In the coterie plays there is an unhealthy intentness about the way the authors turn upon their characters, even the milder of the authors--in the way, for instance, that Chapman concentrates on the humiliation of Gostanzo in All Fools, of Lorenzo in May-Day and Bassiolo in The Gentleman Usher."

[2] Joseph Wood Krutch, Experience and Art (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 53, talks of a basic uniformity of human behavior that is the result of a physiological and psychological sameness. Human character changes slowly, he says, because of "physical, physiological and psychological inevitabilities which keep returning us to that human norm from which we cannot wander far."

let it overleap his own well-grounded judgment. It is this complete lack of control that launches Lorenzo's dark folly into the glaring light of public scrutiny. With face and clothes befouled and with the cry of the chimney-sweep on his lips, Lorenzo's "secret" disguise is hawked by common gossip. All his friends are privy to his plan and all agree among themselves not to "recognize" him. Lorenzo, meanwhile, continues to demonstrate his egregious vanity by becoming fatuously enamored of his disguise as Snail (who, incidentally, though he never actually appears in the play was a known lecher about town). Angelo has just finished painting Lorenzo's face:

> Ang. Have at your smoky chimney, Mistress Frank! Here, sir, take up your occupation, and down with Snail for a chimney-sweeper.
> Lor. Away, see if the coast be clear.
> Ang. I will, sir.
> Lor. Take good view, look about to the doors and windows.
> Ang. Not a dog at a door, not a cat at a window. Appear in your likeness, and not with your quality.
> Lor. Chimney-sweep! Work for chimney-sweep! Will't do, sirrah?
> Ang. Become you, sir? Would to heaven Mistress Frank could bring you to the wearing of it always.
> Lor. I'll forth, i'faith, then.
>
> Maids in your smocks,
> Set open your locks;
> Down, down, down:
> Let chimney-sweeper in,
> And he will sweep your chimneys clean
> Hey, derry, derry, down.
>
> How dost like my cry, ha?
> Ang. Out of all cry! I forbid Snail himself to creep beyond you.
> Lor. As God help, I begin to be proud on't. Chimney-sweep!
>
> (III, i, 109-135)

This is the man who has "great authority in the city"! As he walks the streets his friends begin to bait him, pretending not to know who he is and his "punishment" is underway. Franceschina and Angelo of course also lay their trap for him. Franceschina is speaking here:

> Angelo, give him not too much time with me,
> for fear of the worst, but go presently to the back gate,
> and use my husband's knock; then will I presently thrust
> him into my coal-house; and there shall the old fleshmonger
> fast for his iniquity.
>
> (III, iii, 35-39)

When, some time later, Lorenzo is actually dragged forth from the coal house by Captain Quintiliano (himself a great fool), he is humiliated or at least concerned enough to mutter twice, "A plague of all disguises." But this is not a sign that Lorenzo has been educated out of his folly, as events of the same evening make clear. This is the evening when at the house of Honorio, the whole cast assembles for a "May-night feast and show." Here Lorenzo is again unmercifully baited, but he at no time shows any indication that he plans to shed his carapace of affectation. Ignorant of the fact that the assembled crowd is on to his humbuggery and his lechery and his pretence to respectability, he speaks hortatorily to his nephew Lodovico on the subject of sexual morality: "Well, nephew, well, will you never leave this your haunt of fornication? I school him, and do all I can, but all is lost." Lodovico, piqued by his uncle's pomposity and by jibes he receives from others as well, reminds some of those present that they could more properly direct their ridicule at themselves:

> Nay, jest not at me, sweet gentles. I used plain and mannerly dealing; I neither used the brokerage of any (as you know who did, Leonoro) nor the help of a ladder to creep in at a wench's chamber-window (as you know who did, Aurelio) nor did I case myself in buckram and cry chimney-sweep (where are you, uncle?) but I was trained to it by this honest matron [Temperance, the bawd] here.
>
> (V, i, 292-298)

Thus Lorenzo's exposure is complete and the folly of others has been checked. Not so Captain Quintiliano, however, for at the end, despite damning evidence against his wife, he still foolishly thinks her faithful,

and is blithely self-satisfied. In a final touch that adds an appropriate irony to a comedy of human failings, Innocentio, the Captain's naive gull is awarded, as his bride to be, the notorious old pandaress, Temperance. Innocence (an ignorant dupe), weds Experience (a decayed whore). "Wilt thou have her, Lieutenant?" the Captain asks him, and Innocentio replies, "'Fore God, Captain, I care not if I have!" Thus the play (mere "burlesque and practical joking,"[1] to one critic) ends.

A problem that may be of only secondary importance in a consideration of May-Day, namely, what I take to be Chapman's curiously ambivalent or perhaps better, undecided, attitude toward the physical and the non-physical aspects of love, is one that is usually present in his comedies, either explicitly or implicitly. This problem grows out of the antinomies inherent in the attempt to reconcile a Platonic metaphysic and a Platonic conception of love with the world of physical fact. As has been mentioned the core of a central problem that is going to turn up in the rest of Chapman's comedies has to do with the increasing difficulty he appears to have experienced in establishing a bridge between the two worlds of temporal fact and divine value. In his comedies thus far, the problem--and generally the problem has to do with the whole way in which Chapman relates comic and non-comic elements in his comedies--has already appeared. Even in The Blind Beggar there may be evidence of what I have called "interference" between serious and comic plot lines: certainly such interference exists in All Fools. And in An Humourous Day's Mirth Dowsecer the Platonist (who reflects a "serious" tone) is returned to the comic world of "actual" folly only because he has

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[1] A Guide to English Literature, ed. Boris Ford (2 vols., London: Hazell Watson and Viney Ltd., 1956), II, 83.

discovered that at least one ideal (Martia) animates and in some measure redeems it. Chapman may be suggesting in An Humourous Day's Mirth, then, that there is no cure for the unidealistic world of men (fools).

In May-Day also, despite the fact that Chapman's plot is ready-made and predetermined in its general outlines, there is evidence of a similar division between the ideal and the actual; Chapman seems caught in a dilemma: should he allow a sexual licentiousness that gives the lie to public protestations of virtue, or should he disavow this licentiousness by imposing on it--as he does in the Aurelio-Aemilia scenes--a lofty ethic of Platonism that does not seem to fit the facts? The problem does not deal with whether or not Chapman should denounce pretence and affectation--he was certain of himself here--but, quite simply, with the dramaturgic problem of creating convincing Platonic or normative characters. The problem in other words has to do with the discovery of a way to bring into harmonious interaction (within the play itself) the postulates of a high and for Chapman absolute ethic, and the characteristically unprincipled actualities of life. This problem is only hinted at in May-Day of course, but even here Chapman (as a Platonist) seems to sense the great difficulty of finding in the world he could so unhesitatingly satirize some workable, "realistic" way to counter human moral frailty. Certainly after May-Day the problem of the interrelation of serious (usually Platonic or neo-Platonic) elements and comic elements begins to take on an ever-enlarging significance in Chapman's development as a comic dramatist.

In general Chapman's art in his remaining four comedies documents a growing awareness of his part that the breach between value and fact

was irreparable. If evidence for this breach is not sufficiently distinct in the comedies through May-Day, Chapman's next play, Sir Giles Goosecap, Knight, offers clear structural proof that a split (thematic in origin) was beginning to tear his dramas in two.

CHAPTER VI

SIR GILES GOOSECAP, KNIGHT

By the time Sir Giles Goosecap, Knight was written, about 1601, Ben Jonson had already written Every Man In His Humour, Every Man Out of His Humour, and Cynthia's Revels. It is possible that Sir Giles was not written until as late as 1603. If so, Jonson would already have written Poetaster, and it was not long after the writing of this play that Jonson and Chapman were collaborating, along with Marston, on Eastward Ho. Whenever Sir Giles was written, the influence of Jonson is unmistakable.[1] It is also extensive. Lacking Jonson's savage and uncompromising sense of purpose, Chapman, until at any rate his last comedy, never sought to create comedy conceived in the fierce mordancy of Every Man Out; yet Jonson's handling of character, indeed his whole conception of humour comedy, was congenial to Chapman's talents. In Every Man In His Humour, however, even Jonson is amiable. The fools of this play are almost impotent. We laugh unconcernedly at their

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[1] Before Sir Giles was indisputably assigned to Chapman (see Parrott, II, 889-892), F. E. Schelling, The English Drama (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1914), p. 170, in talking of the play unconsciously paid Chapman high tribute when he wrote that "the anonymous Sir Giles Goosecap is...more in the manner of Jonson than in that of Chapman."

absurdities, for we realize that such creatures can be brushed aside. In Every Man Out Jonson shifts his purpose by presenting fools who, being vicious, are not to be tolerated. And, in place of the skillful and intricate plot of Every Man In, Jonson in Every Man Out has written a play virtually without plot. The play consists almost entirely of dialogue, and the attention of the dramatist is devoted to character, or more accurately, to the satiric lashing of the peccancies of character.

Sir Giles seems to me to combine the tone of Every Man In with the plotlessness of Every Man Out. The foolish characters in Chapman's play are innocuous and their folly is not latently dangerous to society.[1] The fools in fact are good natured and without malice. The comic scenes of the play are almost totally devoid of incident. Sir Giles Goosecap, a witless but affable simpleton, utters inanities and malapropisms. He is always in the company of Captain Foulweather, a French-affected traveller, and the blunt Sir Cuthbert Rudesby. These three knights are lured to the town of Barnet in the only "incident" of the comic scenes, but they return immediately to London where, invited to a dinner, they continue to display their own want of sense and purpose. Sir Giles and Captain Foulweather, not Sir Cuthbert Rudesby at all, are comic scapegoats. Frothy fools themselves, they are the inevitable targets of superior and condescending intelligences that play the music the fools, with willing eagerness, dance to.

Each of the three knights is in some way connected with a higher social level: Sir Giles Goosecap is cousin to Lord Tales; Captain Foulweather is Lord Furnifall's "man"; and Sir Cuthbert Rudesby is the

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[1]Thus Chapman reverts to the humour comedy technique of An Humourous Day's Mirth.

nephew of Sir Clement Kingcob. On this higher social plane conduct can be as foolish as it is in the behavior of Sir Giles and the Captain. Lord Furnifall is a foppish court gallant, and Lord Tales fatuously attempts to construe Sir Giles' nonsense into sense. Into this comic tableau of harmless folly, Chapman, as is customary with him, introduces a romantic theme of neo-Platonic love.[1]

The blending of humour comedy and Platonic romance is one of the distinctive characteristics of Chapman's comic technique, and it will be an increasingly important task of Chapman's comic drama to attempt to answer the whole comic world of folly with the normative (for Chapman) tenets of his Platonism. As has been mentioned, the problem of reconciling philosophical idealism with the actualities of life was one that for Chapman may have been ultimately insoluble. In Sir Giles there is a temporary, tenuous, and on the whole, unconvincing relation set up between the actual and the ideal that seems to gloss over the complicated difficulty the Platonist faces in trying to make the physical world and the ideal world in some manner conform. In any case, the relationship that Chapman establishes between a neo-Platonic norm and a foolish but real world is one of the most interesting features of the play. There are then two "worlds" in this play: the world of the fools (where behavior--and this of course is consistent with the Platonist's notion as to what is ultimately real--is so grotesquely without purpose and so vacuously harmless that it appears "unreal"), and the world of Platonic virtue and love, represented by the characters of Clarence and Eugenia.

[1] By giving roughly half of the play over to the development of normative, romance elements, Chapman in effect cancels out the Old Comedy motif apparent in All Fools.

The source of the romantic theme which Chapman has woven into the comic action is Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde.[1] What he has done to the sensuous eroticism of this story is essentially what he did to the sensuous eroticism of Marlowe's Hero and Leander: he shunned it.[2] In its place, in Sir Giles, he substituted a love relationship based on neo-Platonic virtue. There are some special difficulties connected with this transformation of his source which I will consider later.

It may be helpful to look now at the world which is inhabited by people whom, with very few exceptions, Clarence the neo-Platonist contemns. This is the world of Sir Giles Goosecap and Captain Foulweather, suitors, respectively of Penelope and the Countess Eugenia, both of whom are ideals who occupy the normative world of Clarence. The comic world in other words is planning an assault on the world of ideal virtue. Countess Eugenia is a neo-Platonic ideal and Penelope is a lady of virtue who waits upon her. Captain Foulweather, however, the would-be suitor of Eugenia, is never a serious threat to the integrity or the purity of the ideal. In fact, the comic figures in the play are so functionally helpless that the non-comic figures can afford to patronize them smilingly. Platonism in others words is not really tested in this play, for the comic characters are unable in their impotence to impugn its worth. Take, for instance, the character of Sir Giles. In one scene Lord Furnifall is strutting about, boasting of his courtly

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[1]See G. L. Kittredge, "Notes on Elizabethan Plays," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, II (1898), p. 10-13.

[2]Chapman's theme in Hero and Leander is that "Joy graven in sence, like snow in water wasts."

gallantry, when he falls upon a metaphor with which he illustrates to his listeners (Sir Giles, Captain Foulweather, and Sir Cuthbert Rudesby), how he handled women in his youth:

> Furn. And still the less I sought, the more I found.
> All this I tell to this notorious end
> That you may use your courtship with less care
> To your coy mistresses; as when we strike
> A goodly salmon with a little line,
> We do not tug to hale her up by force,
> For then our line would break, and our hook lost,
> But let her careless play alongst the stream,
> As you had left her, and she'll drown herself.
> Foul. O' my life, a most rich comparison!
> Goose. Never stir if it be not a richer caparison than my lord my cousin wore at tilt, for that was broidered with nothing but moonshine i' th' water, and this has salmons in't. By heaven, a most edible caparison.
> Rud. Odious, thou wouldst say, for comparisons are odious.
> Foul. So they are, indeed, Sir Cut.; all but my lord's.
> Goose. Be caparisons odious, Sir Cut.? What, like flowers?
> Rud. O ass! They be odorous.
> Goose. A botts o' that stinking word, 'odorous'; I can never hit on't.
>
> (IV, ii, 45-65)

Earlier Sir Giles reveals his felicitous imbecility in an argument with Sir Cuthbert and Captain Foulweather over the distance from London to a place named Barnet:

> Foul. Let's go thither to-night, knights, and you be true gallants.
> Rud. Content.
> . . . . . .
> Goose. No, it's too far to go to-night, we'll be up betimes i' th' morning, and not go to bed at all.
> Foul. Why it's but ten miles, and a fine clear night, Sir Giles.
> Goose. But ten miles? What do ye talk, Captain?
> Rud. Why? Dost think it's any more?
> Goose. Ay, I'll lay ten pounds it's more than ten mile, or twelve either.
> Rud. What, to Barnet?
> Goose. Ay, to Barnet!
> Rud. 'Slid, I'll lay a hundred pound with thee, if thou wilt.
> Goose. I'll lay five hundred to a hundred. 'Slight, I will

> not be outborne with a wager in that I know; I am sure it was four years agone ten miles thither, and I hope 'tis more now. 'Slid do not miles grow, think you, as well as other animals?
> . . . . . .
> I never inned in the town but one, and then they lodged me in a chamber so full of these ridiculous fleas that I was fain to lie standing all night, and yet I made my man rise and put out the candle top, because they should not see to bite me.
> (I, iii, 29-55)

A natural fool, Sir Giles is not much altered by art. His accomplishments are described by his kinsman Lord Tales: "First, he dances as comely and lightly as any man"; "he has an excellent skill in all manner of perfumes, and if you bring him gloves from forty pence to forty shillings a pair, he will tell you the price of them to twopence." "He will perfume your gloves himself most delicately"; "he is the best sempster[1] of any woman in England, and will work you needle-work edgings and French purls"; and "he will make you flies and worms, of all sorts, most lively, and is now working a whole bed embroidered with nothing but glow-worms; whose lights 'a has so perfectly done, that you may go to bed in the chamber, do anything in the chamber, without a candle." Sir Giles, in short, cannot threaten the safety of the normative ideals represented by the serious characters.

His companion Captain Foulweather belongs in the tradition of the parasitical <u>miles gloriosus</u>. As he spends by far the greatest part of his time expounding the superiority of the French culture over the English he can be said to swagger not about his martial prowess so much as his acquaintance with French life and fashions.

Jack and Will, pages to the Countess Eugenia, discuss the character of Captain Foulweather:

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[1] Seamstress.

Jack. This Captain Foulweather, alias Commendations, Will, is the gallant that will needs be a suitor to our Countess.

Will. Faith, and if Foulweather be a welcome suitor to a fair lady, has good luck.

Jack. O sir, beware of one that can shower into the laps of ladies. Captain Foulweather! Why he's a Captinado, or Captain of Captains, and will lie in their joints, that give him cause to work upon them, so heavily that he will make their hearts ache, I warrant him. Captain Foulweather! Why he will make the cold stones sweat for fear of him a day or two before he come at them. Captain Foulweather! Why he does do domineer, and reign over women.

Will. A plague of Captain Foulweather! I remember him now, Jack, and know him to be a dull moist-brained ass.

Jack. A Southern man, I think.

Will. As fearful as a hare, and 'a will lie like a lapwing, and I know how he came to be a captain, and to have his surname of Commendations.

Jack. How, I prithee, Will?

Will. Why, sir, he served the great Lady Kingcob and was yeoman of her wardrobe, and because 'a could brush up her silks lustily, she thought he would curry the enemies' coats as soundly, and so by her commendations he was made Captain in the Low Countries.

Jack. Then being made captain only by his lady's commendations, without any worth also of his own, he was ever after surnamed Captain Commendations?

Will. Right!

(I, i, 55-82)

The third knight, Sir Cuthbert Rudesby, or Sir Cut, is only sketchily portrayed by Chapman. He is always in the company of the Captain and Sir Giles, though he himself is not a fool. A blunt man, he is fond of calling Sir Giles an ass and of calling the boasting Captain out. He has very few lines in the play and often is merely on stage with nothing to do and with little to say. It is not really clear to me why he is even in the company of Sir Giles and the Captain. It is apparently not very clear to Sir Cuthbert himself, for at one place he remarks: "I discredit my wit with their companies, now I think on't. Plague o' God on them! I'll fall a beating them presently."

As the play opens the three knights are engaged in the pursuit of three women: the Countess Eugenia, and her two companions, Penelope and Hippolyta. Captain Foulweather imagines himself to be an eminently

eligible candidate for the hand of the Countess Eugenia, who is a widow; Sir Giles wants to get married so that he can play on the married men's football team and is directed toward Penelope, though he nowhere expresses a preference for any woman, and Sir Cut pays court to the "chaste Hippolyta." Thus the inane comic world of foppish vanity (Sir Cut is an exception) meets the serious world of wisdom and virtue: the Countess Eugenia is a virtuous and learned woman, a scholar who can answer her interlocutors in Latin. She is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and uninterested in the world. That Captain Foulweather is not taken seriously at all by Eugenia is made clear in the second scene of the play. Sir Giles, the Captain, and Sir Cut have just risen from supper at Eugenia's house where, besides herself, Hippolyta and Penelope are present. Apparently finding the captain intolerably annoying the ladies have risen quickly from their meal. (Winifred is a servant to the Countess.)

> Foul. Howsoever, believe it, ladies, 'tis unwholesome, uncourtly, unpleasant, to eat hastily and rise suddenly; a man can show no discourse, no wit, no stirring, no variety, no pretty conceits, to make the meat go down emphatically.
>
> Eug. Winifred!
>
> Win. Madam!
>
> Eug. I prithee go to my uncle, the Lord Momford, and entreat him to come quicken our ears with some of his pleasant spirit; this same Foulweather has made me so melancholy; prithee make haste.
>
> Win. I will, madam.
>
> Hip. We will bid our guests good night, madam; this same Foulweather makes me so sleepy.
>
> Pen. Fie upon it, for God's sake, shut the casements, here's such a fulsome air comes into this chamber! In good faith, madam, you must keep your house in better reparations, this same Foulweather beats in so filthily.
>
> Eug. I'll take order with the porter for it, lady. Good night, gentlemen.
>
> Rud. Why, good night, and be hanged, and you'll needs be gone!
>
> Goose. God give you good night, madams, thank you for my good cheer; we'll tickle the vanity on't no longer with you at this time, but I'll invite your ladyship to supper at my lodging one of these

mornings; and that ere long too, because we are all mortal, you know.

Eug. Light the Lady Penelope and the Lady Hippolyta to their chambers! Good night, fair ladies!

Hip. Good night, madam; I wish you may sleep well after your light supper.

Eug. I warrant you, lady, I shall never be troubled with dreaming of my French suitor.

(I, ii, 10-40)

Shortly after this scene Chapman introduces into the zany world of Sir Giles and the Captain the figures of Momford, uncle to Eugenia, and his friend, the scholar, Clarence. Clarence corresponds to Troilus in Chaucer's poem, Momford to Pandarus, and Eugenia of course to Criseyde. When Clarence walks on stage at the beginning of scene four in the first act, we have had only a glimpse of Eugenia and do not yet know much about her except that she finds Captain Foulweather, her French-affected suitor, tedious. Clarence has much in common with the Renaissance melancholic malcontent. When we first see him he is deciding not to die, as he has discovered something in the world that he is able to love.[1] His soliloquy is delivered against a background of music.

Clar. Work on, sweet love; I am not yet resolv'd
T'exhaust this troubled spring of vanities
And nurse of perturbations, my poor life;
And therefore, since in every man that holds
This being dear, there must be some desire,
Whose power t'enjoy his object may so mask
The judging part, that in her radiant eyes
His estimation of the world may seem
Upright and worthy, I have chosen love
To blind my reason with his misty hands
And make my estimative power believe
I have a project worthy to employ
What worth so ever my whole man affords:
Then sit at rest, my soul, thou hast now found

---

[1] He is like the figure of Dowsecer in An Humourous Day's Mirth who too was reconciled with the world after discovering an ideal woman in it.

> The end of thy infusion; in the eyes
> Of thy divine Eugenia look for Heaven.
> Thanks, gentle friends!
> (I, iv, 1-16)

The argument of this passage seems to be that to live is to desire. Desire though is contrary to reason and judgment, blinding them so as to make possible the rationalization that the object of desire is worthy of rational consideration. As, however, the soul seeks union with that which is immortal (the soul's "infusion") and as Eugenia is "divine," emotion and feeling--which have suspended judgment and reason--are allowable (curiously this appears to be a rational decision). Clarence has, even as a lover, powers of ratiocination that are unfaltering. He is apparently vexed with world because it falls profoundly short of his Platonic expectations; and to discover someone who calls him down from his winged scholarly lucubrations into the world he despises poses at first a contradiction for him. It is with this contradiction that Clarence appears to be wrestling in his opening speech.

The relationship between Clarence and Lord Momford is an interesting one. Clarence, who by the way is without rank or money, has known Momford for twenty years and for ten years has been Momford's "bed-fellow." Momford describes Clarence as "thou soul divider of my lordship." To this Clarence replies:

> That were a most unfit division,
> And far above the pitch of my low plumes;
> I am your bold and constant guest, my lord.
> (I, iv, 23-25)

Momford disregards this by remarking that his own lordship is an "atom," a "thing of naught indeed." You should, he tells Clarence, take whatever "becomes...our indissoluble love."

The character of Momford is clearly an idealized one. Clarence's dissatisfaction with the world stems, as his next speech seems indirectly to indicate, from the fact that, as he lacks rank and wealth, his merits have gone unrewarded. Momford is a nobleman, who, aware of Clarence's greatness, loving him too, harboring and caring for him, promotes him in the world. Clarence explains to Momford, in a speech that is intended more for our ears than Momford's (who after all has known Clarence twenty years), why he feels as he does:

> Clar. My lord, my want of courtship makes me fear
> I should be rude, and this my mean estate
> Meets with such envy and detraction,
> Such misconstructions and resolv'd misdooms
> Of my poor worth that, should I be advanc'd
> Beyond my unseen lowness but one hair,
> I should be torn in pieces with the spirits
> That fly in ill-lung'd tempests through the world,
> Tearing the head of Virtue from her shoulders,
> If she but look out of the ground of glory;
> 'Twixt whom and me, and every worldly fortune.
> There fights such sour and curst antipathy,
> So waspish and so petulant a star,
> That all things tending to my grace or good
> Are ravish'd from their object, as I were
> A thing created for a wilderness,
> And must not think of any place with men.
> (I, iv, 35-52)

Momford embraces him and tells him that it is time "that we both lived like one body." Clarence then discloses that he is in love, and Momford replies:

> And, i'faith, is my sour friend to all worldly desires
> o'ertaken with the heart of the world, Love? I shall be
> monstrous proud now to hear she's every way a most rare
> woman, that I know thy spirit and judgment hath chosen.
> Is she wise? Is she noble? Is she capable of thy virtues?
> Will she kiss this forehead with judicial lips, where so much
> judgment and virtue deserves it? Come, brother twin, be
> short, I charge you, and name me the woman.
> (I, iv, 96-103)

Clarence then says that he "passionately" loves Momford's niece, the Countess Eugenia, who possesses great rank and is therefore beyond the grasp of a "poor gentleman." She would, so he feels, never consent to a mesalliance. Momford's answer indicates that he is, at least in the scenes with Clarence, not so much a dramatic character, as a spokesman for what ought to be, not what is. He says that Eugenia is not

> ...one of these painted communities that are ravished with coaches, and upper hands, and brave men of dirt; but thou knowest, friend, she's a good scholar, and like enough to bite at the rightest reason; and Reason evermore ad optima hortatur, to like that which is best, not that which is bravest, or richest, or greatest, and so consequently worst.
> (I, iv, 137-142)

Unlike Pandarus Momford is helping Clarence to succeed in marriage, not in seduction.[1] Momford conceives the proposed alliance to be a meeting of minds; therefore, social position and wealth are unimportant.

Before we view Momford cajoling his half-reluctant niece to accept Clarence as a husband, we get one more glimpse of Clarence struggling with the dilemma of the Platonist who finds himself forsaking the study and contemplation of absolute knowledge because he feels an attraction for a woman. It may appear at first that Chapman is poking benign fun at the too deeply engrossed scholar-turned-lover, but this is not the case at all. Clarence was perhaps too close to the thinking of Chapman himself to make this possible. In any event Clarence is presented almost throughout humorlessly. He is apparently not intended as an object of even mild fun. In the scene at hand Clarence is still slightly bewildered that he can become reconciled with the world or

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[1] C.S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 515, remarks that Chapman's continuation of Hero and Leander is "essentially...a eulogy of marriage."

at least with that part of it occupied by Eugenia:

> Clar. I, that have studied with world-scorning thoughts
> The ways of heaven, and how true heaven is reach'd,
> To know how mighty and how many are
> The strange affections of enchanted number,
> How to distinguish all the motions
> Of the celestial bodies, and what power
> Doth separate in such form this massive round,
> What is his essence, efficacies, beams,
> Footsteps, and shadows; what Eternesse is,
> The world and time, and generation;
> What mould the world's soul is, what the black springs
> And unreveal'd original of things,
> What their perseverance, what is life and death,
> And what our certain restauration--
> Am with the staid heads of this time employ'd
> To watch with all my nerves a female shade.
> (II, i, 1-16)

Momford approaches Eugenia and praises her for her learning and her scholarship. (Learning in women, he says, is like "lustre in diamonds.") Clarence, he tells her, "rather my soul than my friend," is "with your virtues most extremely in love." Eugenia is at first concerned with her "honor" and her "good name." Momford tells her that insofar as honor and good name are "airy titles" only, they are worthless, and that insofar as they are "species of truth" they are essential parts of her. Still Eugenia argues to the effect that to marry a "poor gentleman" is to compromise herself. Momford does not think so:

> ...as he is a gentleman, he is noble; as he is wealthily furnished with true knowledge, he is rich, and therein adorned with the exactest complements belonging to everlasting nobleness.
> (II, i, 181-184)

Eugenia continues momentarily to be mundane. His nobility of mind will not "maintain him a week," and lacking a coat of arms, he can hardly come by one for his back. They exchange rejoinders in Latin and for the moment the subject is dropped.

In Clarence's next soliloquy his position toward Eugenia is clarified philosophically. Considering the physical relationship between man and wife, this passage may seem excessively cold. Clarence is unwilling to acknowledge the admixture of physical desire in the love he feels for Eugenia.

> Clar. ...According to my master Plato's mind
> The soul is music, and doth therefore joy
> In accents musical, ...
> . . . . . .
> Divine Eugenia bears the ocular form
> Of music and of Reason, and presents
> The soul exempt from flesh in flesh inflam'd;
> Who must not love her then that loves his soul?
> (III, ii, 2-10)

He then begins a letter to her in which he says his "love is without passion, and therefore free from alteration." This is a little curious as he has already said (I, iv, 105) that the Countess Eugenia is "the woman that I so passionately love." Perhaps this is the neo-Platonist's dilemma. At any rate, it appears to be Clarence's.[1]

Eugenia does not take seriously Clarence's claim that he loves without passion. Perhaps Chapman after all is cautioning the idealist not to rationalize his desire. Eugenia's remark that his love, "being mental, needs no bodily requital," certainly brings the ethereal flights of Clarence to earth. Also, thinking that Clarence is sick with love of her (though in fact he merely feigns illness), she asks in Marlovian accents, "Is this the man that without passion loves?" For just this

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[1]There was almost certainly not a philosophical inconsistency for Chapman. In The Tears of Peace (1609), Chapman writes that "...there are/ Passions in which corruption hath no share;/ There is a joy of soul; and why not then/ A grief of soul, that is no skathe to men?/ For both are passions, though not such as raigne/ In blood, and humor, that engender paine."

one moment in the play Chapman seems to be mildly satirizing the Platonic lover, but in the next scene in which Clarence appears, the impulse to smile at him, if such it has been, is abruptly checked. Clarence receives a letter from Eugenia in which she says she will marry him. Clarence, elated, cries out to Momford:

> My lord, I feel a treble happiness
> Mix in one soul, which proves how eminent
> Things endless are above things temporal
> That are in bodies needfully confin'd.
> (IV, iii, 5-9)

When Momford asks him to explain his "treble happiness," Clarence says:

> I feel my own mind's joy
> As it is separate from all other powers;
> And then the mixture of another soul
> Join'd in direction to one end like it;
> And thirdly the contentment I enjoy
> As we are join'd, that I shall work that good
> In such a noble spirit as your niece,
> Which in myself I feel for absolute.
> (IV, iii, 14-21)

This is knotty dogma. I take the meaning of the passage to be that Clarence enjoys first an awareness of his own powers of mind, of, in short, his soul; second, he takes satisfaction in knowing that his soul and Eugenia's are to be united in pursuit of a common end; and third he is pleased that he will be able to form Eugenia into something even better than she is. ("Each good mind doubles his own free content/ When in another's use they give it vent," he goes on to say.)

At this point in the play the spiritual nature of Clarence's love is further defined by his remark, "Outward fairness bears the divine form/ And moves beholders to the act of love." Clarence, then, apparently loves Eugenia with his rational soul, and, as he says, there are no "passions in the soul." He thus seems to love the divine idea of which

the corporeal Eugenia is an outward manifestation. The problem as to whether or not Clarence feels passion for Eugenia is finally resolved in a remark he makes to a physician about Eugenia:

> Indeed I do account that passion
> The very high perfection of my mind,
> That is excited by her excellence,
> And therefore willingly and gladly feel it.
> (IV, ii, 74-77)

He feels passion in other words for her excellence, which I think we can take to be her virtue, her learning, and the visible expression of these "divine" qualities in her fair outward form. His excitement, that is, stems from his recognition of her as an incarnation of an ideal which he takes to be eternal.

The conversation between Clarence and the physician brings to light Clarence's attitude toward the world, and in some sense, Chapman himself may have thought such an attitude to be the only possible defense against an unreasonable and unfair society that would let merit go unrewarded.[1] An important difference between Clarence and Chapman is of course that Chapman did not enjoy the patronage and bounty of a Lord Momford. Actually the Clarence of Sir Giles has little to complain about specifically. He desires to be both of the world and out of it and gets his wish by despising the world yet loving an ideal which has mysteriously manifested itself in the form of Eugenia. The physician tells Clarence not to continue to devote all his time to eternity:

> ...even for holy Virtue's health
> And grace of perfect knowledge, do not make
> Those groundworks of eternity you lay
> Means to your ruin and short being here;

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[1] See J. Robertson, "Early life of George Chapman," Modern Language Review, XXXX (July, 1945) 157-65; Eccles, pp. 176-93.

> For the too strict and rational course you hold
> Will eat your body up.
> (V, ii, 104-109)

The physician goes on to say that if Clarence lets himself die the world will suffer a diminution because so much "Virtue" will have been lost. "Most men," the physician continues, "have sold" their virtue; therefore, in particular uphold your own, he tells Clarence.

The following remarks of Clarence, probably more than any other in the play, have given rise to the feeling that he is "little short of a scholarly prig."[1] He has agreed, like the Troilus in Chaucer's work, to pretend to be ill so as to make possible a visit from Eugenia. He makes reference to this "wile" in the following soliloquy:

> I prop poor Virtue, that am propp'd myself,
> And only by one friend in all the world!
> For Virtue's only sake I use this wile,
> Which otherwise I would despise, and scorn;
> The world should sink, and all the pomp she hugs
> Close in her heart in her ambitious gripe,
> Ere I sustain it...
> (V, ii, 120-126)

The final comment about the marriage of Clarence and Eugenia comes from Eugenia herself when she addresses the supposedly sick Clarence:

> ...oh, I could weep
> A bitter shower of tears for thy sick state,
> I could give passion all her blackest rites,
> And make a thousand vows to thy deserts;
> But these are common; knowledge is the bond,
> The seal, and crown of our united minds,
> And that is rare and constant...
> (V, ii, 211-217)

The play at this point is virtually over. Chapman's purpose has apparently been divided clearly between the presentation of the sayings of the fools--they do almost nothing--in which their own vanity

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[1] Parrott, II, 895.

and uselessness are revealed; and the presentation of an idealized love relationship. Despite the fact that comic figures mix socially with the serious figures, the two worlds, comic and Platonic, remain universes apart.

Before the play ends, Eugenia gets some good news about Clarence, for Momford makes him "sole heir to all my earldom." Theirs is a marriage, Momford goes on to say, which is "an absolute wonder," for it is "a marriage made for virtue, only virtue." Momford then takes godlike control of the characters and dispenses marriages cavalierly. To Sir Cut, he "gives" the "chaste Hippolyta," and to Sir Giles he "gives" Penelope.[1] Lord Furnifall assures the rejected Captain Foulweather that he will find him a mate. The captain is unconcerned over the loss of Eugenia. Clarence, he says, has been in France and he "therefore merits her." Sir Giles thanks Momford with his customary witlessness: "Now I may take the married men's parts at football." The supper all are about to sit down to is consecrated to Hymen, and the play ends with dancing and singing.

The play, I think, is an experimental one for Chapman. Dramatically it seems faulty, not because it is all talk, but because much of that talk is often involved in philosophical disquisition that is not intimately related to the comic action. The philosophical doctrine (of which Clarence is the chief spokesman) strikes me as being in other

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[1]This union between characters who belong primarily in the comic world with characters who belong primarily in the "ideal" world is not symbolic. The genuinely Platonic figures--Clarence and Eugenia--remain untouched by and closed off from the world of the vain and the foolish.

words strained off from the rest of the play. Yet obviously Chapman was aware of this. Perhaps the problem I have sensed in the play derives from the fact that the philosophical content does not provide persuasive dramatic evidence of how ideal values or norms are to become translated into the world of actual experience.[1] Eugenia is the expression of the presence of this ideal and along with the virtuous Momford redeems it for Clarence.[2] Does she perform the same function for the reader who may or may not share Clarence's philosophical idealism? Perhaps this question can be answered only by the individual. I myself feel something lacking in the polemical sections of the play, and for lack of a better phrase I call it the absence of dramatic conviction. Are the inadequacies of the actual world to be countered by what amounts to a withdrawal into the arcana of neo-Platonism?

It might be helpful to pause a moment to examine a broad pattern of development in Chapman's comic drama up to and including Sir Giles Goosecap. Oversimplified, that pattern can be described in this way: in the comedies up to Sir Giles satire is uppermost. The Blind Beggar is a piece of brash, guffawing burlesque, An Humourous Day's Mirth displays a bedlam of fools, and All Fools and May-Day reflect the same bedlam of moral lunacy after it has been turned loose into the world. In each of these plays, with the possible exception of The Blind Beggar,

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[1] Ornstein, p. 54, speaking of Chapman's tragedies, remarks: "He consistently lacked the ability to construct plots which would translate his vision of life into vital dramatic terms.

[2] Precisely the same situation was present in a minor way in Chapman's second comedy, An Humourous Day's Mirth, where Dowsecer, the Platonist, was able to re-enter the actual world from which he had retired to a philosophical solitude, only after discovering that Martia, a Platonic ideal, existed in it.

characters from an ideal world have been present,[1] but the world of the fools and the world of the wise and virtuous have been mutually exclusive. Before Sir Giles the satiric impulse had controlled the writing of all but a few passages. In these passages characters in normative roles make curious appearances. In An Humourous Day's Mirth people actually come to stare and gape at Dowsecer, the eccentric scholar-idealist; Valerio in All Fools mysteriously sheds his Platonism for the more socially acceptable roles of swaggerer, dicer, and whoremonger; in May-Day Aemilia and Aurelio as creatures of impulse behave erotically towards one another and as creatures of reason behave quite unemotionally. However, until Sir Giles the problem of relating fact and value remained in the background of the comedies, the primary impulse of which was satiric.

If, though, Chapman had written humour comedy in An Humourous Day's Mirth and a kind of Old Comedy in All Fools and May-Day he has certainly done something else in Sir Giles. As if to assert the superiority of value over fact, Chapman seems to have elevated the normative characters, Clarence, Momford, and Eugenia into positions of social power and pre-eminence (thereby reversing the Old Comedy strategy of elevating fools) and to have created a set of gelded buffoons who are, socially, intellectually, and morally comtemptible inferiors of the wise. Chapman then has defined the problem in extreme terms in Sir Giles: an almost perfect good has as its adversary an almost complete and certainly thoroughly impotent folly.

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[1]Even in The Blind Beggar the characters Doricles and Aspasia are probably normative.

I think Chapman is still in the process of formulating in his comic drama an answer to the world of folly. His answer, already hinted at in An Humourous Day's Mirth, and in Sir Giles is tantamount to complete withdrawal or retreat. In his remaining three comedies, Chapman works in two different and for him new directions. In his next play, The Gentleman Usher, in what may have been an attempt to make his norms and ideals less static, he moves from the presentation of isolated folly on the one hand and isolated virtue on the other to a consideration of the interaction not of virtue and folly, but of good and evil. In The Gentleman Usher Chapman has the forces of good triumphing. What happens, however, when ethical ideals and lovers' vows are verbal structures only and when widows' tears are false? In his last comedy, The Widow's Tears, Chapman apparently has realized that his ideals, hitherto protected and espoused by his art, have little social durability or efficacy, and, abandoning the affirmation of value which he supplies didactically in Sir Giles, The Gentleman Usher, and in Monsieur D'Olive, his comic art darkens into sustained irony that is dispassionately and mordantly cynical of man as a moral entity.

CHAPTER VII

THE GENTLEMAN USHER

The Gentleman Usher, written probably in 1601 or 1602, is an extraordinary achievement. Chapman seems at the height of his powers as a comic dramatist. Comic and noncomic elements blend in a perfect dramatic harmony, answering one another with the finesse of a matchless parry and riposte.[1] Chapman seems also to have handled a whole cast of characters--for the first time perhaps--with a distributed strength that does not leave some figures hazily undifferentiated or only sketchily portrayed. Also, and again perhaps for the first time, Chapman has been able to present serious characters (in comedy) with what I regard as great success: the static and astral aloofness of the neo-Platonic love philosophy has been replaced with a love relationship that involves characters who must act in a world to salvage their ideals. The lovers, in other words, are dramatically conceived.

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[1]The only possible exception to this fusion that I can see is in the heavily doctrinal and didactic passages of Christian stoicism uttered by Strozza. As Strozz's preachment does not, however, influence the action of the play, Chapman can be said to have at last succeeded in uniting comic and non-comic elements in a convincing dramatic action. Most critics of Chapman view the play as disunified: see M.T. Herrick, Tragicomedy (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1955), p. 239; Boas, p. 19. Bradbrook, p. 173, says that "The Gentleman Usher... serves to show the division in Chapman's mind between doctrine and the life of the scene." Ward, p. 435, says that in The Gentleman Usher "Chapman has attempted a larger task than his genius...seems to have been equal to accomplishing."

Furthermore Chapman has presented serious characters, other than the young idealistic lovers, who are extremely plausible and who, like the young lovers themselves, are tied organically to the whole action of the play.

Also, there is revealed in the creation of the comic characters an unfaltering dramatic discipline and purpose: not only is there no surplusage here, no extraneous clownery, there are also few if any scenes in which the fools do not, as they reveal their own asininity, simultaneously advance an involved but never confusing or irrelevant plot.

Plot, character, theme all fuse into a finely unified play; a play written almost throughout in what strikes me as being the most consistently fine blank verse that Chapman has yet written in his comedies. It is tempting to speculate as to what made it possible for Chapman to now put together those heretofore naggingly disjointed elements of serious and non-serious or, more specifically, the romantic and the comic. A comic dramatist writing in a manner similar to Ben Jonson, writing, that is, his own special type of humour comedy, is faced with serious problems when he would attempt to persuasively present romantic lovers, cast as they would be in the midst of a gallery of comic grotesques. For the most part the dominating impulse in Chapman's comedies had been, in other words, basically what might be called Jonsonian; yet Chapman has evinced intermittently in his comedies thus far, a desire to introduce romantic and even neo-Platonic love into a topsy-turvy comic world. By moving, in The Gentleman Usher, closer toward a kind of drama that was soon to be called tragicomedy, Chapman may have hit upon a device that

was to make possible the fusion of parts that, as late as Sir Giles Goosecap had remained discrete, the device, namely, of symbolic presentation. The theme of the conflict of good and evil worked out as it is symbolically, constitutes for Chapman a new dramatic technique, a new dramatic structure. In conception and execution The Gentleman Usher is much closer to the comedy of As You Like It and The Winter's Tale than it is to Every Man Out of His Humour.[1]

Chapman appears, in this comedy, to have shifted the whole basis of his comic invention. A satirist is of necessity an idealist; when man and his institutions fail to measure up to his well-defined values, he ridicules their shortcomings. Chapman though seems increasingly to have desired to dramatize the sometimes unspoken half of the satirist's sensibility, namely, the ideals to which the world ought to subscribe. In The Gentleman Usher Chapman is not just parading a cast of fools before us for our amusement; he is launching instead into the world of drama whose tensions are ethical: the world where good and evil clash. In such a world, at least in The Gentleman Usher, the fools are, thematically speaking, on the periphery, though to say so seems to minimize the amazing skill with which Chapman has woven them into the main action. Furthermore, I do not wish to suggest that the fools in The Gentleman Usher are incidental and ornamental, forced on stage to inject laughs into a flagging narrative. The play is concerned

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[1]Henry M. Weidner, "The Dramatic Uses of Homeric Idealism,..." EIH, XXVIII (1960), 123, in a fine essay on The Gentleman Usher, suggests "that this play has less to do with the kind of romance found in Twelfth Night, one of the plays to which The Gentleman Usher has been most often compared, than it has to do with the formal romance structure found in, say, The Winter's Tale."

with human behavior, not just foolish behavior and ideal behavior--but, and this is virtually new in Chapman's comedies, also, with evil behavior. Heretofore Chapman had presented his fools behaving in pronounced contrast to the wise (who were also good); and evil was not a part of his concern. It is probably Chapman's attempt to bring a corner of tragedy into comedy, more than any thing else, that makes the context of this play, for Chapman, radically new. The play is concerned then with behavior, with levels of behavior, and if the fools, Poggio and Sarpego at any rate, are on the periphery, they are there only in the sense that their behavior is so foolish that they seem helplessly unresponsible for it. That is to say, Sarpego, the pedant, and Poggio the simpleton-fool, are incapable of self understanding. They belong to the world of humour comedy where behavior is frozen in caricature. Such characters cannot change, or grow as we say, because they are non-human; that is, they lack compassion, sympathy, and emotion. Such fools as Poggio and Sarpego are simply there; they exist as reminders that folly is permanently about us. But, being essentially caricatures, they cannot exercise moral choice. Without moral choice they cannot become a viable part of an actinn in which ethical values provide the bases upon which character is constructed. In short, moral regeneration, the basic impulse of tragicomedy, and a theme of The Gentleman Usher is, quite simply, not available to the fools of humour comedy.

The comic character Bassiolo, the gentleman usher after whom the play is titled,[1] is not, however, on the same level as the fools

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[1]The play was entered in the Stationers' Registers in 1605 as Vincentio and Margaret.

Poggio and Sarpego, for he has intelligence and practical competence.[1] His folly, since it appears to be volitional and not congenital like Poggio's, makes Bassiolo appear culpable. In this respect he resembles Shakespeare's Malvolio, who may have furnished Chapman a pattern for his own over-weening usher. Twelfth Night and As You Like It had already appeared when Chapman wrote the Gentleman Usher, and Chapman may have borrowed more than an idea for a character; for The Gentleman Usher employs more than ever before and in some instances for the first time in Chapman's comedies, elements which Shakespeare had already begun to use in his comedies: symbolism, magic, fragments from the masque, an atmosphere of "unreality," the extensive use of music, and the themes of political evil and moral regeneration. The Gentleman Usher, still largely neglected, deserves close attention for what it tells us about the changing style of Chapman's comic drama, for what it may tell us about Chapman's debt to Shakespeare (and this has yet to be sufficiently acknowledged), and also for its own intrinsic merits.

The setting of the play is Italy. Duke Alphonso and his son, Prince Vincentio, are both in love with Lord Lasso's daughter, Margaret. The Lord Strozza and his wife, Cynanche, virtuous friends and supporters of Vincentio, grow to oppose the suit of the Duke for the hand of Margaret when the Duke becomes dangerously jealous of his son's love for her. The Duke is counseled by the sinister and evil Lord Medice who plots to destroy Vincentio. The entire cast assembles at Strozza's where the

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[1] Ward, p. 436, dismisses Bassiolo easily: "The Gentleman Usher, a silly busybody whom the Prince gains over by flattery, without using him to much purpose, is not drawn with any striking success, and cannot rank high as a comic creation."

Duke openly and Vincentio covertly court Margaret. It will be one of the play's major purposes to bring the Duke to a recognition of his own "unnatural" passion for Margaret and to a reconciliation with his son. This recognition and reconciliation, implying as they do the expulsion of evil from the Duke's character, constitute a regeneration in which the Duke, repenting of his involvement with debased passion and vicious impulse, rejects them and dedicates himself to a life based on principle.

Strozza, the great friend and supporter of Vincentio and a kind of surrogate father figure during the temporary "madness" of the Duke, also undergoes regeneration. Wise, virtuous, and noble, he is yet, when wounded, at first willing to abandon himself to a raging despair in which he seriously considers killing himself. He is taught Christian stoicism by his wife and near the end of the play is brought into such close union with heaven that he is granted powers of divine prescience.

In the first scene of the play the jealousy between father and son, a sexual jealousy, is established. When Strozza asks Vincentio why his looks are "so cloudy," he replies:

> Ask'st thou my griefs that know'st my desp'rate love
> Curb'd by my father's stern rivality?
> Must not I mourn that know not whether yet
> I shall enjoy a stepdame or a wife?
> (I, i, 82-85)

"The eye of watchful jealousy," he goes on to say, "robs my desire of the means t' enjoy her favour." Strozza suggests that he "suborn some servant" to carry messages, and as this leads to the corruption of the steward Bassiolo, Chapman with one stroke ties comic and non-comic threads together.

As Strozza and Vincentio discuss Vincentio's chances of seeing Margaret--Vincentio and Margaret are, by the way, in love as the play

opens--they inevitably express concern about Medice, the ignoble counselor of the Duke. The character of Medice is an interesting and a curious one. There is something unmistakably sinister about him. He is a dark figure always in attendance upon the Duke; he is the Duke's adviser, his lackey, and his spy. Even the Duke appears to be contemptuous of him, yet apparently the Duke cannot do without him. He is abused by just about everyone, and before we see him actually plotting destruction we have to assume he is a wretch only because others say so. He is ridiculed because his clothes are shabby, and for his inability to read and write. He is called "Lord Stinkard" more than once, and in general is so described that we feel there is an unremovable foulness about his person that is both physical and moral. I think that Medice could accurately be described as an objectification of the Duke's own base qualities. Once Medice has been cast off (banished) the Duke is whole again. The great hatred, stemming from sexual jealousy, between father and son can thus be vented on the scapegoat Medice. All the disgust Vincentio should feel for his father can thus fall upon the nasty and surreptitious figure of Medice. When the Duke overhears his son talking intimately to Margaret, when in other words he realizes that his son has been before him with Margaret, he is blinded with vindictive jealousy and gives Medice license to kill Vincentio. Once Medice has left to execute his orders, the Duke repents and once he has done so, Medice is no longer necessary, for the father now willingly desires to be restored to his son. For almost killing Vincentio (and it is of course the Duke, not Medice who has really been responsible), Medice is banished. At the end of the play it is discovered, and very

appropriately, that Medice was an imposter, that he was only masquerading as a nobleman. The characteristics in other words which Medice represented were "imposters" in the breast of a rational ruler and a true father, and had to be expunged. Medice is a kind of Satan figure at the ear of the Duke corrupting him and creating dissension between him and his son and between him and his subjects. He is in other words an embodiment of a diabolic impulse. The Duke must of his own choice be brought to see that the Medice within himself must be exorcised. Notice how Medice is described by Strozza and Vincentio:

> Stro. The Duke has none for him, but Medice,
> That fustian lord, who in his buckram face
> Bewrays, in my conceit, a map of baseness.
> Vin. Ay, there's a parcel of unconstrued stuff,
> That unknown minion rais'd to honour's height,
> Without the help of virtue, or of art
> Or (to say true) of any honest part.
> Oh, how he shames my father! He goes like
> A prince's footman, in old-fashioned silks,
> And most times in his hose and doublet only;
> So miserable, that his own few men
> Do beg by virtue of his livery;
> For he gives none, for any service done him,
> Or any honour, any least reward.
> Stro. 'Tis pity such should live about a prince:
> I would have such a noble counterfeit nail'd
> Upon the pillory, and, after, whipp'd
> For his adultery with nobility.
> Vin. Faith, I would fain disgrace him by all means,
> As enemy to his base-bred ignorance,
> That, being a great lord, cannot write nor read.
> (I, i, 107-127)

Medice, immoral and consummately nasty, is akin to the dark, evil villain who stalks the Jacobean stage. In the world of Jacobean tragedy this figure characteristically spreads great disaster and evil into the lives of even the innocent. By presenting Medice as an object of ridicule, scorn, and contempt, and by making him the object of practical jokes, Chapman is deliberately robbing Medice of some of his evil

potency. A semi-comic figure lacks the dramatic capacity to arouse the vicarious fear that we feel in the presence of a powerful, inexorable evil. The more we can laugh at a figure, the less we fear him. Chapman very obviously from the first sought to avoid the seriousness and tragedy that would be reflected in a course of action based on the satanic reduction: "Evil, be thou my good."

Because Medice cannot read or write, Strozza says to Vincentio, "...we'll follow the blind side of him/ And make it sometimes subject of our mirth." And somewhat later, when the Duke arrives to court Lasso's daughter, Margaret, Medice is ridiculed and humiliated by Strozza and Vincentio for not being able to deliver a memorized speech in which he was to address Margaret on behalf of the Duke. And yet when, near the end of the play, we see Medice's real capacity for evil begin to take the shape of action, he is surprisingly sinister for one who is both a comic butt and an unprincipled figure of evil.

Medice is then the Duke's evil counselor; listening to him the Duke succumbs to evil impulses, but, except near the end, the atmosphere of the play is never permitted to grow very dark. Medice in fact, until near the end, is a shadowy figure who pads about almost unnoticed, waiting to perform an evil act.

The "real" human impulses of love and jealousy which Chapman treats in the serious plot are embodied in a world that has about it an atmosphere of "unreality."[1] That is, Chapman creates an atmosphere

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[1]Weidner, p. 125: "One can take the play seriously only if one does not take it literally. The Duke is a leader in a community set in a dramatically idealized world. In the ideal world of this play a change of attitude is enough to promote the cures for all the serious wounds of the flesh and soul. This is the stuff of a dream world which is the symbolic norm for our real world."

that is stylized and deliberately non-realistic and releases "real" passions into it. For example, it is possible to say in any number of ways that a group of people are going to hunt boars today. However, once the decision to say this in blank verse is made, "realism" as we understand the word today, is sacrificed. Strozza, in the opening scene of the first act, talking to his nephew Poggio who has forgotten about a proposed hunt, puts it this way:

> You quite forget that we must rouse to-day
> The sharp-tusk'd boar; and blaze our huntsmanship
> Before the Duke.
> (I, i, 19-21)

These lines could, as far as I know, have appeared in any one of hundreds of plays from this period. I do not wish to pause here to discuss the aesthetics of Elizabethan and Jacobean blank verse but only to make clear the kind of atmosphere Chapman introduces as a background against which the courting of Margaret by the Duke and Vincentio takes place, and as a background into which evil is eventually unleashed.

When the Duke and his retinue arrive at Lasso's, they enact to music an "amorous device" in which the Duke indicates that he is "bound" in love to Margaret. (Notice the stage directions for this scene: "Enter Enchanter, with spirits singing; after them Medice like Sylvanus, next the Duke bound, Vincentio, Strozza, with others.") The enchanter is speaking as the scene gets underway:

> Lady or Princess, both your choice commands,
> These spirits and I, all servants of your beauty,
> Present this royal captive to your mercy.
> (I, ii, 52-54)

Shortly afterwards Strozza delivers a fanciful speech on how the Duke, that same morning, while hunting, had chased a boar into a spring where

...on the sudden strangely vanishing,
Nymph-like, for him, out of the waves arose
Your sacred figure, like Diana arm'd,
And (as in purpose of the beast's revenge)
Discharg'd an arrow through his Highness' breast,
Whence yet no wound or any blood appear'd
With which the angry shadow left the light;
And this enchanter, with his power of spirits,
Brake from a cave, scattering enchanted sounds,
That strook us senseless, while in these strange bands
These cruel spirits thus enchain'd him arms,
And led him captive to your heavenly eyes...
(I, ii, 100-111)

Now of course this "amorous device" of the Duke's is meant to be fanciful and is therefore deliberately "unreal." But it is far closer to the life that is being lived in the play than it is to the "real" life outside the play. Immediately following the Duke's little drama, for instance, he says to Margaret, "I rest no less your captive then before;/ For me untying, you have tied me more." Preparations are got underway almost immediately for a little masque which the Duke and several others are to present later in the day. Again the purpose is to woo Margaret symbolically. I will return to the "romance" parts of the play later and say something further about what I have called an atmosphere of "unreality."

Against these preparations Vincentio, on Strozza's advice, so flatters and cajoles the vanity of Bassiolo that he soon makes him a go-between who agrees to help arrange a meeting with Margaret. The scenes in which the steward Bassiolo is won over to Vincentio and Margaret are superb comedy. Step by step Bassiolo is led on, victimized by his own vanity, becoming more and more puffed up with self-esteem, until he is reduced to a puppet eager to execute his master's will. Vincentio is forced, in other words, to take action to thwart the intentions of his father and Medice, and in taking action he and Margaret as well

find it necessary to adopt a measure of cunning and artifice. Skipping over the lengthy but never tedious gulling of Bassiolo by Vincentio and Margaret, we find that Medice has suddenly decided, without much apparent motivation, to have Strozza killed. (Strozza seems to represent those qualities an ideal father and ruler should possess. He becomes by the end of the play, at any rate, the spokesman for a philosophy of wisdom that the Duke has lacked. Also he has befriended in a paternal way, the young Prince Vincentio from the first.) Medice gives instructions to his henchman:

> Tomorrow, then the Duke intends to hunt,
> Where Strozza, my despiteful enemy,
> Will give attendance busy in the chase;
> Wherein (as if by chance, when others shoot
> At the wild boar) do thou discharge at him,
> And with an arrow cleave his canker'd heart.
> (II, i, 7-12)

Here at last is an overt act of evil. The forces of good and of evil have by this time already aligned themselves: over against the Duke and Medice stand the lovers and Strozza and his wife Cynanche. Bassiolo, along with the other fools, is actually outside the arena where moral values are being attacked and defended. How, then, was Chapman to work out a "solution" to this conflict? It is apparent from the first of the play that sooner or later the Duke will come to know of his son's furtive courtship and that he will then seek to punish him. The son clearly cannot be killed in the play, nor can the father win Margaret in marriage. The father must be brought to see his own folly and to voluntarily renounce his interest in Margaret. How though is the evil of Medice and even of the Duke to be countered by the lovers? Chapman's solution may be an unspoken admission that only in art can true lovers and their virtuous and highly principled supporters win physical, moral,

and political victories over corrupt rulers. Evil, in other words, is countered, at least philosophically, by the divine intuitions and god-like foreknowledge that Strozza is granted after he has learned to submit to heaven. The good are given moral courage in the struggle against evil by receiving, if not help from God, at least a sign from Him.

When Strozza is brought in from the hunt seriously wounded and in great pain from an assassin's arrow, he rages at "brutish life" and at "the pains that plague" it. His mood is suicidally bitter as his wife Cynanche attempts to assuage him with doctrine that is both Stoic and Christian. "Oh, hold, my lord!" she tells him

> This is no Christian part,
> Nor yet scarce manly, when your mankind foe,
> Imperious Death, shall make your groans his trumpets
> To summon resignation of Life's fort,
> To fly without resistance; you must force
> A countermine of fortitude, more deep
> Than this poor mine of pains, to blow him up,
> And spite of him live victor, though subdu'd;
> Patience in torment is a valour....
> (IV, i, 48-56)

She continues to urge philosophy upon him but for a while Strozza is adamant:

> I'll break away, and leap into the sea,
> Or from some turret cast me headlong down
> To shiver this frail carcase into dust.
> (IV, i, 73-75)

She entreats him to "resolve on humble sufferance," and says that her "counsels" will continue until they "salve" his "pagan sin" of suicidal despair with "Christian patience." Dogma has entered the play and Chapman is concerned to keep it in, because, he perhaps felt, it is dogma that teaches resistance to evil and to tyranny. It is with dogma, in other words, that Chapman here counters evil. The next time we see

Strozza he has become reconciled with God through his wife's teachings:

> Come near me, wife; I fare the better far
> For the sweet food of thy divine advice.
> Let no man value at a little price
> A virtuous woman's counsel; her wing'd spirit
> Is feather'd oftentimes with heavenly words.
> (IV, iii, 2-6)

And later in the same passage:

> Oh, what a treasure is a virtuous wife,
> Discreet and loving! Not one gift on earth
> Makes a man's life so highly bound to heaven.
> (IV, iii, 11-13)

His doctor did nothing for him; it was Cynanche's advice that "cured" him, even though his wound continues to give him pain:

> Cynanche, thy advice hath made me well;
> My free submission to the hand of Heaven
> Makes it redeem me from the rage of pain.
> For though I know the malice of my wound
> Shoots still the same distemper through my veins,
> Yet the judicial patience I embrace
> (In which my mind spreads her impassive powers
> Through all my suff'ring parts) expels their frailty;
> And rendering up their whole life to my soul,
> Leaves me nought else but soul; and so like her,
> Free from the passions of my fuming blood.
> (IV, iii, 42-52)

Except for the strong stoical note, thought similar to this had already appeared in Chapman's comedies and is part of the Christian neo-Platonism that was apparently a familiar part of his own thinking. Strozza's next remarks, however, introduce something new in Chapman's comedies. Also these remarks help establish the atmosphere of unreality that I have mentioned before:

> Humility hath rais'd me to the stars;
> In which (as in a sort of crystal globes)
> I sit and see things hid from human sight.
> Ay, even the very accidents to come
> Are present with my knowledge; the seventh day
> The arrow-head will fall out of my side.
> The seventh day, wife, the forked head will out.
> (IV, iii, 61-67)

Continuing, he says:

> I'll teach my physician
> To build his cures hereafter upon Heaven
> More than on earthly med'cines; for I know
> Many things shown me from the open'd skies
> That pass all arts.
>
> (IV, iii, 71-75)

The Christian symbolism is obvious. Chapman is here working on a way to present in comic drama the power of good over evil. The forces of good are, through the figure of Strozza, linked with heaven. Strozza now "knows" that evil is about to befall Vincentio and he is therefore able to warn him: "...you have many perils to endure:/ Great is your danger...." Chapman then grants to the good, magical powers of knowledge and clairvoyance.

Immediately following the scene in which Strozza has acquired miraculous powers, the evil Medice is encouraging the Duke to cast off his son:

> Duke. Why should the humorous boy forsake the chase,
> As if he took advantage of my absence
> To some act that my presence would offend?
> Med. I warrant you, my lord,'tis to that end;
> And I believe he wrongs you in your love.
> Children, presuming on their parents' kindness,
> Care not what unkind actions they commit
> Against their quiet: and were I as you,
> I would affright my son from these bold parts,
> And father him as I found his deserts.
> Duke. I swear I will: and can I prove he aims
> At any interruption in my love,
> I'll interrupt his life.
>
> (IV, iv, 1-13)

Here the father threatens to kill his son if he discovers in him a sexual rival. Medice, the Duke's alter ego, continues, like a figure in a dream, to spread the poison of his hate for the "enemies" of the Duke. When the Duke does discover that his son is his rival he is

blinded with passion:

> Passion of death!
> See, see, Lord Medice, my trait'rous son
> Hath long joy'd in the favours of my love;
> Woe to the womb that bore him....
> (IV, iv, 32-35)

If what the Duke now suspects "be true, the trait'rous boy shall die."

Medice, clearly functioning as an objectification of the father's own sexual jealousy, continues to lie damagingly about Vincentio. Here, in the presence of the Duke, Medice explains to Lasso that he should not be so certain that his daughter is not interested in Vincentio:

> You must not be too confident, my lord,
> Or in your daughter or in them that guard her,
> The Prince is politic, and envies his father;
> And though not for himself, nor any good
> Intended to your daughter, yet because
> He knows 'twould kill his father, he would seek her.
> (V, i, 8-13)

At about this point the play reaches a climax. Medice, the Duke, Lasso, and Cortezza (the old drunken sister of Lasso, who has been a spy for Medice) are in hiding awaiting a meeting between Vincentio and Margaret, who soon arrive with their go-between, Bassiolo, the gentleman usher of Lasso. In this scene Bassiolo is exposed. Indeed he becomes in the comic action a scapegoat serving much the same function that Medice will serve shortly hereafter in the serious action when he too becomes a scapegoat. Bassiolo's reputation as a loyal and competent steward is here shattered. In a sense Bassiolo is a personification of human folly; Margaret has said of him:

> ...he's not only
> My father's usher, but the world's beside,
> Because he goes before it all in folly.
> (IV, ii, 118-120)

Much earlier in the play Strozza, in describing to Vincentio the way

to gain Bassiolo to his cause, said this of him:

> He hath two inward swallowing properties
> Of any gudgeons, servile avarice
> And overweening thought of his own worth,
> Ready to snatch at every shade of glory:
> And therefore, till you can directly board him,
> Waft him aloof with hats and other favours
> Still as you meet him.
>
> (I, ii, 71-77)

From that time forward Bassiolo's mask had been stripped off continually, as he became the pompous and vain gull of Vincentio and Margaret. Pledging eternal fidelity to them and pocketing a jewel and innumerable meretricious praises from Vincentio for his friendship, Bassiolo tries to desert them at the first sign that they have been found out. He is prevented from doing so only because Margaret and Vincentio threaten to expose him for his villainy, and the evidence they have against him incites him to a perfect frenzy of new devotion to them. Bassiolo in other words is the comic egotist with a taste of avarice in him who, feigning loyalty to all is loyal to none except himself. He, like Lorenzo in May-Day performs a function that seems to be cathartic in that he seems to drain off, as it were, the folly of those who observe him. Or put another way, he represents human folly in the gross. When he is exposed to everyone, as he is in the climactic scene, which I am hastening to get to, his dissembling and his treachery are brought to the surface and exposed. Folly is thus, in a sense, defeated. Bassiolo, who is here speaking to Vincentio and Margaret, is unaware that he is being overheard by Duke Alphonso, Medice, Lasso, and Cortezza:

> Bas. Dispatch, sweet whelps: the bug, the Duke, comes
> straight: Oh, 'tis a grave old lover, that same Duke.
> And chooses minions rarely, if you mark him,
> The noble Medice, that man, that Bobadilia,
> That foolish knave, that hose and doublet stinkard.

Med. 'Swounds, my lord, rise, let's endure no more!
Alp. A little, pray, my lord, for I believe
We shall discover very notable knavery.
Las. Alas, how I am griev'd and sham'd in this!
Cor. Never care you, lord brother, there's no harm done!
Bas. But that sweet creature, my good lord's sister,
Madam Cortezza, she, the noblest dame
That ever any vein of honour bled;
There were a wife, now, for my lord the Duke,
Had he the grace to choose her; but indeed,
To speak her true praise, I must use some study.
Cor. Now truly, brother, I did ever think
This man the honestest man that e'er you kept.
Las. So, sister, so; because he praises you.
Cor. Nay, sir, but you shall hear him further yet.
Bas. Were not her head sometimes a little light,
And so unapt for matter of much weight,
She were the fittest and the worthiest dame
To leap a window and to break her neck that ever was.
Cor. God's pity, arrant knave.'
I ever thought him a dissembling varlet.
(V, i, 53-79)

That much of what Bassiolo says here has truth in it only confirms, so it would appear to me, his role of comic scapegoat. The audience itself is here looking on the eavesdroppers who in turn are looking on as Bassiolo is discovered for what he is, a smug back-biting dissembler who says whatever he thinks will win him credit with his listeners. Bassiolo pretends to see the Duke coming just to frighten the lovers. When he succeeds in frightening them he tells himself, "Ah, I do domineer, and rule the roost."

Bassiolo's vanity and self-delusion are at a height when the Duke at the prompting of Medice and Cortezza (who is a kind of female Medice) steps forth. He is advised by both Medice and Cortezza as to how to dispose of his errant son, Vincentio:

Med. What says your Highness?
Can you endure these injuries any more?
Duke. No more, no more! Advise me what is best
To be the penance of my graceless son.
Med. My lord, no mean but death or banishment

> Can be fit penance for him if you mean
> T'enjoy the pleasure of your love yourself.
> Cor. Give himplain death, my lord, and then y'are sure.
> (V, i, 114-121)

The Duke then orders Medice to kill or banish Vincentio, who has fled, and running to Margaret, says he will pardon all if she will love him. She informs him that she and Vincentio are plighted lovers. The Duke is not pleased:

> Despiteful dame, I'll disinherit him,
> And thy good father here shall cast off thee,
> And both shall feed on air, or starve, and die.
> (V, i, 146-148)

Margaret's answer goes unheard by the Duke and her father Lasso:

> If this be justice, let it be our dooms:
> If free and spotless love in equal years,
> With honours unimpaired deserve such ends,
> Let us approve what justice is in friends.
> (V, i, 149-152)

Margaret then beseeches heaven to "save my love," and is taken to her room where she is to be held prisoner. At this point in the action the Duke takes the first step that will lead him to regeneration: guiltily pondering the effects of his passion, he moderates his desire for vengeance against his son by ordering a servant to hasten to Medice with orders "to use no violence to...[Vincentio's] life." "Evil" forces are apparently in complete control. Strozza is still in bed with his wounds; the lovers have been separated, and Vincentio is in danger of his life. In the next scene, however, we are reminded again that heaven supports the good, for Strozza is here describing how on the seventh day the arrow fell from his side. He says, furthermore, that he foresaw "this divine event." The doctor believes him and calls Strozza's recovery a "Christian precedent" which confirms "what a most sacred med'cine patience is." Strozza

then addresses his wife and somewhat didactically relates her virtues:

> Sweet wife, thou restest my good angel still,
> Suggesting by all means these ghostly counsels.
> Thou weariest not thy husband's patient ears
> With motions for new fashions in attire,
> For change of jewels, pastimes, and nice cates,
> Nor studiest eminence and the higher place
> Amongst thy consorts, like all other dames;
> But knowing more worthy objects appertain
> To every woman that desires t'enjoy
> A blessed life in marriage, thou contemn'st
> Those common pleasures, and pursu'st the rare,
> Using thy husband in those virtuous gifts,
> For which thou first didst choose him, and thereby
> Cloy'st not with him, but lov'st him endlessly.
> (V, ii, 17-30)

As heaven has been engaged on the side of the good, we are virtually guaranteed that they will come to no harm. Yet the good still appear to be the helpless victims of the Duke and Medice. Cortezza tells Margaret that Vincentio has been killed, and she replies that "...it cannot be/ That Heaven should suffer such impiety." Cortezza swears it is true and urges her to accept the Duke. When Margaret, believing Vincentio to be dead, decides to mutilate her face, Cortezza, a comic-sinister temptress figure, and old and ugly herself, hands her an ointment which will disfigure her face. Margaret thereupon spreads it over her face and quickly destroys her beauty. Her only reason for doing this is that she desires to suffer because her lover is dead and because it will horrify the Duke who has, she says, "eaten his own child with the jaws of lust." Margaret then runs to the Duke and speaks in bitter accusation against him:

> Tyrant, behold how thou hast us'd thy love!
> See, thief to nature, thou hast kill'd and robb'd,
> Kill'd what myself kill'd, robb'd what makes thee poor.
> Beauty (a lover's treasure) thou hast lost,
> Where none can find it; all a poor maid's dower
> Thou hast forc'd from me; all my joy and hope.

No man will love me more; all dames excel me.
This ugly thing is now no more a face,
Nor any vile form in all earth resembled,
But thy foul tyranny; for which all the pains
Two faithful lovers feel, that thus are parted,
All joys they might have felt, turn all to pains;
All a young virgin thinks she does endure
To love her lover and beauty, on thy heart
Be heap'd and press'd down till thy soul depart.
(V, iv, 12-26)

Before the Duke has had time to speak a messenger arrives with the news that Medice countermanded the Duke's orders and, attempting to kill Vincentio, wounded him seriously. The messenger also tells the Duke, "...your subjects breathe/ Gainst your unnatural fury..." Strozza then storms into the Duke's presence with the wounded Vincentio and denounces the Duke:

Where is the tyrant? Let me strike his eyes
into his brain with horror of an object.
See, pagan Nero, see how thou hast ripp'd
Thy better bosom, rooted up that flower
From whence thy now spent life should spring anew.
(V, iv, 40-44)

Strozza too speaks with the voice of virtue:

A virtuous man is subject to no prince,
But to his soul and honour; which are laws
That carry fire and sword within themselves,
Never corrupted, never out of rule.
(V, iv, 59-62)

The Duke is shamed. "How thick and heavily my plagues descend," he remarks, and tells Strozza to "...pour more rebuke upon me.../ For I have guilt...." The Duke is suddenly cured of his passion for Margaret and of his desire to persecute his son:

Believe then, son
And know me pierc'd as deeply with thy wounds:
And pardon, virtuous lady, that have lost
The dearest treasure proper to your sex,
Ay, me, it seems by my unhappy means!
Oh, would to God, I could with present cure

> Of these unnatural wounds, and moaning right
> Of this abused beauty, join you both
> (As last I left you) in eternal nuptials.
> (V, iv, 79-87)

Since the Duke from the first was meant to be a reclaimable, and corrigible figure, it has been necessary for him to make the discovery that Medice, a personification of his own evil nature, had to be rejected. Vincentio speaks of this as he addresses his father:

> My lord, I know the malice of this man Medice
> Not your unkind consent, hath us'd us thus.
> (V, iv, 88-89)

Medice, after he is made to confess that he is not really a nobleman but an opportunist imposter, is banished by the Duke:

> Hence then; be ever banish'd from my rule,
> And live a monster, loath'd of all the world.
> (V iv, 274-275)

Also once the Duke's reformation has occurred (as a result of a recognition of his own guilt and complicity), the lovers symbolically are united. It is not really surprising, then, that a physician appears on stage with a nostrum that restores Margaret's beauty--despite the fact that Vincentio has indicated that, as his love was for her virtues, it did not abate when her beauty had vanished. Thus the true lovers are joined happily; old Strozza has learned a heavenly discipline, and the Duke has learned to govern his own evil impulses.

Chapman, I think wisely, did not have the Duke cast off the worst part of his own nature as a result of divine intervention into the action but as a result of his own perception of the price his villainy was making him pay. Strozza, it is, true, is in touch with heaven, but this communion with the divine is a testament that the values Chapman is upholding in the play have a supernatural sanction; not that evil, even in art, is going to become ineffectual in the presence of such

value. Thus the miraculous powers given Strozza, and the magical cure of Margaret's carbuncles have nothing to do with the change that occurs in the moral character of the Duke.

In stressing so heavily the serious action of the play, I have given the impression that the play is graver than it is. I have deliberately done so, however, to make clear that Chapman has attempted to do something in his comedy that he has not done before, and that is to deal with the problem of character development--development in which there is registered dramatically growth from moral blindness to a level of perception that is characterized by moral insight. Folly, vanity, and evil must at some point be sloughed off, and for this reason Bassiolo and Medice must be sacrificed. The only fool who remains at the end of the play is Poggio, the simpleton who, unlike Bassiolo, lacks sufficient wit to be able to hurt anyone. He is harmlessly amusing and, because he does not mirror the fool within, can be tolerated and enjoyed by the virtuous. Medice, on the other hand, as he reflects the evil within, has to be banished. The Duke ends the play with instructions to his son:

> Then take thy love which heaven with all joys bless,
> And make ye both mirrors of happiness.
> (V, iv, 296-297)

The preceding discussion of The Gentleman Usher seems to contradict the statement made earlier about the widening breach in Chapman's comedies between the physical world and the spiritual world, a breach which is expressed dramatically in the bifurcation of serious, romantic elements and comic elements. It seems to me, however, that The Gentleman Usher is a profound statement of the bifurcation, despite the interrelationship I have described between comic and non-comic elements.

Look, for example, at Strozza. He is able to achieve a personal communion with God; yet though he knows through divine intuition that evil of some sort is to befall Margaret and Vincentio, aside from warning them (and his warning is of no help whatsoever to them), he is utterly unable to intervene in behalf of justice and virtue. Margaret and Vincentio themselves are defenseless against the evil cunning of Medice and the irrational tyranny of Duke Alphonso. Strozza, in other words, is almost completely aloof from the action--an action that takes place in a society ruled by a temporarily blind Duke who in his blindness becomes the tool of evil on earth. And the innocent lovers are at the end, despite the fact that they have taken active roles in the world to combat evil, unable to protect themselves. The sheer helplessness of the good--at the end of the play--indicates the fragility of what they represent (virtue, right conduct, love). The virtuous are saved at the end--and the unpredictability of such an eleventh hour salvation in actual life must have occurred to Chapman--they are saved only because the Duke has a volitional change of heart. If in other words the ruler fails to perceive within himself a moral center then the Vincentios, the Margarets, and the Strozzas of the world are doomed. If anything, then, The Gentleman Usher documents, not Chapman's loss of faith in his own philosophical and religious values, but in what may have been his growing awareness of their absence from the concerns and lives of men in society.

Chapman's combination of non-satiric elements with the satiric material that he had constructed entire dramas of heretofore[1] is

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[1] An Humourous Day's Mirth (except for the Dowsecer scenes) and All Fools (except for Valerio's Platonism).

continued in Monsieur D'Olive, written about the same time as The Gentleman Usher. The insertion of the non-satiric theme of moral regeneration is sufficient, I think, to let The Gentleman Usher be labeled a tragicomedy; and in Monsieur D'Olive Chapman does not completely abandon the tragicomic motive of moral regeneration, though he falls back on the structural dichotomy apparent, for example, in Sir Giles, in which neo-Platonic doctrine floats in serene, cloud-like independence above the world of comic action. It is quite possible that on account of the brilliance of Chapman's comic character D'Olive, the serious and romantic plot, suffering as the play progressed from D'Olive's refusal to assume a subaltern dramatic position, became somewhat neglected and hence ineffectual, but I will argue that there are deeper reasons lying in Chapman's apparent difficulty--as it is expressed in the comedies at any rate--in reconciling his philosophy with life. In any case Monsieur D'Olive provides us with one more statement of the Platonist's aloofness from the world and of the satirist's concern in it. This dilemma is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

MONSIEUR D'OLIVE

In The Gentleman Usher Chapman had abandoned his practice of having a central figure who manipulated and directed the action.[1] This change in structure is indicative of a shift in emphasis. In satiric comedy, whether in the tradition of Old Comedy or New Comedy, the fools must be brought to reveal their own foolishness either through action or conversation or both. The fools, in other words, must be baited or gulled and comic action must be arranged. The figure who performs these functions is not an uncommom character in satiric comedy. At least one such figure had appeared in each of Chapman's previous comedies. Once, however, the comic dramatist introduces the theme of moral regeneration into his play and permits it to dominate his drama, he alters the whole texture of satire, for once repentance enters satire departs, and once there is repentance the presence of moral choice and of evil is acknowledged. In a word, this kind of drama, as it is not conceived to unmask imposters and ridicule fools, is not funny. For there to be a central figure in such a drama who directs the action so as to bring about the regeneration of character, the old comic

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[1]Boas, p. 19, says that there is missing in The Gentleman Usher "what had hitherto been the most distinctive figure in Chapman's comedies--a character who holds in his hands all the threads of the action. Instead in...Bassiolo, he is almost caricatured."

intriguer, the Irus of The Blind Beggar, the Lemot of An Humourous Day's Mirth, the Rinaldo of All Fools, the Lodovico of May-Day, would probably have to give way to a figure something like that of Prospero in The Tempest. In other words, there could still be a central controlling figure, but his function would clearly be unlike that of the comic plotter who baits and gulls fools and arranges future action, for whereas the Prospero figure attempts to make man aware of his own potentiality for moral improvement, the comic plotter is primarily interested in exploiting man's capacity for folly. The former impulse is basic to tragicomedy; the latter to satiric drama. In The Gentleman Usher and in Monsieur D'Olive Chapman draws on both, though in Monsieur D'Olive Chapman, characteristically perhaps, does not achieve the harmony of interrelationship between serious and comic that had appeared in The Gentleman Usher.

Though there is no central, controlling figure in Chapman's previous comedy, The Gentleman Usher, Margaret and Vincentio do bait and gull Bassiolo and in doing so perform the function of the structurally central comic intriguer, but they are both utterly helpless to control the action in the serious plot. In Monsieur D'Olive, written probably in 1604, Chapman returns to the old, dramatically central figure who binds the various plot threads together; however, this time he divides the function among three characters: two belong exclusively to the comic action and one belongs exclusively to the serious action. This division coincides perfectly with an almost symmetrically balanced split between the serious plot and the comic plot, which are virtually distinct throughout the play. The play in fact falls into halves, each with its own plot, with little or no connection between the two. In each of

the five acts there are two scenes.[1] In each act the first scene involves the serious characters, the second, the comic; in the second scene of the fifth act, the characters from both the comic and the serious plots are summoned on stage together, but this represents the shadow, not the substance of cohesion. Chapman apparently made no attempt to bring the two plots together, for though they succeed one another throughout the play with structural regularity, thematically they seem autonomously discrete. Chapman in fact seems to be driving the same number of nails into two different houses. In this respect the play seems inferior to The Gentleman Usher and in technique seems to antedate it. Chapman appears almost to be writing by a formula which called mechanically for two more or less equal parts: the serious-romantic, and the comic (though almost a third again as many lines are given to the comic plot as to the serious). The breach between a serious, Platonically oriented action, and a comic-absurd one has at last been defined in a structural dichotomy.

The first act promises more than the rest of the play fulfills. Here for the only time in the play the two worlds, comic and serious, corresponding roughly to what might be called the actual and ideal, are undivided. Vandome, the figure who controls the action in the serious plot, has just returned after a three years' absence to find his sister dead and her husband, the Count St. Anne, withdrawn from the world, necrophilically preserving and worshipping his dead wife's body. Vandome also discovers that his Platonic mistress, Marcellina, wife of

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[1] Technically speaking there is only one scene in Act I, but about midway through it the serious characters exit and comic characters enter.

Count Vaumont, has withdrawn herself from society because her husband had falsely suspected that Vandome was more than a virtuous friend to her. Her sister, Eurione, is reluctantly sharing Marcellina's voluntary exile from society. These "pathologies," as we would call them today, of St. Anne and Marcellina, are described in detail and deserve some attention, as it will be Vandome's function in the serious part of the play to restore, through what he calls "policy," his Platonic mistress to her husband and thus to life, and to bring St. Anne out of his obsession with unholy death rites. In a quite literal sense, then, Vandome is to be the agent by which two virtuous but misdirected people are returned to the world of the living.

Count Vaumont describes what has occurred between him and his wife (to the newly arrived Vandome) since Vandome's departure some three years previous:

> You know my wife is by the rights of courtship
> Your chosen mistress, and she not dispos'd
> (As other ladies are) to entertain
> Peculiar terms with common acts of kindness;
> But (knowing in her more than women's judgment
> That she should nothing wrong her husband's right,
> To use a friend, only for virtue chosen,
> With all the rights of friendship) took such care
> After the solemn parting to your travel,
> And spake of you with such exceeding passion,
> That I grew jealous....
>
> (I, i, 75-85)

And that she in return

> ...by her violent apprehension
> Of her deep wrong and yours...hath vow'd
> Never to let the common pandress light
> (Or any doom as vulgar) censure her
> In any action she leaves subject to them,
> Never to fit the day with her attire,
> Nor grace it with her presence, nourish in it
> (Unless with sleep) nor stir out of her chamber;
> And so hath muffled and mew'd up her beauties

In never-ceasing darkness, never sleeping
But in the day, transform'd by her to night
With all sun banish'd from her smother'd graces;
And thus my dear and most unmatched wife
That was a comfort and grace to me,
In every judgment, every company,
I, by false jealousy, have no less than lost,
Murther'd her living, and entomb'd her quick.
(I, i, 98-114)

To a modern reader Marcellina's zeal to protect her own purity of intention, may suggest that the Count's jealousy was not altogether unfounded, but Chapman, without our knowledge of the unconscious, intended, I would say, no such thing. The Count, deeply repentent of his own mistrustfulness, implores Vandome to help restore his wife to him. He feels, however, that his wife, as she has been wronged "past all comparison," has sufficient cause for her action. Vandome does not agree:

Virtue is not malicious; wrong done her
Is righted ever when men grant they err.
(I, i, 125-126)

Count Vaumont, then, though he belongs to the world his wife has forsaken, is clearly a character of worth, and though belatedly, one who trusts in virtue.

Vandome is told that his sister has been dead for some time and that his brother-in-law, St. Anne is still paying his singular obsequies. Count Vaumont is speaking:

Vaum. St. Anne strives with Death, and from his caves
Of rest retains his wife's dead corse amongst the living;
For with the rich sweets of restoring balms
He keeps her looks as fresh as if she liv'd,
And in his chamber (as in life attir'd)
She in a chair sits leaning on her arm,
As if she only slept; and at her feet
He, like a mortified hermit clad,
Sits weeping out his life, as having lost
All his life's comfort; and that, she being dead

(Who was his greatest part) he must consume
As in an apoplexy strook with death.
Nor can the Duke nor Duchess comfort him,
Nor messengers with consolatory letters
From the kind King of France, who is allied
To her and you. But to lift all his thoughts
Up to another world where she expects him,
He feeds his ears with soul-exciting music,
Solemn and tragical, and so resolves
In those sad accents to exhale his soul.
(I, i, 154-173)

Vandome describes this new piece of news as a "second ruthless sea of woes," and decides that after mourning a day he will begin at once to restore the dead to the living. He decides to go first to his mistress to make her see "How much her too much curious virtue wrongs her." Vaumont thereupon tells him that he is as welcome as "new lives" to "us" and that "our good now shall wholly be ascrib'd...to you." Vandome then is indispensable to the action and theme of the serious plot; and his two "problems" have been clearly defined.

After Vandome and Vaumont exit the characters who are going to control the comic action, Roderigue and Mugeron, walk on stage. In addition to their discussion of the self-imprisoned Marcellina some commentary on the times is made. Mugeron defends the purity and virtue of Marcellina, but the cynical Roderigue says that her behavior is a piece with the corruption of the times.

Mug. Can any heart of adamant not yield in compassion to see spotless innocency suffer such bitter penance?
Rod. A very fit stock to graff on! Tush, man, think what she is, think where she lives, think on the villanous cunning of these times! Indeed, did we live now in old Saturn's time, when women had no other art than what Nature taught 'em (and yet there needs little art, I wis, to teach a woman to dissemble); when luxury was unborn, at least untaught the art to steal from a forbidden tree; when coaches, when periwigs and painting, when masks and masking, in a word, when court and courting was unknown, an easy mist might then, perhaps, have wrought upon my sense, as it does now on the poor Countess and thine.

Mug. O World!
Rod. O Flesh!
Mug. O Devil!
Rod. I tell thee, Mugeron, the Flesh is grown so great with the Devil, as there's but a little honesty left i'th' world. That that is, is in lawyers, they engross all. 'Sfoot, what gave the first fire to the Count's jealousy?
Mug. What but his misconstruction of her honourable affection to Vandome?
Rod. Honourable affection? First she's an ill huswife of her honour, that puts it upon construction. But the presumption was violent against her: no speech but of Vandome, no thought but of his memory, no mirth but in his company, besides the free intercourse of letters, favours, and other entertainments, too manifest signs that her heart went hand in hand with her tongue.
Mug. Why, was she not his mistress?
Rod. Ay, ay, a Court term for I wot what! 'Slight, Vandome, the stallion of the Court, her devoted servant and, forsooth, loves her honourably! Tush, he's a fool that believes it! For my part I love to offend in the better part still, and that is, to judge charitably. But now, forsooth, to redeem her honour she must by a laborious and violent kind of purgation rub off the skin to wash out the spot; turn her chamber to a cell, the sun into a taper, and (as if she lived in another world among the Antipodes) make our night her day, and our day her night, that under this curtain she may lay his jealousy asleep, while she turns poor Argus to Actaeon, and makes his sheets common to her servant Vandome.
Mug. Vandome? Why, he was met i'th' street but even now, newly arrived after three years' travel.
Rod. Newly arrived? He has been arrived this twelvemonth, and has ever since lien close in his mistress' cunning darkness at her service.
Mug. Fie o' the Devil! Who will not Envy slander? Oh, the miserable condition of her sex, born to live under all construction. If she be courteous, sh's thought to be wanton; if she be kind, she's too willing; if coy, too wilful; if she be modest, she's a clown; if she be honest, she's a fool....
(I, i, 207-258)

Roderigue falsely impugns Marcellina's honesty, and slanders both her and Vandome with malice prepense. After this exchange, however (during which there is a fleeting contact between the world inhabited by fools and scoundrels, and the world inhabited by the virtuous), thematic communication between comic and serious plots pretty nearly disappears. Hereafter Roderigue and Mugeron devote all their energies to the gulling of that most wonderful of all Chapman's fools, Monsieur D'Olive who,

introduced at this point in the play, may be one reason why, after the first act, Chapman neglected to maintain the rapprochment between serious and comic themes that he very carefully arranged for in the first act. In a word, Monsieur D'Olive, a magnificent fool, tended to take over the play.[1] If the title of the play is any guide Chapman had in mind from the first a play with Monsieur D'Olive at the center; nevertheless, this does not excuse his failure to integrate serious and comic themes. Of course except for The Gentleman Usher, and even there in a few places Chapman inserts passages of inert didacticism, he has not been successful in doing so.

Now, after having been as severe with Chapman as I am able, I would like to say that, looked at from a slightly different view than the one from which I have been writing, it is possible to see the play as being more closely knit than I have indicated. In this view Vandome could be said to be dealing with a sickness. D'Olive's sickness is his own spectacular vanity and egotism, and his unbounded gullibility. He is in other words, a fool. Thus he is to be tricked and deceived and ridiculed; in short, satirized. The sickness of St. Anne and Marcellina, however, is of another kind altogether. They are both people whose behavior, though misdirected, is based on an honest desire to measure up to the letter and the spirit of their ideals. They are good people who have "humours." Notice, for example, what Vandome says to Marcellina when he bursts uninvited into her chamber:

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[1] I am probably treating a symptom as a cause. Monsieur D'Olive may, so to speak, take over the play, but as has already been pointed out, the collapse of communication between the "two worlds" of Chapman's comedies has made it possible for a comic plot action to exist in virtual if not absolute independence of a serious plot line.

> What hour is this? What fashion? What sad life?
> What superstition of unholy vow?
> What place is this? Oh, shall it e'er be said
> Such perfect judgment should be drown'd in humour?
> Such beauty consecrate to bats and owls?
> (II, i, 73-77)

He goes on to say that he does not want her to die and become "the fable of the scornful world," and asks that she "forbear these humors." Thus at both the comic and the serious levels of action there is conduct which in one way or another is deviate and hence in need of the ocr-rection which Vandome in the serious and Roderigue and Mugeron in the comic action are supplying. Of course, neither Marcellina nor St. Anne is unmasked, because neither is pretending. They are not in other words subjects of satire, as the fools are in the comic action. St. Anne has buried himself with the corpse of his wife because he was devoted to her and feels he does not want to live without her. Marcellina was--at least this is the way Chapman has presented her--so cruelly hurt by the imputation of impurity that she withdrew, presumably forever, from the world. Thus, as there seems to be no real issue involved in her withdrawal (once she comes out of her chamber her part of the story is at an end), her "humour" appears superficial, for it does not really represent an actual human failure or weakness of any meaningful importance. She is, moreover, lured, not reasoned, out of the house by a deceitful trick of Vandome. Once out, her vow to withdraw forever from society is shattered and she is whole again, and is once more restored to her husband. In other words her "recovery" comes about not, as is true of the Duke in The Gentleman Usher, as a result of her own recognition of error but as a result of what is almost a mere practical joke.

Chapman's handling of the St. Anne part of the serious-romantic plot is, I think, much more solid. Vandome conceives his problem here

to consist in the dissipation of St. Anne's

> ...settled melancholy, be it ne'er so grounded
> On rational love and grave philosophy.
> (II, ii, 206-207)

Here again, then, is the good person caught up in an excess that he is admired and honored for. At the feet of his wife's long dead and well-preserved body, the faithful Count, paying lugubrious homage to the woman who was "all his life's comfort," and "his greatest part," plans to "exhale his soul." Again had St. Anne been presented as a kind of Orsino figure in reverse ("If music be the food of death, play on"), Chapman would have created a character whose romantic but pathological absorption to his dead wife's memory would have been presented as an originally genuine emotion that had become in part an affectation. But this is not what Chapman is doing, and it is impertinent to suggest that he should. I think Chapman was virtually incapable of ridiculing characters who were idealists, even if they were somewhat misguided in their behavior. To look at the problem differently for a moment, might it not be suggested that Chapman, a Platonist himself, would be almost predictably in trouble in trying to have a character such as St. Anne (the neo-Platonist who, finding in his wife a personification of a heavenly ideal, therefore loves her soul)--withdraw from his contemplation of her memory to take a new wife? That is, once committed to the ideal of his first wife, to take a new wife would in a sense appear to be tantamount to the abandonment of his ideal, and to the Platonist ideals are timeless. Chapman himself almost certainly could not regard this matter lightly. The neo-Platonist regards the beautiful woman as a mortal embodiment of a permanent ideal, and St. Anne's transfer of

affection from one mortal embodiment to another would, I suppose, not be inconsistent. But dramatically or perhaps "realistically" considered Chapman is ineffectual in persuading his reader that St. Anne's Platonic justification of his shift in affection from his dead wife's memory to the living Eurione--the virtuous woman Vandome has tricked him into falling in love with--is not a rationalization of desire. Chapman seems to acknowledge the difficulty by having St. Anne, and Vandome as well, remind us several times that Eurione looks like St. Anne's dead wife. Symbolically this is true enough: both suggest to St. Anne something eternal beyond the flesh, but realistically considered his transfer of love is not thereby made very convincing. That is to say, St. Anne is willing to take a new wife principally, so it would appear, because in so doing he will be reminded of his first. Still in fairness to Chapman it must be said that St. Anne's morbid commitment to his dead wife's memory was a commitment to death, just as the volitional commitment of Marcellina to a dark chamber was a commitment to death. Vandome's whole purpose in the play is to restore both to love and therefore to life; in so doing Vandome in effect gives to ideals an energy to become operative in a world greatly in need of values.

There is no doubt that though St. Anne is a good man, his service to the memory of his dead wife has become an infirmity. After talking (off-stage) with Vandome he begins to recognize what he is doing to himself. He is speaking here to Vandome:

> You inclin'd me more to leave this life
> Than I suppos'd it possible for an angel;
> Nor is your judgment to suppress your passion
> For so dear lov'd a sister (being as well
> Your blood and flesh, as mine) the least enforcement
> Of your dissuasive arguments. And besides,

> Your true resemblance of her much supplies
> Her want in my affections; with all which
> I feel in these deep griefs, to which I yield
> (A kind of false, sluggish, and rotting sweetness
> Mix'd with an humour where all things in life
> Lie drown'd in sour, wretched, and horrid thoughts)
> The way to cowardly desperation opened;
> And whatsoever urgeth souls accurs'd
> To their destruction, and sometimes their plague,
> So violently gripes me, that I lie
> Whole days and nights bound at his tyranneous feet;
> So that my days are not like life or light,
> But bitterest death, and a continual night.
> (III, i, 1-19)

Despite this recognition, however, St. Anne can still say:

> Alas, I know I cannot love another;
> My heart accustom'd to love only her,
> My eyes accustom'd to view only her,
> Will tell me what soever is not her,
> Is foul and hateful.
> (III, i, 36-40)

When he meets and falls in love with Eurione, he says:

> Dead wife, excuse me, since I love thee still,
> That liv'st in her whom I must love for thee;
> For he that is not mov'd with strongest passion
> In viewing her, that man did ne'er know thee;
> She's thy surviving image....
> (IV, i, 34-38)

Vandome eventually restores, how meaningfully the reader can decide for himself, both St. Anne and Marcellina to love and to life, and hence, to society.

Does this discussion, then, invalidate the statements at the first of this chapter about the essential separateness of value and fact, or of the serious and comic worlds in the play? I do not think so. To me there is still a decisive split between the two worlds of the play, irrespective of the fact that in both actions the theme of human aberration is present. For despite this apparent collaboration of purpose, it probably ought to be recalled that there is almost no

interaction between the two worlds; the characters in each inhabit an arena of impulse, motive, action and desire that is self contained; hence, disregarding negligible exceptions, there are no satiric characters in the serious action and no morally grave and virtuous characters in the comic action. In other words there are two sets of characters and two orbits of value that are not even tangentially related. The misdirected virtuous characters (St. Anne and Marcellina) are returned to the "world" all right, returned, as I have said, "to life," but their life, their world is the antique world of virtue. Their aberrations, once corrected, make it possible for them to re-enter the ideal, "perfect" world from which they originally withdrew. The people in this world do not really have vital connections with the comic-political world of Monsieur D'Olive, a world which might be described as a comic "imitation" of the actual world. Thus, as I see it, the two "interpretations" of the play that I have sketched, are merely different statements of the same fundamental disunity.

If it is felt that as the play progresses Chapman tends to push further into the background the development and eludication of the serious-romantic plot, another reason not as fundamental as the one just discussed, can be found, as I have already mentioned, in the show-stealing character of that magnificent fool, the Monsieur D'Olive, who takes on an independent life of his own by the middle of the play. I think that his character became so dominatingly interesting as the play moved along that Chapman was unable or unwilling to let him serve a dramatic action larger than himself. I hope I have made clear that the character of D'Olive can in no way account entirely for the dichotomy

that does exist in the play, for this dichotomy has roots, I would imagine, in Chapman's own mind; D'Olive is therefore one resulting manifestation of that dichotomy, not the reason, or certainly not by any means the only reason for it. This same disunity, or tendency toward disunity is reflected in most of Chapman's comic work. Still Monsieur D'Olive himself is assuredly an understandable excuse to forego the task of uniting meaningfully both comic and serious threads.

Parrott provides some interesting commentary which indicates that the character of D'Olive is based on that of Northampton, who was at the time of the writing of the play, the Lord High Admiral and an ambassador to Spain. D'Olive and his retinue do provide satire on extravagant and wasteful embassies, and during the year just prior to the appearance of Monsieur D'Olive, elaborate and long-delayed embassies were the talk of London.

> In the autumn and winter of that year [1604] three great lords accepted posts as ambassadors, Lenox to France, Hertford to the Archduke in the Low Countries, and Northampton to Spain. The town was all agog over the extraordinary preparations that were being made for these embassies. Specimens of the current gossip of the day are preserved in the letters printed in Winwood's Memorials. Thus we read (vol. ii, p. 39): 'My Lord Admiral...prepareth against March to go with very great magnificence. All his gentlemen shall Have black velvet cloaks, and what else I know not'; later on (p. 51): 'I hear he carries with him the title of Excellence and hath 15,000 allowed him for his expense, besides the charge of two of the King's best ships to transport him.' In January, 1605, we hear (p. 45): 'Our Lords Ambassadors begin now to prepare for the journeys, my Lord Admiral with great pomp'; in February (p. 50): 'The Lord Admiral makes great preparations for his journey. He hath with him six lords...and fifty knights'; in March (p. 52) we learn of a misadventure that befell one of his attendants: 'Sir Adolphus Carey was robbed of £50 and three suits of clothes which were provided for the Spanish journey,' and in the same letter: 'Our great Ambassadors draw near their time, and you may think all will be in the best manner when the little Lord Hartford makes a rate of expense of £10,000 besides the King's allowance....My Lord Admiral's number is five hundred, and he swears five hundred oaths he will not admit (Cf. Monsieur D'Olive, III, ii, 47-50) of one man more.'

> The extravagant preparations and the long delay seem at last to have become a common jest; 'Stone the jester' we are told in the same letter 'was well whipped at Bridewell for a blasphemous speech that there went sixty fools into Spain besides my Lord Admiral and his two sons. But he is now at liberty again, and gives his Lordship the praise of a very pitiful Lord.' It was not until some time toward the end of the month that the much talked of embassy was actually dispatched. On March 28, we learn that 'the Lord Admiral is now on his way toward Spain.'[1]

Northampton, as Parrott goes on to say, was Jonson's enemy,[2] and shortly after the writing of Monsieur D'Olive, Chapman and Jonson, who were already friends, were writing, along with Marston, Eastward Ho. It might be instructive to examine more closely this greatest of all Chapman's fools, as he gives evidence of Chapman's remarkable comic talents in a play that is almost unknown.

D'Olive describes what he thinks will be the effects created by his "ambassage" to the King of France:

> The siege of Boulogne shall be no more a landmark for times; Agincourt battle, St. James his field, the loss of Calais and the winning of Cales, shall grow out of use; men shall reckon their years, women their marriages, from the day of our ambassage; as 'I was born, or married, two, three, or four years before the great ambassage.' Farmers shall count their leases from this day, gentlemen their mortgages from this day; St. Denis shall be raced out of the calendar, and the day of our instalment entered in red letters; and as St. Valentine's day is fortunate to choose lovers, St. Luke's to choose husbands, so shall this day be to the choosing of lords. It shall be a critical day, a day of note; in that day it shall be good to quarrel, but not to fight; they that marry on that day shall not repent--marry, the morrow after perhaps they may--it shall be wholesome to beat a sergeant on that day; he that eats garlic on that morning shall be a rank knave till night.
>
> (IV, ii, 111-127)

Before he was gulled into becoming an ambassador by Roderigue and Mugeron, D'Olive was living away from Court affecting to be a man of wit and

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[1]Parrott, II, 773-774.

[2]Jonson, Discoveries, p. 14 (Conversations with Drummond).

learning, pretending indifference to the vain and empty world of the Court. Roderigue and Mugeron decide to translate Monsieur D'Olive, the obscure fool, into Lord D'Olive, the Duke's ambassador to France. "The true map of a gull!" Roderigue says of him. "By heaven he shall to th' Court! 'Tis the perfect model of an impudent upstart, the compound of a poet and a lawyer; he shall sure to th' Court." Perhaps it is worth mentioning that in a passage which appears shortly after these lines are spoken, Roderigue, continuing his description of D'Olive, seems to describe not so much the D'Olive of the play as a specific person, perhaps Northampton, whom Chapman disliked. I say this because some of the characteristics which are here ascribed to D'Olive he does not very convincingly possess, namely, paganism, epicureanism, and lust:

> Oh, 'tis a most accomplished ass, the mongrel of a gull and a villain, the very essence of his soul is pure villany; the substance of his brain, foolery; one that believes nothing from the stars upward. A pagan in belief, an epicure beyond belief; prodigious in lust, prodigal in wasteful expense, in necessary most penurious; his wit is to admire and imitate, his grace is to censure and detract. He shall to th' Court, i'faith, he shall thither! I will shape such employment for him as that he himself shall have no less contentment in making mirth to the whole Court than the Duke and the whole Court shall have pleasure in enjoying his presence. (I, i, 408-418)

D'Olive is then taken to Court, where the Duke joins in the gulling of him, and becomes an ambassador. At Court while mock honors are being heaped upon him, D'Olive, the fresh-made lord, assuming at once a gross familiarity with the Duke and his Duchess, chirrups incessantly but quite amusingly about himself and his wonderful abilities. He will not let the Duke give him a prepared statement to use in delivering the Duke's message to the King of France:

> I will not have my tale put in my mouth.
> If you'll deliver me your mind in gross,

> Why, so; I shall express it as I can.
> I warrant you 'twill be sufficient.
> (II, ii, 129-132)

He goes on to tell the Duke that no one present has had the opportunity to see how masterful at statecraft he, D'Olive, is. He then describes in enormous detail, the effect of which is unconsciously mock-heroic, the polemics of a recent debate over the use of tobacco in which he countered skillfully all objections to its use and, finally, delivered an eloquent peroration on its virtues.

From here until he is told that his "ambassage" is cancelled, D'Olive is made to demonstrate his own consummate self-esteem; as a braggart ambassador he is a variation of the more familiar miles figure; and as his retinue swells, and his preparations lengthen, he becomes increasingly inflated with notions of his own importance. In addition to being generally satiric of embassies and of being perhaps specifically satiric of a particular English ambassador, the character of D'Olive is excellently satiric of the courtier, too. Notice D'Olive's description of what makes him a success at Court:

> Softness and modesty savours of the cart; 'tis boldness, boldness, does the deed in the Court: and as your chameleon varies all colours o' th' rainbow, both white and red, so must your true courtier be able to vary his countenance through all humours--state, strangeness, scorn, mirth, melancholy, flattery, and so forth: some colours likewise his face may change upon occasion, black or blue it may, tawny it may, but red and white at no hand--avoid that like a sergeant; keep your colour stiff, unguilty of passion or disgrace, not changing white at sight of your mercer, nor red at sight of your surgeon; above all sins, heaven shield me from the sin of blushing! It does ill in a young waiting-woman; but monstrous, monstrous, in an old courtier.
> (III, ii, 22-35)

Made a "Christmas Lord," as a jest of Roderigue and Mugeron, he subsequently "raised up all the country in gold lace and feather," and thereby provided "laughter for the whole Court." Told that he has been

gulled and that he has been a glorious Court jest, D'Olive says that the State can "sink or swim" now that it is without his services, for he has done with it. D'Olive is certainly a superb fool;[1] unquestionably he is one of Chapman's greatest if not his greatest satiric portrait,[2] and he is compensation enough for any structural shortcomings or defects which it may be felt the play contains.

Monsieur D'Olive is for me a play whose parts, as I have already said, are difficult to place in organic relationship. Chapman continues in this play to write in the vein of satiric comedy which he and Jonson had begun to develop at essentially the same time--and to the last of his comedies Chapman retains this satiric impulse--but as in The Gentleman Usher, Chapman, has, in Monsieur D'Olive, interlarded satire with a serious and romantic theme in which at least some characters move from a lower level of perception to a higher. At any rate this is true of St. Anne and perhaps of Marcellina as well. The tragicomic theme of moral improvement, in other words, is at least incipiently present in Monsieur D'Olive. In both The Gentleman Usher and more particularly Monsieur D'Olive, however, Chapman seems to have arrived at a frustrating dead end. Virtue has been saved in both, as it has been in his earlier comedies--as early in fact as An Humourous Day's Mirth--only at the expense of plausibility; and increasingly it has become apotheosized right out of life. In Chapman's last comedy he achieves what I think is a masterpiece of structural and thematic

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[1]Parrott, II, 779, suggests that Jonson's Fastidious Brisk may have been the prototype for D'Olive.

[2]Swinburne, p. 64, does not think so. He refers, for example, to "the overwrought fooleries of the gull D'Olive...."

cohesion. The Widow's Tears is a play whose vision is broad, profound, and unified. The price Chapman may have paid for a dramatic oneness may well have been a bitter one. Man in this last play has shed his virtue, his ideals, his honor altogether; Chapman has thus "solved" the dramatic problem of how to interconnect the duality of value and fact, though his solution has made necessary a new admission concerning human nature.

CHAPTER IX

THE WIDOW'S TEARS

The Widow's Tears, written about 1605 or 1606, was probably the last of Chapman's comedies. It is not difficult to see in this play a growing awareness on Chapman's part that the ideals of "valor and virtue" were more abstract than real, and that moral disorder in the individual and in society was universal. At about the time of the writing of this play Chapman had begun to turn to tragedy[1] where he brooded over the problem of moral integrity in a morally chaotic and decadent age. More and more Chapman seemed to have realized the practical defeat of his own lofty idealism: the geographic and political frontiers in which that idealism had heretofore held some sway seem increasingly to dwindle until, in the tragedies the virtuous man becomes a lonely alien in his own corrupt society. In what may be

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[1]There is great disagreement about the dating of Chapman's tragedies. Parrott dates them from about 1603 to about 1613; Tucker Brooke thinks that The Widow's Tears is contemporaneous with Chapman's "earliest tragedies"; Rees thinks Caesar and Pompey is Chapman's first tragedy and dates it Ornstein places it late, around 1612 or 1613. The matter of dates was by no means settled by the appearance of Elias Schwartz's "The Dates and Order of Chapman's Tragedies," MP LVII (1959), pp. 80-82. Schwartz ventures "to suggest the following dates for the plays in question: Bussy--1597; the Byron plays--1601 or 1602; The Revenge--1602 or 1603; Caesar and Pompey--1604 or 1605. As for Chabot....Mrs. Norma Dobie Solve has conclusively shown that it was written long after Chapman's other tragedies, between 1621 and 1624." If Schwartz is correct, or even substantially so, Chapman was writing all of his comedies and all but one of his tragedies during the same period of time.

Chapman's last tragedy, Caesar and Pompey, the world which even heaven "fails to reform," is described as

> A heap...of digested villany:
> Virtue in labor with eternal chaos
> Press'd to living death, and rack'd beneath it,
> Her throes unpitied, every worthy man
> Limb by limb sawn out of her virgin womb,
> To live here piecemeal tortur'd.
> (V, ii, 80-85)

The regeneration of the ruler, still possible in The Gentleman Usher, and symbolic of the reformation of society as a whole, must have appeared to the Chapman of the tragedies as a dream of art; The Widow's Tears itself clearly foreshadows the loss of a controlling ethic in man and in his rulers. The impulse towards political reformation, which Chapman explored in The Gentleman Usher, is quiescent.

The Widow's Tears seems to be acknowledging further the fragility of the ideals Chapman has dramatized in his three previous plays. In describing, still in comic terms to be sure, a world where values that are publically espoused are privately rejected and where political rulers are physically diseased--and physical disease is here symptomatic of political incompetance that borders on and will become in the tragedies moral corruption--Chapman is outlining in this his last comedy the whole vice-ridden world in which he had already begun to set his tragic heroes afoot. Even in the comedies Chapman's ideal figures have given the impression that they would crack if handled very roughly. They are delicate figures and for the most part unrealistic spokesmen for a way of life that Chapman came, I think, increasingly to realize was never meant to characterize a social or political ethic. The Widow's Tears, the grimmest and most deliberately unfunny of all Chapman's comedies

is a play in which a comic ethos is cast over a society where folly is giving way to vice and corruption.

Some critics, however, are outraged by the atmosphere of "vice and corruption" in the play, apparently because they are unable to view this corruption as part of an artistic structure. To them, so it would seem, The Widow's Tears is simply "cold pruriency."[1] William Archer, for example, refers to the play as a "tissue of flagrant absurdities, flavoured with every possible grossness...."[2] Nicoll remarks that Chapman "becomes almost nauseating in the tomb scene, where Cynthia embraces an unknown soldier in the very presence of her husband's coffin."[3] And James Russell Lowell in a judgment of all Chapman's comedies, probably had The Widow's Tears especially in mind when he wrote:

> In his comedies he indulges himself freely in all that depreciation of woman which had been so long traditional with the sex which has the greatest share in making them what they are. But he thought he was being comic, and there is, on the whole, no more depressing sight than a naturally grave man under that delusion. His notion of love, too, is coarse and animal, or rather the notion he thinks proper to express through his characters.[4]

Ward finds the subject of the play "disagreeable." Chapman's "uncomfortable mixture of a ghastly situation with a comic action is certainly not pleasant to read."[5] What these critics do not see is that Chapman's

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[1]John Middleton Murray, Katherine Mansfield and other Literary Portraits (London: Peter Nevill, Ltd., 1949), p. 172.

[2]The Old Drama and the New (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1923), p. 43.

[3]Nicoll, p. 157.

[4]Lowell, p. 84.

[5]Ward, p. 440.

play is profoundly ironic.[1] All spokesmen for his Platonic and stoic idealism are removed as Chapman meticulously demonstrates, with a philosophically detached and analytic irony, that man is not the noble creature he would have others think him to be.

The Widow's Tears is a compelling and powerful play. In it Chapman seems to be showing us what occurs when there is no force to offset human pretence and baseness. For the first time in his comedies Chapman chooses not to introduce normative figures. Heretofore it was Chapman's characteristic practice to pit the good, the wise, the virtuous character against the foolish, the unjust, the absurd, the irrational character. But in The Widow's Tears we find no trace of Chapman's old oversimplified psychological pairings. The wise, the good, and the virtuous, in the world of this drama, do not exist. The spokesman for the new (unilateral) psychology is Tharsalio,[2] the central wire-pulling figure who binds all the actions of the play, and the theme as well, into what is a masterpiece of organic construction. Tharsalio is a cynic in a play the principal theme of which deals with women's vows of fidelity to their husbands, living and dead. Tharsalio alone claims that the vows are false. He corresponds roughly to the figure of Horner in Wycherley's The Country Wife, a play that deals similarly with the stripping off of the sanctimonious mask of decorum to reveal the cunningly appetitive animal that lusts in hiding.[3]

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[1]Bradbrook, p. 176, offers the suggestive but completely undeveloped observations that the "whole structure" of the play is ironic and that Chapman is dealing with a "bewildering dualism of nature."

[2]Boas, p. 26, calls Tharsalio "probably the last and most vigorously drawn of Chapman's favorite figure in his comedies, who sets in motion and keeps a hand on all the springs of the action."

[3]Cf. Murray, p. 172: Tharsalio's "vicarious wooing of Eudora,

Tharsalio's sister-in-law, Cynthia, who has sworn to be true to her husband (Tharsalio's older brother), Lysander, through all eternity, rebukes Tharsalio for his fleering cynicism:

> Brother, I fear me in your travels, you have drunk too much of that Italian air, that hath infected the whole mass of your ingenuous nature, dried up in you all sap of generous disposition, poisoned the very essence of your soul, and so polluted your senses that whatsoever enters there takes from them contagion and is to your fancy represented as foul and tainted, which in itself, perhaps, is spotless.
>
> (I, i, 132-139)

Tharsalio replies:

> No, sister, it hath refined my senses, and made me see with clear eyes, and to judge of objects as they truly are, not as they seem, and through their mask to discern the true fact of things. It tells me how short-lived widow's tears are, that their weeping is in truth but laughing under a mask, that they mourn in their gowns and laugh in their sleeves; all which I believe as a Delphian oracle, and am resolved to burn in that faith.
>
> (I, ii, 140-147)

Lysander describes his brother Tharsalio thus:

> I know him for a wild, corrupted youth,
> Whom profane ruffians, squires to bawds and strumpets,
> Drunkards spew'd out of taverns into th' sinks
> Of tap-houses and stews, revolts from manhood,
> Debauch'd perdus, have by their companies
> Turn'd devil like themselves, and stuff'd his soul
> With damn'd opinions and unhallowed thoughts
> Of womanhood, of all humanity,
> Nay, deity itself.
>
> (II, i, 46-54)

"Widow's-vows," Tharsalio says much later in the play, are "moral disguises of coyness, which the ignorant call modesty." Underneath the disguise, he continues, are

> Poor naked sinners, God wot! Weak paper walls thrust down with a finger. This is the way on't, boil their appetites to a full height of lust; and then take them down in the nick.
>
> (III, i, 97-100)

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through Arsace, for cold pruriency anticipates the very worst of Wycherley."

When others are scandalized to discover that the vows of the most notable exemplars of wifely purity and devotion are abandoned at the opportunity of new love, Tharsalio remains philosophic and practical:

> What shame is due to't? Or what congruence doth it carry, that a young lady, gallant, vigorous, full of spirit and complexion, her appetite new whetted with nuptial delights, to be confined to the speculation of a death's-head; or, for the loss of a husband, the world affording flesh enough, make the noon-tide of her years the sunset of her pleasures? (III, i, 160-166)

What the play makes quite clear is that Tharsalio's assessment of his world is accurate. He is the cynical flouter who expresses the truth people at first do not want to be shown. The dominant tone throughout the play is one of comic irony. Tharsalio does not lash out at human pretence and frailty but instead strips off the mask of virtue and piety in order to advance calculatedly his own fortunes. The man who can succeed greatly in this world is the amoral Tharsalio, the commentator on human behavior whose cynicism is a factually accurate and therefore "realistic" view of man.[1]

That part of the play which has a source is based on the story of the Ephesian matron in Petronious' Satyricon. In this part of the play, Lysander, madly jealous of his wife Cynthia (who has sworn to be eternally true to him so earnestly and solemnly as to have acquired

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[1] Cf. Samuel Schoenbaum, "The Widow's Tears and the other Chapman," Huntington Library Quarterly XXIII (1959-60), 334: "As The Widow's Tears unfolds, we are brought to the gradual but inescapable realization that Tharsalio, the cynic, the debauchee, the implacable self-seeker, is also the play's only realist....In perception and intelligence he towers above the hypocrites, fools, sentimentalists, and self-deluders who comprise the remainder of the dramatis personae. There is no force in the play to counter him: in being corrupted, Tharsalio has achieved a species of wisdom. He is the dramatist's spokesman, and his vision, terrible as it may appear, is also Chapman's vision."

a public reputation for wifely chastity and devotion), feigns his own death to test his wife. Mourning her husband's "death" Cynthia[1] (and her maid Ero) descend into his tomb where she refuses food and drink as she grieves in unassuagable agony. Disguised as a guard assigned to watch the bodies of criminals who have been crucified near the tomb, Lysander descends into the tomb, where, after wine and sophistry, his wife, who fails to recognize him, succumbs to his blandishments and on the second night of his coming, fornicates with him. While he is in the tomb seducing his own wife, one of the crucified bodies is removed. After Lysander discovers the loss he tells Cynthia that the penalty for his dereliction from duty is death. Cynthia, by this time frantically enamored of her soldier-lover, tells him to "set [his] hands to work" in order to substitute the corpse of her dead husband for that of the missing criminal. Lysander, horrified at her impiety, makes a further attempt to discover some trace of her former "love" for him:

> Lys. I cannot do't; my heart will not permit my hands to execute a second murther. The truth is I am he that slew thy husband.
> Cyn. The gods forbid!
> Lys. It was this hand that bath'd my reeking sword
> In his life blood, while he cried out for mercy;
> But I, remorseless, paunch'd him, cut his throat,
> He with his last breath crying, 'Cynthia!'
> Cyn. O thou hast told me news that cleaves my heart.
> Would I had never seen thee, or heard sooner
> This bloody story; yet see, note my truth,
> Yet I must love thee.
> Lys. Out upon thee, monster!
> Go, tell the Governor; let me be brought
> To die for that most famous villany,
> Not for this miching, base transgression
> of truant negligence.
> Cyn. I cannot do't.

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[1]The name "Cynthia" is an unmistakable verbal irony.

Love must salve any murther; I'll be judge
Of thee, dear love, and these shall be thy pains,
Instead of iron, to suffer these soft chains. [Embracing him]
Lys. O, I am infinitely oblig'd.
Cyn. Arise, I say, thou saver of my life,
Do not with vain-affrighting conscience
Betray a life, that is not thine, but mine;
Rise and preserve it.
Lys. Ha, thy husband's body!
Hang't up, you say, instead of that that's stolen,
Yet I his murtherer, is that your meaning?
Cyn. It is, my love.
Lys. Thy love amazes me.
The point is yet how we shall get it thither.
Ha! Tie a halter about's neck, and drag to the gallows;
Shall I, my love?
Cyn. So you may do indeed,
Or if your own strength will not serve, we'll aid
Our hands to yours, and bear him to the place.
(V, ii, 25-56)

Lysander, who was led to mistrust his wife in the first place because of a doubt planted in his mind by Tharsalio, is prevented from killing her, and thereby turning the play into a tragedy, by a strategem, devised by Tharsalio, which consists of having Cynthia pretend that she had recognized Lysander from the first.

In the other part of the plot Chapman invents a situation in which the same "testing" occurs. The two plot threads in fact are perfectly suited to and evolve from one another. The "double" plot is in effect a single one, structurally unified throughout by Tharsalio. In this part of the plot Tharsalio, who, by the way is a younger son, and who possesses only "valour and good clothes," sets out to "win" the great lady, the Countess Eudora. He explains his plan to his brother, Lysander, and to Lysander's wife, Cynthia:

Know you (as who knows not?) the exquisite lady
of the palace, the late governor's admired widow,
the rich and haughty Countess Eudora?
Were not she a jewel worth the wearing,
if a man knew how to win her?
(I, i, 60-63)

When Tharsalio is reminded that as page to the late Count, he had waited on the Countess at table, he is scoffingly indifferent:

> What of that? I have thereby one foot in her favor already. She has taken note of my spirit and surveyed my good parts, and the picture of them lives in her eye; which sleep, I know, cannot close till she have embraced the substance.
> (I, i, 75-80)

Cynthia reminds Tharsalio of the Countess' vows:

> But, brother, have I not heard you say your own ears have been witness to her vows, made solemnly to your late lord, in memory of him to preserve till death the unstained honour of a widow's bed? If nothing else, yet that might cool your confidence.
> (I, i, 75-80)

"Tush, sister!" Tharsalio answers, in an ironic preview of a future action:

> Suppose you should protest with solemn oath (as perhaps you have done) if ever heaven hears your prayers that you may live to see my brother nobly interred, to feed only upon fish and not endure the touch of flesh during the wretched Lent of your miserable life; would you believe it, brother?
> (I, i, 93-98)

Unhesitatingly, Lysander says, "I am therein most confident."

At this point in the play--within the first hundred lines of the opening scene--Chapman has prepared for his entire plot. The character of the Countess, her public reputation for chastity, Tharsalio's own upstartish plan to marry her, and his brother's proud belief in his own wife's chastity have all been presented. The rest of the play will deal with the "fall" of both the Countess Eudora and of Cynthia, and in doing so will reveal that beneath the most reputable moral exterior lies a fund of publically disguised impulse and motive.

In the scenes in which Tharsalio "courts" Eudora, Chapman does two things: he shows that Tharsalio's crude and aggressively sexual

behavior instead of appalling the "chaste" Countess actually arouses salacious feelings in her; and he demonstrates in the persons of the other suitors who surround this publically acclaimed Penelope of resistance, a political corruption that seems to expand his theme until we come to understand that private life is no less corrupt than the wider social and political world outside the individual.[1]

Lord Rebus, one of several of the Countess' courtly suitors, comes to her with letters of recommendation from the ruler, "his Altitude the Viceroy." It is intimated that Lord Rebus, cousin to the Viceroy, is a bastard. The Viceroy, who never actually appears in the play, is said to have "been long wedded to the venerean disease." The Viceroy and Lord Rebus, in other words, who have the same "blood," are presumed to be disease ridden. This "political" note, which I will return to later, provides a background of lust and bestiality that is thematically appropriate to the main action. When the bold Tharsalio enters Eudora's palace chambers, he loses little time coming to the point:

> Thar. All honour to you, madam!
> Eud. How now, base companion?
> Thar. Base, madam? He's not base that fights as high as your lips.
> Eud. One that waited on my board?
> Thar. That was only a preparation to my weight on your bed, madam.
> Eud. How dar'st thou come to me with such a thought?
> Thar. Come to you, madam? I dare come to you at midnight, and bid defiance to the proudest spirit that haunts these your loved shadows, and would any way make terrible the access of my love to you.
> Eud. Love me? Love my dog!
> Thar. I am bound to that by the proverb, madam.

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[1]The strategy of Old Comedy.

Eud. Kennel without with him; intrude not here.
What is it thou presum'st on?
Thar. On your judgment, madam, to choose a man, and not a giant; as these are that come with titles and authority, as they would conquer or ravish you. But I come to you with the liberal and ingenuous graces, love, youth, and gentry; which (in no more deformed a person than myself) deserve any princess.
Eud. In your saucy opinion, sir, and sirrah too!
Get gone, and let this malapert humour return thee no more for, afore heaven, I'll have thee tossed in blankets.
Thar. In blankets, madam? You must add your sheets, and you must be the tosser.
(I, ii, 68-96)

Lord Rebus then attempts to intervene, and Tharsalio, turning on him and his attendant lords sneeringly, calls them "whoreson bagpipe lords," and refers to Lord Rebus as "a lean lord,"

...dubbed with the lard of other! A diseased lord, too..[who is] a tumour, an imposthume...a very hautboy, a bag-pipe, in whom there is nothing but wind, and that none of the sweetest neither.
(I, iii, 130-132)

Tharsalio is eventually dismissed ignominiously but is still confident of his eventual triumph over the Countess. When Lysander and Cynthia next see him, they make great sport of him and mock his unceremonious departure from Eudora's chambers. Lysander so annoys Tharsalio with ridicule that Tharsalio strikes back by implanting, through innuendo, doubts in Lysander's mind about the chastity of his wife, Cynthia.

Tharsalio, to get a new entree into the Countess's chambers, devises an astonishing plan which calls for the help of Arsace, the panderess (who, and this further suggests the network of corruption in the play, is also a tenant of the great Countess). Tharsalio pays Arsace to approach to Countess Eudora (who of course is repelled by Arsace's occupation) and, in pretending to speak against Tharsalio, to speak for him by arousing what Tharsalio is confident Eudora secretly feels, or can at any rate be aroused to feel, namely, libidinous desire.

It is one of many excellent scenes in the play;[1] Chapman's dramaturgy is certainly masterful here. Arsace is at first refused entrance. Hearing that Arsace is begging an audience, Eudora is morally incensed (not so much, however that she does not pocket a jewel which Arsace has sent as the price of an interview), and is going to have her ordered out. But when she is told that Arsace is there on a matter which touches the Countess's honor, she allows the bawd to approach her. What follows is rather long to reproduce here, but it does reveal Chapman's great dramatic skill and his psychological insight.[2] At first righteous and proudly angry, by the end of the scene, after listening to a description of Tharsalio's sexual prowess, Eudora is somewhat subdued and obviously tempted:

> Ars. Our Cyprian goddess save your good honour!
> Eud. Stand you off, I pray. How dare you, mistress, importune access to me thus, considering the last warning I gave for your absence?
> Ars. Because, madam, I have been moved by your honour's last most chaste admonition to leave the offensive life I led before.
> Eud. Ay? Have you left it then?
> Ars. Ay, I assure your honour, unless it be fore the pleasure of two or three poor ladies, that have prodigal knights to their husbands.
> Eud. Out on thee, impudent!
> Ars. Alas, madam, we would all be glad to live in our callings.
> Eud. Is this the reformed life thou talk'st on?
> Ars. I beseech your good honour mistake me not, I boast of nothing but my charity, that's the worst.
> Eud. You get these jewels with charity, no doubt. But what's the point in which my honour stands endangered, I pray?
> Ars. In care of that, madam, I have presumed to offend your chaste eyes with my presence. Hearing it reported for truth and generally that your honour will take to husband a young gentleman

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[1] Boas, Stuart Drama, p. 27, calls it "a repellent scene."

[2] Hardin Craig, "Ethics in the Jacobean Drama: The Case of George Chapman," in Essays in Dramatic Literature: The Parrott Presentation Volume, ed. Craig (Princeton: University Press, 1935), p. 29, calls Chapman "the psychological dramatist par excellence...."

of this city called Tharsalio--

Eug. I take him to husband?

Ars. If your honour does, you are utterly undone, for he's the most incontinent and insatiate man of women that ever Venus blessed with ability to please them.

Eud. Let him be the devil! I abhor his thought, and could I be informed particularly of any of these slanderers of mine honour, he should as dearly dare it as anything wherein his life were endangered.

Ars. Madam, the report of it is so strangly confident, that I fear the strong destiny of marriage is at work in it. But if it be, madam, let your honour's known virtue resist and defy it for him, for not a hundred will serve his one turn. I protest to your honour, when (Venus pardon me) I winked at my unmaidenly exercise, I have known nine in a night made mad with his love.

Eud. What tell'st thou me of his love? I tell thee I abhor him, and destiny must have another mould for my thoughts than Nature or mine honour, and a witchcraft above both to transform me to another shape as soon as to another conceit of him.

Ars. Then is your good honour just as I pray for you; and, good madam, even for your virtue's sake, and comfort of all your dignities and possessions, fix your whole womanhood against him. He will so enchant you, as never man did woman: nay, a goddess (say his light huswives) is not worthy of his sweetness.

Eud. Go to, begone!

Ars. Dear madam, your honour's most perfect admonitions have brought me to such a hate of these imperfections, that I could not but attend you with my duty, and urge his unreasonable manhood to the fill.

Eud. Manhood, quoth you?

Ars. Nay, beastlihood, I might say, indeed, madam, but for saving your honours. Nine in a night, said I.

Eud. Go to, no more!

Ars. No more, madam? That's enough, one would think.

Eud. Well, begone, I bid thee!

Ars. Alas, madam, your honour is the chief of our city, and to whom shall I complain of these inchastities (being your ladyship's reformed tenant) but to you that are chastest?

Eud. I pray thee go thy ways, and let me see this reformation you pretend continued.

Ars. I humbly thank your good honour that was first cause of it.

Eud. Here's a complaint as strange as my suitory.

Ars. I beseech your good honour think upon him, make him an example.

Eud. Yet again?

Ars. All my duty to your Excellence! Exit Arsace

Eud. These sorts of licentious persons when they are once reclaimed, are most vehement against license. But it is the course of the world to dispraise faults and use them, that so we may use them the safer. What might a wise widow resolve upon this point, now? Contentment is the end of all worldly beings. Beshrew her, would she had spared her news! Exit

(II, ii, 56-136)

Later when Tharsalio asks how Eudora reacted, Arsace is able to confirm his estimate of the Countess' character:

> Well, 'twas a villanous invention of thine, and had a swift operation; it took like sulphur. And yet this virtuous Countess hath to my ear spun out many a tedious lecture of pure sister's thread against concupiscence; but ever with such an affected zeal as my mind gave me she had a kind of secret titillation to grace my poor house sometimes, but that she feared a spice of the sciatica, which, as you know, ever runs in the blood.
> (II, iii, 16-23)

The Countess, despite her "fearful protestations" and "infinite oaths," to her late husband that she would never enter into the "incestuous life" of a second marriage, takes Tharsalio as her husband.

While Tharsalio has been pursuing his own fortunes, his brother, Lysander, has become almost mad with suspicion of his own wife. Lycus explains how Tharsalio's innuendoes have worked upon Lysander:

> You know how strange his dotage ever was on his wife, taking special glory to have her love and loyalty to him so renowned abroad; to whom she often times hath vowed constancy after life, till her own death had brought, forsooth, her widow-troth to bed. This he joyed in strangely, and was therein of infallible belief, till your surmise began to shake it; which hath loosed it so, as now there's nought can settle it but a trial, which he's resolved upon.
> (II, iv, 50-58)

Lysander's feigned death and his subsequent "seducement" of his own wife, Cynthia's trampling of her old vows and her willingness to desecrate what she believes to be her husband's corpse, the sexual frenzy inspired by the macaber "illicitness" of fornicating on the tomb of what she takes to be the scarcely cold body of her husband, all are part of a restatement of the theme which Chapman has been exploring in the Tharsalio-Eudora episode. Recall, for example, that before Cynthia "falls," Tharsalio, the man whose behavior measures up perfectly to his convictions, has made a bet with Lycus that Cynthia, his sister-in-law,

will not remain true to her vows. Something like four days have passed since Lysander's "death;" and Cynthia's descent into her husband's tomb to mourn him has already achieved renown. Tharsalio, talking to Lycus, is unimpressed by Cynthia's behavior:

> For this does she look to be deified, to have hymns made of her, nay to her; the tomb where she is to be no more reputed the ancient monument of our family, the Lysandri, but the new-erected altar of Cynthia.
>
> (IV, i, 120-123)

Her mourning in the tomb, Tharsalio says,

> bewrays itself to be altogether artificial. To set open a shop of mourning! 'Tis palpable. Truth, the substance, hunts not after the shadow of popular fame. Her officious ostentation of sorrow condemns her sincerity. When did ever woman mourn so unmeasurably, but she did dissemble?
>
> (IV, i, 108-113)

Lycus is disgusted with Tharsalio and asks, "What man, what woman, what name, what action, doth his tongue glide over, but it leaves a slime upon't?" But again Tharsalio turns out to be correct. He and Lycus are together in the graveyard when Tharsalio looks into the tomb. When he seeks Cynthia and "a poor eightpenny soldier" fornicating, he is so immensely delighted to have been proved correct that he dances and sings, and even says, "What an unspeakable sweet sight it is!" Lycus, the naive truster in prima facie virtue is baffled: "I know not what it is, nor what to say." Tharsalio's delight is not, however, that of a man who joys in human perversity. He is responding with laughter to the comedy of the human animal caught in a dark closet with his moral mask off. "He that believes in error, never errs," Tharsalio remarks, and this statement expresses as well as any one statement can a unifying idea upon which the whole "vision" of the play is based.

Tragedy is averted when Tharsalio, recognizing Lysander to be the soldier (and it is fitting that the man who believes things are

not what they appear to be should recognize Lysander), informs Cynthia and instructs her to act henceforth as if she had been privy to the disguise from the first. Thus she and Lysander will be ironically restored to one another, and the two "tests" are at an end. Tharsalio, the perfect dramatic instrument for Chapman's comic irony has triumphed. But Tharsalio is more than a catalyst who creates and unifies theme defining comic action--he is also an audience to the "truth" that the play reveals. When Cynthia abandons grossly and completely (with a dramatically telescoped suddenness that appears shocking) the moral restraints that she had always honored, Tharsalio reminds us, in his enormously joyous response, that the action is comic. The mask that Tharsalio insists we look behind is, and I think this is the key to the principle difference between The Widow's Tears and The Country Wife, one that the wearer may not even be conscious of. Tharsalio, in other words, knows more about Cynthia's character than Cynthia does. What gives Chapman's comedy its special flavor, and what inclines it as much as anything else in the direction of tragedy is the clear suggestion that some of the human weaknesses that he is exploiting in The Widow's Tears are not altogether those willfully assumed vanities and affectations which the satirist customarily ridicules. Notice for example, what Lycus, who places his trust in the reality of public protestations of virtue, says about Cynthia after he and Tharsalio have made their wager on the permanence of her vows:

> I'll...not say but she may prove frail:
> But this I'll say, if she should chance to break,
> Her tears are true, though women's truths are weak.
> (IV, i, 144-147)

I think Lycus is correct here. Cynthia's widow's tears were genuine.

Unknown to her, before she is tempted, is that the compulsion of desire, the stuff on which moral precepts have been imposed, can sweep away the best of intentions. Cynthia, however, is conscious of the fact that her vows have provided her with a public reputation for chastity and probity that she would not give up. This is vanity. When the disguised Lysander is wooing her in the tomb she is alarmed lest "the world should see this." "The praise I have had, I would continue" she further remarks, clearly indicating that even though her widow's tears may have been at least in part unaffected they were not unmixed with insincerity and vanity. The entire play in fact could almost be viewed as an anti-romance. Chapman seems to be offering an oblique criticism of his own dramatic rationale in The Gentleman Usher and perhaps of the whole genre of so-called "romantic" comedy of which Shakespeare was the most renowned author. Behind lovers' vows to be eternally faithful, beyond their soul-matings, beyond the triumph of good over evil, behind the whole "unreal" moral universe of As You Like It and The Gentleman Usher where good, purity and chastity are absolute categories, lies, so Tharsalio would argue, the relative "real" world where man strives in vain to measure up to his own most noble image of himself. The vows of the Countess and of Cynthia are almost identical to those expressed by St. Anne and Marcellina in Monsieur D'Olive, but the presentation of the lovers in The Widow's Tears is completely ironic. Also the figure of Hymen, (who appears in Chapman's play in a masque-like fragment celebrating the nuptials of Tharsalio's nephew and Eudora's daughter by her first marriage) appears customarily in a play where romantic love is being sanctioned. In The Widow's Tears the love relationships are physical in nature, and are cynically and ironically presented by Chapman.

The whole apparatus of romance: music, masque, symbolism, and "spiritual" love Chapman seems to be scuttling with a carefully controlled comic irony that is cynical yet realistic. As in Shakespeare's As You Like It Chapman has blended romance and realism, but whereas Shakespeare strengthens his romance theme with scraps of realism, Chapman in effect uses realism to invalidate romance. One of the characters in The Widow's Tears refers to the whole society of the play as "this topsy-turvy world" where goodness is a "means to compass ill." The judgment coincides perfectly with Tharsalio's estimate of human behavior.

The notion that the world is topsy-turvy goes a long way, toward accounting for the last scene of the play. Most critics have not liked Chapman's conclusion at all. In this final scene Chapman introduces the Governor, chief officer of the Viceroy, onto the stage. The Governor, a noteworthy ass, is a travesty of political leadership and social justice. Because Lysander is still presumed to be dead, the Governor, arriving to administer the law, addresses Lycus, the alleged murderer.

> Gov. I say it is imagined thou hast murdered Lysander. How it will be proved, I know not. Thou shalt therefore presently be had to execution; as justice, in such cases, requireth. Soldiers, take him away.
>
> (V, iii, 244-248)

When Lycus demands that his "defense he heard," the Governor replies:

> Sirrah, I'll no finding nor proving! For my part, I am satisfied it is so; that's enough for thee. I had ever a sympathy in my mind against him. Let him be had away.
>
> (V, iii, 250-253)

"I will do justice," the Governor goes on to say, "I will not hear him." In time it is explained to the Governor that there has actually been no death and that no law has been violated; the still disguised Lysander,

reflecting on his own conduct, then remarks to Tharsalio, "O brother this jealous frenzy has borne me headlong to ruin"; and the play ironically concludes with Tharsalio's command that Lysander kiss his wife: "So, brother let your lips compound the strife and think you have the only constant wife."

Parrott, with what seems to me to be unwonted critical blindness, dislikes more than the last scene; he is also annoyed by the change in character that Cynthia undergoes in the tomb. She is transformed, he argues, "from a frail woman into a monster wholly out of place in a comedy."[1] Now as the play deals with the whole question of "the widow's tears," that is, with the validity of conventional ideals, it is unquestionably true that Chapman's entire purpose in the play is built around the implications of Petronious' story of the Ephesian matron. It is in other words essential to Chapman's comic viewpoint--as it is reflected in this particular play--to show that the seemingly virtuous woman, the woman who herself believed in the permanence of her own tears and vows--should be shown, just as we are shown, a basic truth about herself, namely, that what she thinks she is and ought to be is not what she actually is. She learns in other words that her real tears--which she is vain about and proud of--dry up. Thus her "change" in the tomb is an obligatory scene and not at all unsuited to Chapman's comic purpose. As for the last scene in the play, Parrott is unreservedly condemnatory: "The play comes to an abrupt and unsatisfactory close with a farcical scene...the solution is simply burked." Parrott goes on to say that "it is somewhat difficult to account for this lame

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[1]Parrott, II, 802-903.

and impotent conclusion," but suggests, very implausibly, I think, that Chapman was in a hurry and merely "dashed off" a scene "to cover the collapse of his plot with a mantle of farce."[1]

Boas virtually repeats Parrott's criticism:

> Up to this point [the last scene] the play is, as an exhibition of plot-technique, a masterly achievement. But then comes a disconcerting collapse. Instead of the obviously needed scene of explanation and reconciliation between Lysander and Cynthia there is a tediously drawn out trial scene before a blundering and fussy governor...where the action is brought to a muddled conclusion.[2]

Nor was Swinburne, writing of course earlier than either Parrott or Boas, able to view the conclusion as an organic part of the play:

> The action of the last scene is...hampered by the intrusion of forced and misplaced humours; and while the superfluous underlings of the play are breaking and bandying their barren jests, the story is not so much wound up as huddled up in whispers and byplay.[3]

I think these views are mistaken. Chapman has not been derelict at all in this last scene. The Governor's appearance helps unscramble the few remaining entanglements and thus performs a needed plot function. Also and more importantly Chapman is able to bring back to our attention the note of political decadence that he pointedly developed near the beginning of the play.[4] The world is indeed topsy-turvy, for in it moral

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[1]Parrott, II, 802-903.

[2]Boas, p. 28.

[3]Swinburne, p. 67.

[4]Schoenbaum, p. 330, argues correctly and cogently for the importance to the play of the Governor: "Also significant is the Governor, who in his single, brief appearance contributes much to the final impression left by the play. In Elizabethan comedy the magistrate who brings the action to a close by disentangling the confusions of the intrigue and meting out appropriate punishments and rewards is a familiar figure....If the dramatic function of such a personage is manifestly practical, it is symbolic as well: He signifies the triumph of wisdom and (depending upon the playwrights's mood) good humor or stern morality over the forces of human folly, ignorance and injustice.

virtue is sham and political life is corrupt. Life in its private and social manifestations is, from the vantage point of the ironic onlooker, indeed comic.[1] But the comic view of the last scene is different from that comic view expressed by Tharsalio when he gleefully discovers in the tomb, confirmation of his truth about man. The comedy in the tomb scenes is philosophical in its irony. Masquerading as an imperturbable moral unity, man is shown to be in fact an absurd human animal. In the last scene, however, Chapman returns us to the more familiar comic world where character is greatly exaggerated. The Governor is a "humour" character, a bumbling, idiotic fool who is a caricature of the just official. We are reminded again, then, at the very end of the play that the world of the play is a comic one,[2] a topsy-turvy one, where all expectations and categories are reversed. And as for the critics' desire for a reconciliation scene between Lysander and Cynthia, I can only say that in effect this is what occurs at the end of the play when Tharsalio brings them together for an embrace that signifies with a final ironic touch the happy and deluded union of man and his ideals. Chapman's final view of man, as it finds expression in his comedies, is thus an ironic one. Man, an absurd creature, is doomed by his own

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In Chapman's hands, however, the character of the magistrate undergoes a peculiar, indeed perverse, transformation; for the Governor who presides over confusion makes a travesty of justice...."

[1]This places The Widow's Tears squarely in the tradition of Old Comedy, which is discussed in Chapter III.

[2]Herrick, Tragicomedy, p. 238, apparently would not agree. In a Polonius-like attempt to define genre, Herrick says that the play "might well have been called a tragical comedy, or better still a romantic-satirical-tragical comedy."

nature to revolve ceaselessly around his own limitations and, mistaking them for virtues, to fall back on himself in endless and unescapable circles of folly. Chapman, from All Fools on had begun to shape his comedy so as to make of it a unified embodiment of his own interpretation of experience, but perhaps not until The Widow's Tears was he entirely successful in achieving in his comic drama profundity and coherence. G. Wilson Knight's pronouncement that "Ben Jonson's reading of human nature is pessimistic; his friend George Chapman's optimistic,"[1] would certainly not stand the test of Chapman's last and, so my own judgment tells me, greatest comic drama.

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[1] The Golden Labyrinth; a Study of British Drama (London: Phoenix House Ltd., 1962), p. 92.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

This study has traced a dualism in Chapman's comedies from its first shadowy appearance in The Blind Beggar of Alexandria up to but not including The Widow's Tears. There is no question that this dualism exists, but I do not think we can say with John Middleton Murray that Chapman was a stranger in a world of sense that he "could make nothing of...."[1] The comedies make clear that Chapman was not exactly a stranger in this world; and far from being unable to make anything of it, Chapman managed to order his experience of this world into comic dramas where man's gargantuan folly was artfully and at times masterfully presented. Perhaps he was a stranger in this world in the sense that he must have been aware--his comedies and his tragedies both suggest that this is so--of how wonderfully seldom man subscribed in word and deed to principle; and being acutely aware of this he may have felt that the ideals he himself valued were inhospitably welcomed sojurners in a world where goodness may have seemed more a literary abstraction than a reality. But Murray is perfectly accurate when he states that Chapman "was one for whom the opposition between sense and soul was never resolved."[2] In The Tears of Peace (1609) there is

[1] Murray, p. 173.

[2] Ibid., p. 171.

a passage that suggests the two polar extremes between which Chapman's thinking seems to have been restlessly tossed about. The Spirit of Homer asks Chapman "...what hast thou to looke on, more divine,/ And horrid, then man is...." Roy Battenhouse refers to this division in Chapman's thinking as "the Platonic dichotomy between sense and intellect."[1]

We may not today be particularly sympathetic with the difficulty the neo-Platonist had in keeping the physical separated from the metaphysical in his relationship with the ideal woman--we may be conscious mostly of our awareness of rationalization of desire. But in any case we should remember that neo-Platonism is only one of Chapman's moral values. Furthermore, the Platonic dichotomy that so disunifies Chapman's comedies does not wholly account for his particular development, traced in this study, from a position akin to optimism to one that has the appearance of a despairing cynicism. Chapman is not simply a neo-Platonist, a Stoic, and a Christian who is troubled about the status of heavenly ideals; such a judgment is far too over-simplified. The entire range of his comedies plots a course of development which leads almost inevitably to his admission, finally, that man, far from being a creature imperfectly wedded to divinity, was in fact merely a horrid creature. Chapman's vision in The Widow's Tears is not simply the final comic work of a writer whose ideals had failed him, but the final comic work of a writer who had come to realize that people, with distressing regularity, had failed his ideals. If love was merely lust after all, that was one thing to be concerned about, but if all public professions

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[1]Battenhouse, p. 107.

of nobility, love, probity, and integrity were but affectations, then the defeat of human ideals was virtually complete. The worthy man, if he appears at all, is thus isolated and alien; and this is precisely the view taken in Chapman's tragedies. Irving Ribner's fine summary of them unmistakably connects the whole world of Chapman's tragedies with the view of human nature and human society depicted in The Widow's Tears:

> His Bussy D'Ambois...is based upon the assumption of a degenerate decaying world in which virtue is incapable of survival. To make his point Chapman uses the concept of the "golden age" of prelapsarian perfection, for Bussy reflects the qualities of man in such an age, and his tragedy is the tragedy of all of us who must live in a world where such virtues can no longer exist. These motifs are repeated in the Byron plays, with further emphasis upon the corroding force of the world's evil, and with a slowly developing stoic insistence on the need for authority to regulate a degenerate humanity. In The Revenge of d'Ambois and Caesar and Pompey Chapman sacrifices everything else in the plays to his need to proclaim, almost frantically, the virtues of the stoic ideal. There is little stoicism in his final play, The Tragedy of Chabot, but his theme is the inability of justice to survive in a vitiated world....[1]

The comedies and the tragedies thus depict in their respective modes the same vision of man.

Paralleling Chapman's maturing development as a comic writer were certain changes in genre which he experimented with. Beginning with a form of satiric drama we designate as humour comedy, Chapman moved towards the related satiric drama of Old Comedy. But near the end of his career as a comic dramatist he evolved, in The Gentleman Usher and in Monsieur D'Olive, a form of tragicomedy. It would seem that tragicomedy might have lent itself beautifully to Chapman's dramatic powers, blending as they do the romantic and the philosophically serious with the grotesquely absurd; and there is harmonious resolution in The

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[1]Ribner, p. 7.

Gentleman Usher. But even in tragicomedy Chapman gives the impression that the good and the virtuous are sheltered only because they are protected by antique poaching laws that could not be enforced. Perhaps it is ironic that by abrogating the poaching laws and by removing the beautiful, unsullied white hinds from the glades of an unrealizable Arden, Chapman in his last comedy was able to create a perfectly unified and artistic comic drama.

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