Routledge Library Editions

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY

SHAKESPEARE

Routledge Library Editions

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY

SHAKESPEARE

Routledge Library Editions – Shakespeare

CRITICAL STUDIES
In 36 Volumes

I	Shakespeare's Poetic Styles	*Baxter*
II	The Shakespeare Inset	*Berry*
III	Shakespeare	*Bradbrook*
IV	Shakespeare's Dramatic Structures	*Brennan*
V	Focus on Macbeth	*Brown*
VI	Shakespeare's Soliloquies	*Clemen*
VII	Shakespeare's Dramatic Art	*Clemen*
VIII	A Commentary on Shakespeare's Richard III	*Clemen*
IX	The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery	*Clemen*
X	Shakespeare	*Duthie*
XI	Shakespeare and the Confines of Art	*Edwards*
XII	Shakespeare the Dramatist	*Ellis-Fermor*
XIII	Shakespeare's Drama	*Ellis-Fermor*
XIV	The Language of Shakespeare's Plays	*Evans*
XV	Coleridge on Shakespeare	*Foakes*
XVI	Shakespeare	*Foakes*
XVII	Shakespeare's Poetics	*Fraser*
XVIII	Shakespeare	*Frye*
XIX	The Shakespeare Claimants	*Gibson*
XX	Iconoclastes	*Griffith*
XXI	That Shakespeherian Rag	*Hawkes*
XXII	The Living Image	*Henn*
XXIII	Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne	*Kermode*
XXIV	Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets	*Leishman*
XXV	King Lear in Our Time	*Mack*
XXVI	Shakespeare as Collaborator	*Muir*
XXVII	Shakespeare's Sonnets	*Muir*
XXVIII	The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays	*Muir*
XXIX	The Voyage to Illyria	*Muir & O'Loughlin*
XXX	Shakespeare	*Nicoll*
XXXI	The Winter's Tale	*Pyle*
XXXII	The Problem Plays of Shakespeare	*Schanzer*
XXXIII	Swearing and Perjury in Shakespeare's Plays	*Shirley*
XXXIV	The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose	*Vickers*
XXXV	Literature and Drama	*Wells*
XXXVI	Readings on the Character of Hamlet	*Williamson*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY

WOLFGANG CLEMEN

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1977

Reprinted in 2005 by
Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RN
270 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

First issued in paperback 2010

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery
ISBN 978-0-415-43595-6 (set)
ISBN 978-0-415-35280-2 (hbk)
ISBN 978-0-415-61220-3 (pbk)
Miniset: Critical Studies

Series: Routledge Library Editions – Shakespeare

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY

Wolfgang Clemen

SECOND EDITION, WITH A
NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON
METHUEN AND CO LTD
1977

First published in 1951
by Methuen & Co Ltd
Reprinted seven times
First published as a University Paperback in 1966
Reprinted twice
Second edition 1977

Printed in Great Britain at the
University Press, Cambridge

ISBN 0 416 85740 X (hardback)
ISBN 0 416 85730 2 (paperback)

CONTENTS

PART III

THE IMAGERY IN THE "ROMANCES"

PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

PREFACE

LOOKING BACK OVER FORTY YEARS

IT is now twenty-five years since this book was first published in England and forty years since *Shakespeares Bilder*, which formed the basis for it, appeared in Germany. These dates provoke a retrospective survey, self-criticism and a prospective look into the future, for in the meantime the study of Shakespeare's imagery has developed in various quite divergent directions.

It was my good fortune to be among the first to concentrate on this subject, for my book was published almost simultaneously with Caroline Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. But it was also fortunate that our two books took a different line, supplementing each other rather than overlapping. However, it also needed the boldness and inexperience of a young man not deterred by the complexity of his subject and not wholly aware of it, and who was, moreover, not bowed down by the burden of secondary literature which would have suggested many other possible approaches. For anyone settling down to write about Shakespeare's imagery nowadays would have to take these possibilities into consideration. The task I had set myself in those early years was shortly afterwards described justly as "exploring a field far beyond the power of any one man".[1]

When, in 1950, I was preparing the English version of my German book, altering a good deal, I was again fortunate in receiving Una Ellis-Fermor's advice. For she encouraged me to stick to my original scheme, advising me to extend the inquiry into the specifically dramatic functions of imagery and not to abandon the variety of approach which I had used and furthermore not to give up the wide concept of imagery which in the meantime she too had advocated

[1] Una Ellis-Fermor, *Some Recent Research in Shakespeare's Imagery*, Shakespeare Association Pamphlet, Oxford, 1937.

in her book *The Frontiers of Drama*.[1] Her encouragement was supplemented by that of John Dover Wilson who recommended the book in a preface which he contributed to the first edition, thus introducing its author to Shakespeareans in the English-speaking world.

Looking back on my book today I would still contend that the general drift of my argument was right and that many of its conclusions and points-of-view are still valid for our present interpretation of Shakespeare's plays. Inquiring into the development of one particular aspect of dramatic art has proved a fruitful approach, which later on was applied to other elements of drama as well. My aims went in the right direction but I could achieve only part of them. At many points I would now acknowledge the desirability of additions and qualifications and, in quite a few cases, of corrections. I would also try to make up for one major omission, the chapter on *Macbeth*, for which I had collected material but which, because of the complexity of this very subject, I never succeeded in completing. Yet were I to carry out all this, the book would grow to at least double its size and would become less readable, though perhaps more learned and more balanced in its presentation. Even if one is in possession of more knowledge one should perhaps not rewrite an early book which owed its origin to a situation which cannot be recreated. Moreover, this 'new' book would be a less original one. The original text has therefore not been changed substantially for this second edition and references are still made to the text of the Globe edition. Some changes, however, have been made in language and presentation. The notes have been checked and the bibliography – as far as articles and books on Shakespeare's imagery are concerned – has been brought up to date.[2]

My aim, then as now, has been to trace the changing functions of Shakespeare's imagery against the background of the general evolution of his dramatic art. As was evident

[1] Una Ellis-Fermor, *The Frontiers of Drama*, London, 1945, p. 78.

[2] The author wishes to thank Dr. Ingeborg Boltz for her assistance in the preparation of the new edition.

from related studies which were published in the years following the first edition, my book, which I had described in my summary as a "first tentative endeavour", could not at that time exhaust the subject. Several aspects, which I had neglected, such as Shakespeare's derived imagery, his iconographic, religious, and emblematic imagery, his 'image clusters', his use of personification, his stage imagery, have received adequate treatment in subsequent articles and books, as have the relationship between image and symbol and the question of imagery as a test of authorship.[1]

My major concern, however, had been to relate Shakespeare's imagery to other elements of his dramatic art and to examine its specific dramatic function within this wider context, linking it up with situation and character, plot and scenic action. Strangely enough, this line was taken up again only at a much later date, although this approach, judged from today, may well have been the most promising for further research and the one, moreover, that could have counterbalanced certain exaggerations and vagaries which the study of Shakespeare's imagery was to produce.

For the main trend in this area continued to be the exploration of the associations and hidden meanings of Shakespeare's imagery, the unravelling of its symbolism, its undertones and its subtle ambiguities. G. Wilson Knight's first important books,[2] which developed the analysis of poetic symbolism in Shakespeare's plays, had in fact been published before the investigation of imagery became a major field of research. Another influence came from the new methods of analysing poetic texts and led to Shakespeare's imagery being looked upon primarily as an instrument of poetic expression, while its use as a dramatist's tool was overlooked. There is no doubt that these new

[1] E.g. J. E. Hankins, *Shakespeare's Derived Imagery*, New York, 1953; J. Doebler, *Shakespeare's Speaking Pictures, Studies in Iconic Imagery*, Albuquerque, 1974; D. Mehl, "Emblems in English Renaissance Drama", in *Renaissance Drama* II, ed. S. Schoenbaum, Evanston, 1969; E. A. Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Imagination*, 1946, repr. Lincoln, 1963 (for "image clusters"); T. R. Henn, *The Living Image*, London, 1972; K. Muir, "Image and Symbol in *Macbeth*" (and in *Hamlet*), in *Shakespeare the Professional*, London, 1973; H. Zimmermann, *Die Personifikation im Drama Shakespeares*, Heidelberg, 1975.

[2] *The Wheel of Fire*, London, 1930; *The Imperial Theme*, London, 1931.

modes of textual interpretation, reinforced by what could be learned from the New Criticism, helped us to discover in Shakespeare's language, in his "poetic texture", subtleties, ironies, and interconnections which had previously passed unnoticed. A perusal of recent annotated editions of plays or of articles commenting on certain passages shows that today we are indeed better equipped to understand difficult passages and sound their meanings. But, on the other hand, this development has also led to a certain isolation of studies in imagery. Imagery was looked upon as almost autonomous, as belonging to "the pattern below the level of plot and character" (T. S. Eliot), as a key to the play's themes and ideas which were to be unfolded rather by images and repeated words than by the action on the stage. Robert B. Heilman's two books on *King Lear* and *Othello*,[1] in which he examines many strands of imagery, relating them to the structure and the basic themes of the play, are perhaps the best example of the value, the ingenuity, but also of the limitations of this method.

Specialized studies are often in danger of distorting the perception of the work as a whole, and the specialized critic, concentrating his attention on one aspect and attempting to consider everything from this angle only, is apt to overvalue his approach. The temptation was great to base the interpretation of a play solely on what its imagery could disclose about the play's underlying themes and symbols. The obvious meaning, which could be derived from the course of the action, from "plot and character", from direct statement, was taken to be less important and sometimes even esteemed less than those hidden meanings supposedly conveyed by the imagery. "To read the plays through theme and imagery was an invitation to all kinds of doctrinal irrelevances" was Muriel Bradbrook's comment on this trend in her retrospect "Fifty Years of Criticism of Shakespeare's Style".[2]

Five years later Helen Gardner expressed even more dissatisfaction with this development: "This method seems now to have come to the point where its deficiencies are

[1] *This Great Stage*, Baton Rouge, 1948; *Magic in the Web*, Lexington, 1956.
[2] *Shakespeare Survey* 7, 1954.

becoming more obvious than its merits."[1] Again five years later, Kenneth Muir, in a detailed account "Shakespeare's Imagery – Then and Now"[2] in which he did full justice to the divergent lines of research in imagery came to the conclusion: "...it must be confessed that in recent years the study of imagery has fallen into disfavour." This surely has always been the fate of a specialized study pushed to its limit and sometimes beyond its limit.

The time had come to turn away from the close and exclusive analysis of verbal imagery towards a wider concept which would include "Visual imagery" and, by emphasizing its dramatic function, would link it up with other dramatic elements. This demand was in fact formulated as early as 1952 in an important article by R. A. Foakes, "Suggestions for a New Approach to Shakespeare's Imagery",[3] in which the author made many valuable proposals for studying imagery in its relation to other aspects of Shakespeare's dramatic art. His claim that "The poetic image in a play is set in a context not of words alone, but of words, dramatic situation, interplay of character, stage-effect, and is also placed in a time sequence" confirmed in some ways what I had myself outlined at the end of my book (his article was written before the English version of my book was published). Foakes was quoted by other critics who were also dissatisfied with the prevalent trend of imagery analysis and were looking out for correctives.[4] Even before Foakes expressed his warnings, an article had been published in *Hudson Review* (1949) whose author, Alan S. Downer, also advocated an approach that would bridge the gap between Shakespeare the poet and Shakespeare the playwright. For Downer showed how Shakespeare used the language of imagery in action, how he dramatized the image, so that it "is more than a verbal one" and "is realized, made visual in the action of the play". But this important article did not become known to a wider public until 1957.[5]

[1] Helen Gardner, *The Business of Criticism*, Oxford, 1959.
[2] *Shakespeare Survey* 18, 1965.
[3] *Shakespeare Survey* 5, 1952.
[4] E.g. John Lawlor, "Mind and Hand, Some Reflections on the Study of Shakespeare's Imagery", *Shakespeare Quarterly* VII, 1957.
[5] "The Life of our Design. The Function of Imagery in the Poetic Drama", *Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. L. F. Dean, New York, 1957.

However, it was only in 1961 that the demand to integrate the examination of imagery into a combined consideration of plot and character, stage-action and style was put into practice. Maurice Charney's book *Shakespeare's Roman Plays* refers to imagery only in its sub-title ("The Function of Imagery in the Drama"), thus indicating the subsidiary role of image-analysis within a comprehensive interpretation of the plays. Charney's book appears as a milestone. Not only does he show at many points the interplay between verbal imagery and dramatic events, demonstrating how imagery merges into the stage action, he also draws attention to the occurrence of many "non-verbal presentational images", noting "how these work together with verbal images and help to realize them in dramatic terms" (p. 205). Charney's book helped to overcome the division between the study of Shakespeare's poetic language and the study of his stagecraft, a division which had for quite some time prevented critics from recognizing the close interrelationship of the two.

This line of approach was extended to cover more plays in two illuminating articles, Martha H. Golden's "Stage Imagery in Shakespearean Studies"[1] and Dieter Mehl's "Visual and Rhetorical Imagery in Shakespeare's Plays".[2] The important discussion of the impact of symbolic and often mute spectacle initiated by Robert Fricker[3] and further developed by Inga-Stina Ewbank[4] into Shakespeare's "use of a visual-verbal dialectic" was thus continued. The relationship between spectacle and expressive stage images on the one hand and metaphorical language on the other hand, which these critics demonstrate, is so striking and convincing that in retrospect one wonders why it took such a long time to be recognized.

At this point I should say something about my own experiences after 1951. For my interest had shifted from the analysis of imagery and style to an inquiry into other aspects of Shakespeare's dramatic art. But most of these

[1] *Shakespearean Research Opportunities* I, 1965.
[2] *Essays and Studies* 25, 1972.
[3] R. Fricker, "Das szenische Bild bei Shakespeare", *Annales Universitatis Saraviensis* V, 1956.
[4] "More pregnantly than words", *Shakespeare Survey* 24, 1971.

subjects which I discussed in the 1950s and 1960s, including some excellent work carried out by students of mine, also taught me something about Shakespeare's imagery and made me aware of its role in new contexts. The function of imagery within Shakespeare's art of preparation, and also its rôle in evoking the past, actualizing retrospect and narrative, clarifying the central theme of appearance and reality, and dramatizing the soliloquy,[1] all this made me see that imagery may play an important part in even more respects than I had realized when my first book was written. Although I did not pursue the study of imagery for its own sake I kept on coming across it. Even in my scene-by-scene commentary on *Richard III*[2] I had to deal with new features of Shakespeare's imagery, although this play is certainly not among the most rewarding plays for this purpose.

It was discovered indirectly, too, that imagery could be used as a valuable aid for the producer. For only within the last decade has Shakespeare's text been systematically scrutinized for its numerous implicit stage-directions, the signals for gesture and costume, physiognomy, speech, and movement on the stage. This approach which was successfully carried out by Rudolf Stamm and those working with him was another step towards relating poetic language to the reality of the stage. As Stamm has shown,[3] these hints for the producer and actor are conveyed by various means, imagery being only one of them. Such studies also provide support for what had already been demonstrated by Charney and others (and what confirmed the line followed in this book): that we must not restrict the concept of dramatic imagery to the traditional definitions of metaphor, simile, comparison and other figures of speech as laid down in our textbooks. These definitions may be useful for other pur-

[1] The relevant essays are: "Foreboding and Anticipation in Shakespeare's Early Histories", *Shakespeare Survey* 6, 1953; "Shakespeare's Art of Preparation", "Past and Future in Shakespeare's Drama", "Shakespeare's Use of the Messenger's Report", "Appearance and Reality in Shakespeare's Plays", "Shakespeare's Soliloquies" in *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, London, 1972.

[2] *A Commentary on "Richard III"*, London, 1968.

[3] See especially "The Theatrical Physiognomy of Shakespeare's Plays", *The Shaping Powers at Work*, Heidelberg, 1967; "The Alphabet of Speechless Complaint" in *The Triple Bond*, ed. J. G. Price, London, 1975. Arthur Gerstner-Hirzel, *The Economy of Action and Word in Shakespeare's Plays*, Bern, 1957; Jörg Hasler, *Shakespeare's Theatrical Notation: The Comedies*, Bern, 1974.

poses. If, however, we wish to recognize connections and interrelationships, and to grasp the complexity of a dramatic process, we need a concept as broad and as inclusive as possible. For what matters here is the ancillary role of imagery, its constant interchangeability and interaction with direct statement, description, visual stage-effect and other elements of dramatic representation.

When we review the present situation of Shakespearean studies and look into the future it appears doubtful whether any more specialized studies focusing on imagery alone would help us to see these relationships. Imagery studies would best serve our purpose if they were integrated in a coordinated interpretation of Shakespeare's plays, so that one could draw upon them whenever the occasion arose. This does not of course mean that we know enough about imagery and that there are no aspects left which might deserve a fresh consideration. But these new approaches could most fruitfully be worked out in connection with constant renewal of our attempts at interpretation. The contours of some of these new approaches may already be discerned.

In analysing the imagery the chief concern has been to explore what was going on in Shakespeare's mind, what associations and imaginative processes could be detected.[1] Much less emphasis was laid on what went on in the mind of the audience when, watching the consecutive scenes, they take in a certain passage rich in imagery. What would its impact on *their* imagination be, what would be remembered when the next scene passed over the stage? Our habit of analysing a given passage at our desk may lead us to neglect what is going on in the playhouse, and the scholar's intellectual response is different from the imaginative response of the audience. This imaginative response during a performance is difficult to describe and to examine with our customary critical methods. However, it is what matters when a play is not read but staged.

To inquire into the impact of imagery on the mind of the audience during a performance necessarily leads to a consideration of the consciousness of the passing of time

[1] See especially Edward A. Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Imagination*, 1946, repr. Lincoln, 1963.

which we experience while watching a play. That there are in each of Shakespeare's plays several conflicting planes and temporal modes has often been demonstrated. The important rôle of imagery in this context, however, has less often been shown. But in some cases a passage of imagery may have the effect of halting, for the audience, the passage of time and with it the action: a moment of suspense is created in which we forget about the advancing movement of the plot, "a window is thrust open admitting a glimpse of a remote past or of a sphere removed from the actuality of what we have just been witnessing on the stage".[1] These effects which transpose us into another time and another place, introducing a new dimension and with it another perspective of time, apply in particular to what Francis Berry in his valuable study has called "Inset".[2] His merit is to have shown, through many different examples, how much these "Insets" vary "in their degrees of temporal recession or perspective in relation to their dramatic context". For the time of an "Inset" is almost aways different from the time of its context. Berry's insets are, in most cases, passages of intricate and complex imagery, working strongly on our imagination, and his findings could therefore help us to establish new criteria for evaluating the function of imagery in the time-sequence of the play as experienced by the audience.

A play's movement and pace, as reflected in the time-consciousness of the audience, is influenced by many factors, not only by the varying speed of the action and the movements of the characters, but also by the alteration of verse and prose, by syntax and diction, the use of rhetorical figures and several other means by which the dramatist can influence the tempo of speech and delivery on the stage. In this context Shakespeare's prose-imagery, which in my book I treated only perfunctorily, plays an important rôle, which may be deduced from Brian Vickers' thorough analysis of Shakespeare's prose.[3] Different types of images, used by different characters in prose-passages, may have an

[1] *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, London, 1972, p. 140.
[2] Francis Berry, *The Shakespeare Inset*, London, 1965.
[3] Brian Vickers, *The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose*, London, 1968.

accelerating or retarding effect, besides influencing, by their very rhythm and movement, the mood of that particular scene or passage.

In his important survey "Shakespeare's Imagery – Then and Now" Kenneth Muir proposed as "one of the ways in which the study of Shakespeare's imagery could be profitably pursued in the future" a "comprehensive study of the use of imagery by Shakespeare's contemporaries". This approach could be expanded into the question of what, in this respect – within an overall comparison – would distinguish Shakespeare's drama from that of all other playwrights, ancient and modern. Una Ellis-Fermor, in an early chapter on "The Functions of Imagery in Drama", had already given thought to this fundamental problem,[1] discussing the increase of concentration, unity, depth, amplitude and imaginative significance which Shakespeare's poetic drama possesses compared to drama without imagery. Renewed reflection along these lines would be fruitful. Apart from the manifold "functions" which Shakespeare's imagery fulfils in his plays, there appear to be two qualities particularly characteristic of Shakespeare, distinguishing him from all other major dramatists, and both are closely related to his use of imagery.

One is his way of making us aware of his characters' physical life in all its aspects. For we not only see before us – as has often been observed – locality, scenery and setting, but we watch these characters experiencing night and day, sleeping and waking, physically suffering or enjoying, eating and drinking, walking, standing and sitting, doing all sorts of things; we sense the climate, the weather, feel the cold and the heat, know whether it is dusk or dawn, gloomy or bright. Moreover our sense of taste, of smell, of touch is mainly awakened through the sensations of the characters on the stage. This would apply to the drama of other playwrights as well, but only to a limited extent and on a much smaller scale. For would we find this complexity and fullness of physical conditions and sensations elsewhere?

This physical existence of man is situated within the

1 Una Ellis-Fermor, *The Frontiers of Drama*, London, 1945.

context of Elizabethan life. To an extent not yet fully realized Shakespeare's imagery reflects the economic realities of his age, foreign trade, crafts and merchandise, so that a study along these lines, in comparison with other dramatists, should be rewarding.

If the physical complexity of life is fully represented in Shakespeare's language, there emerges, at the other end of the scale, the world of imagination, of the spirit. In particular the tragedies and romances gain an additional dimension through the numerous references to this higher spiritual world, which nevertheless is brought close to the audience by concrete symbols and images. These two planes or modes of experience, the physical and the metaphysical, the real and the imaginative, counterbalance each other in a manner which prevents Shakespeare's drama from becoming either too realistic or too metaphysical. This perfect balance, unequalled in European drama, lends Shakespeare's work one of its unique qualities; nor is the breadth of experience, as reflected by his use of imagery, paralleled in the work of any other playwright. A fruitful area for future research may therefore lie in this direction.

WOLFGANG CLEMEN

I

INTRODUCTION

ANYONE who will take the trouble to compare the imagery in *Antony and Cleopatra* with the imagery in *Henry VI* or in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* cannot but be greatly impressed by the vast difference between them. They lie so far apart that a connection, a transition between these two styles seems scarcely possible. But if one delves deeper into Shakespeare's dramas, and if one examines each of the plays in turn, from the earlier works to the late tragedies, it will become apparent that in the former, this art is prepared for, step by step. Here we stand before an amazing and unique development of an element of poetic expression, an evolution so striking and of such compass as is difficult to find in any other poet. It is the aim of this book to describe this in its separate phases and forms and to show its connection with Shakespeare's general development.

Anyone who has occupied himself with Shakespeare at all has at least some conception of the general development of his art. If, however, we are to study this evolution more in detail and if we are to become fully conscious of what we at first feel in a vague and general way, we shall be constrained to return again and again to the individual, concrete fact; we must fix our gaze upon separate courses of development in order to grasp the more comprehensive and the more general. Thus, for example, similar scenes and situations in the various plays must be compared with one another; we must investigate how Shakespeare manages his plot, how he characterizes his men and women, and how his description of nature, his technique of exposition, his method of preparing for a crisis, and his manner of resolving a conflict undergo changes and attain to perfection. Only from such individual investigations can we gain a definite picture of what one may term the general development of Shakespeare's art. By investigating the special

development of a very important element of Shakespeare's style, this book would seek to help towards a more distinct conception of the history of Shakespeare's art in its entirety.

It must be remembered, to be sure, that every investigation of an individual development carries with it the danger of overlooking the connection of this element with the play as an organic whole. Only too easily do we forget that the distinction which we make between different elements of dramatic art is at bottom an artificial one. Delineation of character, plot, atmosphere and dramatic structure of a play do not, in fact, exist as independent spheres, distinct one from the other. Only one thing really exists: the play as a whole, as a totality. Everything else is simply an aspect which *we* detach from the whole in order to facilitate our investigation and make it feasible. Herein lies the final difficulty which is responsible for the problematical character of all literary investigation concerned with poetic development. It is only by means of the individual study of such isolated aspects that the total development can become tangible and clear to us. But it is just this method of isolating and cutting out that may easily destroy the living organism of the work of poetry.

Hence it must be our aim to reduce to the minimum errors due to isolating the "imagery" from the other elements of the dramatic work. This study seeks to show how manifold and various are the conditions and qualifications determining the form and nature of each image, and how many factors are to be considered in order to grasp fully the real character of the imagery of a play. It is very tempting to examine a passage from Shakespeare by itself, and it often gives us great aesthetic pleasure. But it is a method suitable only in a few definite cases. In most cases it is deceptive, because we examine the given passage from a viewpoint which does not coincide with Shakespeare's own intention. When Shakespeare wrote this passage, he wrote it for a certain particular situation, for a particular moment of his play. The special circumstances involved in this situation he kept before his mind's eye, and of them he thought while composing the passage. Sometimes, he

sought by means of the imagery to lend enhanced expression to the feeling of the character concerned; at other times, it might have been his intent to give the audience a hint towards understanding what was still to come, or perhaps to provide a counterpoint to one of the central themes of the play. Before we can claim to appreciate and appraise rightly an image or a sequence of images, we must first know what particular purpose this image serves where it occurs.

An isolated image, an image viewed outside of its context, is only half the image. Every image, every metaphor gains full life and significance only from its context. In Shakespeare, an image often points beyond the scene in which it stands to preceding or following acts; it almost always has reference to the whole of the play. It appears as a cell in the organism of the play, linked with it in many ways.

It is the aim of this book to investigate these relations and connections, in order to arrive at a truly organic method of understanding the images. There are certain important questions which naturally follow from this angle of approach.

We must first of all consider the immediate context in which the image stands. How is the image, the metaphor related to the train of thought? How does it fit into the syntax of the text? Are there criteria by which we may distinguish between degrees of connection?

The further question arises, whether certain forms of dramatic speech, the monologue or the dialogue, have an influence upon the nature of the image.

As a dramatic situation, a specific motive or inducement, stands behind every image, the following questions arise: What motives are especially productive of images, out of what situations do most images grow? What is the relationship of the images to their occasion?

Each image is used by an individual character. Is the use of imagery different for each character, can any relation be discerned between the nature of Shakespeare's men and women and the way they use imagery? Are characters to be found in Shakespeare which are especially marked by speaking in images?

All these relationships point, each in its own way, to

the fundamental fact that the image is rooted in the totality of the play. It has grown in the air of the play; how does it share its atmosphere or contribute to its tenor? To what degree is the total effect of the play enhanced and coloured by images? For the distribution of the images in the whole play is often very striking, and leads to an investigation of the relationships between dramatic structure and the use of imagery.

Thus imagery necessarily suggests to us the fundamental problems lying beneath the complex construction of a play. Swinburne has already pointed out "That the inner and the outer qualities of a poet's work are of their very nature indivisible" . . . and emphasized that "criticism which busies itself only with the outer husk or technical shell of a great artist's work taking no account of the spirit or the thought which informs it, cannot have even so much value as this. . . ."[1] One should go even a step further and say that it is not possible to interpret stylistic peculiarities before being perfectly clear about this "thought which informs the artist's work". Style is a word of many meanings, and hence is subject to the most varied interpretation. In the past few years there has been no dearth of attempts to raise the concept of style to a higher plane and to interpret it in a way that illuminates its real significance.[2] Shakespeare's style has not long ago been happily defined "as the product of the characters, the passions, the situations, which in fact are the living, driving forces behind and determining the style".[3] This book, too, attempts to view the imagery in this way and to discover the forces determining it.

The answer to all these questions will only be found when the problem is considered as one of evolution. The power to associate the imagery with the very fabric of the play, at first a mere potentiality, develops and extends, step by step, with Shakespeare's development. In Shake-

[1] Swinburne, *A Study of Shakespeare*, London, 1880, pp. 7, 8.

[2] Cf. Middleton Murry, *The Problem of Style*, London, 1925; Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, London, 1928; Henry W. Wells, *Poetic Imagery*, New York, 1924; Stephen J. Brown, *The World of Imagery*, London, 1927; C. Day Lewis, *The Poetic Image*, London, 1947; Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, University of Chicago Press, 1948.

[3] Oliver Elton, *Style in Shakespeare*, British Academy Lecture, 1936.

speare's early plays we miss many of the functions of which the images in later plays are capable. Only little by little did Shakespeare discover the possibilities which imagery offers to the dramatist. In his hands metaphors gradually develop into more and more effective instruments: at first fulfilling only a few simple functions, they later often serve several aims at one and the same time and play a decisive part in the characterization of the figures in the play and in expressing the dramatic theme. The image eventually becomes the favourite mode of expression of the later Shakespeare. This fact, well known to the majority of Shakespeare's readers, deserves, however, investigation and explanation. Why does Shakespeare, especially in the greatest plays, repeatedly replace the direct statement by a metaphorical phrase? Why does the later Shakespeare say the deepest and wisest things through an image instead of in "plain language"? It is a superficial and unsatisfying explanation to declare that metaphorical language is "more poetical". We must seek better answers.

As a rule, too little attention is paid to the fact that images in a play require quite another mode of investigation than, say, images in a lyric poem.[1] We are able to comprehend a lyric poem—like a painting or a statue—almost at one single glance, "immediately"; a drama, on the other hand, we can understand only through a series of impressions, "successively". This holds equally true of the essential nature of the epic poem or of the novel, but in the case of the drama, the sequence of time, the process of the successive exposition, plays a far more important rôle.[2] For the action of the drama unfolds itself in one evening, visibly and audibly, before the eyes and ears of the audience; its effect depends largely upon how far the audience can be brought under the spell of this sequence of events in time, how far

[1] A clear recognition and appreciation of the particular functions of imagery in drama is to be found in Una Ellis-Fermor's book on *The Frontiers of Drama*, London, 1945 (Chapter V, "The Functions of Imagery in Drama").

[2] J. Dover Wilson says of the Elizabethan play, "Above all it was action in motion, a work of art which, unlike that of architecture, sculpture, painting, or lyrical poetry, was not to be apprehended in all its parts at one and the same moment, but conveyed the intentions of its creator through a series of impressions, each fleeting as the phases of a musical symphony, each deriving tone and colour from all that had gone before and bestowing tone and colour on all that came after, and each therefore contributing to the cumulative effect which was only felt when the play was over" (*What Happens in Hamlet*, Cambridge, 1935, p. 230).

it experiences with the characters the course of the dramatic happenings, and lives in it during the actual performance. The dramatist himself shapes everything in his play according to this immanent law of the succession of time. His art, as Dover Wilson once put it, is one of "progressive revelation".

In every epic poem and in every novel, we find sections which can be taken by themselves, which lose none of their significance even when we do not know their connection with the temporal course of the events. The novelist can allow himself digressions, broad descriptive passages and historical or sociological explanations; he often brings in something that has no significance for what is to come and likewise much that did not necessarily result from what preceded. Time, the progress of things and events, often seems to stand still in the novel and the epic poem; a protracted lingering occurs at some point without our being able to detect any advance. In the drama, which is subject to entirely different laws, this would be utterly impossible. The texture of the drama is of a much closer web, and the necessity of an inner continuity, of a mutual cooperation and connection of all parts, is greater in the drama than in the epic poem or the novel. This becomes clearer if we look at a play of a great dramatist (dramatists of lesser rank naturally often fail to fulfil these conditions) and examine the often apparently insignificant details which he introduces. Almost every single detail is used later on, reappears suddenly at an important point. Individual touches which seemed insignificant when they were introduced for the first time, acquire real meaning with the progress of events. In a truly great drama nothing is left disconnected, everything is carried on. The dramatist is continuously spinning threads which run through the whole play and which he himself delivers into our hand in order that, by their aid, we may understand what follows, and accompany it with greater tension and keener participation. It is one of the artistic achievements of the great dramatist to prepare in the mind of the audience a whole net of expectations, intuitions and conjectures so that each new act, each new scene, is approached with a definite pre-