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FROM THE POETIC WORLD OF
SHAKESPEARE AND CERVANTES.



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TESIS CON FALLA DE ORIGEN

A la memoria de mis adorados padres
el Sr. Dr. Don Felipe Suárez y la
Sra. Doña Trinidad Fernández de
Suárez.

Al alto y noble espíritu de mi culto
esposo el Sr. Dr. Don Arturo Alcacez

A mi hermana Luisa y demás
familiares.

A mis maestros con infinita gratitud

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to attempt an approach to THE POETIC WORLD OF SHAKESPEARE AND CERVANTES: to study the lives of these two writers and, so far as possible within the limited extent of these pages, a few of the many elements used in creating their poetic masterpieces; to realize how their suffering souls directed their efforts more toward the happiness of others than their own enjoyment or material benefit; to appreciate the profound devotion and sacrifice, transformed into poetry, which realized their ideals.

If Cervantes had devoted his life to dramatic literature, perhaps he would have excelled in this form, for he has written some magnificent dramas. But he also found a kind of spiritual shelter and moral protection in writing fiction, for among his opponents was Lope de Vega.

Therefore, it was neither in the field of drama nor poetry that Cervantes was to excel, as much as it was in fiction. He had to find a new form of literature which would embrace many other forms, and a new style stimulated by personal experience, guided by criticism and containing the natural philosophy

he had acquired during his wide and many-sided adventures.

There is a period of forty years in Cervantes' life from 1575 when he was taken into slavery to 1615 when the Second Part of Don Quijote was published, which held more bitterness than happiness for Cervantes. He tried three times to escape from slavery in Algiers: first on the 20th of September, 1576; second, in March 1578; and the third time in 1579.

In spite of all this, he did not obtain freedom until 1580, when his ransom was paid and he sailed for Spain. He reached Valencia joyfully on December 18 and a few days later was in Madrid.

Cervantes never stopped writing during his captivity in Algiers, and some of these works will be mentioned later on. The amazing accumulation of experiences acquired during this time appears not only in his poetry but in his dramatic works; some of these are lost forever, but others survive to enrich his novels.

He traveled constantly. In 1582 after writing La Numancia, he went to the Azores; in 1584 he had an opportunity to publish the First Part of La Galatea, which pastoral novel finally appeared at Alcalá de Henares on June 13, 1585. In the same year he married Doña Catalina Salazar y

Vozmeediano, who was the inspiration for one of his main characters in Galatea.

In 1586 he was invited to Esquivias, and a year later he acted as commissary in Seville. In the unforgettable year 1587 the Invincible Armada was equipped and Cervantes, as well as Espinel and other poets, took part in this activity. In 1588 Cervantes was working in Ecija, gathering food for the Armada and dreaming of going to America. Unfortunately, his petition was denied by the king.

During this war between Spain and England, Lope de Vega wrote his famous poems The Tears of Angélica.

After the death of his mother in 1593, Cervantes worked for the government in Granada and four years later, while in Flanders, heard of the death of his brother Rodrigo. Later he went to Valladolid.

In 1604 he began to publish the First Part of Don Quijote which appeared in 1605.

Cervantes' exceptional life, with its poverty, suffering, slavery and ensuing wisdom, resulted in a refinement and purification of soul. This is portrayed in his literary work, especially Don Quijote which represents the ideal of creating a perfect world.

between the year 1619 when he entered the Order of Servants of the Holy Ghost and 1612 when he was attending the Selvaje Academy, he lost his two beloved sisters, Andrea in 1609 and Magdalena in 1611.

His "peñola" or pen, always active, had already produced The Twelve Exemplary Novels (1612) which, according to the critical and wise opinion of Don Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, should be read between the First and Second Parts of Don Quijote of La Mancha, when they were written, chronologically.

This work was preceded by the exquisite poem Journey to Farnassus, developed in one thousand tercets of remarkable and genial originality, even though it was suggested originally by a poem of Caporali.

In spite of his literary efforts under poverty and lack of freedom in different periods of his life, Cervantes always held to his religious belief; on the 2nd. of April, 1616 he took the Third Order of Saint Francis Assisi, received extreme unction a few days later and died on the 23rd.

The burial took place on the 24th of April, 1616 and his body was taken, with the face uncovered, to the convent of the Barefoot Trinitarians.

Death saved him from the pain of losing his

wife who died in 1526 and his daughter Isabel de Saavedra who died in 1652.

Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda, published posthumously by his wife in 1617, was Cervantes' last literary work. It is delicate in colour, exquisite in language, extraordinary in its creativeness, and as mature as autumn fruit hanging from a golden tree, with succulent honied juice falling drop 'y drop.

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There exists, in the parish register of Stratford-on-Avon church, a record of the baptism of "Gulielmus filius Johanes Shakpere," William son of Shakespeare. William's mother was Mary Arden and she was profoundly Catholic.

The date of Cervantes' birth, as well as Shakespeare's, is unknown, though the latter is celebrated in Stratford on the 23rd of April.

On November 28, 1582, "William Shakespeare and Anne Hathway of Stratford (eight years older than the Bard) got a license 'to solemnize matrimony upon once asking of banns, provided that there was no legal objection' in order to hasten the marriage." (1).

The offspring of Shakespeare and Anne were Susan (1583), and Hamnet and Judith (1587).

After reading many contradictory opinions on the life and works of Shakespeare and Cervantes, any devoted student of these two writers must build up his own judgement, without overlooking, however, dispassionate, balanced and thoughtful criticism.

The years in which these two dramatists and poets lived are sunken in the depths of time and, with the passing of the centuries, judgement of the works of both writers has become more and more impartial. For a long time it was said traditionally, that there was a mystery behind Shakespeare's works and his life, as well as the altered chronology of his dramas and especially the sonnets.

"As a poet, Shakespeare met very early the different and inspiring Earl of Southampton, his first patron, a dazzling young nobleman through whom he got to know the great world and grew familiar with the courtier's, scholar's, soldier's eye, tongue and sword. There must have been similar stimulating influences that we can only guess at. The kind of knowledge eminently possessed by Shakespeare is something beyond mere acquisition - the kind of knowledge that comes only to 'an experiencing nature' and the experiencing

nature, like creative nature, is a gift, not an acquirement. People have made a 'Shakespeare mystery' by trying to find reasons. All creative genius is a mystery, and utterly inexplicable." (2).

Ever since 1585 many different opinions have been expressed. But the important fact is that Shakespeare's first literary works created a great impression in London. This happened with the performance of the First Part of King Henry VI, written in 1491 but probably conceived sometime during the preceding five years; and also at the publication of his most beautiful lyric poem, Venus and Adonis. This poem was warmly dedicated to the brilliant and handsome young Earl of Southampton:

VENUS AND ADONIS

'Vilia miretus vulgus; mihi flauus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.'

(The crowd admires vile things; for me may
yellow-haired

Apollo prepare cups full of Castalian water.

ie. from the Muses' spring on Mount Parnassus.)

(3).

Ideologically there is a close parallel between these last two lines of poetry and Cervantes' Journey to Farnassus.

The dedication of Venus and Adonis says:

To the Right Honourable Henrie
Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton
and Baron of Titchfield.

Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my vnpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure mee for choosing so strong a proppe to support so weake a burthen, onelye if your Honour seeme but pleased, I account my selfe highly praised and vowe to take aduantage of all idle houres, till I haue honoured you with some grauer labour. But if the first heire of my inuention proue deformed, I shall be sorie it had so noble a god-father: and neuer after eare so barren a land for feare it yeeld me still so bad a haruest. I leave it to your Honourable suruey, and your Honour to your Heart's content, which I wish may alwaies answeere your owne wish, and the worlds hopefull expectation.

Your Honours in all dutie,

William Shakespeare (4)

From 1594 on, perhaps due to the influential favour of the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare performed at Court and his name appeared in a well organized company. There is a note: "Payment for performances at Court was made to William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richarde Burbage, seruanter to the Lord Chamberleyne." (5)

A dark cloud was to veil the ascending star of Shakespeare in 1596, when his young son Hamnet died. This was the time when the poet was inspired to create the sad character of Arthur of Bretagne, the unfortunate Prince of Wales, son of Geoffrey of Plantagenet and Constance. Prince Arthur was cruelly murdered by King John.

Prince Arthur was older than Hamnet, but the Bard portrayed him as between twelve and fourteen years of age, which was Hamnet's age. Two years later, in 1596 life smiled on Shakespeare and he had the pleasure of being called 'gentleman' when "William Dethick Garter Principal King of Arms granted to John Shakespeare the privilege of bearing a coat of arms." (6)

From then on it was definitely accepted that "Shakespeare had poetic ideas dramatically conceived. The fruit of it, therefore, will be not drama written in the form of poetry, but something we can call poetic drama - which is a very different thing.

The triple combination of actor, play wright, and authentic poet had not been found in the theatre before; and it was just such a combination that was now needed for the development of the art as a whole." (7)

The time had come when Shakespeare was considered successful. No doubt he had a general vision of the future and a clear ambition. In his home town he acquired a good piece of property known as New Place.

On August 29, 1597 Richard II was published under the title of The Tragedie of King Richard The Second, "as it has been publicly acted by the Right Honourable Lorde Chamberlaine his seruants."

Shakespeare's name did not appear on it until 1598 when the drama was presented for the second time. In October of the same year appeared the first issue of The Tragedie of King Richard The Third, perhaps written in 1593, describing Richard's treacherous plot against his brother Clarence, the pitiful murder of his innocent nephews, his tyrannical usurpation of the throne, the whole course of his detestable life and thoroughly deserved death, "as it has been lately acted by the Right Honourable Lord Chamberlaine his seruants." (8)

Dates mentioned by writers and critics do not always agree. As in the case of Cervantes, there

have been many different points of view over the centuries, but very rarely have opinions been definite or in agreement. Time has made clear the early defects of both writers as well as their evolution through effort and wisdom, so that modern critics are now in agreement that both Shakespeare and Cervantes were geniuses.

Since authorities do not agree as to dates, we follow the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which gives the following dates for the dramas and tragedies studied in this work:

- 1591 - (1,2) The Contention of York and
Lancaster (2,3) Henry VI
- 1592 - (3) Henry VI
- 1593 - Richard III
- 1595 - Richard II
- 1595 - King John
- 1596 - Richard II
- 1598 - (2) Henry IV
- 1599 - Henry V

The preceding enumeration covers only those dramas studied here.

At the end of this work there is a general chronology of Shakespearean plays. Here we see in what order Shakespeare wrote, during the above-mentioned period, the poetry, dramas, comedy and tragedy, all of which showed his constant aim toward perfection.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE

The development of Shakespeare as a dramatist follows the lines of natural artistic development in language and dramatic form, as well as the author's individual style of poetic expression, with the most careful and widest use of lexicon which appears in the first works. Inasmuch as things and actions have names, there is no limit to the power of genius.

In drama as well as in poetry, the power of imagery comes from the mental and artistic sensitivity of the creator; a vigorous colouring of words is necessary to paint the idea adequately and vividly in a correct and suggestive manner.

All these vital elements are present in the blank verse which Shakespeare employs to present the images and other unique characteristics which fashion the style of his work.

For Shakespeare, the expression of his artistic creation in adequate words in an orderly way, and in poetry which was often blank verse without rhyme, was not an easy task; in spite of his extraordinary and genial ability as a poet and dramatist, his artistic work required a strict and methodical order of elements to bring about its

great unity.

It is not easy to surmount the elements of drama, when we remember that the sixteenth century in England was overnourished on Hellenism and basic classicism. We can feel the influence of Greek tragedy on Shakespeare's vigorous creative strength, especially the deep pools of human cruelty found in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

As result of this influence he created such characters as Tamora the merciless Gothic queen, and the Roman general Titus Andronicus, her personal enemy; the plot of Titus Andronicus comes directly from Seneca.

Scholars are inclined to believe that Shakespeare learned drama not only on the stage, where he acted various secondary parts in many different plays when very young, but also later through his adaptations of theatrical works of different authors from many countries and epochs.

This activity gave him firsthand knowledge of the scenic needs in English theatre of his time.

He mastered the elements of drama and saturated it with the wisdom of his predecessors and the sap of his own intellect and artistry which enlivens all his productions.

"Effective progress from Songs and Sonnets was delayed, however, until 1579 and the appearance of Spenser's Shepherds' Calendar, which was even more impressive as a technical triumph. Spenser showed how the pastoral convention could be adapted to a variety of subjects, moral, amatory or heroic, in a diction consistently eloquent, recalling both Chaucer and Virgil; and showed how the rules of decorum, or fitness style to subject could be applied through variations in diction and the metrical scheme. The half decade of the Shepherds' Calendar was decisive. It brought the writings of Sidney and a new generation of poets at Court, and the success of Lyly's novel Euphues (1578), a fashionable pattern book of manners and studied phrasing. And shortly after the building of the first London playhouse in 1576, it brought the new literature to the popular stage, with a new group of professional men of letters - the University wits." (1).

Shakespeare, at the bottom of his poetic historical consciousness, vibrated to all the political and religious changes of transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance; we feel this strongly in most of the works written before King Henry VIII.

The aim of most medieval poets revolved in

a Christian and philosophical atmosphere. The collapse is felt in Chaucer and also in William Langland.

In the world of poetry, it is usual for the poet to move ahead of his epoch.

Because of this, the voice may be isolated. It is generally the voice or cry of a whole country, or even the universal expression of a whole period, as shown in the solemn statements on religion and philosophy in The Divine Comedy, in Piers Plowman and other important works of the time.

"The greatest change in literature, between the Middle Ages and Shakespeare's century, shows the characteristics of the Renaissance. It consists mainly in actions deriving from the discovery of the internal potentialities of the ego; these actions were expressed outwardly in a manner opposite to those of preceding generations. This resulted in the suppression of many eminent thinkers, poets and writers; they were punished with the cruelest tortures and with death by "purifying" fire, an accepted institution in England to avoid the spread of the seed of reasoning on religious matters, considered heretical in those days." (2)

This violent change was unavoidable but it

destroyed the previously established moral principles and produced moral chaos, an emptiness of intellectual conceptions. This was necessary for a methodical reorganization of new values, but it tended to complete destruction of old values.

Great political changes, national and international, always bring with them transcendental mutations, generally in culture and especially in fine arts. A new way of thinking implies a new way of expression; there is a need for new words derived implicitly from new actions, new customs and new ideas.

The linguistic expressions in Shakespeare's work have a medieval touch. The English language had matured rapidly since the fourteenth century, but the harmony of linguistic elements as the poet employs them in a purely individual way, constitutes the richest, most colourful, and most expressive style ever used.

Mr. Eliot once observed, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between themselves; there is not a third one. It is true also that they divide what Mr. Eliot selects for his own finality, what he names The Modern World, divided into two parts: the medieval one, under the dominion of faith, and the other the reason; the strictly modern part in

which the great possibilities of the innermost discovery in men have been explored on the bases of the synthesis." (3)

The English language in the twentieth century has grown for the obvious reason of discoveries, industry, commerce, etc., but in Elizabethan times language was cultivated and artistically polished, by an extraordinary mental activity in which creative imagination always took part.

Writers in England, under the influence of Latin, had and still have nowadays, an exquisite and refined poetical expression; they do not pretend to use it pedantically but rather with a kind of spiritual elegance, in which logic is never abandoned.

Not one Elizabethan writer neglected these requirements, and Shakespeare carried on the perfection which extends from ideological exuberance to a euphony in expression.

Shakespeare was accepted as a genuine poet in 1594 with his first two poems, and Venus and Adonis was known in London as the most exquisite example of poetry at that time.

The Rape of Lucrece appeared later.

It seems strange that one of his first theatrical works, Titus Andronicus, was produced and staged with all details, which nauseated the

audience and resulted in their leaving the theatre.

Today there is a rumor that this tragedy will soon be presented on the stage and on the screen.

The theme and structure of Titus Andronicus moves the spirit, especially when its frightful action is compared with the ethereal transparency of the poetry of Venus and Adonis.

Criticism on the matter is abundant, but sometimes entirely opposite. On one side is the respectable voice of Señor Don Luis Astrana Marin: "It was the year 1593. In those days appeared the first issue of Venus and Adonis and Christopher Marlowe died at the height of his glory. He was assassinated in Deptford, on the first of June, after a quarrel in a tavern but his success survived his violent end. Tamburlaine the Great published in 1590, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, and Edward II share glory with Romeo and Juliet. In the intermediate productions of Shakespeare, such as Richard II, Richard III and The Merchant of Venice, the influence of Marlowe is decisive. In the first of these, Shakespeare takes up the path of English history at the very point where Marlowe left it in the Third Part of King Henry IV." (4)

On the other hand, Mr. Calvin Hoffman, among others, insists that Shakespeare and Marlowe never met. If Christopher Marlowe was actually murdered

at the age of twenty-nine, and William Shakespeare did not begin to write until his thirtieth year, when did Marlowe's influence take root? The most reasonable answer is at once. Yet this influence is observed in seven plays and some poems written before Marlowe's death in 1593. And most of Marlowe's works were not published until after 1593.

"Where did William Shakespeare read these works of Marlowe that so influenced him? Did Marlowe show his manuscripts to him? There is no evidence that the two men ever met; or ever spoke to each other; or that they ever referred to each other, directly or indirectly. It is conceded that Shakespeare's period of productivity endured about twenty years, during which time he completed thirty-six plays, one hundred fifty-four sonnets, and two epic poems. Since we know that Marlowe's influence on the Bard did not cease until Shakespeare had written his last play (perhaps The Tempest), it is reasonable to wonder why one of the greatest poetic minds that ever lived permitted the influence of a lesser playwright throughout his creative life, even to the very end of it." (5)

A group of Shakespeare's dramatic works, usually named "the problem works" such as Troilus and Cressida, contain a problem of scenography but, even in this work in which Shakespeare joins such opposite values

as love and war, poetry exists clear and triumphant.
 In Act IV, Sc. IV when Troilus and Cressida are
 about to part, Troilus says:

Tro. Cressida, I love thee in so strain'd
 a purity,
 That the bless'd gods are angry with
 my fancy,
 More bright in zeal than the devotion
 which
 Cold lips blow to their deities, take
 thee from me.

Cres. Have the gods envy?

Pan. Ay, ay, ay, ay; 'tis too plain a case.

Tro. A hateful truth.

Cres. What, and from Troilus too?

Tro. From Troy and Troilus.

Cres. Is it possible?

Tro. And suddenly; where injury of chance
 Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by
 All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips
 Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents
 Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows
 Even in the birth of our own labouring breath.
 We two, that with so many thousand sighs
 Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
 With the rude brevity and discharge of one.
 Injurious time now with a robber's haste

Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how;
 As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
 With distinct breath and consign's kisses
 to them,
 He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
 And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,
 Distasted with the salt of broken tears. "(6)

In Shakespeare's time actors memorized their parts and, though it is easier to memorize verse than prose, the above fragment on the lips of Troilus, even for the best British actors, implies not only intricate mnemonic difficulties, but also diction, because of the rich oral exuberance, "tremendously unendlessly elaborate. But the order of it is not equal to the complexity. The adverse action of time upon the parting lovers is represented by an astonishing number of verbs: 'puts back,' 'justles roughly by,' 'rudely beguiles,' 'forcibly prevents,' 'strangles,' but the emotion does not develop and does not acquire added coherence in the course of its expression. It remains a long and acutely sensed effort to express a single moment of conflicting feeling. It belongs, in short, to a period of Shakespeare's development in which the keenness of his apprehension of certain elements of experience (already for the most part indicated in the sonnets) was not accompanied by a corresponding sense of order and significance. We shall see that

order and significance gradually grows out of the increasing mastery of his art..." (7).

There are opinions which consider Troilus and Cressida as imaginative and criticize it as punctilious, but not in reference to feeling:

Tro. And suddenly; where injury of chance
 Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by
 All time of pause...

There is also the opinion that Shakespeare, in this drama, exhibits a deep sense of emotional conviction which constitutes the most important part of the work.

The matter becomes clear if we remember that Troilus is the son of Priam, King of Troy, while Cressida is the daughter of Calchas who, although a Trojan priest, is an enemy of his country and a partisan of the Greeks.

The greater part of the action takes place on the Greek battlefield, near Troy. Unrestrained love, transformed into lust, follows the parallel expression of the poet in Sonnet CXXIX:

The expense of spirit in the waste of shame
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
 Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
 Past reason junted, as a swallow'd bait
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad;

Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
 Before a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
 All this world knows; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell. (8)

Criticism agrees that the sonnets sustain the vital root of the various elements which make up the acute dramatic art of Shakespeare. In all his writings from the beginning, there prevails the same consciousness of superiority, with arrogance, which we find in Don Quixote de la Mancha. This concept of pre-eminence gives a sense of eternity which dominates the works of both Shakespeare and Cervantes.

But Cervantes shows an exquisite irony, expressed in prose or poetry with a delicate grace, which in his great novel surges up to the superb.

Shakespeare, in the greater part of his work, written in magnificent blank verse, shows himself a reactionist far ahead of his time.

A feeling of tragedy flames up in the meaning of many of his sonnets, with a general tone and intimation of eternity, leading the author to the most lofty possibilities existing in nature; but even then, poetry dominates triumphantly: "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds..." (9)

In the same way that Don Quixote de la Mancha and the twelve Exemplary Novels form a coherent unit, the whole work of the English Bard forms one enormous and strongly united body.

The marked transition from the first to the second part of Don Quixote, shows a definite maturity in the Prince of Wits; the same transition can be observed if the dramatic works of the Swan are followed chronologically.

Young William tried to take the summit of historical drama by assault. The greatest authorities on Elizabethan literature always point out a chronological sequence in these works.

Other observant writers, not thinking in terms of chronology but looking for the inner spirit of the historical dramas, have grouped them in cycles.

Criticism, as far as it has been possible to investigate, suggests no reason why Shakespeare chose to write The First Part of Henry VI last. Probably the defeat of the English armies in France by Joan D'Arc did not hold the same poetic and dramatical possibilities for the author as the legend of Marguerite D'Anjou and the abysmal fall of the Lancasters, which were in moral opposition to each other.

Also, the epoch which The First Part of Henry VI

covers is eight or nine years after the war.

For the purpose of this work, which attempts to follow the dramatic and poetical development of Shakespeare in comparison with Cervantes, attention is given to the medieval English historical cycle in chronological order, following the kings whose lives and actions awoke a deep interest in the author, without giving any special attention to other works of a different type that Shakespeare wrote during the three years in which he produced several of these different works, that is to say: The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew and Love's Labour's Lost, published between 1591 and 1594, as well as Titus Andronicus (1594) and Romeo and Juliet.

During these last three years, London theatres were closed frequently because of the plague. It is said that Shakespeare took refuge in some distant place, far from the city, where he devoted himself to writing. His literary production was uninterrupted during twenty years.

DEVELOPMENT OF CERVANTES

The varied experiences of Cervantes, from childhood to his last days, gave him an opportunity to know all aspects of human nature. If we accept serious critical opinion and also the proof of his works, he was not the layman which his contemporaries would have liked to consider him.

It is a well known fact that during his childhood he traveled with his family; his father was a physician who went from town to town and village to village in Andalusia. It is also known that Cervantes lived for fifteen years, at different times during his life, in large cities such as Seville and Granada. The influence of the gypsies and their graceful manner of oral expression attracted his attention and later he made good use of it to give grace and colour to his literature.

It is accepted that, "in Alcalá de Henares, when Cervantes was a little more than seven years old, he must have attended the Academy of Len

Alonso Viveros where reading, writing, Latin, grammar and 'canto llano' were taught. This Academy had great renown..." (1).

For many centuries both Shakespeare and Cervantes were considered talented but self-taught writers, although their works tend to show the opposite.

"As the (above mentioned) Academy was elementary, San Juan de Avila obtained from the city government permission to found the Jesuit Fathers College of Saint Catherine. If Cervantes' family lived there it is logical to suppose that Miguel attended this Jesuit center of study. Señor Astrana Marin says so, and it has been confirmed by Señor González Aurióles." (2).

According to the research of Señor Rodriguez Marin, Cervantes continued his studies in Seville.

In the general literary work of Cervantes his religious creed shines through clearly. He always appears as a deep and respectful Catholic, a reverend worshipper of Our Lord, a true and devout Christian, and a passionate admirer of the Holy Virgin.

It is not easy to discover Shakespeare's religious beliefs. When Hamlet was going to kill Claude, he did not do so because the king was praying, and Hamlet thought that Claude might be

pardoned; but, when the Bard refers to Joan D'Arc, he considers her a witch.

In the sixteenth century, general education in England still had the same Latin foundation as in Spain. Most facts and events in Shakespeare's life are unknown; but Cervantes himself, in his literary works, tells important details and even minute facts about his life.

How could Cervantes know what he explains so clearly and precisely, in the literary dialogue of his Exemplary Novel, "El coloquio de los perros," which is one of the wisest and most philosophical of his works in fiction?

"In El coloquio de los perros Cervantes praises the general schedule followed under Jesuit supervision; one must suppose that he owed a great part of his development and formal education to the Jesuit Fathers. In this institute was taught infima latinitatis, three courses in grammar, one in rhetoric and three on the humanities. Latin was taught by means of Introductiones Latinae by Elio Antonio de Nebrija (sic). Grammar covered, besides a knowledge of the classics with translations, examples, composition, etc., Horace, Virgil, Caesar, Plautus, Seneca. Rhetoric used the Institutiones Oratoriae of Quintiliano, a forerunner of modern style. The Partitiones of Cicero and other similar

works. Greek palaeography, music and dancing were also on the schedule. Grammar lessons lasted two hours and there were thirty minutes for rest between classes. (3).

Cervantes was always fond of the theatre. When he studied under the humanist, Señor Juan López de Hoyos, he had the opportunity to attend theatrical performances; he also enjoyed López de Hoyos' comedies. Further research has discovered that Cervantes continued his studies under the Jesuit Fathers and in 1563 or 1564, when he was seventeen years old, he entered the third course, and later studied poetic art.

"In 1566 Cervantes' family moved to Madrid, where he began to write poetry. These are the few but important details which we have about Cervantes' education and development." (4).

The high concept of honour found in Cervantes' characters, their profound respect for the Catholic Church and the spiritual atmosphere in which his humble life developed, gives a rounded idea of his basic moral values.

"One can assume the type of influence which his teacher, Señor López de Hoyos, transmitted to his pupil, for we know that the teacher was inspired by the readings of Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives, Valdés and others who represented the

humanistic wisdom of ancient classicism. In the teacher, as in the student, we find the vibrant values of the Scripture as well as writings of the church fathers; Cervantes' mind was illumined by the theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas, who taught that virtue is a substance of the soul and nobleness the inalienable attribute of virtue." (5).

Following upon these opinions of Cervantes' education, criticism has come little by little to accept that he was not a "layman."

The Roman Cycle of Shakespeare's dramatic works - Titus Andronicus (1594), Julius Caesar (1599), Anthony and Cleopatra (1606), Coriolanus (1606) - and some of the comedies such as The Merchant of Venice and The Comedy of Errors, etc., make no mention of the author's travel in Italy, but some critics and investigators, among them Mr. Thomas Calvin, are inclined to believe that all these literary works of the Roman Cycle were written while the author was breathing the very atmosphere of Italy so as to give to his writing the precise flavour of the background.

On the other hand, most artists of occidental Europe go to Italy to find the inspiration which is heritage of the old deities on the Mediterranean shores.

Cervantes went to Italy before his service

to Cardinal Julius Aquaviva. "Could a man like Cervantes lie around year after year doing nothing but playing quínolas (a Spanish card game)? History is silent on this point. But what about his works? His stay in Italy was certainly transcendental in Cervantes' spiritual development." (6).

"He (Cervantes) saw Genoa...he passed through Lucca, Florence with her sumptuous buildings, flowing rivers and peaceful streets...He entered Rome, queen of cities and mistress of the world. He was in Naples, finest city in Europe...In his old age he still remembered with nostalgia, 'Naples, the illustrious, and I walked on her streets for more than a year'...As soon as he learned the tongue he read eagerly Orlando innamorato, Orlando furioso which he never forgot, and the precious and indelible Arcadia and Ameto; also other works of his master of fiction; the indispensable volume Sonetti canzoni e triomphi which inspired him, Il cortegiano, Dialoghi d'amore. Every one of these sculptured pieces left him transformed. He was at that time twenty years old and chamberlain to Cardinal Aquaviva (7). Cervantes built up an enormous cultural background. He read The Chivalry Books and Diana by Jorge Montemayor; the Enamoured Diana by Gaspar Gil Polo; The Examination of Mind by Huarte de San Juan;

Philosophia Vulgaris, Juan de Mal Lara; Araucana, Alonso de Ercilla; Trovador, Jorge Montemayor; Il amadici, Bernardo Tasso; Rinaldo and Aminta, Torquato Tasso; the Hecatomithi, Cinthio; as well as works of Boccaccio, Sannazaro, Ariosto... the works of Antonio Lofrasso; the Ten Books of Love Fortune and Love, which made him laugh so much, and from which he took the name Dulcinea."

All Latinity was his: Pietro Bembo, the Aretino, Petrarch, Dante, and many other Greco-Latin classics. How could Tomás Tamyó de Vargas call Cervantes "a layman?"

But life was to teach Cervantes much more than books and his experience in the service (Lepanto, the Invincible Armada, Corfu, Tunis, Portugal, etc.) left heroic traces.

His sea was the sea of Ulysses, and bitter was his captivity in Algiers; the humble position he filled in order to earn a modest livelihood was very depressing.

In spite of constant suffering and the extreme poverty to which he was reduced, humiliation and slavery, all these misfortunes only raised him higher on the path to perfection and the ideal of poetry and beauty.

"We must not correct Cervantes' mistakes as we would a student's notebook," says the illus-

trious Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal.(8).

"Cervantes created constantly and he did not have at hand the books he mentioned. His mistakes must not be taken as a lack of culture. For instance, when he attributes to Cato the couplet, 'Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos'...which belongs to Ovid, or in his judgement of Homer's nymph Calypso as an enchanter, or quoting 'non bene pro toto libertas benditur' from Aesop's Canis et Lupus which he attributed to Horace or 'whoever may have said it,' as he wrote." (9).

Parallel to the above mentioned (and many more) sources of inspiration, Cervantes did his writing in a way which was always poetic. "We admire the great suggestiveness of this strophe of beautiful verse which the enamoured student sings (1,43):

Siguiendo voy una estrella
que desde lejos descubro,
más bella y resplandeciente
de cuantas vió Palinuro

I go following a star
that I discern from afar,
more beautiful, more resplendent
than those that saw Palinuro. (M.S.A.)

who will not call to mind Palinuro, the pilot of Aeneas? Cejador y Frauca, in his Dictionary on Cervantes, refers to verse 515, Canto III of the Aeneid, where he sees all the stars that pass through the tranquil sky:

Sidera cuncta notat tacito labentia caelo.

What stars did Palinuro see? Did he see Arcturus, the pluvial Hyades, the Great and Small Dipper and Orion armed in gold?

Arcturum pluviasque Hyadas, geminosque Triones,
armatumque auro circumspicit Oriona.

What a joyful thought when, remembering Clara, he finds her more beautiful than the most vivid star with its mystic and poetic radiation, which Palinuro saw shining in the stillness of the night, just before dawn. How many times Cervantes must have thought of Virgil, while looking at the celestial bodies on a summer night. In that solitude, a rumour of ancient deeds must have come wafting on the breeze." (10).

CAPTIVITY IN ALGIERS

1580

This "comedy" written in four acts or jornadas covers the historical aspect of slavery suffered by Christians under the Mohammedans in Algiers.

Cervantes appears under the name of Saavedra, one of the slaves. Aurelio, another captive, also shows several characteristics of the author.

It seems unbelievable that the great proud poet, Lope de Vega Carpio, who so bitterly attacked Cervantes, would drink from the fountains of Captivity in Algiers to give light to his work, Los Esclavos de Argel (1598).

The character of Aurelio, one of the most important protagonists in the play, shows Cervantes' experience during seven years in captivity. There are some allegorical characters such as the Demon, the Occasion, and the Need, but the main part of the action is given to Izuf and the woman Zahara; and to Silvia and Aurelio, a handsome couple in slavery, who display all the Christian virtues.

The plot is planned logically; each jornada has happenings which, according to their importance, are acted out by the appropriate characters, related in romance or hendecasyllabic verse.

Poverty, in all its aspects, sacrifice and humiliation, is the atmosphere of misery in which the slaves move, whether they be men, children, or whole families; they often suffer not only hunger and thirst but all kinds of physical and moral degradation.

The suffering is described poetically and those in captivity who could not endure torture forsake their religion and thus become responsible for the sacrifice of hundreds of Christians, as Cervantes explains in sparkling metaphores, in which human passions and virtues are interwoven artistically and poetically with witty truisms.

In the first jornada, Cervantes shows himself a true poet in his description of the martyrdom of the priest, Sebastian, a young captive.

"The Martyrdom in Algiers, of Fray Miguel de Aranda is based upon a real fact which happened on the 18th of May 1577, and which is narrated by Aedo in his Topography and General History of Algiers. It is divided into five parts (or volumes) and printed in Valladolid in 1612..." (1)

One of the most colourful elements in the so-called comedy, which really has the characteristics of a dramatic tragedy, is the game of interwoven passions of the Moors and Turks who are always attracted by the beauty and virtue of Christians;

Cervantes found a mine in this theme, and exploited it fantastically in his witty creative style.

On the other hand, the plot is enriched by a variety of situations which always breathe the author's unmistakable criticism.

The conflict is stated at the very beginning. Izuf, owner and master of Aurelio, is passionately in love with the young and marvelously beautiful Christian slave Silvia; Zahara, Izuf's wife, is burning with love for Aurelio (who has many characteristics of Cervantes, although another captive in the play impersonates him).

Fate has joined Silvia and Aurelio under the same shelter. Izuf bought them without knowing they were married some time before. When they meet again in Moorish captivity, their love blooms once more in the midst of their suffering.

The play shows the same technical procedure employed by Shakespeare in several of his works, mainly Midsummer Night's Dream, The Comedy of Errors, etc.

Even in prose, Cervantes employs this technique of "enredo," or entanglement, in the sentimental realism of Cardenio and Lucinda, Don Fernando and Dorotea, appearing in the first part of Don Quixote.

The description of the corsair's action, the selling of prisoners and all the adventures and

dreadful happenings on land and especially on the sea, adds a Byzantine flavour to the play.

More impressive than the first jornada, is the second. An entire family was caught in a common net by the Mohammedans and the voice of the auctioneer announces, "Two little dogs and the big old dog," and "the pregnant she dog" (1!) (2).

Two children up for sale are bright enough to understand their misfortune if they are separated forever, which finally occurs.

The sale of the children to different buyers breaks the hearts of their parents, whose last words of advice to the little ones are that they should always be good Christians.

The position of Fatima, Zahara's servant, who is desirous of helping her owner in the passion which is sapping Zahara's vitality, results in the exorcism which is aimed at gaining Aurelio's love for Zahara, in the last part of the second act; this runs parallel with Shakespeare's Macbeth (Act III, Sc. V). Besides, it clarifies the question raised by Don Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo as to whether or not Shakespeare and Cervantes believed in witchcraft.

In the second act the Demon, addressing Fatima, says: "Pon al conjuro pausa, y al momento satisfaré / tu intento en lo que pides / si acaso tu te mides / y acomodas a mis palabras todas y consejos / Todos tus aparejos son en vano, / porque un pecho cristiano, /

que se arrima a Cristo, en poco estima / hechicerías..." (2)

The aim is different in the two exorcisms, but that of Cervantes has all the shadings of pure and perfect poetry.

Fatima: "El esperado punto es ya llegado..."

The third jornada concerns, historically, the war in Flanders, to which Don Juan of Austria and his brother Philip devoted their personal attention.

Meanwhile, "Don Juan no venir; acá morir!" on the lips of the Turkish children, sung as a refrain, was a constant stab in the heart to captives who dreamed that the armies of Don Juan of Austria would release them from slavery.

There is also a very attractive nature facet to the play with rivers, hills and mountains, which the slaves learned to know in the hope of escape, which was their golden dream. All this is combined with expressions of a love of freedom which embellish and heighten the poetic value of the play.

At the end of this jornada, Silvia and Aurelio, who had married before the disaster at sea which separated them, meet again under the roof of Izuf and Zahara, and both are aware of the passion which consumes their owners: Izuf is in love with Silvia and Zahara is fascinated by Aurelia.

Of the two Christian children sold separately, the younger apostatized in order to enjoy the pleasures of life; the older remained a perfect Christian,

enduring every misfortune.

In Act IV, there is an allusion to Christianity in the early days. One slave who escaped from captivity, tried to come back. He falls asleep on the grass, tired and hungry, and a lion approaches him gently and sleeps beside him.

Another fugitive is taken into the presence of the king who orders that he be tortured. Later Azán, King of Algiers, orders the Spanish apostate, Izuf, to sell Aurelio and Silvia to him. The king then accepts Aurelio's word of honor and sets him free to return to Spain with Silvia, collect their ransom, love each other and be happy.

Cervantes eulogizes the priests in the Order of Mercy as well as the Trinitarians who paid Cervantes' ransom by begging alms, which is historically true.

"As in the great paintings of the Renaissance the painter portrays himself, not in the middle, but on one side; Cervantes expresses himself by Saavedra, and, not only by the second name but by other details, shows who he is. For example, he pronounces part of the tercets of Cervantes Epistle to the secretary of Philip II, Mateo Vazquez with light modifications..." (4)

There are many Cervantine themes in El Trato de Argel, such as glorifying the melancholy of the Golden Age:

Aurelio - Oh Santa edad por nuestro mal pasada

a quien nuestros antiguos le pusieron
el dulce nombre de la edad dorada!

The poetic quality of El Trato de Argel admits of no discussion. The bitterness of the atmosphere in which slavery took place is narrated and described, but the poetical quality, instead of being diminished, is purified and reinforced by the beauty and sincerity of the author's Christian faith.

Cervantes' dramatic works have no parallel with the historical English theatre of Shakespeare but, as poetry, they show the excellence of a true and magnificent poet.

THE SIEGE OF NUMANCIA

1581

Numancia - nowadays named Soria - is the setting for this historical work. It has the features of Los Persas, one of the most famous tragedies written by Aeschylus, and the only technical aspect which makes it different from this classic is the absence of the chorus; a chorus is the unmistakable characteristic of Greek tragedy, and was also used by Shakespeare in The Life of King Henry V to give maximum heroic splendour.

This unique work of Cervantes reveals his poetic and dramatic qualities. The plot did not merely come out of his personal wit and wonderful invention. Its greatest merit is rooted in truth, in poetry, in heroic deeds, as well as in the artistic development of the tragedy.

Cervantes drank from the rich sources of Latin authors such as Apiano, from the streams of Lucio Floro and the works of Tito Livio, in whose writings he found historical truth.

The poetic creation of La Numancia is from Cervantes' own mind, and constitutes the greatest proof of his ability as a dramatic poet. This tragedy is an unquestionable masterpiece.

"He (Cervantes) might have discovered the rapsody of Latin history in the Castilian General History by King Alfonso, or in the Historical Compendium by Garibay (1571) whose widow was a personal acquaintance of Cervantes, or in the Chronicle by Ambrosio de Morales (1574), who was also his contemporary. Perhaps some old romance such as Gentle Prose (1573) by Timoneda might have brought him an echo of that legend already expressed in poetry. From these sources perhaps he read of the two Roman wars against Spain, in 152 and 133 B.C., as well as the hero Viriato (Virato), who was head of a group of natives defending the soil of their country. He combined the two wars into one, in order to fit the circumstances of the tragedy to his own plan and literary style; and perhaps he took the name of his character Bariato (or Variato) from Viriato, about whom he built the character of the lad who was the last survivor of his race. Teógenes and Caravino, who appear in the tragedy, are real historical characters, as well as Cipion (Escipión, el Africano), and Yugurta, who was the son of Manastabol of Numidia and grandson of Massinisa. The other characters in this Cervantine work are purely imaginary or allegorical..." (1)

All rhetoricians of the period of Cervantes and Shakespeare assign five acts to each play, but The Siege of Numancia and Captivity in Algiers are constructed in four "jornadas," which is the literary style of the first

Cervantine period. Not so those plays which belong to the second period, which are divided into three jornadas.

The long war in which, for sixteen years, Rome has been trying to conquer Spain, has corrupted the soldiers heroically defending Numancia.

The Romans, Cipión and Yugurta, show all the ambition and cruelty that history has attributed to them.

It would be difficult to imagine a more audacious, rich and colourful scene than that contained in the second jornada.

The principal Numantine chiefs are listening to Teógenes, their leader. At his side are Caravino, (of Carabino), Marquino, Marandro, and others. The military men, tired and discouraged by the long siege, are discussing animatedly some means of driving away the Romans.

Teógenes is downcast; Caravino suggests one more ferocious battle, but Teógenes would like to go out and fight singlehanded; some suggest praying fervently to their gods and offering sacrifices.

All important passages of the second jornada, in which these things are discussed, are written in majestic hendecasyllabic verse; other passages are in octosyllabic or other minor meters, but the magnificence and splendour of the tragedy continues undiminished.

While Teógenes describes the bitter suffering of his army and his people, Caravino prays fervently to the gods:

Teógenes

Paréceme, varones esforzados,
 que en nuestros daños con rigor influyen
 los tristes signos y contrarios hados
 pues nuestra humana fuerza disminuyen.
 Tiénnenos los romanos encerrados
 y con cobardes manos nos destruyen;
 ni con matar muriendo no hay vengarnos,
 ni podemos sin alas escaparnos.
 No sólo a vencernos se despiertan
 los que hemos vencido veces tantas;
 que también españoles se conciertan
 con ellos a segar nuestras gargantas.
 Tan gran maldad los cielos no consientan;
 que se muestran en daño del amigo,
 favoreciendo al pérfido enemigo.
 Mirad si imagináis algún remedio
 para salir de tanta desventura,
 porque este largo y trabajoso asedio
 sólo promete presta sepultura.
 El ancho foso nos estorba el medio
 de probar con las armas la ventura,
 aunque a veces valientes fuertes brazos
 rompen mil contrapuestos embarazos... (2)

In violent contrast to the despairing military chiefs who feel their responsibility, we see the maid Lira and the young Numantine Morandro who are deeply in love and immersed in their own private universe, enjoying their amorous pleasure.

The rich resources of Cervantes' creative ability are shown in this jornada when Marquino evokes a dead soldier, offering a lamb in sacrifice at his grave. The whole ceremony is enhanced with incantations and supplications, while fragrant incense smoke curls up slowly against a background of numerous crystal jars filled with miraculous liquids of different colours. These elements of a hydromantic passage are combined with the action.

All this magic acts upon the body of the soldier, who mysteriously rises up from his tomb, wrapped in a white winding sheet, which represents the veil which transported him to eternal life.

The dead soldier prophesies that the Romans will destroy Numancia so completely that not a single living Numantine will be taken back to Rome as a trophy.

The Numantines decide to send Caravino to Cipión to propose a special contest with the Romans. Cipión refuses, the city continues blockaded and the siege becomes unbearable.

The Numantine women encourage their men to go into the field and fight the enemy; but there were only

three thousand hungry and exhausted Numantines to face thirty thousand strong and healthy Romans.

As result of the general despair and the physical debility of the starving Spaniards, there began circulating a suggestion to eat the Roman prisoners.

Meanwhile, the most valiant decided to go to the enemy camp and bring back food; but after they had gone, Teógenes decides to burn the city, an order which results in a most pathetic scene crowned by heroic action which reaches an unexpected climax.

The cruelty of the Romans exceeds all imagination. Spanish women are killed; most of the Numantines who crossed the barrier died; Morandro comes back with a piece of bread for his beloved Lira; other soldiers return mortally wounded, only to die with their loved ones; the city is burned to ashes.

Cipión and his army were deprived of the pleasure of taking a live Numantine soldier back to Rome, for Virato, the last survivor of the unfortunate Numantines, jumped from the wall when he saw the enemy enter the smoking ruins of his city. Thus they were denied the savage pleasure of mocking this last survivor and taking him as a slave to Rome.

Several allegorical characters such as War, Disease, and Hunger play an important part in the tragedy. During the long siege, the people of Numancia

suffered these terrible calamities which result from war.

Among the Shakespearean tragedies, Titus Andronicus portrays such cruelty that the audience has been known to leave the theatre at the end of the banquet, when Titus shows Tamora the heads of her sons, of whose flesh and brains she has already eaten. Nevertheless, the action of a staunch Roman soldier does not represent a whole nation. The vengeance in the soul of Titus was caused by the cruelty of war.

Cervantes obtained entirely different results and received the highest criticism: "Eloquent is the praise given Cervantes' work by the German poet Augusto Guillermo Schlegel. Referring to the first Cervantine dramas, he says: "One of these comedies, Captivity in Algiers, probably the first written by Cervantes, shows the beginnings of a new art form in the excess of narration, the general plan and the lack of variety in characters and situations. But the other, The Siege of Numancia, reaches the heights of Greek tragedy, erected on the classic buskin, and by an unconscious and instinctive approach to the simplicity and greatness of ancient times, becomes a memorable step in the development of modern poetry. The idea of Fate predominates throughout; the allegorical characters which appear between the jornadas

represent in a way, the function of the chorus in the Greek tragedy: they direct the attention and set the tone...I might even say that a Spartan pathos appears here, for all individualism is thrown into the mould of patriotic feeling; when the poet refers to the glory of his nation in past wars, ancient history is linked with the present day." (2)

With this tragedy Cervantes proved to the world that he was a poet and dramatist of the highest rank, and he has been eulogized by such great writers as Goethe, Schopenhauer and many others.

"In 1808, while the city of Zaragoza was besieged by Molier, Junot and Lannes, and Palafox was resisting the Napoleonic aggression, La Numancia was performed once more and brought to life, in the nineteenth century, the courage of the Iberian city exalted by Cervantes. The performance of the tragedy under such circumstances is ample proof of the patriotic significance of this work..." (3)

Apparently Cervantes was always hesitant in judging his own works, but between the lines one sees his witty irony about everything and everybody, including the reader; the author's feeling of self-confidence shines through constantly, expressed both seriously and humorously.

Referring to his own comedies in Adjunta al Parnaso, he says: "...the one I hold in highest

esteem and which I feel most worthy is that called La Confusa," and he adds calmly, "among all comedies of the 'Capa Espada' style performed up to now, this stands very high, ranking among the best."

Referring to the same matter he wrote:

Soy, por quien La Confusa, nada fea,
Pareció en los teatros admirable,
Si esto a mi fama es justo que se crea. (5)

THE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH DRAMATIC CYCLE OF SHAKESPEARE

The historical dramatic works of Shakespeare, inspired by the history of his own country, reach the height of the greatest epics. They emerge from the upheaval of the Middle Ages and overflow prodigiously into the Renaissance.

The ambition of the English kings to plant their banner on the European continent, caused the Hundred Years War.

Some of these monarchs sacrificed princes and kings of their own blood, and occasionally tried to cleanse their crime by crusades to the Holy Land; Bolimbroke (later Henry IV) was responsible for the death of his cousin Richard II but he never undertook a crusade. The magnificence of the romantic period of knight errantry was enhanced by the presence of kings who became crusaders, such as Richard I, the Lion Hearted; this English king was as famous for his ardour in battle as for his noble virtues and chivalrous spirit. The impulses guiding men of that epoch impelled them to follow one of the purest and most poetical ideals that has ever motivated humanity during the last two thousand years; the tremendous poetic inspiration of Shakespeare gave definitely epic characteristics to his cycle of dramatic works

covering this period.

The cycle starts with The Life and Death of King John, who was followed after a bitter struggle by the Lancaster dynasty with Bolimbroke, later Henry IV, as we have already said.

Bolimbroke, Duke of Hereford, ascended the throne of Richard II after the assassination of that monarch.

Henry IV was succeeded by his son Henry V, the most brilliant and valiant of the Lancasters; the crown of England then went to Henry VI, whose weakness and insanity contributed to the decay of the dynasty. According to the opinion of historians, his physical condition was inherited from his French grandfather and increased by the horrors of war.

After the sunset of the Lancasters, in the dramatic works of Shakespeare, Richard III became king, and later the grim Henry VIII, a Tudor.

In an atmosphere pregnant with the resounding and ironic laughter of the immortal Bard, there move a great variety of characters. The big-bellied Falstaff, embodiment of all vices and the most repugnant glutton, captures the imagination; he was a colourful friend of the young Prince of Wales, a juggler and the comrade of bandits, thieves and highwaymen, who were the intimate and favourite friends of the prince, who later succeeded Bolimbroke as

Henry V, to become England's most illustrious warrior and the hero of Agincourt.

Falstaff is a comic character, wicked and vicious if weighed against the unfortunate prince, Arthur of Bretagne, who was direct heir to the throne, as son of Geoffrey Plantagenet the Handsome, husband of Constanza.

Young Arthur, in his suffering, was the opposite of Falstaff. As a young boy he was sentenced to have his eyes burned out with red hot irons and, though saved from this torture, he was mortally wounded with a dagger and thrown into the Sena River by his uncle, John the Landless.

Intelligent criticism has questioned the historical depth of Shakespeare's works. This is not only because of the changes which he introduces but the casual way in which he handles the most painful events, with the aid of anachronisms, in order to make use of the extraordinary characters and events to build up his scenes.

An example of this liberty with historical facts and characters is the case of Henry V, for whom the poet developed a feeling of artistic and sentimental affection. As Prince of Wales, in the First Part of Henry IV, he was the friend of a juggler and thieves, fickle, inconstant and effeminate. But when he ascends the throne, the change exceeds imagination

For Shakespeare has adorned him with a poetic sensitivity and the most marvelous deeds; he is virtuous, responsible, reliable, valiant beyond words when he defeats Henry Pierce, Harry Hotspur. Henry V has become the bravest, most noble and just sword of the times, and the conquering hero in the most amazing deeds of the Lancastrian dynasty.

The Swan of Avon could not allow his hero to perish in a common scene of awful gluttony following unbridled and frantic revelry, which would have been true to fact. Therefore, with the noblest of sentiments, the poet gives his hero a glorious death as result of an unequal battle.

The same literary freedom is shown in Shakespeare's characterization of Margaret D'Anjou, princess of France, whom he endows with poetry and beauty, and actions far surpassing those of the devilish Lady Macbeth.

Margaret's beauty, as it flowered in Shakespeare's imagination, is shown in the light of a celestial dawn, and in the fire and gloom of infernal passions, in anguish, misfortunes and in uncontrolled ambition.

In the greater part of this English historical cycle of Shakespearean dramas, ambition is the main axis. In Henry VI it comes out more strongly than the mother instinct, in Margaret's drive to acquire

the throne of England for her son.

In the above mentioned cycle a succession of royal heads fall, as result of ambition.

The dramas and tragedies which constitute this cycle are:

1. The Life and Death of King John
(Dynasty of the Plantagenets).
2. The Tragedy of King Richard II
(Dynasty of the Lancasters).
3. The First Part of King Henry IV
4. The Second Part of King Henry IV
5. The Life of King Henry V
(Trilogy of the two roses).
6. The First Part of King Henry VI
7. The Second Part of King Henry VI
8. The Third Part of King Henry VI
(End of the Middle Ages).
9. The Tragedy of Richard III.

In the above works, the dramatist has not proceeded chronologically; neither has he employed all the royal personages available. He does not mention actions or events in historical order but has selected those characters where the tragic tone or unusual circumstances lend themselves to dramatic treatment, within an atmosphere where historical truth, in one form or another, is of outstanding importance.

Those things which primarily drew the attention of the poet were the historical cases of kings who had several children, and the way in which the parents' protection, according to medieval law, was always in behalf of the first born.

These events took place after the time of William the Conqueror, who gave to his first born, Robert, the dukedom of Normandy; to his second son, William, the kingdom of England; and to the third and weakest, Henry, only five thousand silver pounds. However, Henry turned the tables and destroyed the power of his two brothers, becoming Henry I of England. Later, Henry I was punished by life when his only son was lost in a shipwreck and there came to the throne of England as Henry II, the son of Matilde (Henry I's sister) and Geoffrey Plantagenet the Handsome.

At this historical moment there comes a series of events and a parade of kings and personages which gave the poet the opportunity to select according to his pleasure whatever he needed for the success of his work. The dynasty of the Plantagenets reached extraordinary power with Henry II.

Henry II was King of England in direct line from his grandfather Henry I, third son of William the Conqueror.

Henry II was Lord of Anjou because he was the son

of Geoffrey the Handsome, and by marriage with Leonor of Aquitania became also Lord of Aquitania.

So Henry II began the Angevin dynasty, famous for the prowess of Richard the Lion Hearted, a dynasty which later declined under John the Landless.

THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

The ambition of England to possess territory on the continent, mainly in France, caused the Hundred Years War, which is divided into two periods: 1320 to 1414, and 1414 to 1453.

At this time the Magna Charta was in force in England, which had been drawn up in 1215, an event which is not given much importance in Shakespeare's work. During the reign of Henry III and Edward I, Parliament was built.

The poet did not use these last two kings. On the other hand, he found most useful the English kings who lived during the Hundred Years War, beginning with Richard II and the three Henries of the Lancaster dynasty, up to Richard III. It constitutes a cycle which ruled first under feudalism, when the light of medieval times and knightly customs were beginning to fade before the shining aurora of the Renaissance, over which towered the fatal figure of Henry VIII, a Tudor (1509-1547).

According to feudal law, the king of England was subject to the sovereign of France, but notwithstanding this vassalage he was very powerful.

The noble figure of Joan D'Arc (1429) fought against the English in Orleans. At first she had several victories in her effort to save France from the moral shipwreck into which the country was sinking, but in Paris she lost, and was sold to the English, who condemned her to be burned for witchcraft.

The valiant saint of Orleans was not a source of inspiration for Shakespeare.

The Hundred Years War culminated with the independence of France and a wave of patriotism maintained the unity of all her provinces.

In the time of Charles VII a permanent army was formed and certain fixed taxes were levied. This king tried to strengthen all the institutions founded by Charles V, especially those referring to subsidies and the Court of Accounts.

In 1461, at the death of Charles VII, France was already well along the path to liberty.

Historical facts, favourable or unfavourable, were never an impediment to the Bard in arranging his poetic empire. He squeezes the heart of centuries as well as the heart of kings and, with the magic

of his creation, endows them with the miraculous light of eternity which has appealed to all generations.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN

The world is in my debt,
There is something owing to Plantagenet.
I, marrie Sir, let me alone for game
I act some wonders now I know my name. (1)

The Life and Death of King John, considered by many scholars as one of Shakespeare's simplest tragedies, has the charm of relief from strain. From the very beginning the plan is important.

Since time immemorial the possession of land has been the most serious problem in England.

Philip of France, with every legal right, asked King John for Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, the Turenne and the Main in behalf of Prince Arthur of Plantagenet who was the son of King John's elder son Geoffrey who some time ago passed away.

The petition was refused by King John.

The plot of this tragedy is based on the crimes by which John usurped the throne and kept it. On one side there was a party formed by King John and his mother Leonor of Aquitaine. On the other side was Constance, the widow of Geoffrey of Plantagenet, and her son Prince Arthur.

Among the outstanding characters, besides those already mentioned, there appears Philip Faulconbridge the Bastard, who was the son of Richard the Lion Hearted, brother of King John.

Philip Faulconbridge represents the man of action, violent and sincere, in contrast to the adolescent and weak Prince Arthur of Bretagne.

The noble and honourable blood of Richard the Lion Hearted runs in the veins of the Bastard. Hubert of Burgh, the jailor, completes the group of main characters among whom the turbulent action of King John develops. This tragedy is a symbol of the thirteenth century.

The dramatist has selected from history those characters which lend themselves to the most dramatic presentation, in actions both pathetic and tragic. However, when the characters and circumstances do not agree with the epoch in which the poet has placed the action, he introduces various elements in persons who did not live at that time; and, what is more, he frequently modifies the character of a real personage, and bestows on him a body and soul entirely different from his own. In the heart of the Middle Ages, in full feudalism chivalrous voices resound, and the poet speaks as if he himself were of royal blood, with a thorough knowledge of nobility and especially royalty.

Henry II, after the defeat in which his English partisans betrayed him, asked Philip for the names of the traitors. Finding among them the name of his son, John the Landless, Henry Plantagenet died the following day.

Richard the Lion Hearted succeeded to the throne of his father Henry; but when Richard went on a crusade with Philip Augustus of France, John the Landless made up a diabolical plot in order to ascend the throne of his brother.

Richard died of a crossbow wound at Chalus (Limoges) and, according to his express will, John became king.

Geoffrey Plantagenet also died leaving an heir, Arthur of Bretagne, with legitimate rights to the throne.

These are the roots of great suffering which the author uses as the powerful motivating force in his tragedy. The cruelty and vice of kings, in the hands of the poet, produce magnificent theatrical effects; and he has left to posterity portraits which are sometimes completely different from fact, such as the one of Marguerite D'Anjou and John the Landless.

Hypocrisy, egotism and unrestrained ambition give vivid hues to this tragedy. On the other hand, historians and critics who rarely agree regarding

John the Landless, are all in harmony as to the wickedness of this king; he was imprudent, impious, sacrilegious and capable of any abominable action. It will suffice to remember that he ordered the eyes of his nephew, Arthur of Bretagne, to be burned out. But scenic effects were more important to Shakespeare than accuracy in historical facts.

The poet follows the royal geneology by an elaborate technique which is so clear that it surpasses history itself. But in regard to facts, he modifies them or neglects them, especially with regard to periods. He moves his characters on the checkerboard of time and obtains the most amazing results, but with unexpected and ununderstandable anachronisms.

These modifications, deliberately planned, have prevailed over historical truth, which on many occasions seems pale compared to Shakespeare's dynamic creation. Despite the fact that the historical truth is well known, the dramatic characterizations are accepted.

Shakespeare's historical plays show a thorough knowledge of the false atmosphere of the court, not only in England but also in Greece, Italy, Gaul and Egypt; and also of the public and private behaviour of kings and the poisonous intrigues of courtiers who often are more able politically than the

monarch, who may be weak and ineffective. John the Landless became very attached to Philip of Faulconbridge, the Bastard son of Richard the Lion Hearted. This colourful character, as he appears on the stage is a happy creation of Shakespeare's art.

John recognizes Philip Faulconbridge as his nephew, admiring his physical resemblance to Richard the Lion Hearted. He orders Philip to kneel before him and the Bastard rises, converted to a knight, ennobled with the name of Richard of Plantagenet.

The author brings two terrible women face to face in this tragedy, in an unrestrained conflict to secure the throne: Leonore of Aquitaine, widow of Henry II and mother of John the Landless, is against Constance, widow of Geoffrey of Plantagenet and mother of Arthur of Bretagne whose father was direct heir to the throne, since he was the eldest son of Henry II.

The struggle between these two women threatens the downfall of the country. In this case Shakespeare is loyal to history: the citizens of Angers decide who is to rule the country, John the Landless or Arthur of Bretagne. The citizens suggest the marriage of the Dolphin, Louis of France and later Louis VIII, with Princess Blanca de Castilla. This

couple, in future years, were to be the parents of Louis IX, the Saint King named the Angel of Peace. This union denies the legitimate hopes of Arthur of Bretagne to attain the throne.

Constance moans in distilled bitterness:

" ...I will instruct my sorrows to be proud;
 For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop.
 To me and to the state of my great grief
 Let kings assemble; for my grief's so great
 That no supporter but the huge firm earth
 Can hold it up; here I and sorrows sit;
 Here is my throne, and kings come bow to it." (2)

The grotesque figure of Limoge of Austria appears covered with a lion's skin, thus mocking Richard the Lion Hearted, which angers Constance and infuriates Faulconbridge, who follows him off stage and returns with the Austrian's head.

Not in vain has Richard the Lion Hearted left his blood in the heart of Richard of Plantagenet, who now has avenged his father.

Constance begins to realize there is little hope for her son's future. Arthur is a young boy but he is armed by the King of France, who promises him his daughter, Princess Mary, in marriage. But Arthur must first perform a very difficult task.

At the head of an army, the young prince is to attack and take possession of a castle. The King

of France and Constance, Arthur's mother had a political idea behind this historical fact. The mother of John the Landless was Arthur's grandmother and she lived in the castle that he was to capture. Arthur was by law, heir to the throne.

Before Arthur and his army could take possession of Castle Mirabeau, John the Landless, by a rapid machination, took the young prince prisoner, and no one knows what happened to him.

Shakespeare was accustomed to combining elements from real life with those extracted from legend, applying them to obtain scenic effects, according to his needs. The poet designed, against the ferocity of John the Landless, the handsome and naive figure of Arthur, whose virtues are emphasized by the desperate cry of his mother who is clamouring for war:

Constance (to Lymoges)

" War! War, no peace! peace is to me a war.
 O, Lymoges! O, Austria! thou dost shame
 That bloody spoil: thou slave, thou wretch,
 thou coward!
 Thou little valiant, great in villany!
 Thou ever strong upon the stronger side!
 Thou Fortune's champion, that dost never
 fight

But when her humorous ladyship is by
 To teach thee safety! thou art perjur'd too,
 And sooth'st up greatness. What a fool art
 thou..." (3)

The suffering of Constance rises in the middle of the stage like a flame, her voice contracting convulsively in bitter reproach for Arthur's death. It is impossible to conceive of lamentation more mournful than that which springs up in the center of the action: she is deprived of a son, already killed, and a throne which vanished with him.

When Cardinal Pandulf tries to comfort her she rejects his sympathy with poisonous irony:

Constance

" Thou art not holy to belie me so;
 I am not mad; this hair I tear is mine;
 My name is Constance; I was Geoffrey's wife;
 Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost!
 I am not mad; I would to heaven I were!
 For then 'tis like I should forget myself;
 O! if I could, what grief should I forget.
 Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
 And thou shalt be canoniz'd, cardinal;
 For being not mad but sensible of grief,
 My reasonable part produces reason
 How I may be deliver'd of these woes,
 And teaches me to kill or hang myself;

If I were mad, I should forget my son,
 Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.
 I am not mad; too well, too well I feel
 The different plague of each calamity. (4)

According to history Arthur of Bretagne disappeared, but Shakespeare creates a miracle in his tragedy: Hubert of Burgh, the jailor, who was supposed to burn Arthur's eyes out and later kill him, was feeling sick and young Arthur, with his gentle soul, took care of him. So Hubert, in a tender scene, was touched by a deep feeling of humanity and Christian piety, in this "bloody" Shakespearean tragedy, and does not blind the lad nor kill him.

According to the poet, Arthur falls from a high wall and is killed while trying to escape from prison. History says that Arthur's death was due to John, but in the tragedy John repents of his wickedness and criminal actions.

Variety and contrast in attitudes and actions, all moved by passion, show the great technical ability of the author in these historical tragedies.

The Bastard (Act III, Sc. III) displays a spirituality contrary to what might be expected of him: in spite of his loyalty to the king, he reproaches him, in a scene similar to that between Antonio and Brutus after Caesar's death:

Bastard

Go, bear him in thine arms.

I am amazed, methinks, and lost my way
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.

How easy dost thou take all England up!
From forth this morsel of dead royalty,
The life, the right and truth of all this
realm

Is fled to heaven; and England now is left
To tug and scramble and part by the teeth
The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.

Now for the bare-picked bone of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest
And snarleth in the gently eyes of peace;
Now powers from home and discontents at home
Meet in one line: and vast confusion waits
As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.

Now happy he whose cloack and cincture can
Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child
And follow with speed: I'll to the king:

A thousand business are brief in hand

And heaven itself doth frown upon the land." (5)

After Arthur's death in the tragedy, John the Landless is no longer a hero, even for Faulconbridge. Shakespeare pours over the tragic horror a poetic elixir which has crystallized history into a

masterpiece of poetry; fable and myth are satirized and under the light of creative and poetic imagination, everything recovers a new life, a new action, motion, spirit, essence, and a rhythmical expression. The poet's divine creative spark shines from a single facet in his dramatic poetry. He laments tenderly through the heart of a child, Arthur of Bretagne.

Shakespeare had left his home town when his son Hammet was two years old and returned ten years later when the child died at twelve years of age. Thus his delicate sensitivity was twisted by pain to its very roots just a short time before writing The Life and Death of King John; he uses the accustomed technique to resolve a scenic problem by making Arthur appear as Hammet, instead of the older youth that he really was.

The soul of the child is a jewel containing all virtues. He is a character created with infinite tenderness, a serene soul even when facing the greatest disaster.

Arthur usually obtained what he needed by his gentle mood, in an atmosphere of sweetness and suffering, for he was created out of the poet's heart, trembling with pain for his own son Hammet.

When Arthur knows that he is about to die, he addresses his mother, with a placid countenance:

I do beseech you, madam, be content... (6)

Pain, cruelty and the most tender feelings of the author for his dead Hammet, are expressed in the despair of Constance; her heart melts with love for her boy, combined with bitterness and fury and envy, an effervescence in the mind, the heart and the soul of the poet's creation, and gives origin to this tremendous tragedy.

The characters of Cervantes do not exhibit these characteristics in his dramatic works. However, in The Siege of Numancia, with its powerful dramatic technique, we find not only the most exquisite poetry, but all the burning passions that the human heart can shelter, and a sublime patriotism at the climax, which leads to the unusual ending.

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD II

"Even when Shakespeare was young, he hated the cruelty of ambition and the ferocity of war, as much as he loved all the rites of royal courtesy. Similar tendencies must be assumed from the study of King Richard II of Shakespeare, a work which in some aspects constitutes his most important historical creation." (1)

In this extraordinary tragedy Shakespeare fingers all the strings of the human heart. He first raises Richard of York to the highest summits of pride in all his royal prerogatives.

Later, crime and the resulting despair convince the king of his powerlessness; when he becomes fully conscious of his impotence, he feels obliged to abdicate.

But he does not easily transfer the crown; the soul hesitates, and only later does he yield, convinced of his inability to rule.

The philosophical meditations of the author are clearly felt in Richard's attitudes and psychological

states, just as they were felt in Hamlet's irresolution. The disaster is expressed in the impressive soliloquy of Richard in Act V when he finds himself abandoned by all, alienated from every kind of love and tenderness, hurt by solitude; in his disillusionment he even despairs of music, though later he considers music as the purest manifestation of affection. Indeed, it is affection that he holds in the highest esteem.

All the poetical capabilities of the author appear in this tragedy: by means of poetry he analyzes, in their essence, the deepest caverns of the human soul with the greatest ease and faithfulness; at other times, he raises beauty to sublime and lofty heights, perfect kindness to its ultimate limits, and virtue becomes a marvel of the human soul.

The tragedy of Richard II embraces the last two years of his reign, from 1398 to 1400. These two years, marking the passage from one century to the next, also coincide chronologically with an important period of transition in many European countries. Feudalism was in its death agony as it faced the important changes and broad consequences that the Renaissance was bringing to occidental Europe.

Echoes of medieval chivalrous voices still

resounded and heraldry with its arms and emblems still struggled against the insatiable ambition to possess the land.

Despotism and arrogance was the mark of the nobility, and the cruelty of kings to reach the throne resulted in extraordinary contests. Such were the characteristics of the period.

Using as pretext a violent duel between two noblemen, Richard, Lord of Hereford, assumed the power and wealth of the Lancastrian dynasty, the most famous and brilliant of all the English dynasties.

The poet weaves a rich fabric from the various elements and, with the golden mantle of poetry, produces an extraordinary work. He follows the same technical and stylistic procedure which was to lead to perfection in his later and more conventional historical adaptations; he employs anachronism, whenever it is necessary to achieve his most dramatic impressions, either by the invention of characters, or by distorting important events. But we always find that royal blood is spilled, which suggests the immense accumulated suffering in the soul of the Bard.

Though this tragedy is connected with history, the poet has been called as "ignorant" as a "prentice," and still is considered by some eminent

writers as the cruel and "bloody" Shakespeare. However, in his tremendous suffering he was carving out his immortality in a work of unsurpassable beauty.

Richard is one of the personages in the feudal epic of the Lancasters; he was the son of the Black Prince of Wales who was eldest son of Edward III; the Black Prince died before his father, Edward, and Richard ascended the throne of England.

In this hazardous epoch, when Richard was a young boy, there was the heresy of Wycliffe. John Huss was another dissenter with the same views as Wat Tyler who had provoked a rebellion, and both produced a veritable chaos.

Richard II married Ann, Princess of Bohemia, and when she died he married Isabel de Valois, Princess of France and daughter of Charles VI.

The unpopularity of the king increased when his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, showed himself openly opposed to his royal nephew; later Gloucester was accused of treason and disappeared, probably murdered by his nephew, King Richard.

Under these circumstances Bolimbroke, son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and cousin of Richard, became a threat to the monarch. In order to free himself from this danger, the king exiled

Bolimbroke and another nobleman, and during Bolimbroke's absence, Richard appropriated money from the treasury of Henry of Hereford (Bolimbroke) to support the war against Ireland.

Meanwhile, with Bolimbroke exiled, his father John of Gaunt, uncle of Richard, was distraught. Richard visits him and treats him most cruelly.

Both Richard and Bolimbroke were grandsons of the great Edward III. When Richard usurped the throne, all the apocalyptic furies of York and Lancaster were unleashed, which resulted in the War of the Roses.

Bolimbroke enjoyed tremendous sympathy and popularity when he came back from exile to organize an army, which terrified Yorkshire. Richard, caught off balance by the unexpected events, found himself without protection and abdicated in favour of Bolimbroke, who became Henry IV.

Richard was taken prisoner and sent to the castle of Pomfret, where he was assassinated.

The poetical presentation of this historical tragedy is truly extraordinary.

The Tragedy of King Richard II was probably written in 1595 and registered in 1596; the main sources were the well known chronicle of Holinshed, which Meres mentions in his Palladis Tamia, published in 1598, and it is also supposed that

Shakespeare had recourse to the Annals of Sloeve, a very old chronicle of London in the fifteenth century; he also consulted Hall, as well as the chronicle of Robert Fabyan, Sheriff of London in 1493.

Apparently, the tragedy of Richard II has no definitely known origin; the quality of the work shows the highest literary values and the abundance of lyrical monologue is truly remarkable, surpassing every other extant poetical work of the Bard and serving as a model for its author, since some critics mention it in the Diary of Forman.

"It is probable that the old drama presented Richard as even more wicked and false than Shakespeare portrays him. We know that in Confessio Amantis, by Gower, the poet renounces his loyalty to Richard, for he struck out the dedication of this poem to King Henry. Also, William Langland, the author of Vision of Piers Ploughman, escaped from Richard at the last moment, taking advantage of his destitution as a suggestion to the badly advised youth. Consequently one can suppose that tradition showed Richard as a vile criminal, in whose weakness only crime thrived." (3)

Shakespeare follows tradition as well as historical sources. Occasionally he modifies facts, even the most fundamental and all important ones,

such as considering Richard as the assassin of Gloucester, which is not found in the Chronicle of Holinshed; but in the tragedy Gaunt accuses the king of having perpetrated this crime.

All impressions produced on the audience come from delicate threads manipulated by the fingers of the poet.

During the royal visit to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was in agony and dying, the king was extraordinarily vile and ungodly to his uncle:

O, had thy grand sire with a prophet's eye
 Seen how his son's should destroy his sons,
 From forth thy reach he would have laid
 thy shame.

Deposing thee before thou were possess'd
 Which art possess'd now to depose thyself,
 Why, cousin wert thou regent of the world,
 It were a shame to let this land by lease;
 But for thy world enjoying but his land
 It is nor more than shame it so?
 Landlord of England art thou now, not king:
 Thy state of law is bondslave to the law;
 and thou -

King Richard

"A lunatic lean-witted fool,
 Presuming on an ague's privilege,
 Darest with thy frozen admonition

Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
With fury from his native residence.

Now, by my seat's right royal majesty,
Were thou not brother to great Edward's son,
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head
Should run thy head from thy unreverent
shoulders." (5).

But later on, the poet awakens in his audience a certain sympathy towards Richard, quite opposed to the feelings previously aroused against the king, especially before the dying John of Gaunt, who was justly exasperated by the unfair appropriation of Bolimbroke's resources.

In the first part of the tragedy the description of the king's passion rouses tremendous indignation, but in the second half the horror disappears.

The author appeals to the heart of his audience for a feeling of pity and mercy towards Richard, who falls helpless under the actuality of his crimes, into the darkness of death.

In Act III, Sc. IV when the queen, upset because of her self-imposed silence, talks to the gardener of the palace and he tells her that the king has been overthrown, she flies into a rage and refuses to believe him.

The author's style of expression, despite its violence, is entirely poetic. Within the total

unity which tragedy demands we find, among other scenes, one in which Bolimbroke ironically kneels, in cruel mockery, before the fallen Richard who is now a prisoner. Richard, overthrown, exclaims:

" ...Come down?

Down court! Down, king!

For night-owls shriek where mountain larks
should sing. "(6)

A bitter dialogue pours forth from the humiliated and vanquished York; Lancaster bows mockingly to Richard in a manner usually reserved for crowned heads. Thus the laws of life are acted out by human beings, but it is Talion's law of "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

Shakespeare leads Richard over a thorny path to even worse misfortunes which are awaiting him. In London Richard is led through a street to the Tower, where the queen is waiting to see her husband for the last time, now despoiled of pride and confidence. Richard, on seeing his wife, addresses her; he suggests that she go to France to tell the sad tale on winter nights and "send her listeners weeping to their beds..."

It is hard to believe that Shakespeare would rush into a historical tragedy such as this without having a definitely preconceived plan, as some critics seem to believe. From the middle of the tragedy on,

as it approaches the climax, the dramatist is playing with the feelings of his audience.

The critic, researcher, scholar may be able to analyze the technical procedure. But the spectator, who lacks preparation and the intention of the critic, will allow the writer to lead his emotions; later, perhaps, he may consider the structure of the work, analyze the development of the characters, but his purpose will always be a different one.

In the witty handling of passions, through all of nature's ups and downs in happiness and misfortune where life moves men like sad puppets, the Bard has moved his characters to reach the artistic and poetic effect at which he aims.

The technical action of Richard II developed the author's great ability, which he demonstrates in the next dramas of Henry IV, in which Falstaff appears as one of the first comic characters in universal literature.

In the life of the Prince of Wales, later Henry V, we see a change from one tragedy to the next, mirroring the same character development observed in Richard II, but on an ascending scale. And last comes the sad and decadent creation of Henry VI, with whom the dynasty of Lancaster comes to an end.

Shakespeare, with his extraordinary creative

power, moves the soul of Richard II in such a way that it reflects automatically on the audience; the soul of the king, as shown on the stage, is entirely the poet's own creation. Richard cries out with deep emotion to his country, and salutes her with the deepest feelings of respect and confidence; or with a profound disillusionment, according to the psychological conditions of the scene.

At times he blesses heaven because of the protection showered on his divine rights, and in the end, when everything is lost, his soul sinks into an abyss of failure and despair.

Bolimbroke is not a phantom facing Richard; he is like the latter, a prince of noble blood; he has the same legal rights as heir to the throne of England as Richard.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and Bolimbroke's father, and Richard's father the Black Prince, were both sons of the great Edward III; this relationship was the reason for Bolimbroke's opposition to Richard.

While Richard descended the steps of failure cursing his partisans who changed to the winning side, Bolimbroke founded the most brilliant English dynast.

The poet takes advantage of the historical situation in this way: while Richard held the

scepter his pride resulted in darkness over his world; now, with most of his followers dead, his laments pour forth for he knows that he has lost everything.

At this point it is appropriate to mention a theory of Mr. Thomas Calvin, who expresses what many other critics have surmised but could not prove: namely, that Shakespeare was passing through a very special state of mind when he wrote this tragedy.

The drama rises for the last time with a pathetic soliloquy of Richard while prisoner in the tower of Pomfret Castle.

A little later Exton strikes the king, who says:

K. Richard

" That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire
 That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy
 fierce hand
 Hath with the king's blood stain'd the king's
 own land.
 Mount, mount, my soul! Thy seat is up on high;
 Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward here
 to die. "

When Exton took Richard's body to Bolimbroke, the latter did not approve of the murder, in spite of Exton's defense:

Bolingbroke

Exton, I thank thee not; for thou hast
wrought

A deed of slander with thy fatal hand.
Upon my head and all this famous land.

Exton

From your own mouth my lord, did I this
deed.

Bolingbroke

They love not poison that do poison need
Nor do I thee: Though I did wish him dead.
I hate the murderer, love him murdered.
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy
labour,

But neither my good word nor princely
favour:

With Cain go wander through shades of night
And never show thy head by day nor light. (7)

THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY IV

It was impossible to have peace within the flames of war, in spite of the efforts made by Henry IV, who had usurped the throne.

King Henry IV consists of two parts; the action starts in an atmosphere of chivalry and war in the First Part, and continues in the Second Part. Both parts are concerned with establishment of the hegemony of the house of Lancaster.

The strong partisans who had helped Henry IV rise to the throne were the same who could overthrow him: Thomas Percy Count of Worcester, his son Harry Percy Earl of Northumberland, and others.

From the beginning of the drama the conflict is clearly stated, with Harry Percy or Hotspur, the most noble and valiant sword of England, in opposition to the Prince of Wales, later Henry V, whose rebellious and effeminate nature found entertainment among bandits and highwaymen.

The virtues of young Hotspur were so appealing to Henry IV, that he would have liked to find them in his own son, the Prince of Wales.

In 1402, when both young men were returning from the battle of Holmedon, Hotspur informed

the king of certain attitudes of the Prince of Wales which he did not consider patriotic.

Young Hotspur was the hero of Holmedon, in the war which had begun two years before against the Scots.

The name of Percy belonged to feudal lords with possessions in the north, bordering on the fiefs of Scotland. He and his followers had fought courageously to win in Holmedon and the booty was rich; there were five noble prisoners who, according to medieval law, could pay a high ransom.

The prince had asked Percy for the prisoners, and Percy went to the king to complain of his son. Though he did not mention the prince by name, the description was clear:

Hotspur:

My liege, I did deny no prisoners;
 But I remember, when the fight was done,
 When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
 Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
 Came there a certain lord, neat, and trimly
 dress'd,
 Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin, new reap'd,
 Show'd like a stubble - land at harvest home;
 He was perfumed like a milliner;
 And 'twix'd his finger and his thumb he held

A pouncet - box, which ever and anon
 He gave his nose and took't away again;
 Who therewith angry, when it next came there,
 Took it in snuff; and still he smil'd and
 talk'd,
 And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
 He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
 To bring a slovenly unhandsome corpse
 Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
 With many holiday and lady terms
 He question'd me; among the rest, demanded
 My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.
 I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
 To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
 Out of my grief and my impatience,
 Answer'd neglectingly, I know not what,
 He should, or he should not; for he made me mad
 To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet
 And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
 Of guns, and drums, and wounds...(1).

Percy's accusation roused the king, especially
 because among the prisoners was Edmond Mortimer,
 Earl of March and brother-in-law of Harry Percy.
 He was Henry IV's greatest enemy because of his legal
 right to the throne through the maternal line; also,
 Richard II had declared him "the prince closest to

his own blood" and consequently heir to the throne.

Hotspur was opposed to the royal order to free the prisoners, and risked his life in this cause. But when the violence was over, remembering the advice of his uncle, Worcester, he decided to free the prisoners. Later he would join Mortimer and Glendower in Scotland, raise an army and, with the house of York, they would face Henry IV.

This dramatic piece, written in a medieval atmosphere of chivalry, is brilliantly ornamented with the character of Sir John Falstaff, who is unequalled in all literature.

Falstaff was the close friend of the Prince of Wales and also a group of robbers and highwaymen, banded together to steal the king's money. On one occasion, after the prince, Falstaff and other bandits had carried out an ambush, the prince and Poins went off by themselves, put on masks and robbed the rest of the bandits at the moment they were distributing the booty.

Falstaff and the thieves fled, abandoning everything, while their masked friends (the prince and Poins) took possession of it.

Later, at Mistress Quickly's tavern in Eastcheap, the thieves told the prince and Poins about "the fierce battle they had against one hundred bandits," all of them masked.

The prince confessed his part in the assault and Falstaff laughingly replied that he had recognized him but since he was heir to the throne he did not want to kill him.

Next day, the prince has to tell his father about his behaviour of the preceding day. He goes through a short farce with Falstaff impersonating the king and questioning the prince about his adventures; in a second recital, the prince takes the part of the king and Falstaff impersonates the prince, which shows the brilliant capability of the author.

To balance Falstaff's ludicrous action in the drama, there comes a conspiracy formed by Hotspur in the north, with his uncles the Duke of York, Owen Glendower, Mortimer, Douglas and others.

The king receives news of the conspiracy and prepares his army for defense.

Up to now, all the belittling descriptions of the Prince of Wales - ridiculous and derogatory as they are - constitute only an introduction to his future life of great and heroic deeds in peace and war, in which he will be raised to the greatest heights.

Before starting the campaign in Scotland, Henry IV complains to his son of his lack of discretion, and the prince promises to be more prudent.

Shakespeare's technique in this drama is to begin with the Battle of Holmedon, in which the Prince of Wales is a ridiculous puppet and Hotspur a great hero of the battle.

Throughout Henry IV heroic deeds alternate with comical scenes in which repeated bursts of laughter contrast with actions of war.

On the highway to Coventry, Falstaff tells his friends how he stole the king's money to recruit and equip an army of beggars, who appeared on the battlefield.

On the opposite side, Hotspur, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Douglas, Vernon and others are prepared to fight, when Blunt suddenly appears with an offer to negotiate peace.

Hotspur reproaches the king for his lack of honesty in carrying out his promises, for his pride and hate, and for the murder of Richard.

The Archbishop of York explains that many brave knights are against the king; but in the king's party are his two sons, the Prince of Wales and John of Lancaster, Westmoreland, Blunt, and others.

Since his offer of peace was not accepted, the king accuses Percy of defamation.

From this point on, the poet begins to build up the Prince of Wales, who offers to fight alone

against Harry Percy, the most valiant sword of England, in order to avoid spilling more blood. The two armies approach each other. In the king's party there are several knights dressed in armour exactly the same as King Henry. One of these, Blunt, falls at the very beginning; Prince John fights valiantly; the king and the Prince of Wales enter into the conflict.

Most of the knights with armour similar to Henry's have fallen. Douglas attacks the king ferociously and the prince saves his father's life and then enters into a fierce struggle with Hotspur, who falls dead; Falstaff, attacked by Douglas, pretends to be killed, and falls near Percy's dead body.

After the battle, Falstaff, with renewed strength and vigour, ~~takes~~ Percy's body to the prince and asks a reward, claiming that he killed Hotspur during the battle. The Prince of Wales corrects this misstatement.

There is a definite victory for the side of Henry IV. The prisoners are brought into his presence and the valiant Douglas is given freedom without paying ransom.

The king divides his army into two parts: one headed by Prince John goes to York against Northumberland; the other, led by the Prince of

Wales, goes to Wales against Glendower and the Earl of March, in order to put an end to the rebellion.

The First Part of Henry IV ends with this victory; and the Prince of Wales is on a path toward perfection, having acquired the virtues of a hero.

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY IV

Shakespeare sublimates the actions of the Prince of Wales by every means possible. Having saved the life of Henry IV, the prince is no longer a licentious young man, sunken in the perversities and vices of misled youth. He has vanquished Hotspur, mirror of all virtue and chivalrous honour, in honest combat on the field of battle. In the period covered by this second drama, the prince has completely regenerated himself; he has acquired the noble virtues of a knight errant, as displayed by courage in combat, surpassing the best and most valiant knights.

From this point on, the character of the Prince of Wales develops rapidly until it reaches a sublime apotheosis that prepares him to appear in the next drama as Henry V, glorified as the culmination of the Lancastrian dynasty in the victorious battle of Agincourt.

Falstaff, a most humorous and colourful scoundrel and close friend to the Prince of Wales during the prince's younger days, continues to be a source of laughter, not only because of his lack of seriousness in the most pathetic moments, but

even when facing dishonour or death.

Falstaff, at this time, is a man who has passed sixty years of age and his main interest is gluttony. He enjoys the finest foods and the heavy wine of the Canaries, where he would like to be shipwrecked if possible.

Falstaff has no definite qualities nor does he speak an honest word. He uses his intimacy with the prince to enjoy vice at the latter's expense. As a dramatic character, he made such a deep impression on the audience that Queen Elizabeth asked the dramatist to bring him into some of his other works.

He is presented again in The Merry Wives of Windsor, one of Shakespeare's most pleasing and successful comedies. Here Falstaff makes love to the young newly-married and virtuous ladies of Windsor, and becomes the main focus for laughter.

In the Second Part of Henry IV the principal intention of the author is to glorify England, to enlarge her fiefs in Scotland and keep her territory on the continent. The Prince of Wales and his brother, John of Lancaster, share in this idea and general trend, for John is another example of probity and courage. Both were keenly aware of their father's method of acquiring the throne from Richard II: first usurpation, then assassination

and promotion of a war to put down the rebellion against him.

Generally, Shakespeare's greatest characters show tremendous moral qualities and usually, like Othello and Cressida, they pass from well-doing to evil behaviour, and not the opposite as Henry of Monmouth.

We know, according to history, that the Prince of Wales was unprejudiced and not responsible for the state of public affairs, but he was impatient to rule. During his father's lifetime he was the head of a political party opposed to the king's purposes. In this opposition party, the death of Harry Percy by the prince's own hands, was considered a great misfortune.

Meanwhile, Falstaff comes and goes along the streets of London, dressed for battle. He has a page but no money. On this occasion the king orders him to accompany Prince John of Lancaster to put down a rebellion which has started in the north, instead of going with the Prince of Wales.

Balancing the events of war are scenes in which Mistress Quickly accuses Falstaff of unpaid debts in her tavern, as well as not living up to his promises of marriage. But in spite of everything, Falstaff continues to consume the best the tavern has to offer.

At this time Henry IV falls seriously ill, which saddens the Prince of Wales.

Already the poet has prepared us for the culminating action of the next drama; but meanwhile, Falstaff continues to enliven the present with his special brand of salt and pepper.

The prince comes to the tavern once more, with a friend, to play a joke on Falstaff. This scene (Act II, Sc. 4) is extraordinary because of the alternation of bold and impudent ribaldry with delicate mythological references and snatches of conversation within a fraternity of rogues. It carries an intoxication of the lower passions of licentious youth.

The prince and Poins, disguised as young people, enjoy themselves; but soon they abandon the tavern and return to the king.

After a fortnight of sickness, the king again plans to visit the Holy Land, as he had intended to do eight years before, when he overthrew Richard II.

There is an abundant play on words in this act, as is usual in all of Shakespeare's writing, and the names given characters at the tavern have a double meaning. These former friends of Falstaff, who is now a ridiculous old man, had not seen him since their younger days when he was a page of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

The action of the drama returns to the atmosphere of war in which every man must be ready to be recruited.

Then peace comes once more, with an agreement between John of Lancaster and the Archbishop of York; the chiefs drink and embrace each other happily in celebration. But Prince John does not keep his word and orders the army to return and take the chiefs prisoner. He then forces them to march in single file before the troops, as punishment for their treason and sedition.

Comic scenes and martial scenes alternate constantly. Falstaff takes several prisoners from the enemy lines and asks Prince John for a big feast in honour of his deeds.

Meanwhile, the king continues seriously ill. He recommends that his sons, Humphrey of Gloucester and Thomas Clarence, treat the Prince of Wales with understanding and affection; and he is deeply saddened when he receives word of the prince's return to his disreputable behaviour.

Undoubtedly the author is showing, by this lack of stability in the actions of the Prince of Wales, that perfection can only result from great and continuous effort, and not from sudden change.

Near the end of the drama, the king suffers an apoplectic stroke. As he grows weaker he wants

to listen to music and asks for his crown. The musicians, playing in the next room, hear Prince Henry soliloquize. Placing the crown on his head, he enters his father's chambers and, in front of him, makes a solemn promise to honour the Crown of England.

The king asks to be moved to Jerusalem Hall, where he expires; the princes show their sorrow, while in another hall, Falstaff is promising the best posts to his friends.

The coronation of Henry V takes place a short time later. Falstaff and his friends acclaim him, but he ignores them.

In the atmosphere floats a presentiment that English armies will soon go to France.

A boy dancer closes the drama by announcing that Falstaff will appear in another dramatic work in the near future.

THE LIFE OF KING HENRY V

This extraordinary work of Shakespeare begins with a chorus. It announces that everything is insignificant compared with the glorious magnificence of which the author is about to sing. Therefore, the audience is asked to multiply, by imagination, everything that it will see: men, horses and distances over which the great and heroic deeds will take place.

The portrayal by Shakespeare of the Prince of Wales in the two parts of Henry IV, is merely an introduction to the apotheosis of the new king as he appears in this masterpiece. There is an imitation of the Greek tragedy with the prominent place given to the chorus, as well as the transcendental subject of which it treats.

The Swan dramatically and eloquently laments his lack of genius to sing adequately of the dignity and splendour as well as the heroic deeds of Henry V. He hopes that his audience, with their superb imagination, will comprehend the immensity of the action which vibrates in the noble voices of the chorus at the beginning of every act, as it tells the main points of the plot.

The conflict is stated at the very beginning. The Bishop of Canterbury explains the situation to the Bishop of Ely: ever since the eleventh year of Henry IV's reign, there has existed an objectionable project of inflicting heavy taxation on the Catholic Church, for the benefit of the State. Lands belonging to the Church would be expropriated; there would be a high tribute paid to the king in the form of fifteen earls, one thousand five hundred horses and six thousand two hundred of the best horsemen, all for the benefit of the public.

However, hope now burns brightly for the church dignitaries, because Henry has undergone a change of heart and now wishes only the best for the Catholic Church. At this point Shakespeare pauses to eulogize most eloquently the king's character. The poet is now carving a saint, with a soul possessed of all virtues in the highest degree, and a wisdom usually found only in divinity.

The dramatist uses poetic elements inspired, in this case, by the marvelous flowering of the Lancaster dynasty; he glorifies it on the wings of poetic splendour and imagination. Historians admit that Henry V was better than his father, and that the kingdom did not decay, as with Henry VI; but they also show clearly that the deeds at Agincourt were not the epos that Shakespeare paints.

"The internal unity of the Lancastrian epic poem," says the scholar Señor Don Rafael Ballester Escalas, "is indisputable, especially since it does not vary as much as Shakespeare's other works, from the dates usually given by scholars. The variation is really very small. The dates do not go further than from 1596 (which is the latest date accepted by Furnivall) to 1599 (which, according to modern research, was the date in which Julius Caesar as well as The Merry Wives of Windsor were produced, and in the next year, Hamlet). There could be no greater difference than exists between these works. But why does this surprise us? Have we not seen Shakespeare joining, with a single stroke of his brush, the poetic, the prosaic, the humorous, in a book of knight-errantry?" (1)

"The drama Henry V was probably written in 1598 or 1599. Scholars have assigned this date because the chorus in Act V alludes to the "triumphant" expedition of the Earl of Essex to Ireland; the disastrous return from this expedition took place on the 28th of September 1599. Shakespeare's praise of Essex is excessive, and perhaps (according to one unknown writer) it is ironical." (2)

After discussing "Henry V" and "Julius Caesar," the poet says:

As, by a lower but loving likelihood,
 Were now the general of our gracious empress,
 as in good time, he may, from Ireland coming,
 Bringing rebellion broached on his sword..." (3)

Shakespeare gives this work the characteristics of an old metrical romance, but with many historical details; referring to the arrival of the Great Turk in Constantinople, he brings him there in 1419 or 1420, whereas history fixes the date as 1453.

"For some unexplainable reason, the poet who has flattered the Lancasters more than Queen Elizabeth of England, makes no effort to be silent about the ugliness of events." (4)

Shakespeare raises Henry from the mire in which he was sunk as Prince of Wales, to the level of a deity. This type of divinity which the poet attributes to him is interpreted differently by different critics, and is often considered pure fiction in its political and intellectual interpretation. Perhaps the poet was passing through an extraordinary personal exaltation when he enameled this masterpiece in such brilliant colours.

Henry V tried to correct the errors of the preceding period: "The remains of Richard II were removed to Westminster, where defunct kings were honoured; which tended, in that time of legend and

rumour, to prove to the people that Richard was dead, "absolutely" dead. The king also permitted offerings at the tomb of Archbishop Scroop who, after his rebellion, was murdered by Henry IV. The king took great care to restore to Percy, Hotspur's son, his property in Northumberland..." (5)

The main objective of Henry V was to enlarge England at the expense of France; but he sought the approval of the Bishop of Canterbury in this step:

Henry

" My learned lord, we pray you to proceed.
 And justly and religiously unfold
 Why the law Salique that they have in France
 Or should, or should not, my dear and
 faithful lord,
 That you should fashion, wrest or bow your
 reading
 Or nicely charge your understanding soul
 With opening titles miscreate, whose right
 Suits not in native colours with the truth;
 For God doth know how many now in health
 Shall drop their blood in approbation
 Or what your reverence shall incite us to..." (6)

The salique law in France denied a woman the right to the throne. Since Henry V laid claim to the throne of France through his mother's line, he wanted

to make this bid legal. However, Henry was aware that the salique law, "In Terram Salicam Mulieres Ne Succedant," applied not to France, but to a part of Germany.

Before starting his warlike expedition to France, he asked his cousin Lewis, the Dauphin, which states and duchies he considered he had a right to. The Dauphin replied indignantly, with an insulting remark about Henry's wild youth, and gave him a box of tennis balls; Henry retorted angrily that the tennis balls might become cannon balls. This conversation resulted in a conspiracy of English traitors, who joined with France against Henry.

After the war starts Shakespeare, by the use of approved techniques, alternates a variety of actions. Falstaff dies at Mistress Quickly's tavern in Eastcheap, exactly as he had lived; King Henry has rejected his comrade in dissipation, and this disillusionment was principally responsible for the death of Falstaff.

In the future events of war on an epic scale, Falstaff was unnecessary.

There have been heated discussions as to the identity of Falstaff; he could have been the well known Old Castle, whose offspring forced Shakespeare to make a public apology for having endowed his father with so many vices.

The followers of Richard II continued to be rebellious after their king's death, and during Henry IV's reign there were constant threats of an uprising, which lasted up to the time of Henry V. These were finally suppressed by this monarch in 1415 after a conspiracy led by Richard, Earl of Cambridge.

The philosophical speech of Henry to the traitors, when the conspiracy was uncovered, gives a good idea of the tremendous spiritual gifts with which the poet endowed his protagonist: wisdom, balanced judgement, justice and patriotism are the main virtues showered upon Henry V. He condemns the traitors to death, and continues determined that the King of England shall be also King of France.

At the end of Act IV the poet uses a speech by Charles of France to praise the future accomplishments of the descendants of Henry V.

Once in France, with his definitely warlike intentions, Henry sends his genealogical tree to King Charles and claims the crown with all its rights; the Dauphin makes fun of Henry, but King Charles prepares his armies for defense.

Henry's genealogy shows that he is a direct descendant of the great Edward III, and consequently has a right to the throne of France, of which he has been deprived. Charles asks a truce for one day.

At the opening of Act II, the vibrant and poetic voice of the Chorus announces Henry's determined advance on Harfleur. King Charles offers Henry his daughter Katharine in marriage, and some minor possessions, but Henry refuses. The encounter at Harfleur ends, after much bloodshed, in victory for Henry, and the way is open for further triumphs.

Henry's old friends, all of them considered rogues, become unimportant. The poet criticizes bitterly the merciless abuse of the English language by an Irishman, a Scotchman and a Welshman.

A romantic window on the future is opened and we see Princess Katharine of France having an English lesson, while the ominous sound of cannon approaches; meanwhile there is an interchange of indignities between the two kings: Charles hopes to see Henry at his feet, conquered and humiliated, begging for mercy; Henry replies that he will attack in a very short time.

Up to this moment the dramatist has been gilding the frame of the great deeds which are to come. On the battlefield, near Agincourt, the Dauphin and his soldiers are waiting; at two o'clock in the morning Henry approaches with his army.

Henry encourages his tired soldiers, addressing them as brothers. In a grandiloquent speech, before going into battle, he mentions all his good deeds and

offers penance to wash away the sins committed by his father, Henry IV, when he took the throne from Richard II.

At dawn Henry's weary army advances over the plain to meet the enemy. There is a fight between one Englishman and five Frenchmen, to show the proportions. Henry prays with humble devotion. Pistol fights one French soldier and offers to let him live if he pays two hundred ducats.

Shakespeare compares Henry to Alexander the Great: Henry was born in Monmouth where there flows a river similar to the one which crosses Macedonia. It was there that Alexander killed his friend Clito, but Henry has never killed a friend (though in cold blood he killed Falstaff in Act IV, Sc. VII).

A fierce battle leaves the field covered with bodies of men and horses; the blood of nobility has been spilled with that of common soldiers, but this does not disturb the king.

Later, Henry asks the name of a castle which is nearby and being informed that it Agincourt, he gives this name to the battle fought on St. Crispin's day.

The king, addressing the audience, explains that he is a Welshman, and for this reason he wears a branch of leek in his helmet.

After counting the dead, Henry goes to the

French palace, where there is a council with the French. He asks to be left alone with his cousin Katharine and although she does not speak English nor he French, they understand each other with the help of one of the ladies in waiting.

Henry seeks a quick response from Katharine; his suit advances rapidly and he kisses her. A little later, when talking with King Charles, Henry intimates that by marriage with the princess he will acquire the French cities protected by walls.

The council accepts everything except that a child born to Katharine in her marriage with Henry, should ascend the throne of France, which condition was later accepted.

The wedding takes place with great hopes and promises of friendship between England and France.

The Chorus closes the drama with one more apology for the poet's lack of wit, his feeble resources and weak voice when he has sung of the glories of Henry V, whose son Henry VI was later crowned King of France while still in swaddling clothes.

"Henry V symbolizes the unity of his country, as shown in a sublime and epic manner on the battlefield. The king, dressed in a simple uniform, walks among the troops and around the campaign tents. He speaks to his soldiers without their knowing who he

is, talking with them naturally, watching over and encouraging his army. Since Shakespeare was a subject of one of the three strong monarchies of the Renaissance, he has made this work a panegyric of the greatness and unity of a nation."

"What was begun as an epepee is ended as an epithalamium." (8)

"The Queen was crowned at Westminster on the 24th of February, 1421. Shakespeare reserves the dark tones for the next reign and in this drama he does not tell us that Henry V died in 1422, a young man, exhausted by the endless struggle. Shakespeare simply says that Henry and Katharine were married and lived happily." (9)

This exquisite and profoundly poetical work, with distinctly dramatic qualities, has been classified as a comedy by some erudite critics. Others have considered it an "old metrical romance" lacking in depth as far as the battle of Agincourt is concerned (which was planned and directed by Henry), but one of Shakespeare's superb masterpieces, containing an infinite treasure of poetry. It is profusely ornamented with frequent allusions to Greek mythology as well as to ancient English wisdom.

"The dramatist has made of him (Henry V), an almost baroque statue, full of sonorous and warlike symbolism."

Then should the war-like Harry, like himself
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword
and fire
Crouch for employment.

(Words of the Chorus Act I)

THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI

And yet thou shalt be safe? such safety finds
The trembling lamb environed with wolves.

III Henry VI - Act I, Sc. Queen Margaret (1)

All the efforts of Bolimbroke to establish the dynasty of Lancaster which began with him as Henry IV and continued to flourish during the reign of Henry V, who was the finest example of patriotic ideals and warlike tendencies, decayed during the painful sunset of failure and insanity in the reign of Henry VI.

It is not easy to understand why Shakespeare wrote the second and third parts of Henry VI first, and only afterwards the first part.

The historical background of the War of Two Roses, between the houses of York and Lancaster, covers a period of almost thirty years from 1455 to 1485, and the poet has placed these tragedies (the three parts of Henry VI and The Tragedy of Richard III) which are interwoven chronologically, within this period. Shakespeare has portrayed the Machiavellian Richard Plantagenet as a monster, a belly spider willing to devour his three older brothers in order to possess the throne of his father, Edward of York, who was

king of England in the last days of the above mentioned War of Two Roses.

There has been considerable speculation as to the paternity of the above mentioned works; some critics say that Shakespeare wrote in collaboration with Christopher Marlowe, with Robert Green, even with Peele. The poet has been accused by some of literary piracy, while others justify him as having adapted ancient works to the needs of the stage of his time and the theatrical companies to which he belonged; the most serious opinions consider his work as "revision" rather than "piracy."

"Green's parody in the "Shakescene" passage of Groatsworth of Wit (1592), of a line which occurs both in The Contention and in Henry VI, clearly suggests Shakespeare's connection with the plays; but it is evidence neither for nor against the collaboration of other writers, because there is not sufficient evidence for determining, on grounds of style in Shakespeare's earlier works, whether there was collaboration or not. There is nothing in Henry VI or Richard III which is unacceptable as a revision of the original material in The Contention, which is followed and elaborated scene by scene. It is difficult to assign to anyone except Shakespeare the humor of the Jack Cade scenes, the whole substance of which is found in The Contention as well as

in Henry VI. Opinions which exclude Shakespeare altogether can be disregarded. Henry VI is not in Mere's list of Shakespearean plays, but its inclusion in the First Folio is almost positive proof for assigning to Shakespeare some share in the completed work, if only as reviser." (2)

Consequently, since Henry VI appears in the First Folio, and reveals an unmistakable poetic tone from the very beginning of the drama, it can be considered Shakespearean. There is present his great ability to combine the elements of legend, either gloomy or luminous, tragic or happy.

In the first part of Henry VI the poet introduces the characters, but without the effect they reach in the other two parts of the work. The most impressive scenes are those which refer to Joan of Arc, which show the real Shakespeare in all his patriotic fervor, using all linguistic, dramatic and poetic elements to reach a preconceived end, on which criticism generally remains silent.

In the second part there stands out the cruel and tragic figure of Leonor Cobham, the wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was brother of Henry V and uncle of Henry VI.

Henry VI was an orphan since early childhood, weak by nature and with the fatal inheritance of insanity; this derangement appears several times

during his life but Shakespeare never refers to it, merely using all the king's misfortune as a subject for tender poetry. Leonor Cobham, as Shakespeare describes her, has the prophetic faculties of Macbeth and she wants to destroy with her own hands the French princess, Marguerite D'Anjou, married to Henry VI.

In this drama, Shakespeare reverts to the powerful dramatic element of witchcraft, whose consequences bring to the poetry an untoward and lugubrious atmosphere which colours the fires of passion with a shadow of spectral fatality.

Leonor is caught in sorcery against the king and exiled for the rest of her life; her husband, the powerful Humphrey of Gloucester, a Lancaster and uncle of the king, falls from the monarch's favour. Nevertheless, Shakespeare glorifies him, not as the wise humanist he really was but as upholder of English dominion over the French provinces. The king does not save Humphrey from death in prison, which several opinions hold was caused by apoplexy, while others say it was due to a plot hatched by Marguerite D'Anjou and some of the nobles.

The king faints when Humphrey of Lancaster dies, for mentally and morally he had been the support of the king's official life; Henry VI feels lost without his advice, and Henry of Gloucester pities him:

Gloucester

" Ah, thus King Henry throws away his crutch
 Before his legs be firm to bear his body.
 Thus is the shepherd beaten from thy side
 And wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee
 first.

Ah, that my fear were false! ah, that it were!

King

My Lords, what to your wisdom seemest best,
 Do or undo, as if ourself were here.

Queen

What! Will your highness leave the parliament?

King

Ay, Margaret; my heart is drowned with grief,
 Whose flood begins to flow within my eyes,
 My body round engirt with misery,
 For what's more miserable than discontent? "(3)

In order to obtain the dramatic and tragic effects he sought, the author modifies historical and chronological facts.

Years before, when the unhappy King Henry VI decided to marry beautiful Princess Marguerite D'Anjou, the Duke of Suffolk was in charge of all arrangements for the wedding. This marriage was unpopular in England because Marguerite's father, the king of France, was considered "a king of cards," using many

titles of nobility such as King of Naples, of Sicily and of Jerusalem, where he possessed no land." (4)

Henry VI, enamoured of his wife's exquisite beauty, practically worshiped her; but with the passage of time, the queen became more powerful, more clear-sighted and ambitious, while the king, little by little, sank into a mental chaos, up to the moment when Humphrey disappears and everything begins to decline.

Suffolk, according to some opinions, was responsible for the death of Humphrey of Gloucester. He brings the sad news to the king who swoons and later speaks in a way he had never spoken before:

Suffolk

Comfort, my sovereign! Gracious Henry,
comfort!

King

Why doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me?
Came he right now to sing a raven's note
Whose dismal tune bereft my vital powers;
And thinks he that chirping of a wren,
By crying comfort from a hollow breast
Can chase away the first conceived sound?
Hide not thy poison with such sugar'd words;
Lay no thy hands on me; forbear, I say;

Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting.
Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!
For in the shade of death I shall find joy;
In life but double death, now Gloucester's dead. (5)

"This scene is one of the deepest psychoanalytical studies in Shakespeare. Weak persons sometimes understand themselves better than others do. The poet does not tell us in so many words about the spells of insanity the king sometimes suffers, which disease was inherited from his grandfather Charles VI of France; but his concrete problem, of a political and individual nature, appears to us even more real and true to life than Hamlet's problem." (6)

The misfortune of Gloucester's death is followed by that of his partisans. Suffolk is exiled, taken to sea and beheaded. But it is not Suffolk's death, but rather Humphrey's, that is the real turning point in this tragedy.

Shakespeare's poetry emerges in all its splendour, permeating even scenes of life and death which are usually considered most frightful. On the other hand, the soul of poor Henry VI, in Shakespeare's dramatic hands, becomes a miserable toy, especially when the body of Gloucester is brought before him and the Earl of Warwick points out all the horror:

See how the blood is settled in his face.

Oft have I seen a timely - parted ghost,

Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale and

bloodless,

Being all descended to the labouring heart;

Who, in the conflict that it holds with death,

Attracts the same for aidance 'gainst the

enemy;

Which with the heart there cools and ne're

returnth

To blush and beautify the cheek again.

But see, his face is black and full of blood,

His eye-balls further out than when he lived,

Staring full ghostly like a strangled man;

His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretched

with struggling;

His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd

And tugg'd for life and was by strength subdued;

Look, on the sheets his hair, you see, is

sticking;

His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugged

Like the summer's corn by tempest lodge!

It cannot be but he was murder'd here;

The least of all these signs were probable... (7)

In spite of the strong impression of horror,
which is the intention of the drama, the flight of

poetry moves in funereal rhythm over the corpse of Gloucester.

Before considering the effect on the audience, we should think of the effect on the sad, wounded and sick soul of the unfortunate king, Henry VI.

There are many points of similarity between Shakespeare and Cervantes, but there is a great difference in their approach to life and death. In the dramatic end of The Siege of Numancia, where the whole city is destroyed, the poetic elements are entirely different from Shakespeare's. In the works of Shakespeare death is generally presented as a crime; in the above mentioned tragedy of Cervantes, death is also a crime, but by its silence death is also a patriotic resolution.

The three works based on the life of King Henry VI embrace a period of fifty years, from 1422 to 1472. They stretch from the death of the hero of Agincourt to the assassination of Henry VI, murdered by the very hands of his successor, Richard III, in the gloomy Tower of London. All the warlike achievements of Henry V have ended in fanatic and unbridled chaos.

Richard, when he ascends the throne, does not claim paternal rights, in spite of the fact that his father, Edmund of Langley, was the fifth son of the great Edward III; he claims his maternal rights, since his mother, Anne, was the sister of Edward of Mortimer,

Count of March, and both were children of Edward the Great.

Richard Plantagenet remembered that his father, the Count of Cambridge, had been assassinated by Henry V for high treason.

In the three parts of Henry VI we feel the breath of the old metrical romances. The One Hundred Years War is often minimized in order to draw attention to the civil War of Two Roses. This latter war was rooted in difficulties between the nobility of the house of York (the White Rose), and the house of Lancaster (the Red Rose), but later was taken up by their partisans.

The house of York claimed to represent the aristocracy; Bolimbroke had established the dynasty of Lancaster by usurping the throne of Richard II, who was found dead in prison. "This death, considered assassination by modern historians, is treated by Shakespeare as incriminating the Lancasters, although the king, on stage, confesses his responsibility" (8)

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY VI

In The Second Part of King Henry VI the strong personality of the Duke of Suffolk never submits to the authority of law; the law is always subservient to his will. According to Shakespeare's presentation, this man is Machiavellian and not concerned with the good of England.

England had suffered a hard blow from Joan of Arc and Shakespeare, in his patriotism, despises her as a witch and uses her as a highly colourful element for his own purposes.

The machinations of Suffolk are resumed in the Truce of Tour between England and France in 1444, which is considered a consequence of the Peace of Arras in September 1435. The worst part of this truce was the marriage of the charming French princess, Marguerite D'Anjou, whose father was more concerned with culture than with government.

It was not Suffolk's death, but that of Humphrey, which caused the decline of Henry VI, in spite of his deeply religious feelings. Suffolk, as portrayed by Shakespeare, is a hideous character, a clever and hypocritical courtier, who gives to Renato D'Anjou (Marguerite's father) the provinces of Anjou and Maine.

In the three works on Henry VI, Shakespeare has drawn powerful characters: Henry VI, his uncle Humphrey of Gloucester who was Protector of the provinces on the continent, and Humphrey's most bitter enemy Queen Marguerite.

Humphrey, erudite, brilliant and an exceptional politician, is deeply admired by Shakespeare, who always shows him in open quarrel with his uncle, Cardinal Beaufort. History does not agree with Shakespeare on this last point, nor does history consider the cardinal to be the assassin of his own nephew, Humphrey. According to history, the cardinal had the deep virtues of wisdom and equanimity; but the poet has built his character according to his dramatic needs.

One of the most colourful moments in the second part of Henry VI is when Eleanor Cobham, Humphrey's wife and similar to Macbeth, inquiring the fate of various personages at court, is surprised and caught in the midst of her sortilege. The sorcery is predicting the death of the Duke of York:

Spirit

Adsum.

Margery Jourdan

Asmath!

By the eternal God, whose name and power

Thou tremblest at, answer that I shall ask;
 For till thou speak, thou shalt not pass from
 hence.

Spirit

Ask what thou wilt. That I had said and done!

Bolimbroke

First of the king: what shall of him become?

Spirit

The Duke yet lives that Henry shall depose;
 But him outlive, and die a violent death.

Bolimbroke

What shall befall the Duke of Somerset?

Spirit

Let him shun castles;
 Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains
 Than where castles mounted stand.
 Have done, for more I hardly can endure.

Bolimbroke

Descend to darkness and the burning lake!
 False fiend, avoid!...

York (reading from paper)

The Duke yet lives that Henry shall depose,
 But him outlive and die a violent death.

Why this is just

Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse. (1)

In addition to the parallelism between Shakespeare and Marlowe, there is another point on which the most brilliant researchers do not agree: "The recently "unearthed" Shakespeare from Stratford-on-Avon who, according to his friend Ben Jonson, knew 'little Latin and less Greek' appears to have read not only the Eneid in the original, as can be inferred from Duke Humphrey's remarks, but also Cicero's text De Divinations, II, 56, from which he quotes the oracle. And this is not all; note the genial parallelism and deep knowledge of English history which compares Pirro (King of Espiro) with the Duke of York who, it is believed, may survive Henry VI and even rule in Henry's place, when actually he was destined to die before the king." (2)

On many points there is an amazing coincidence between the drama and history: Marguerite never forgave Humphrey for considering her a foreigner, and this is shown as revenged by Humphrey's death, when the poet describes the corpse so pathetically that it mournfully dominates the unusual scene; but later, cruel Suffolk was to have his turn.

The Second Part of King Henry VI is a real tragedy; the scene which, by means of witchcraft, foretells the conspiracy, is tremendously impressive; and unfortunately, as happens in Macbeth, everything comes out later as it was foretold.

Shakespeare's wisdom in the field of history and his classical knowledge, exceeds imagination; not only the light of his genius is projected on the stage, but there is also a deep knowledge of law, of human nature, of events in the field of culture and, above all, a tremendous stock of Greek and Latin wisdom which shows the pen of a scholar.

The invoking of the Spirit by the Duchess of Gloucester, suggests fatality, for this event preceded the War of Two Roses.

"If we overlook chronology, we can appreciate the gigantic synthesis of the historical poet, in showing facts which took place before the war (War of Two Roses). But let us also admire the exuberance of his style, his humanistic culture, the creative imagination expressed in a superbly invented theme, unsurpassed by any writer of the period of Romanticism." (3)

The above mentioned war, followed by the rebellion of John Cade, included two periods of struggle and restlessness, which Shakespeare develops in two separate tragedies: The Third Part of King Henry VI and The Tragedy of King Richard III, as well as one act added to The Second Part of King Henry VI.

"The poet has transformed a long and tedious period of slaughter and treason into the quintessence

of historical drama. He lacks nothing in subject matter, for the deeds of York and Lancaster were terrible. There is the theme of ferocity and brotherly vengeance, which reminds us of Thucydides description of the Peloponnesian War." (4)

From remotest times it was customary in England to send far away, all men who were disturbing elements, preferably to battles which were already lost, in order to remove them from the political scene. At that time, Ireland was such a land, and it was there that Lancaster sent the Duke of York, working on the duke's passion rooted in bitter hatred, as well as on his ambition.

The poet describes all these passions in the most brilliant colours. For all criminal actions attributed to Marguerite, he uses fire words, that the passage of time has not obliterated, although history does not mention them. This language in which Shakespeare's characters speak is the only example of the speech of the royal personages that his characters represent.

The weakness of Henry VI is described by the Swan in a few words:

King

Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne,
 And could command no more content than I?
 No sooner was I crept out of my cradle

But I was made a king at nine months old.
 Was never subject long'd to be a king
 As a do long and wish to be a subject." (5)

All events used by the poet from the War of Two Roses reach an imposing climax in The Second Part of King Henry VI. The Duke of Somerset wanted to keep the provinces of Guyene and Normandy on the continent; behind this there was also a rivalry for the throne. Talbot was sent to France to reconquer the provinces, but he died in 1453 when the English armies were defeated, an event which marked the end of the One Hundred Years War.

Queen Marguerite has a very important role in the second and third parts of Henry VI; as a dramatic and tragic character, she is considered here alone, and apart from the historical aspect. An important fact is that after eight years of marriage she finally gave birth to a child, who had an indisputable right to the crown. As the War of Two Roses became more and more bitter, the queen's army pushed the enemy northward, and the king, when he felt well enough, led the battle; but York soldiers finally defeated those of Lancaster.

Henry was taken prisoner, while the queen and her son fled to France. The throne now appeared especially attractive to the Duke of York. The dark colours of

tragedy begin to appear: one side tries to destroy Henry, crown the Duke of York, and dispossess the young Prince of Wales; on the other side Queen Marguerite stands out against the Duke of York as a frightful figure, and this enormous shadow, lucubrious, tragic, carries over into the next drama.

THE THIRD PART OF KING HENRY VI

The Duke of York, his hatred rising, tries to make sure that he will ascend the throne in the future. Henry is still a prisoner and Queen Marguerite is building up her army.

However, Parliament refused to dethrone Henry, insisting that he should remain king as long as he lived. But it is arranged that at Henry's death, Richard of York will become king. This would deprive the young Prince of Wales of his rights.

The fires of vengeance burned in the queen's soul, sinking her into an abyss of diabolical fury; perhaps due to the poison of rage, she did not foresee her own downfall in the near future. All happenings now become violent. Edward of York is crowned at Westminster and young Henry loses his rights to the crown.

The new king, against the wishes of his family, fell in love with Lady Grey, Isabel Woodville, the widow of a military officer in Lancaster's army.

The Prime Minister Warwick, "the king's maker" did not approve of this marriage. However, Edward seemed to solve intelligently and cleverly all problems. In this case an unexpected event changed

everything: Warwick, prime minister for York, reversed his political affiliation and, going to France, made an alliance with Marguerite to restore Henry VI to the throne. Meanwhile, he was negotiating the marriage of his daughter Anne to the Prince of Wales, son of Marguerite and Henry VI.

Unfortunately, the help given by Louis IX of France and the Duke of Lotaringia, which had helped Warwick on other occasions, failed this time; they could not forgive him for changing sides.

Henry was rescued from prison and restored to the throne; but events to come were already casting their shadow. Many famous battles followed and in the Battle of Barnet, in 1471, Edward IV prevailed, and in the same battle "the king's maker," Warwick, lost his life. He cries out in agony as he is dying:

Thus yields the cedar to axe's edge,
 Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,
 Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,
 Whose top branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading
 tree

And kept low shrubs from winter's powerful wind.
 These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's
 black veil,
 Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun,
 To search the secret treasons of the world:

The wrinkles in my brows, now filled with blood,
Were liken'd oft to kingly sepulchres;
For who lived king, but I could dig his grave?
And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow? (1)

Even more frightful events were to come, for Queen Marguerite and her son, confident of Warwick's victory, landed in England just after he had died. The queen fell prisoner and King Edward himself, in incredible action, struck her on the face with his iron gauntlet. The young prince, last representative of the Lancaster dynasty, was assassinated, and a little later his father Henry VI was murdered in the Tower of London.

The Middle Ages were coming to an end, as well as the Hundred Years War. The great triumphs of Henry V on the continent remained a memory for England, but they were past.

Edward IV of York ruled his people with an iron hand.

Shakespeare designs Richard of York, the youngest son of Edward, as a hateful and diabolical figure. When he ascended the throne of England as Richard III he took with him all the cruelty which his father had displayed when he put to death Henry VI and killed the Prince of Wales with his own sword.

Shakespeare creates Richard III as a symbol of

wickedness, cruelty, and all the most despicable traits of character which the human mind can imagine.

Nevertheless, over this ocean of blood and cruelty, there is a poetry which endures forever.

MARGUERITE D'ANJOU

O Phoebus! hadst thou never given consent
That Phaethon should check thy fiery steeds,
Thy burning car never had scorch'd the earth!

III - Henry VI, Act 2, Sc 6, 1

In creating the character of Marguerite D'Anjou, the author followed the technical procedure later employed by Balzac in The Human Comedy; he takes Marguerite from her youngest years and follows in detail all aspects and periods of her life, from youth to senility and death; but, in this case, the poet crowns his character with a poetic and tragic end entirely outside the historical frame. Into her the poet has poured all the power of his rich creative genius. She first appears endowed with all the splendour and beauty of glorious youth; later, as an adult and mainly as a mother, the consuming fire of passion devours her charm; and the Swan reserves for her, in old age as she wastes away, every tragic misfortune that can accumulate misery in a human soul.

William de la Pole, the cynical and Machiavellian Duke of Suffolk, treacherous and hypocritical according to chroniclers, was in charge of the wedding

arrangements for the French princess, Marguerite D'Anjou, and King Henry VI of England.

Because of this fact, Shakespeare insinuates between the lines the suggestion that the princess had a sentimental affection for Suffolk. This throws sombre ridicule on the king, who was weak by nature and always passionately in love with his delicate wife whom he admired and was devoted to fervently until his death.

The queen's exquisite femininity, her deep culture and the natural vivacity of her mind made her extremely attractive. She was a real oasis in the sad life of the king.

"The love of Marguerite D'Anjou and Suffolk has been compared with other legendary and guilty loves, such as Lancelot and Queen Guenevere. Dante would have placed them in the second circle of the 'Inferno,' swept by a relentless whirlwind: 'La bufera invernale que mai non resta,' or the black wind that howls through all eternity in the souls of Paola and Francesca of Rimini..." (2)

After the marriage of Henry VI with the Princess Marguerite, which was carried out by proxy, she was taken from France to England, where she was always considered a foreigner and intruder. Her first mortal enemy was Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, an expert in necromantic procedures who

competed by means of magic. Eleanor was the wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who was Protector of the Kingdom as well as uncle of the monarch. It was Eleanor's attitude which taught Marguerite the path of hate and unlimited ambition, all of which is a complete anachronism not recognized by history; nor does history recognize the implied affection between Marguerite and Suffolk.

The queen, in her eighth year of marriage, gave birth to the new Prince of Wales. However, he was never to reach the throne as Henry VII. From the moment he was born and throughout his entire life, because his legitimate rights to the throne frustrated the ambition of the Duke of York, there was increased restlessness in the houses of both York and Lancaster.

On the other hand, at the same time, Henry VI passed through a difficult period of insanity, to which Shakespeare never refers. After almost a year of mental illness the king recovered his health. In those days Marguerite was no more the charming princess, overflowing with youth and merriment; her thoughts were sunk in the organization of an army, as all her violent passion struggled to maintain the rights of her son to the crown.

The War of the Two Roses unleashed its fury in 1459. The king personally led the fighting and he was

victorious; the Duke of York, vanquished, fell back toward the north.

A breath of cruelty and wildness penetrated the queen's heart.

The War of the Two Roses was ruthless; the main aim was to secure the throne of Henry for the Duke of York and, by means of treason, eliminate Marguerite and her son.

The queen advances into the middle of the stage before York, with tremendous effect, in a pathetic speech: "You have no children..."

"Such is the Shakespearean cry par excellence: the leitmotiv of paternity. It is a deeply rooted feeling, one of the few which can be considered basic for the dramatist, and it is reflected on the stage during these few hours. In the case of Marguerite D'Anjou, the tragedy of paternity is far more than a theatrical effect; it is an entirely historical fact." (3)

Despite everything, Henry continues as king for the time being, although the Duke of York has to take his place on the throne. This humiliation unleashes Marguerite's anger to the limit and there is a very depressing and insulting interchange of humiliations between the queen and the Duke of York. It appears on the stage as a madness such as can emerge only from Shakespeare's pen. According to the Duke of York,

Marguerite is:

She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of
France,

Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's
tooth!

How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex

To triumph, like an Amazonian trull,

Upon their woes whom fortune captivates!

But that thy face is visard-like, unchanging,

Made impudent with use of evil deeds,

I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush.

To tell thee when thou camest, of whom derived

Were shame enough to shame thee, were thou not

shameless

Thy father bears the type of King of Naples,

Of both the Sicily and Jerusalem,

Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman

Hath that poor monarch taught thee to insult? 6.

After this powerful but poetic scene, the Duke of York is executed, and his son Edward, Earl of March, the future Edward IV, takes his place. He has been outstanding in the fight against the Lancasters, in a party headed by Gaspar and Owen Tudor, both of whom were roots of the Welsh dynasty of that name, which became better known after the Renaissance.

The principal part of the struggle is between

Marguerite D'Anjou and Edward IV. Marguerite is defeated at Towton Field in 1492 and after this disaster tremendous misfortune fell upon the Lancasters: Henry VI was taken prisoner and led to the Tower of London, where he spent bitter days; Edward of York ascended the throne; Queen Marguerite and her son fled to France.

The most cruel deeds of the War of the Two Roses were committed during these days; treason and hate were rampant. After the wedding of Edward IV with Elizabeth Woodville (Lady Grey), Warwick the leader of the house of York acted treacherously. He turned his back on the house of York, left England and went to France, taking with him all that was left of the Lancasters, to make an alliance with Marguerite. His aim was to remove Henry VI from the Tower of London and marry his daughter Anne Warwick to the Prince of Wales, who might later be Henry VII.

The king was taken from the Tower and restored to the throne, while Edward IV was deposed; but the partisans of Edward IV were increasing in number and strength and in 1471 Warwick, the "Kings' Maker," lost his life in a fierce battle.

Shakespeare infuses into every scene the very essence of poetry, and Warwick, in agony speaks eloquently:

Thus yields the cedar to the axes edge,
 Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,
 Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,
 Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading
 tree

And kept low shrubs from winter's powerful wind.
 These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's
 black veil,

Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun,
 To search the secret treasons of the world:
 The wrinkles in my brows, now fill'd with blood,
 Were liken'd oft to kingly sepulchres;
 For who lived king, but I could dig his grave?
 And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow? (5)

But a far greater misfortune was spreading its fatal wings over Queen Marguerite. Trusting in the triumph of her ally, Warwick the "Kings' Maker," she landed in England just as he was dying on the battlefield. Her troops were completely routed, her son assassinated and she herself taken prisoner, humiliated and slapped on the face by the royal hand of Edward IV of York, elegantly sheathed in an iron gauntlet.

The last in direct line, and unhappiest of the Lancasters, was assassinated in the Tower of London by the treacherous hand of Richard Plantagenet. But before Henry VI was eliminated forever, the poet has

already exalted him in the most lofty manner: first, when King Henry VI meets young Henry Tudor, the king predicts that he will be the glory and salvation of England; in his speech, Henry VI is not a weak, pusillanimous and sickly creature, always swayed by the will of others; and toward the end he is illuminated as a tender soul, sanctified by sweet piety, as he appears praying God to pardon his executioner.

In history, Marguerite outlives this painful chain of tragic catastrophies, but nothing remains of her glorious youth. She had struggled with all her strength to see her son crowned king of England, yet she saw him assassinated. The martyrdom of this queen goes beyond all bounds and exceeds the endurance of any human being. While the prince born of her heart is assassinated, she curses the heir of York, who is still a child in those sad days. The rosy lips of young Marguerite have become the mouth of hell, whose only pleasure is to curse and predict death.

Later, she is sunk in gloom, at the bottomless pit of a bitterness which devours her; she is a foreigner, an intruder, crucified by suffering, the mother of a Lancaster, and therefore she is different: "The dynasty suffers in its very depths, at the very root of its blasonry. Marguerite D'Anjou has transformed herself into Margaret of Lancaster. How could Shakespeare allow her to return to France? England

has given the territory back to France but the poet keeps the queen. Through his poetic ability as a dramatist, Marguerite will remain on English soil, because there is no soil more English than the realm of beauty created by Shakespeare with the frozen and statuesque greatness of a cemetery of crowned heads. For this reason, in the literary Westminster of Old England, Marguerite of Lancaster will remain by the side of her husband, adjacent statues, with their respective attributes interchanged (for him the prayer book, for her the sword), with their stony eyes turned in the ageless lethargy that presides over royal statuary." (6)

"History tells us that after the disgraceful happenings between York and Lancaster, Marguerite D'Anjou spent her old age in seclusion in France, until her death in 1482. (7)

Neither Macbeth, nor Hamlet, nor Lear, left their tortured hearts so firmly in the tenuous hands of poetry, as did Queen Marguerite.

In Hamlet, after the character of Claudius has been built up as a villain, many times emphasized by the lips of Prince Hamlet, the Bard gradually rouses another sentiment in the audience, little by little producing a feeling of pity for Claudius, because of his wholehearted repentance. The same procedure is followed at the end of Queen Marguerite's life.

In the works of Shakespeare as well as Cervantes, creativity and poetic creation have found an equilibrium. However, the fields of action of these writers were different, for Cervantes devoted most of his life to fiction while Shakespeare created drama and lyrical poetry.

In the three parts of King Henry VI where everything declines (in contrast to The Life of King Henry V where everything rises valiantly in heroic actions), crime, despair and vengeance are expressed in the most horrible deeds, some of which were quoted above, but poetry flies triumphantly, even in the flames of the most degrading passion.

Poetry in these works is enshrined in eternal truth: "Pride went before, ambition follows him." (8)

And in the voice of Clifford:

So cowards fight when they can fly no further;
 So doves do pick the falcon's piercing talons;
 So desperate thieves, all hopeless of their lives
 Breathe out invectives 'gainst the officers (9)

THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD III

Look, how this ring encompasseth thy finger,
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart...
Wear both of them for both of them are thine (1)

It is impossible to comprehend the witty, poetic and creative mind of Shakespeare without penetrating into the sordid depths of Richard III. But even so, the mysterious Swan remains impenetrable. What was there in the poet's soul, during this first epoch, that he needed so much bloodshed?

The Tragedy of King Richard III strikes a note of terror from the very beginning. The king, Richard of York, whose army has reduced to nothingness the dynasty of Lancaster, basks in the splendour of his symbol, the White Rose, while he machinates new cruelty.

This tragedy is the very moment at which the monstrous Richard erupts like a volcano, spewing forth the burning poison of crime and horror.

The unaesthetic figure of the king is no obstacle to the Swan's poetic creativity. On the contrary, the force of his language, enriched with an exquisite elegance, surpasses his preceding works. Rhyme is less abundant, and the dynamics of the verse

rides majestically on a pegasus of luminous wings. Ideas are concise and "The lexicon tends to the greatest number of ideas in the least number of words." (2)

Richard's physical deformity, probably more legendary than real, gives Shakespeare an opportunity to squeeze through this form all the poisonous and wicked actions rising from the monarch's treacherous soul.

The tragedy begins with a hideous monologue by Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Gloucester

Now is the winter of our discontent
 Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
 And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
 In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
 Now are our brows bound with victorious
 wreaths;
 Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
 Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
 Grim-visaged war had smooth his wrinkled front;
 And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd and want love's
 majesty,
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determin'd to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other:
And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,
About the prophecy, which says that G

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd and want love's
 majesty,
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
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And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other:
And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,
About the prophecy, which says that G

Of Edward's heirs the murderers shall be.

Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: Here

Clarence comes. (3)

Nevertheless, there is something even more terrible and moving than Richard's soliloquy: the lamentations of Lady Anne. She goes as a mourner to the funeral of her father-in-law, Henry VI, as the widow of his son who was assassinated at the same time as his father.

There follows a dialogue between Lady Anne and Richard of Gloucester, in the presence of the corpse, which exceeds imagination:

Set down, set down your honourable load,
 If honour may be shrouded in a hearse,
 Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
 The untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
 Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!
 Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
 Thou bloodless remnant of thy royal blood!
 Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost
 To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
 Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughter'd son
 Stabb'd by the self-same hand that made these
 wounds.

Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life,
 I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes... (4)

In this tragedy Shakespeare modifies history according to the needs of the stage, as he frequently does. "Henry VI was dethroned by Edward IV shortly before the Battle of Barnet. Henry died a few days after the fighting at Jewksbury and his death is generally attributed to Richard of Gloucester." (5)

Shakespeare, like other great literary figures, employs all dialectical elements, from the maximum splendour and purity of poetry to a sordid insolence which is unacceptable in any phase of life, and especially on the stage. This situation has obliged critics and editors to cut a great deal, not only from this tragedy but from others as well, resulting in a mutilation which appears to the student as lack of balance in structure. There is no doubt that this was not due to Shakespeare's writing.

In Macbeth, for instance, there are seven scenes in the first act, four in the second, five in the third, three in the fourth and eight in the final fifth act. We cannot accept this with the eyes closed as some critics do, or place the blame on Shakespeare as others do.

The most amazing thing about The Tragedy of King Richard III is that it is a product of youth; it was written between 1593 and 1594 and shows a prodigious vigor of creation and a delicate poetry which floats through the world of crime.

The poet did not follow a chronological order, which is usual in historical narration of facts, for there is proof that this tragedy was written before Richard II.

The poetic vibration is enlivened by the colourful flames of passion: "This is, like Titus Andronicus, a tragedy of paternity. Constance and Marguerite D'Anjou are sisters and the apollonian gesture of mourning and weeping is mounted on the Hellenic buskin. They are the daughters, the mothers, and the wives, in this imposing and stylized exhibition of suffering. They are weeping for their men in general, which is almost the same as crying for the sons of their hearts; for, as Shakespeare knows so well, in the bosom of women's suffering there is always a breath of maternal pain. Nothing expresses the Greek spirit more deeply than the chorus of the weeping mourners, crowned as tearful queens, with hands raised to heaven and hair floating on their mourning robes. Richard, the usurper, goes by as a visionary charioteer, in the middle of the tragic lament of the women." (6)

There are three female characters in this tragedy, whose aggressive attitudes toward Richard of Gloucester focuses the attention: Queen Elizabeth, who is the wife of Edward IV; Marguerite D'Anjou, imprisoned for four years in the Tower of London after

the assassination of her husband Henry VI, who is transformed into a fateful shadow with a voice which is heard on stage commenting upon Richard's crimes; and above all, Lady Anne, an extraordinary woman in whom Shakespeare concentrates all the most bitter experiences, as seen in Act I, Sc. II.

The Swan, a genius of the Renaissance consumed with anxiety to perpetuate his name, has integrated elements of tragedy, which is considered "formidable."

It shows the extraordinary creation of Richard as a monster, in contrast with the purest excellence of Hellenism, in an unsurpassable style.

"Considering the criticism of Malone, Stevens, Johnson, we turn our attention once more to the old Aesthetics, and it brings to mind a dedication to Shakespeare by one of his contemporaries, John Davies of Hereford: in a writing 'whose name I do not want to remember,' he named Shakespeare 'our English Terence.' Our English Terence! Indeed, this was praise with the dignity of ancient times. There was an era in which authors were considered as gods. This comparison with Terence expresses in a naive and perhaps amusing way, the sincere admiration that John Davies felt for Shakespeare. But nowadays things have changed and we believe that comparing Shakespeare with Terence is an undeserved tribute to Terence." (7)

but occasionally the historical aspect, which is considered most important, together with little known details of Cervantes' life, secrets almost forgotten in his writings, which have some bearing on his poetry and other works, have been brought to light. There has been a tendency to consider all Cervantine writing together, with Don Quixote as the central star of a constellation, around which all other works revolve according to their particular shade, color, light and intensity.

All Cervantes' work, whether it be fiction with its variety of intentions and styles, large or small dramatic pieces, tragedies, entremeses, etc., all possess their own merit and poetic spirit, whether expressed in prose or verse. We can hardly find a writer whose poetry, in its totality, shows the same level of beauty and perfection.

THE POETRY OF SHAKESPEARE AND CERVANTES

The poetical works of these two writers - English and Spanish - embrace the lyrical, dramatic and epic fields.

Cervantes' first poetry was published between 1560 and 1569 when he was very young. Besides the short poems, there were several others including the Elegy and the Epitaph to the Queen of Spain, Doña Isabel de Valois.

Cervantes continued writing poetry throughout his lifetime, as did Shakespeare, but the Bard of Avon was thirty years old in 1592 when he published his first poem, Venus and Adonis.

There has been considerable discussion during the last four centuries about Cervantes' poetry. "We cannot form a definite opinion on Cervantes as a poet from the following works: the reflections of Quintana in his Life of Cervantes and his appendix to Cervantine Verses; the brief essay of Don Adolfo de Castro entitled Was Cervantes A Lyrical Poet Or Not? which appears in Volume 42 of Rivadeneyra's Collection, as a part of his Observations on Spanish Poetry (1857). But with the Florilegio by Don Eugenio de Silvela, which is a discussion with quotations,

Silvela comes out against the old traditional opinions which deny Cervantes the quality of a poet, and affirms this to be his special merit. Don Adolfo de Castro and Menéndez y Pelayo already had spoken in behalf of Cervantes as a poet; Navarro Ledesma in his biography of Cervantes, and Cotarello Valledor in his work Cervantes Dramatic Poetry, also spoke in behalf of the Spanish poet."

"In spite of all this evidence, Spanish anthologies of poetry omit Cervantes and every text book and syllabus on literature repeats that he was a bad versifier, or they avoid mentioning him entirely." (1)

Fortunately, since the survival of Cervantes' work depends more on mature and balanced judgement over a period of time, opinion now agrees that he was a true poet. According to Don Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, "Don Quixote de la Mancha is a world of poetry," and furthermore, he considers the criticism of Cervantes' poetry most unfair.

Modern criticism presents a different judgement of the work of these two poets and dramatists. The traditional opinion of Cervantes as a "layman" and a bad poet, long ago reached the limits of injustice. Now, according to new appraisal and deeper analytical studies, Cervantes is a true poet, and never a bad poet as he says of himself in El viaje del parnaso:

Yo que siempre me afano y me desvelo
 por parecer que tengo de poeta
 la gracia que no quiso darme el cielo... (2)

I, that always, sleepless, making effort,
 Vainly to appear like a real poet
 To show a grace denied by heaven...(M.S.A.)

Shakespeare was a poet before he was a dramatist, just as Cervantes was a poet before he wrote fiction and dramatic works. There is a parallel development in Shakespeare between his sonnets and his plays; some of the same aspects of transition from early to mature works can also be observed in Cervantes' writings. But Cervantes achieved a greater complexity in his mature works of poetry, showing deep poetical sense in most of his compositions; the muse breathes with special warmth in the tercets of The Travel to Parnasus, in the rhymes of some of his best comedies, in the poems inserted in El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don quixote de la Mancha, in the Exemplary Novels, etc.

The essence of the hendecasyllabic poems, vivid and spirited, is inspired by the same source as Jorge Manrique's Couplets on His Father's Death; the four quatrains of this octosyllabic romance are in easy rhyme and rhythm; The Elegy, a sonnet-poem, expresses the pain and sadness of the poet in a

spiritual lament; Phillip II is mentioned, whose wealth and possessions, whose powerful dominions all over the world, could not banish his sadness; in spite of the fact that "he is protector of the most lofty ideals," only the certainty of a better life to come brings sweet consolation to the king and the people of Spain. The Elegy is in more classical style, enameled with mythological references.

The musical rise and fall of the rhythm is melodious in the three parts of this epitaph, especially in The Elegy:

A quién irá me doloroso canto,
o en cuya oreja sonará su acento
que no deshaga el corazón en llanto? (3)

To whom will go my painful song
(or) in what ear will its accent sound
that might not melt the heart in tears?(M.S.A)

Cervantes was born in 1547 and scarcely nineteen years old when he wrote this lyrical poem. He continued writing poetry throughout his entire life, which testifies to his vocation as a poet.

Nothing is known of Cervantes' poetry until his teacher, Juan López de Hoyos, published some of his poems. The Travel to Parnassus published in 1614, two years before his death and addressed to Don Rodrigo

de Tapia, Cabellero de la Orden de Santiago,
contains a number of autobiographical details,
such as when the author says to Apollo:

Desde mis tiernos años amé el arte
dulce de la agradable poesía
y en ella procuré siempre agradarte... (4)

Since my most tender years I loved art
Sweetest of most agreeable poetry
By means of which I tried to please thee...

(M.S.A.)

The fact that no earlier poems have reached us
from before the one published by Cervantes' teacher,
Señor López de Hoyos, does not mean that Cervantes
had not written poetry earlier.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564, when
Cervantes was seventeen years old. Little is known
of Shakespeare's life in comparison to Cervantes'
and most of the clues discovered in his literary
works rather than documents, have been reasoned out
psychologically.

Shakespeare's first known poem is Venus and
Adonis, which was issued six times between 1593 and
1602. Shakespeare was twenty-nine years old in 1593
and this magnificent work of art made his name as a
poet. Some scholars believe that Shakespeare had

written this poem as well as The Rape of Lucrece before his arrival in London, but Venus and Adonis is the first known Shakespearean work.

The Legend of Venus and Adonis was used in ancient times by Teócrito, later by Bion, most importantly by Dante and Chaucer in the Middle Ages, and during the Renaissance by several Spanish, French and Italian poets. Ronsard treated the same subject the very year that Shakespeare was born. Spenser and Marlowe retold the classical myth in verse. To these must be added Robert Green and, above all, Tomas Lodge, who sang of Adonis' death and Venus' grief in the stanzas of the prologue to Scyllas Metamorphosis, published in 1589.

From these works as well as from the Third Chant of The Fairie Queen and the short poem by Enrique Constable, Canto Pastoral de Venus y Adonis, Shakespeare extracted the substance of his story. However, the principal source was Ovide's Metamorphosis or Transformations.⁴ (5)

There are many differences between Shakespeare's poetry and Cervantes'. They both embrace the lyrical, dramatic and poetic fields, but Shakespeare never wrote fiction. They began writing at different ages; it is easy to verify that the English poet, as mentioned previously, was almost thirty years old when his first poem appeared, while on the other hand

Cervantes wrote his first lyrical poem before he was twenty.

According to early scholastic criticism, Cervantes' poetry never reached the height of Shakespeare's, but lately Cervantes has been recognized as a great poet.

Don Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo's judgement is that the whole of Cervantes' work is "a poetical world."

Poetry, a gift from heaven, was not denied to Cervantes, as the Marquis of Santillana wrote in the fifteenth century: "La Poetrya e gaya sciencia es avida rrecebida e alcanzada por gracia infusa del Señor Dios que la da e enbya e influye en aquel o aquellos que byen e sabia sutil e derechamente la saben fazer e ordenar e componer e limar e escandir e medir por sus pies e pausas e por sus consonantes e syllabas e acentos e por artes sotyles e diversas e singulares nombrabzas..." (6)

Modern criticism considers that the glowing brilliancy of Don Quixote, with its continuous and universal triumph, has so dazzled critics and researchers that they have not been able to see clearly the importance of Cervantes' poetry and lesser works. Romantic criticism, throughout the centuries, was determined to draw public attention to Don Quixote. The same thing has happened this century,

THE GREATEST POEMS OF SHAKESPEARE AND CERVANTES

According to literary criticism, there are two clearly delineated classifications of poetic creativity: imagination and fantasy. Both of these support the thesis that man does not create anything; he only imitates or combines what already exists in nature.

The artist joins certain elements to produce a work of imagination; in the field of art this may be a dragon, a sphinx, etc. But when the artist, by a flight of imagination, using all his potentials, goes beyond the usual limits, by fantasy he reaches sublime heights of beauty and expression that can only result from a creative mind.

In this kind of work, mainly in poetry, imagination carries a "light," a flame which illuminates the way to a preconceived end. A creative force, using imagination, brings into reality whatever is basic in the thought giving rise to the work of art. The poet may reach his artistic purpose by any means at his command; by any combination of elements, but with the vital strength of his creative fancy, which surpasses his own native ability and achieves a noble end.

Venus and Adonis

Venus and Adonis is the finest and most exquisite of Shakespeare's poems. Although written on an old and well known subject, it is a treasure house of artistic elements; but these elements are presented in a personal and characteristic rhythm and musicality which is deeply melodious and appealing. It produces a delightful and a spiritual feeling, which has been difficult or impossible to duplicate in other poems, even by the same author.

Venus and Adonis shows a coherent and poetic magic in the combining of elements of composition into form as well as ideological content. Every imaginable means, balanced artistically with mythological and human values, is used to vibrate the strings of human emotion. While medieval poets dreamed on divine themes in their poetry, the Bard of the Renaissance returned to classicism and tried to reinterpret these works in an expression of music, colour and feeling.

The poem Venus and Adonis is full of youthful strength. It is shaded with the most delicate imagery and seasoned with such sweetness of verbal expression that the poet is referred to as "the melliferous one," "the poet of the honeyed tongue." This term was also applied to Ovid.

"The 'Vilia miretur Vulgus' of the devices which ornament the beginning works of Shakespeare, harmonizes perfectly with the 'Odi Profanum Vulgus' of Horace, who eulogized the new school of expression of his time. In order to advance, it was necessary to go back to the classics..." (1)

There is an exceptional power of creation, which in large part determines style, and also that well known device of great poets, a melodic weaving of rhythm by combination of vowels and consonants. This gives an ethereal harmony to the poem, as well as drawing in a combination of the classical and sentimental atmospheres. Thus we find an unsurpassable euphony in Venus and Adonis and an imagery which flows naturally from the overpowering passion of the goddess.

According to the opinion of Coleridge, "It has been before observed that images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature and as accurately represented in words, do not, of themselves, characterise a poet. They become proofs of original genius as far as they are modified by a predominant passion or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant, or lastly when a human or intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit." (2)

In Shakespeare's mind the persistent subject of lost happiness, of human disintegration, is an obsession which appears in many of his works. This is more common in his lyric poetry where he frequently expresses it by the use of metaphores.

It is well known that language is the principal element of style. In Shakespeare's work, there is not only a rich lexicon, but a special use of language. On the other hand we must remember that there are many linguistic changes in the English language, due to the change in man's activities and the evolution of his thought.

Scholars have always emphasized that Shakespeare's language is not modern English; also, idioms of times past and new words introduced later, offer different shades to the poet's mind. In the case of Shakespeare, there are many different between-the-lines meanings of an amphibious nature. They appear simple, but have a crude meaning behind them. When Prince Hamlet suggests that Ophelia should enter a nunnery, the direct meaning is not the most important. Also, the expression, 'Thus conscience does make cowards of us all' requires a linguistic note of some kind to enable the beginner to understand its original Elizabethan meaning. The points which play maximum

part in ordinary language are concerned with lexicography (additions and losses in vocabulary), semantics (alterations in the meanings and associations of words), and accidence and syntax (changes in inflection and construction). In addition, there are equally far-reaching phonological changes. Our phonetic equivalents for vowel and consonant symbols are not the same as the Elizabethan..." (3)

The styles of Shakespeare and Cervantes are inimitable, since they are the result of extraordinarily creative minds, and of a life devotion to the expression of their work.

"Venus and Adonis is a masterpiece of decoration. The abundant imagery, often conventional and euphuistic, but as often actual and void, is unified by the regularity of the versification and the studied conduct of the vowels and consonants. The content is adequate for the style and sufficiently varied. There is description and some action; disquisitions on the idle and over played theme of 'Gather ye rose buds while ye may;' the supplication of Death, the distinction drawn between love and lust, and a concluding prophecy on the nature of human love hereafter..." (4)

The spirit of Venus and Adonis is pure poetry, and this aspect distinguishes it from The Rape of Lucrece,

in which there already begins to appear the characteristics of drama.

The Rape of Lucrece

Venus and Adonis, as main characters, emerge from the Hellenic world endowed with all grace and ethereal beauty, the finest creation of the Greek mind "protected" by Olympian deities; on the other hand Tarquino, Colatino and Lucrece breathe the unmistakable mark of the Latin world.

"The consciousness of death characterizes the Middle Ages. The sense of time is the dominating note of the Renaissance.⁽⁵⁾ Elizabethan imagery owes a vast debt to euphonism. In Lily we find imagery of two kinds. Sometimes the idea is only valuable for the images it suggests. Sometimes the images are intended to argue the idea. Thus, as an example of poetic logic we might take the words of Venus:

Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell and sappy plants to bear,
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse.
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breatheth
beauty:

Thou was begot: to get it is thy duty...

Or of Lucrece:

Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
 Or hateful cookoos hatch in sparrows' nests?
 Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
 Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts? (6)

And in the Sonnets:

No more he grieved at that which thou hast done.
 Roses have thorns and silver fountains mud;
 Clouds and eclipses stain both sun and moon
 And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.

This is the method of Lily's madness..." (7)

Nevertheless, the characteristic traits of tragedy (violence, blood and death) are present in Lucrece, as if all the later tragedies of the poet would flow from this work.

In The Rape of Lucrece as well as in the Sonnets, the influence of Lily is decisive. Lucrece, in her despair and pain, says things which were thought and said before by Lily.

Pain, despair and the inevitability of death besiege the soul of Lucrece and she tries to persuade Tarquin not to make "doulour dwell in her" forever. The sense of honour of the Roman woman is more pronounced here than in any other literary work.

In Venus loving passion is unbridled, while in Lucrece there is balance and the responsibility of

conjugal duty; Lucrece opposes Tarquin's lust, and, for that reason perhaps, the poem has been considered cold, compared to an iceberg or an icehouse.

In Shakespeare's poetry, metaphors are a rich poetic element used with definite artistic aim. It transmits the imagination of the author by producing a feeling of enduring satisfaction.

There is no doubt that Shakespeare wrote Lucrece with characters, atmosphere and feelings opposite to those of his first poem in order to express his knowledge of different worlds, as well as to enrich his work with variety in accordance with his own experience and literary ambitions.

From a psychological point of view, the Swan placed himself between two different worlds. When Lucrece destroys the portrait of Helen with her own hands, she protests against a woman who was hateful to her in word and deed. Lucrece represents the virtues and beliefs of her own time. Behind the world of visible action, there exists a psychological process of thought. The art of poetry actually consists in awakening in others the feelings and thoughts of the writer.

THE JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS

The Journey to Parnassus is not the only great poem by Cervantes. There is genuine poetry in most of his writing. "We cannot form a correct opinion about the work of Cervantes as a poet from the reflections of Quintana in his Life of Cervantes (1805) and his Appendix on cervantine verse; nor from the brief essay of Don Adolfo de Castro, entitled "Was Cervantes a Lyric Poet or Not?" in Spanish Poetry (1875), which opens Volume 42 of Rivadeneyra's Collection; nor from the Florilege by Don Eugenio Silvela, an essay with quotations. However, Silvela is especially interesting because he disagrees with the traditional opinion which denied Cervantes the status of a poet. Don Adolfo Castro and Menéndez y Pelayo had already expressed their opinions in behalf of the much-discussed poet, as had also Navarro Ledesma in his biography on Cervantes, and Cotarello Valledor in his Study of the Dramatic Works. In spite of all this, Spanish anthologies of poetry omit Cervantes and the manuals of literature repeat that he was a bad versifier, or simplify matters by avoiding all mention of him.

But little by little, after much discussion of

Cervantes as a lyrical poet, the conclusion has been reached that most of his poetry is remarkable; the lyrical aspect is recognized as well as the dramatic and epic, for although Don Quijote de la Mancha is written in prose, it is an epopee ornamented artistically by a great number of poems.

It is not certain when The Journey to Parnassus was produced, but it may have been at the same time Cervantes wrote his great novel. He mentions it in the Prologue of the Exemplary Novels in which he portrays himself. Actually, The Journey to Parnassus was printed in 1614 just one year after the novel.

The Journey to Parnassus is a work of great inventiveness, as well as excellent poetry, and corresponds to Cervantes' last years when he was approaching his end, which was one of his most productive periods.

His literary production of this time is amazing: The Exemplary Novels was published in 1613 and two years later The Second Part of Don Quijote. The Comedies and Entremeses appeared in 1615 and The Works of Persiles and Sigismunda was finished in 1616, four days before Cervantes' death, and published by his wife in 1617.

The Journey is followed by a prose writing

entitled Annexed to Parnassus. It is a dialogue between Cervantes and his close friend Don Pancraccio de Roncesvalles, a wealthy and faithful patron but a bad poet, who brought Cervantes a letter from Apollo: "The Privileges, Dispositions and Warnings from the Gods to the Spanish Poet."

When Shakespeare wrote Venus and Adonis and his second famous poem, The Rape of Lucrece, he was about twenty-nine years old. Cervantes published The Journey in 1614, at the age of sixty-seven, though probably it was written two or three years before. However, the Spanish poet wrote poetry throughout his entire life.

The two above mentioned poems of Shakespeare as well as The Lover's Complaint, The Passionate Pilgrim and other lyrical poems, are of the highest quality in form, ideological content, style and coherent structure. But The Journey to Parnassus, besides being fine poetry, is a serious work of criticism.

In the sixth chapter of the First Part of Don Quijote de la Mancha, Cervantes gives us a piece of criticism on the works of prose writers before his time, covering not only knight-errantry but also the pastorale, the Byzantine, romantic, sentimental, philosophical, Italian and many other types of novels; in The Journey to Parnassus he

criticizes the work of other poets. In his novel he condemned to fire all bad fiction and praises works which are good according to his own balanced judgement. Amadis of Gaul, Tirante el blanco and El Caballero Cifar were not condemned to be burned. Amadis is important not only because he is Don Quijote's hero but because these four books have given birth to all others of this genre. Amadis is outstanding literature.

Jorge Montemayor's Diana is saved because it is the first of its kind and extremely poetic. In Chapter VI Cervantes speaks briefly of The Treasure of Various Poems, which he does not condemn because of certain values and also because of his sentimental friendship for the author.

Among the epic poems, there are references to The Araucana by Don Alonso de Ercilla, The Austriada by Juan Rufo, and The Monserrate by Cristóbal Virués, the Valencian poet. Cervantes comments on several other works, some original and some influenced by Spanish or Italian poets, among which were those of Mateo Boiardo, Ludovico Ariosto, Ovide and others.

The character of prose seems to lend itself to easy criticism; but in order to criticize poetry conscientiously, with a fair balance which will give future generations the right perspective on literature produced centuries before, the writer needs

a sense of responsibility and an entirely different faculty from that which is necessary for producing a work of art. This ability to criticize is the main difference between the great poems of Shakespeare and Cervantes.

Shakespeare's creative mind possessed such divine qualities that his words seemed to come through the honied lips of a deity. The Journey to Parnassus may be compared in originality with Shakespeare's greatest poems, in spite of the fact that the source of Cervantes' inspiration was The Viaggio by Caporali; actually this source served the Spanish writer not only as a stimulus but resulted in a criticism of the grotesque style of the Perugian poet: "Comprai anco una mula..."

According to the best authorities, Cervantes was merely inspired by, but did not imitate, the Italian poet. In the above mentioned criticism, the hendecasyllabic tercets swing the sweet rolling of the cervantine vessel of poetry, the whole made up of melodious poems in every style. Mermaids push the ship gently on magnificent rolling metaphores, while the real poets throw all the bad poets into the sea where they drown. The travelers, led by Mercury, sing pastoral eclogues and other poems while they row.

Criticism prevails throughout this poem;

one instance is when the bards, thousands of them, were thrown out of the Empyrean of Poetry to write on such common themes as "the kidneys" of their ladies. This implies self-criticism, since the author once wrote a poem on this subject, though it did not refer to a lady.

"Benedetto Croce has said in his homage to Menéndez y Pelaya: 'Ma sa del componimento del Caporali il Cervantes tolse il modello e qualche particolare, nell' insieme egli opera assai diversa, così pel contenuto come per lo svolgimento. Ed anche per l'estensione; giacché il poemato del Cervantes, diviso in otto capitoli, é per lo meno sei volte piú lungo dello scritto del suo predecessore italiano.' The Viaggio by Caporali is entirely different from Cervantes' poem, by reason of its content, development and range." (1)

The Journey to Parnassus is written in eight chapters and followed by the prose piece, the Annexed, already mentioned.

The whole poem is an ironical narration in hendecasyllabic tercets which start out with an understanding with Mercury and arrangements about the details and apparent motives of the trip.

In the second chapter the author definitely begins to praise the qualities of those poets who

are worthy: the Christian lawyer, Poyo, unsurpassable in humour; the wise Hipólito de Vargas, brilliant and sharp as lightning; Godínez, the facetious writer of comedies; Don Francisco de Quevedo, a poetic deity similar to Apollo; the saint and bard, Miguel Cid, who actually astonishes the Muses; Don Luis de Góngora, who Cervantes fears will hate him for such a short eulogy.

Thousands of poets fall like rain drops from the clouds, directly from heaven onto the ship; among them Juan Galarza and Lope de Vega, the latter unsurpassable in prose and poetry. This is only the beginning of a long list, and in spite of the seriousness of the subject, there is constant but gentle mockery behind the author's written lines.

A thousand mermaids helped many poets sink into the waves of the sea - that is, the bad poets. At last, after several days rowing, striking the ocean with "dactylic oars," they saw the mountain (Chapter III). Here Cervantes' ironic laughter reaches out even to the Muses, five of whom he treats with respect but the other four he ridicules for lack of dignity.

Apollo, in person, comes walking down from the height to welcome the poets: he has previously taken the luminous rays from his face. The tone of

the poem now becomes not only poetic, but Hellenic: the offering of the Castalian waters refreshes the poets for their next step in poetry, which is to talk freely with Apollo as they sit under the shade of a green canopy of wild foliage. Cervantes now complains to the god about the cruel lack of understanding of the people, as well as of their ignorance and envy; he enumerates most of his own literary and dramatic works, some of them lost forever (Chapter IV).

In the same way that Cervantes portrays himself physically, he describes his moral and intellectual qualities to Apollo, who answers discretely in words, but more eloquently in the magnificent voice of nature, with all the Olympic elements of beauty, honouring Cervantes. How well the prince of Spanish letters knew his values!

If there could be any doubt about Cervantes as a great poet, it is sufficient to read carefully this fourth chapter; here the perfection and lyricism is ample proof of his qualities. These qualities are two: his ability to criticize in verse, and the lyrical quality of the verse.

In the same chapter, between the lines of Mercury's speech, the author refers to his own exceptional poetic qualities, both moral and intellectual.

Later on in the poem, there appear various

references to literature: first to Homer's Odyssey, where there is mention of Olympic deities who give aid or destroy the enemy while they are sailing, as Venus worked against Ulysses after the fall of Troy; again, to Dante Alighieri's sending his enemies as well as the corrupt people who were a danger to society, to the very depths of the inferno.

Neptune, coming up under a ship loaded with bad poets approaching Apollo, causes a shipwreck, and they all sink to the bottom of the sea.

Cervantes continues expounding on his own merits in the fifth chapter, but in the sixth he extols discretion and speaks very wisely about the bad effects of vaingloriousness, untruth and flattery, which is a hearty laugh at the previous boasting.

Then come more lists of great poets and their works which are discussed and criticized from different points of view in Chapter VII: Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, Garcilaso de la Vega, Juan de Timoneda are among the best; Timoneda is praised especially for his Lope de Rueda comedies.

Again, in the last chapter, the touchingly classic and lyrical poetry of Cervantes reigns, glowing with all its qualities of beauty and perfection. Apollo distributes handfulls of jasmine, pearls and roses among the poets. There is a

constant psychologically designed reminiscence of the mythological in the over-all atmosphere. The poets are again led to Castalia where, among other happenings, Pegasus, artistically decorated with gay ornaments is brought into their presence. Orpheus endows the poets with his strength.

After a few days Cervantes awakes in Naples, and later in Madrid. He sends his thanks and blessing to the magnanimous Earl of Lemos and sighs over all the physical and moral sufferings that life has so bitterly inflicted on him, which were perhaps the source of the poetry which sings through all of his remarkable works.

EPISTLE TO MATEO VAZQUEZ

During the time Cervantes was captive in Algiers he tried to escape three times. "With undaunted courage and persistence he organized plans to escape. In 1576 he induced a Moor to guide him and other Christian captives to Oran; the Moor deserted them on the road, the baffled fugitives returned to Algiers, and Cervantes was treated with additional severity. In the spring of 1577 two priests of the Order of Mercy arrived in Algiers with a sum of three hundred crowns entrusted to them by Cervantes' family; the amount was insufficient to free him and was spent in ransoming his brother Rodrigo. Cervantes made another attempt to escape in September 1577, but was betrayed by the renegade whose services he had enlisted. On being brought before Hassan Pasha, the Viceroy of Algiers, Cervantes took the blame on himself and was threatened with death; struck, however, by the heroic bearing of the prisoner, Hassan remitted the sentence, and bought Cervantes from Dali Mami for five hundred crowns. In 1577 the captive addressed to the Spanish Secretary of State, Mateo Vázquez, a versified letter suggesting that an expedition should be fitted out to

seize Algiers; the project, though practicable, was not entertained." (1)

As Cervantes himself says, in the fifty-eighth tercet of the Epistle, this poem was written at the end of two year's slavery in Algiers and sent to Spain when his brother, Rodrigo, was ransomed.

The Epistle to Mateo Vázquez "was found among several interesting manuscripts, in the archives of His Excellency Señor Conde de Altamira." (2)

This piece of poetry surpasses in quality and beauty the two Canciones to the Invincible Armada and that to Santa Teresa de Jesús.

Cervantes must have held the Epistle to Mateo Vázquez in high esteem. This can be inferred, although he does not actually mention it anywhere, because of the purpose for which it was originally written, the things that he proposes in it, and also because he used a great part of the Epistle for the autobiographical character, Saavedra, in Captivity in Algiers.

Criticism has been generous to this work. Menéndez y Pelayo speaks of "the valiant and patriotic inspiration" of the Epistle (Estudios, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 6); Navarro Ledesma mentions the strength of its tercets (El ingenioso hidalgo

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Madrid, 1905, p. 3); "The most vigorous and sincere poetry ever written," says Fitzmaurice-Kelly (Lecciones, op. cit., p. 176); "The touching and sad Epistle" says Valledor (El teatro de Cervantes, p. 201); and Cotarello (Efemerides, op. cit., p. 75) has called it "A touching poetry...If the Epistle and the Canciones to the Invincible Armada and some parts of the Journey present Cervantes as a civil poet, his songs in Galatea show him as erotic; his muse sings of events - historical, legendary, religious and pastoral - embracing not only themes but also human feelings; universal sympathy is another singular trait of his genius." (3)

In the Epistle, Cervantes deploras his condition as a slave and praises the humanitarianism and sensitivity of his old friend, Mateo Vázquez, who was at that time secretary to the king.

The Epistle portrays in poetic form the endless suffering of Christians enslaved by Mohammedans. Cervantes writes a tender verse, imagining that the king is listening; but unfortunately the king never knew about it.

The work takes on a classical elegance with allusions to Greek mythology. Criticism, by Cervantes' ardent admirers, is variable, but a cold and impartial judgement based on thorough

knowledge of Cervantes' literary personality, and paralleled by careful consideration of his biography, brings us to the definite conclusion that Cervantes was extraordinarily poetic.

The pitiful condition of the author's slavery in Algiers gave origin to the Epistle, but it had nothing to do with the vigorous poetry of his creative work.

It seems unbelievable that Lope de Vega should have attacked Cervantes: "Writing to the Duke of Sessa on the 14th of August 1604, from Toledo, Lope said: 'Many bad poets are at work, but none so bad as Cervantes, and none so foolish as to praise Don Quijote.'"

Fifteen years after Cervantes' death, in 1631 Lope de Vega was to write a great eulogy to Cervantes in his poem, Laurel de Apolo:

In awful battle, where the ray of Austria,
 Immortal son of the most famous Eagle
 Won from a king of Asia in bitter war
 The laurel wreath divine;
 The envious Fortune
 Hurt in Miguel de Cervantes his left hand
 Not his genius, whose diamantine verses,
 Those of lead he turned them in such a glory
 That for sweet, for sonorous and for elegant
 Took to eternity his noble memory

So, that it can be said that a hurt hand
Could afford to his owner life eternal.(5)

(M.S.A.)

THE SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE

The monument of the Sonnets, the quintessence of Shakespeare's writing, remains an impenetrable mystery, lighting up only a shell of suffering and a paradise of poetry in the soul of the poet.

The mystery remains unsolved by the most brilliant researchers in linguistic and literary matters of the Elizabethan epoch; unsolved by all polemics on the Shakespeare-Marlowe or Marlowe-Shakespeare theme; unsolved in spite of all the parallelisms in poetry, drama and style, discovered by the most expert critics of the works of both poets.

"The one hundred and fifty-four sonnets were neither published according to the exact chronology of their production nor in the order in which they were written. Besides, it is known that the first edition was done surrepticiously." (1)

Though the most erudite opinions do not reach any definite conclusion as to the author's motivation for writing the Sonnets, the "supposed" personality of the poet projects some light on the Elizabethan era and serves as a stimulus for further study.

If the Sonnets had been kept in the order of

their production, many happenings in the author's life might be placed in their true perspective.

This would have clarified the alternation, exact up to a certain point, with the dramatic works, and would perhaps light up many unexplained points.

"We have previously noticed that the sonnet is the most self revealing form of expression known to writing. Strange, then, that scholars and critics have failed to perceive in Shakespeare's sonnets the prayers of a pleading soul, suffering in forced anonymity and exile. Interpretations given to the sonnets are among the most diverse of all literary criticism. Some critics cluster them into sections and speak of the Dark Lady behind the theme. Others admit that Shakespeare might have spoken of a Dark Young Man. Still others conclude that the sonnets are addressed to Cupid, to Love, to Beauty, to Friendship, Time and Death. An infinite variety of abstracts does not camouflage the fact that the sonnets remain wrapped in obscurity. The motivated force behind the poems is enigmatic." (2)

The sonnets are an outpouring of self-surpassing poetry as well as an effort to surpass the literary works of his contemporaries.

We find the same intention in Cervantes' Don Quijote de la Mancha and in the works of other

geniuses of the Renaissance and the golden years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The themes of Shakespeare's sonnets show, among other things, a persistent anxiety as to immortality and the validity of the writer's love, as an overwhelming passion, to become eternal in the sublimity of poetry.

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime.
But you shall shine more bright in these
contents

Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish
time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire
shall burn

The living record of your memory.

'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall
still find room

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So, till the judgement that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes. (3)

But over and above this constant pursuit of immortality through the ideal of eternal beauty, we see how deeply the heart of centuries has trembled at his cry of pain and the unavoidable agony of remaining anonymous and living separate from the loved one, on shores far distant from the one of whom he dreamed.

This is the basic point for those who contend that Shakespeare was Christopher Marlowe. They remind us of the similarity of their personalities. Christopher Marlowe undertook truly erudite studies. Although he came from a very humble family he studied in King's School, adjoining the Cathedral in Canterbury, which is much older than Cambridge or Oxford and therefore with a long tradition as one of the best in the kingdom.

Marlowe had access to this school thanks to a scholarship furnished him by the church.

Three hundred years later it is said that he took full advantage of the privilege: "This author was the first English poet, the father of English tragedy and the creator of blank verse." (4)

When Marlowe was not yet seventeen years old he passed from King's College to Corpus Christi College, showing a deep absorption in belles-lettres and especially in theatrical works.

In this college students "must at the time of

their election be so entered into the skill of song that they at first sight solve and sing plain song and that they shall be of the best and aptest scholars, well instructed in their grammar, and if it may be, such as can make verse." (5)

Always progressing, Marlowe went on afterwards to obtain his bachelor of arts and a masters degree, which was the highest that the University of Cambridge conferred at that time.

Having concluded his studies, which were extraordinarily brilliant, Marlowe was temporarily refused his degree due to his frequent absences from the university, but later the degree was granted.

His absences were due to his participation in espionage and counter-espionage, in which he became involved under the orders of his protector Sir Thomas Wolsingham (Wolsing-Ham).

The counter-espionage was centered in Reims, where Marlowe went on his trips. These political and religious difficulties were often disastrous in the Elizabethan era, with torture and death by fire not uncommon. It was believed that this was the real reason why Christopher Marlowe was assassinated on May 30, 1592, in Deptford.

A year later in 1593 (or 1594) there appears for the first time, in the world of English letters,

the symbol of the heraldic emblem of William Shakespeare (Shake-Spear).

It is impossible to search for a ray of light in the terrifying and at the same time exquisitely poetical mystery of the Sonnets, without comparing the lives of these two extraordinary poets and dramatists.

" Christopher Marlowe, whose age only differed from that of Shakespeare by two months, was baptized in Canterbury the 26th of February 1564; Shakespeare received the lustral waters at Stratford-on-Avon, County of Warwick, on the 26th of April 1564, in the Church of Holy Trinity, as Gulielmus filius Johanes Shakespeare." (6)

For the purpose of this study, the main points to be considered are:

First - the source of William Shakespeare's academic culture is not only unknown, but his contemporaries were astonished at the unexpected appearance of his writing, and reproached him for possessing "little Latin and less Greek" as Ben Jonson said, and for "adorning himself with somebody elses plumes."

Second - Marlowe, with outstanding intelligence and wisdom, rose to the upper third of the highest culture of his time, showing unequaled poetic ability as well as a consciousness of his own

superiority, which expressed itself in a haughty manner.

This trait of character, rooted perhaps in the knowledge of his humble birth, was the urge which drove him to humiliate not only the most refined aristocrats, in whose company he lived and moved, but also the great men of letters of his time.

Impudence was usual in most Elizabethan literature and a great part of the work of Shakespeare and Marlowe has been purged.

Of Shakespeare's education it is said only that he attended the Grammar School of Stratford. In spite of this, his literary work is saturated with classicism and historical data, not inferior to that of Marlowe and with an equally unsurpassable stylistic quality.

"To be just, I should produce the evidence brought forth by the Shakespearean advocates. Here are some of their theories on William Shakespeare's education. (1) It has seriously been stated by Shakespearean zealots that the sources of Shakespeare's education must not be questioned, since 'genius' ipso facto, requires no explanation; that Shakespeare was beyond the necessity of learning by all educative preparation. Inherent in this belief is the absurd notion that the formal

acquaintance with the works of Socrates, Sophocles, Virgil, Senec, Ovid, Plautus, Lucan and Pliny; with Latin, Greek, French, Italian; with the arts of grammar, medicine, poetics, philosophy, divinity, astronomy, versification, law and horticulture, had dropped 'as the gentle rain from heaven' upon the man from Stratford. This knowledge must have been garnered through some external means. Shakespeare's sensitivity argues not only for general knowledge, but also for a systematized knowledge of the intellectual world. No wonder Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in this connection, tells us: 'Ask your own hearts, ask your own common sense, to conceive the possibility of the author of the plays being the anomalous, the wild, the irregular genius of our daily criticism. What! Are we to have miracles in sport? Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?' The miracle of Shakespeare's education, or self-education is an impossible miracle. It argues only the limitations - and credulity - of those who incline to such possibility." (7)

Some critics believe that the greater part of Shakespeare's works, especially those permeated with classicism, were written on the shores of the Mediterranean facing the Adriatic Sea, or before the trembling golden sands of the Homeric gods. The truth is that in all these poetic and dramatic works,

recognized as the Swan's, there sings the spirit of Italy and the immortal soul of Greece.

Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece and about ten dramatic works produced between 1594 and 1602, all breathe the same atmosphere and alternate with a similar number of dramas set in England. The only ones of which we can be certain are those listed in Quartos and the entries in the Stationer's Register of 1598, quoted by Francis Meres in Palladis Tamia of that year. These include The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors, Romeo and Juliet, Love's Labour's Lost, A Midsummer-Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Titus Andronicus, most of them placed in a Mediterranean setting. There are other works mentioned later in the Register: Much Ado about Nothing (1598) placed in Mesina, and Julius Caesar (1599), all alternating, as has been said above, with a considerable number of works of the English Cycle.

"Going back to 1593, year of the supposed assassination of Marlowe, it comes to mind that it was one of the years in which the plague whipped London most bitterly; many persons believed that Marlowe had been a victim of the disease; but it is well known that Sir Thomas Walsingham, his protector, of whom Marlowe was an old, intimate and favourite friend, for more than twenty years, employed two

malefactors to assassinate an unknown humble man instead of Marlowe, who was accused of heresy, that is to say, a reasoned analysis of the Scripture. An unknown man supplanted the poet and received a mortal wound in the face which disfigured it in a certain manner that was impossible to recognize him. Nevertheless, one month later, after receiving the queen's pardon, Ingram Trizer, the assassin, abandoned Sir Thomas Walsingham's service, just to continue his personal activities as a thief, but, whose benefit would go directly to Mr. Walsingham's treasure and that of his formidable wife. Four months later, in September 1593, the name of William Shakespeare appeared in the book Venus and Adonis, an anonymous poem, registered on the 18th of April, 1593. This was the first time that the name of Shakespeare appeared in a work." (8)

The anxiety for an immortality in beauty, as Greek art understood it, was not only taken over by Elizabethan poets; they actually lived and breathed it.

The motivation of an extreme sensitivity generally roused by a suffering beyond all imagination, produces the most refined aesthetic works, as can be seen in a great number of Shakespeare's sonnets.

The poetic essence of Shakespeare's Sonnet XXII shows, side by side with the sweetness of love, the bitterness of an irremediable absence, and among its

most beautiful rhetorical figures it has
reminiscences of Romeo and Juliet:

For then my thoughts - from far where I abide -
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking in blindness which the blind do see.
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.
Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself no quiet find. (9)

Yet in Sonnet XXVIII, the continuous suffering of
absence flowers, in a series of similes, into something
of tremendous beauty.

There has been an infinite number of interpre-
tations of Shakespeare's sonnets. "Most critics,
however, tend to one of two parties. Some agree with
Wordsworth, who wrote:

Scorn not the Sonnet; critic, you have frowned
Mindless of its just honor; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart.

Others follow Matthew Arnold, who said:

Others abide our question. Thou art free,
We ask and ask - thou smilest and art still
Out-topping knowledge.

These two observations sum up the main divisions between those who believe that Shakespeare was an inscrutable sphinx about whose personality we can know nothing, and those who believe that Shakespeare laid bare his heart in his plays and in his sonnets." (10).

THE SONNETS OF CERVANTES IN DON QUIJOTE

Both Cervantes and Shakespeare expressed their most intimate feelings in sonnet form. Cervantes, immediately after Prologue to the Reader, began his masterpiece, The History of Don Quijote de La Mancha, with a collection of poems, most of which are in this literary form.

Except for the first short poem containing "The Unknown Urganda's Advice on Don Quijote's Book," and that of "El Donoso, the Motley Poet on Sancho Panza and Rocinante" which are in octosyllabic Spanish verse reduced to seven syllables (versos de cabo roto), there are eight original sonnets praising Don Quijote, Cervantes, Sancho and Rocinante.

Amadis not only extols Don Quijote, but eulogizes its author for his wisdom, "unique" in the world, and for having placed his country in first rank. Between the lines in Don Quijote there is a bitter complaint about poverty and suffering, but there also shines, in the hendecasyllabic verse, an exquisite sense of aesthetics and the pre-eminence of classical poetry.

In the second sonnet, Don Belianis of Greece

envies Don Quijote's prowess; in the third sonnet, in sweet and rhythmical lines, Lady Oriana admires and envies Dulcinea.

Gandalin, Amadis' squire, could not refrain from the greatest admiration of Sancho and his donkey, and even of Orlando, the Knight of Phoebus; Solisdan wraps up in well-rhymed lines his admiration for Don Quijote; and the introductory remarks of the book end with a philosophical dialogue, in sonnet form, which prepares the reader poetically to enter a definite place in La Mancha, the name of which he will never know.

In the very heart of the book, Chapter XXIII of the First Part, shines a sonnet which Don Quijote and Sancho find among a number of golden crowns and many other things, in Cardenio's bag, and this makes Sancho very happy. This sonnet has a bitter and philosophical tone:

Or love is lacking in intelligence
 Or to the height of cruelty attains,
 Or else it is my doom to suffer pains
 beyond the measure due to my offence.
 But if Love be a god, it follows thence
 That he knows all, and certain it remains
 No god loves cruelty; then who ordains
 This penance that enthralls while it torments?
 It were a falsehood, Chloe, thee to name;

Such evil with such goodness can not live;
 And against Heaven I dare not charge the blame,
 I only know it is my fate to die.
 To him who knows not whence his malady
 A miracle alone a cure can give.

In his verses on love Cervantes does not aim merely at immortalizing his name through poetry; he achieves a higher goal by superimposing a poetic world over the ocean of his misfortunes.

There is further parallelism with Shakespeare's themes in Chapter XXVII, on "How the Curate and the Barber Proceeded with their scheme; together with Other Matters worthy of Record in this Great History." Cervantes also wrote a sonnet on Friendship, which Cardenio sings with profound sadness:

When heavenward, holy Friendship, thou didst go
 Soaring to seek thy home beyond the sky,
 And take thy seat among the saints on high,
 It was thy will to leave on earth below
 Thy semblance, and upon it to bestow
 Thy veil, wherewith at times hypocrisy,
 Parading in thy shape, deceives the eye
 And makes its vileness bright as virtue show.
 Friendship, return to us, or force that cheat
 That wears it now, thy livery to restore,

By aid where of sincerity is slain.
 If thou will not unmask thy counterfeit,
 This earth will be the prey of strife once more
 As when primeval discord held its reign.

The legend of the Dark Lady stolen from Shakespeare's heart by his most intimate friend, if it is true, is very similar to the above sonnet by Cervantes, in which Cardenio sings of the cruelty of Don Fernando, who at one time intended to snatch his beloved Lucinda. This drove Cardenio insane, and singing unhappily, moaning in despair, he almost ends his piteous sighs in the heart of the woods.

In addition to the direct meaning of the two sonnets in which Cervantes refers to Cardenio's misfortune, he criticizes the madness and the death of love so frequent in the Middle Ages.

Later, in "The Novel of the Ill-Advised Curiosity," Chapter XXXIV of the First Part, two other sonnets, equally significant and beautiful, appear on the lips of the treacherous Lothario.

The first begins:

At midnight, in the silence, when the eyes
 Of happy mortal balmy slumbers close...

And the second:

I know that I am doomed; death is to me
 As certain as that thou, ungrateful fair...

In both these sonnets Lothario sings of his treachery to his friend Anselmo, which has brought the worst possible end to the three characters.

These two sonnets, like many others, are magnificent poetry, universal literary jewels. There is no doubt that Cervantes realized the quality of his poetry, for the last mentioned sonnet appeared earlier in The House of Jealousy, a comedy written in his second period. How can we doubt Cervantes' poetic genius when in the above poem we find lines like these?

If buried in oblivion I should be,
Bereft of life, fame, favor, even there
It would be found that I thy image bear
Deep graven in my breast for all to see.

"Deep graven in my breast for all to see," as originally written by Cervantes, shows an interesting and rich contrast in the sonnet spoken by Lothario which, according to a well-informed opinion, has been the seed for golden music and literature; Lothario says:

This like some holy relic do I prize
To save me from the fate my truth entails.

On the other hand, there is the presentiment

of a terrible future in the last tercet:

In peril o'er a trackless ocean sails
Where neither friendly port
Nor pole-star shows.

The translation of these sonnets by John Ormsby, a distinguished linguist, scholar and poet with a profound knowledge of the Spanish language, retains the grace, rhythm, musicality and perfection, as well as keeping the ideological value of these literary pieces, as close as possible to the original.

Two more sonnets appear in Chapter XL of the Byzantine biographical novel "In which the Story of the Captive is Continued." This story is artistically adorned with many interesting details of Cervantes' younger years; he narrates the struggle between Christians and Mohammedans on the Mediterranean.

Several captives were chatting at the inn and one of them mentioned Don Pedro de Aguilar, "a soldier of great repute and rare intelligence, who had a special gift for what they call poetry;" and he tells his friends that Don Pedro "after having been in Constantinople for two years, escaped disguised as an Arnaut, in company with a Greek spy."

Don Pedro's brother, who was sitting with the group at the inn, then recited two sonnets which greatly pleased his listeners.

The first begins with the famous lines:

Blest souls, that from this mortal husk set free,
In guerdon of brave deeds beatified...

The second sonnet, like the first, sings the glory of the brave ones who gave their lives in battle for a holy or patriotic cause. Both sonnets have the character of epitaphs and are extremely poetic in a profound and heroic sense. The first quartet of the second sonnet says:

Up from this wasted soil, this shattered shell,
Whose walls and towers here in ruin lie,
Three thousand soldiers souls took wing on high,
In the bright mansion of the blest to dwell.

Cervantes ends the First Part of his novel Don Quijote de la Mancha with several poems: four epitaphs in sonnet form and two redondillas. The four sonnets, in title and content, underline the ironical spirit of the author:

THE ACADEMICIANS OF ARGAMASILLA

A VILLAGE OF LA MANCHA

ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA

HOC SCRIPSERUNT

Monicongo, Academician of Argamasilla

On the Tomb of Don Quixote

EPITAPH

The scatterbrain that gave La Mancha more
 Rich spoils than Jason's; who a point so keen
 Had to his wit, and happier far had been
 If his wit's weathercock a blunter bore...

Realizing Cervantes' humour, was he perhaps
 trying to create a tidal wave whose sparkling foam
 would splash all those who had pretensions to being
 academicians?

The Academicians of Argamasilla (if there were
 any) gave testimony in this sonnet, that Don Quijote
 surpassed Jason of Crete; his activity reached from
 Catay to Gaeta, and his fame was greater than that of
 Amadis, Galaones, Belianises. In other words, Don
 Quijote was the greatest hero of all knight errantry.

With one jest after another, Paniaguado,
 Academician of Argamasilla, in "Laudem Dulcinae" of
 the Toboso, recollects the most ungracious physical
 appearance of Toboso's queen, though in the twelfth
 and thirteenth lines it says:

Nor youth, nor beauty saved her from the claim
 Of death...

Even more brilliant is the third sonnet of the whimsical and most acute "Academician of Argamsilla, in Praise of Rocinante, Steed of Don Quixote de La Mancha." This sonnet surpasses in beauty and poetic sense the one dedicated to Dulcinea, and even the one in honour of Sancho Panza, ending with the famous lines:

Delusive hopes that lure the common herd
With promises of ease, and heart's desire,
In shadows, dreams, and smoke ye always end.

The Italian line which closes The First Part of Don Quijote expresses very clearly Cervantes' own judgement of his masterpiece:

Forse altro catera con miglior plettro.
(Perhaps another will sing with a better voice.)

+ + + +

Ten years passed, from 1605 to 1615, between the issue of the First and Second Part of Don Quijote de la Mancha. During this period, Cervantes gave birth to the twelve Exemplary Novels (1613); a sonnet in the First Part of Don Quijote on "Various Applications and Transformations..." of Diego Rosel (1613); the Journey to Parnassus (1614); Eight Comedies and Eight New Interludes (1615); and the Second Part of The Most Ingenious Knight Don Quijote de la Mancha. Cervantes

surpasses himself in the Second Part of Don Quijote, where every aspect is carefully and philosophically developed. There is less poetry in verse than in the First Part, though it is implicit in the spirit of the prose. However, there has been copious and continuous criticism for and against the poetic content in Cervantes' novel.

"On the other hand, his attention to the study by the humanist Señor Juan López de Hoyos, his familiarity with the great classics, his education as a man of the Renaissance extolled by Menéndez y Pelayo in his lecture on "The Literary Culture of Cervantes and the Creation and Writing of the Quixote," (read at the Paraninfo of the University of Madrid and included in Studies of Literary Criticism, Vol. IV, p. 3), as well as the cervantine works in prose, are more than sufficient proof of the artistic qualities of a man who, lacking a doctor's degree, has been considered a witty ignoramus in the eyes of certain commentators..." (1)

However, he was not a witty layman but a learned person who made mockery of such opinions in the Journey to Parnassus, a fact that has passed unnoticed by many critics. It occurs precisely at the moment in which the tremendous allegorical character, Vaingloriousness, the daughter of Desire and Fame, rises before his eyes; he has never seen

her before and does not recognize her, but Apollo, who is showing her to him, says very plainly:

If you were not blind,
You had already seen who is the lady,
But, alas, you are a witty layman...(M.S.A.)

The attitude of most of his contemporary writers and poets was a torture to Cervantes; he aimed to surpass them, and he did.

It is said that when Lope de Vega was informed of the publication of the Exemplary Novels, he almost fainted. Eight years had passed since the publication of the First Part of Don Quijote and everyone thought that the Second Part would never be produced, as had happened in the case of Galatea.

It is difficult to know positively why Cervantes introduced so few sonnets in the Second Part of Don Quijote. The first sonnet to appear adorns Chapter XII: "The Strange Adventures Which Befell the Valiant Don Quixote With the Bold Knight of the Mirrors."

The niece, the housekeeper and Don Quijote's friend had finally succeeded in bringing him back on that sad Sunday when the knight reached his village at noon, ridiculously imprisoned in a cage. This incident had sown the hope in every heart that a

third sally would not take place; but when it did occur, the housekeeper and niece asked their brilliant friend to go after Don Quijote. The bachelor, Sansón Carrasco, was in charge of this difficult enterprise and, disguised as the Knight of the Mirrors, he went out to engage in contest and vanquish Don Quijote.

Sansón Carrasco is the sad yet important character who, in the last instance, was to destroy the famous knight. But, on the preceding occasion, Don Quijote, as the Knight of the Lions, vanquished Sansón, who was unable to force him to return home and remain for one year, which everyone hoped would allow him time to recover from his insanity.

A romantic sonnet was the bait to attract Don Quijote's attention:

(Dadme señora un término que siga...)
 Your pleasure, prithee, lady mine, unfold;
 Declare the terms that I am to obey;
 My will to yours submissively I mould
 And from your law my feet shall never stray.
 Would you I die, to silent grief a prey?
 Then count me even now as dead and cold;
 Would you I tell my woes in some new way?
 Then shall my tale by love itself be told.
 The unison of opposites to prove

Of the soft wax and diamond hard am I;
 But still obedient to the laws of love,
 Here, hard or soft, I offer you my breast,
 Whate'er you grave or stamp thereon shall rest
 Indelible for all eternity. (J.Ormsby)

Cervantes was so enamoured of poetry that he naturally found a way to extol it to the highest during the recital of Don Lorenzo's poems at the house of the Knight of the Green Gaban; it is plain to see that Don Quijote was excessive in his praise of Don Lorenzo's poems, for Cervantes says: "Is there any need to say that Don Lorenzo enjoyed hearing himself praised by Don Quijote, albeit he looked upon him as a madman? 'O power of flattery, how far-reaching art thou, and how wide are the bounds of thy pleasant jurisdiction.' Don Lorenzo gave proof of it for he complied with Don Quijote's request and entreaty, and repeated to him this sonnet on the fable or story of Pyramus and Thisbe:

(El muro rompe la doncella hermosa...)

The lovely maid, she pierces now the wall;
 Heart-pierced by her young Pyramus doth lie;
 And Love spreads wing from Cyprus isle to fly,
 A chink to view so wondrous great and small.
 Can pass so strait a strait; but love will ply
 Where to all other power 'twere vain to try;

For love will find a way whate'er befall.
 Impatient of delay, with reckless pace
 The rash maid wins the fatal spot where she
 Sinks not in lover's arms but death's embrace.
 So runs the strange tale, how the lovers twain
 One sword, one sepulchre, one memory,
 Slays, and entombs, and brings to life again.

Most of Cervantes' sonnets in Don Quijote show the imprint of Greek and Latin mythology, or the poetic spirit of the Middle Ages.

"It was Tamayo de Vargas who called Cervantes 'a witty layman' or perhaps "a witty laico," neither clerical nor academic. But, even though it might have been unintentional, Cervantes, in the Journey to Parnassus, ridiculed all those who judged him an ignoramus, just as in the Prologue to Don Quijote he mocked those who considered themselves erudite."

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare and Cervantes were both poets of tremendous stature, with certain similarities but with a different style of writing. Both created a poetic world of their own, based on medieval elements and stimulated by the Renaissance; both wrote poetry before drama and, in the case of Cervantes, also before fiction.

These two dramatists and poets lived in the same period and enjoyed the same privilege of a rich and creative mind. This has led to considerable discussion by critics as to our incomplete information regarding their cultural background, except in so far as it is judged from their writings.

Shakespeare's works are a whole world of poetry in blank verse, sprinkled with some short prose writings; Cervantes on the other hand wrote most of his poetic creations in prose, abundantly sprinkled with poetry in verse of many styles and forms.

The Shakespearean works which were studied in this essay are: the Medieval English Historical Cycle of the Swan, from The Life and Death of King John to the fall of the Lancastrian dynasty

and the triumph of York in Richard the Third; also, some of the Bard's greatest poems and the monument of the Sonnets; in addition there is a separate study of three important characters within this cycle: King Henry V, Marguerite D'Anjou, and Richard III.

We have chosen from Cervantes' poetic works his two most important dramas: Captivity in Algiers and The Siege of Numancia; also some of his greatest poems including The Journey to Parnassus, Epistle to Mateo Vazquez and the sonnets in Don Quijote.

Both poets show a thorough knowledge of classical literature; they might have moved all their lives in the atmosphere of humanism. Each perfectly familiar with the history of his country, as well as world history.

Even though all criticism has glorified both writers as geniuses, there has been violent disagreement as to their education, the level of their work and the general tendency of their writing.

The history of Don Quijote de la Mancha is, as a whole, a world of poetic prose, into which Cervantes inserted poetry in verse and other styles of writing then in vogue. Shakespeare built the great bulk of his dramatic work on

plots taken from earlier writers of other countries; he revived old historical characters, bringing them alive in a new literary form, wrapping them artistically in the most exquisite verse with new elements of versification, which retained the musicality of rhythm and the poetic value.

Meanwhile, Cervantes was working on a majestic plan which combined harmoniously all known forms of literature under the apparent simplicity of one form, as expressed in the First Part of Don Quijote, the Twelve Exemplary Novels and the Second Part of Don Quijote.

In these works Cervantes tried to express a universal wisdom, around which all his other writing would revolve, striving toward a moral and literary perfection which was crowned by his final work, Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda, written just before his death.

A similar moral and literary phenomenon is observed in Shakespeare's work: he was known first as a magnificent poet, with his poems Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece; then he entered the world of theatre, portraying the struggle between York and Lancaster (Henry VI, First, Second and Third Parts, 1591-1592); there followed the frightful tragedies of Richard III

(1593) and Titus Andronicus (1593); his career as a poet-dramatist ended with Winter's Tale and The Tempest, in which the highest moral principles shine forth from spiritual characters. All Shakespearean dramas are interwoven with the publication of the Sonnets, most of which express intimate feelings. The poetical form of Shakespeare's sonnets is different from the Petrarchan form; Shakespeare wrote in three quatrains and a couplet rather than in the earlier two quatrains and a sextet. It is certain that the Swan's Sonnets lie close to his innermost heart.

Both writers excelled in poetry and drama because of study, keen observation, perseverance, and the sacrifice of a great deal of time and effort. Their experiences, their lives and their deep knowledge of human nature with its virtues and vices, gave them the key to the expression of human passions.

Cervantes and Shakespeare surpassed the works of their predecessors and contemporaries because of their forceful and original creation, and both devoted their lives to this single and impassioned aim.

We know more about Cervantes' life than Shakespeare's. However, their writings remain the strongest testimony.

The Spanish writer shows quite clearly his religious faith though occasionally, while he continues to respect the Catholic Church as a great institution, he criticizes some of the finer points. He never hides his political views and is very clever in setting forth his moral principles.

On the other hand, Shakespeare never shows his religious beliefs, though in his day English education was founded on the Roman Church and Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, was profoundly Catholic. In regard to political ideas, he narrates the deeds and bloodstained actions of centuries before; when writing of England's days of glory, he praises the Lancastrian dynasty; later, he speaks of the recently born Elizabeth as the sweet princess, brilliant as the sun, tender, innocent and naive as an angel.

Shakespeare's intimate feelings are contained in the Sonnets which, according to traditional opinion, are as mysterious as the life of the poet himself. But modern criticism holds that there is no mystery about Shakespeare's life, since everything is explained in the 154 sonnets, and in the dedication of Venus and Adonis to W.H.

In regard to the dedication to Henry Wriothesly, Duke of Southampton, the opinion of

this writer is that the poet intentionally wrapped the whole bulk of his poetry in a shroud of mystery, according to his own words: "Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo / Focula Castalia plena ministret aqua."

The dramatic and poetic works of Shakespeare are not only the product of a witty mind, but of the most careful and conscientious labour. The same may be said of Cervantes' works; they express a transcendental and universal meaning, springing from the feelings, passions and vices of mankind.

In both artists the development of their creative and artistic pieces of literature is the result of a natural gift, sustained by an iron will and directed by mental and physical discipline; there is a methodical ordering of elements to form a complete unity of the whole, flavoured with classicism and the medieval spirit, as well as many other qualities.

A definite change is observed in both poets: after beginning by writing poetry, Cervantes turned to fiction and drama, but never gave up poetry throughout his lifetime. Shakespeare, after writing his great poems, turned to dramatic tragedy and comedy in verse, but also held to poetry through his entire life.

Shakespeare's works show many parallelisms

with Christopher Marlowe's literary production, which has resulted in considerable conjecture on the part of critics. Shakespeare's development is clearly seen in his dramatic works, though the vital source of poetry emerges from the sonnets, which seem to contain, in one way or another, the passionate impulse which produced the dramas.

The interruption of Cervantes' literary work after Galatea, suggests that he was probably annoyed by Lope de Vega, whom he called "The Monster of Nature" because of the magnitude of Lope's poetry. Cervantes then tried to build a majestic plan of work which would be specific and yet universal.

One sees, in the works of both writers, the transition from the Middle Ages to the dawn of the Renaissance. Many of the Swan of Avon's works were born during the bitter attacks on Christianity and the English poet portrays the death of the Christian faith, strangled during Elizabethan times, when the great discoveries of the Renaissance beyond the seas corresponded with the great discoveries of the spiritual potentialities of man. In the same way Cervantes shows to the world the greatness of Spain at the beginning of her decline.

The innermost medieval Ego was brought to light, giving birth to reason and philosophical analysis, which occasionally swung into chaos.

Shakespeare and Cervantes have challenged Time itself, and both have attained immortality in the form in which they professed it.

It is logical that maturity should appear in the last works. Thus, within the poetic framework of The Tempest, which may be considered a mirror of life, the author portrays himself in the quiet spirit of Prospero; and Cervantes appears in his Venerable Book of the illustrious Manchegan as the Captive, and shows the perfection of his spirit in the silken prose of the divine Persiles.

As artists of the Renaissance, Shakespeare and Cervantes created an enormous and complete world of poetry, to which this work has given only a brief glance.

In Shakespearean theatre, poetry shines, even though practically every king is shipwrecked in an ocean of blood from which he emerges to ascend the throne. The Bard gives a unique and fanciful impression of royalty which posterity has accepted as real, although it was not historically true.

Shakespeare's historical characters sometimes show the strength of Greek tragedy, mainly in those dramas where the voice of the chorus leads the action.

The house of York, motivated by hate, ambition and vengeance, brought down in death the last of

the Lancastrian dynasty, King Henry VI and his son the Prince of Wales who would have been legally Henry VII, which name appeared later in the Tudor dynasty as an ancestor of Henry VIII.

With all due respect to contrary opinion, this writer considers that the heavy bulk of Shakespearean theatre and poetry is balanced by the magnificent and universal theatre and poetry which make up the poetic world of Cervantes.

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- 6) W. Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, Act IV, Sc. 4.
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