AN ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S ROMANTIC COMEDIES

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by

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Anchalee Rugluang

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AN ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis was to analyse three selected romantic comedies by Shakespeare, written in three different periods of time, to reveal the development in terms of PLOT, CHARACTERIZATION, THEME, and COMEDY AND DICTION.

The findings revealed that there was a clear development in Shakespeare's romantic comedies in terms of PLOT, CHARACTERIZATION, THEME and COMEDY AND DICTION. The early comedy, The Taming of the Shrew was written when Shakespeare was experimenting in writing comedies. A Midsummer Night's Dream was written when he had gained more experience and Twelfth Night was written when he was mature in writing comedies. The development in Shakespeare's skill in constructing his plots, portraying his characters and demonstrating his humour can be clearly traced. The views he conveyed in his later comedies were broader and more profound. As a result, the development of the four elements in each play illustrated the development of the three romantic comedies analysed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare is one of the world's greatest writers, whose comedies, tragedies, and history plays have been read, studied, and performed in countries all over the world. His comedies are interesting and worth reading because they are not only entertaining but also beautiful in their language. Studying his comedies is beneficial because we can see examples of the witty language Shakespeare uses to make us laugh and how great he is in using his imagination to create funny characters and situations. Moreover, they make us aware of our behaviour because we may one day be the same as those characters who say or act foolishly, or we may have the same problems as they do. Stephen (1987 : 37) states that Shakespeare's comedies also have very serious elements in their themes and plots, and are often concerned with some of the weaker aspects of human nature. The subject matter Shakespeare deals with is universal. Young people have problems when they are in love and they try to overcome those problems. Goodman (1978 : 158) comments that Shakespeare's plays were written in blank verse, which is similar to other plays of that period, but that Shakespeare uses it so skilfully that his plays excel all others. Goodman adds that the uniqueness of Shakespeare's genius is universally admitted.

A careful analysis of the plays indicates that his very conventionality is the basis for his continuing appeal. His moral values are generally accepted. He presents a good view of life. His treatment of women, children, the aged, and the unfortunate is

sympathetic, and his characteristic view point is clearly idealistic.

Knight (1968 : 27) states that Shakespeare's comedies are worth studying because they are entertaining and full of dramatic value linked to profound analysis of character and a heartthrilling rhetoric. Moreover, they present imaginative and intellectual suggestion demanding a more exact study and sensitive appreciation than they have so far received.

Shakespeare is great in his imagination and the use of his wit. His characters display profound emotions both alone and in interpersonal relationships. He gives us the life at court and that of peasants, in the city and the country, in England and Europe, on land and at sea. Most of his plays have sub-plots that mirror the main plot on a different level. And his language is universal. In his own day his plays were enjoyed by peasants and noblemen. Today, they are performed in theatres, in schools, and on Broadway, while scholars write doctoral and post-doctoral theses on them. Their art and appeal are limitless. (Staunton. 1983 : xi)

Shakespeare borrowed freely from plays already existing and often simply reshaped older plays; using his talent to create something original. He was always changing. His flexibility was marvellous. He adapted himself to the most diverse material and seemed to use all "with equal ardour and joy". Shakespeare has been famous for all ages, and in many countries. Though he wrote for the Elizabethan stage and audience, he is read and enjoyed even today by English speaking people all over the world. (Tilak. 1981 : 8)

Reading his plays will increase our insight into the aspects

of his genius and extend our knowledge of the remarkable capacities which contribute to Shakespeare's outstanding stature. By studying his poetry closely and studying how he develops his themes, the devices he uses for dramatic effect and his characters' personalities, we can then generalise to understand how he became a genius. (Armstrong. 1963 : 7-8)

There are many reasons for studying Shakespeare's plays, because they are great literature and have been enjoyed by people of all ages both then and now. The reasons why we should study his plays are firstly that they consist of interesting plots, characterization, language and thought. Secondly, they show his talent in mixing prose and poetry to express varying shades of emotion, and in using rich and beautiful language. Finally, they deal with problems that confront all people in all generations for all time. The problems confronting the characters in the plays could be our problems. (King-Boyes. 1976 : 1)

In accordance with the reasons mentioned above Shakespeare's plays are part of a language study in both graduate and undergraduate levels of almost all universities in Thailand. However, most students think that his plays are too difficult for them to understand so they have a negative attitude towards them. However, these plays can be understood and appreciated if the students have enough background or if they read the plays with a specific purpose or if they understand the elements of them. Apart from that, there is a limitation in terms of texts and related research materials about Shakespeare's comedies in Thailand. The purpose of this thesis is

therefore, to provide those students and others who are interested in Shakespeare's comedies with useful analysis, information, and background so that they can understand and appreciate his comedies. Shakespeare's comedies not only make us laugh but also give us some ideas which can be applied to our own lives. It is interesting to find out why Shakespeare's comedies, which were written more than four hundred years ago, are still read and performed.

Review of Related Literature

Charlton states that romantic comedy is the comedy of love. It is occupied with wooing which distinguishes it from classical or Roman Comedy. (Charlton. 1966 : 21) Abrams agrees that romantic comedy is concerned with a love affair that "involves a beautiful and idealized heroine, who sometimes disguises herself as a man. The course of love does not run smooth, but she overcomes all difficulties to end in a happy union." (Abrams. 1957 : 26) Northrope Frye points out that some of Shakespeare's romantic comedies involve a movement from the normal world of conflict and trouble into the green world - the forest of Arden in As You Like It, or the fairy-haunted wood of A Midsummer Night's Dream - in which the problems and injustices of the ordinary world are magically dissolved, enemies reconciled, and true lovers united. The aspects of these romantic comedies produce a festive conclusion in the social ritual of wedding, or dance. (Frye. 1970 : 170) Shakespeare's romantic comedy may be called the drama of the green world. Its plot is absorbed in the ritual theme of the triumph of life and love over the waste land.

The action of the comedy begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into a green world, goes into a complete change where the comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world. In other words, there is a rhythmic movement from normal world to green world and back again. (Frye. 1957 : 182) "The green world changes the comedies with a symbolism in which the comic resolution contains a suggestion of the old ritual pattern of victory of summer over winter." (Frye. 1970 : 170)

Shakespeare's work has stimulated so many scholars to analytical studies it would be impossible to cite them all. There follows a selection to show the range of the scholasticism to which he has given rise.

Jacobs has studied the use of the conventions of wordplay and the familiar contexts and associations in Shakespeare's plays. She finds that Shakespeare's characters "argue, compete, challenge, woo, criticize and even search their heart in soliloquy, all by means of wit." (Jacobs. 1985 : 2112-A)

Willis concludes that Shakespeare uses the forest as his setting to greater advantage than his contemporaries. "Shakespeare's forests influence the characters within them. In all of Shakespeare's forest plays, wilderness settings enhance and enforce exposure of character. In the forest comedies, exposure is followed by change in character." (Willis. 1986 : 918-A)

Barran states that Shakespeare does not rely on a basic pattern for his scenes. After examining Shakespearean scenes, she finds that Shakespeare designs each scene "anew"; for example, the overhearing

scene in Love's Labour's Lost is quite different from that in Much Ado About Nothing or Twelfth Night. (Barran. 1985 : 3134-A)

Shakespeare's earlier plays proved to be "grounds for his later reworkings of theme, character types and generic approaches. We can also trace the gradual development of his vision of language itself, the medium of his art. This approach to rhetorical theory in Shakespeare's plays rests upon a historical analysis of the dialectical interplay of Platonic and Sophistic attitudes toward language as creation of new realities (Sophistic) is opposed by a usage of language to define and protect an inner essence from change (Platonic). An essentially comic and Sophistic display of language early in Shakespeare's career, that is, a delight in the ability of language to create new realities and happy endings (The Taming of the Shrew), later progresses to an exploration of Platonic rigidity and uses of literalism for evil (The Merchant of Venice)." (French. 1986: 2699-A)

Collins comments that Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew is a richer, more complex, more finely crafted, and more meaningful play than has ordinarily been thought. Collins looks at the play with performance both "real and ideal, constantly in mind." Her analysis depends on the assumption that it is the reader who creates the Shakespearean characters, because it is the reader who determines how a character speaks. When the dialogue and the action in the play are considered together, the characters can be seen as more complex than those found in less serious comedy. (Collins. 1986 : 2698-A)

Kooistra shows "the nature and function of blocking characters

changes through the sixteen plays in Shakespeare's comic canon. The early comedies, including A Midsummer Night's Dream, display comic antagonists whose behaviour is dominated by plot or theme: Shylock, the most famous of Shakespeare's blocking characters, acts according to the stereotypes of the kind of comedy in which he exists. In the middle comedies (c.1596-1601), the function of the blocking characters changes. They are usually less of a threat to their comic worlds than their early counterparts. Because they exist in the serenity of happy escapist worlds, whose tone is determined by the heroines of the plays, the blocking characters pose less of a threat to comic happiness there than the blockers of the early comedies. Even Malvolio acts as a lightning rod to attract all the comic antagonism of Twelfth Night, and his gulling leaves the play sweeter after his comic banishment." (Kooistra. 1990 : 3603-A)

Bender comments that Shakespeare's comedies are designed "to engage the character of the spectator. The actions of stage characters are instrumental to the audience's participation in the comic action. Through them, spectators are involved in the basic operations that, according to the sixteenth century humanism, exercise and develop character as opposed to identity - the operations of deliberation and choice that lead to appropriate action. Shakespeare's comedies emerge from the humanist emphasis on deliberation, choice, and the development of character. His stage characters dramatize various courses of action, and the alternatives thus presented stimulate the audience to exercise their powers of prudent choice." (Bender. 1990 : 1617-A)

Roman discusses in his dissertation that plays as diverse as The Taming of the Shrew, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Twelfth Night demonstrate Shakespeare's interest in manipulating comic traditions while interrogating gender: relations and roles. Shakespeare constructs his comedy in order to participate in the shifting social ideologies of love, sexuality, and marriage in Elizabethan England. (Roman. 1991 : 3066-A)

The present thesis will show the development of the basic dramatic elements, namely, plot, character, theme, setting and, where appropriate, the language of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. In other words, it will involve an analysis of the whole play, because one of the purposes of this study is to help those who are interested to understand Shakespeare's romantic comedies. The ten comedies written during the 1590s and up to the year 1601 have been studied because all of his comedies between 1601 and 1613 are considered to be 'dark comedies' or 'tragicomedies.' (Vandiver. 1964 : 339) The ten comedies are called typical or traditional comedies by Frye (1982 : 80). It is difficult to fix exactly the date of each of Shakespeare's plays and most texts present only the approximate dates; as Wilders (1988 : 1) states, "...we do not know the precise order in which Shakespeare composed his plays, particularly the earliest ones. It has proved impossible to establish the true and accurate dates of his plays." By applying Alexander's approximate order of Shakespeare's comedies (Alexander. 1951 : ii), the thesis writer proposes different periods as follows:

The First Period (1584-1594)

1. The Comedy of Errors (1592-1593)*

2. The Taming of the Shrew (1593-1594)

3. The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1594-1595)

4. Love's Labour's Lost (1594-1595)

The Second Period (1594-1599 : from Shakespeare's joining the Lord Chamberlain's men in 1594 to the opening of the Globe Theatre in 1599)

5. A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595-1596)

6. The Merchant of Venice (1596-1597)

7. Much Ado about Nothing (1598-1599)

The Third Period (1599-1608): from the opening of the Globe in 1599 to the taking over of the Blackfriars Theatre in 1608)

8. As You Like It (1599-1600)

9. Twelfth Night (1600-1601)

10. The Merry Wives of Windsor (1600-1601)

the dates are taken from Brockett's History of the Theatre. 1991 : p.160)

Three of these ten comedies(each from a different period) will be analysed to trace the development of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. The Taming of the Shrew represents the first or experimental period; A Midsummer Night's Dream: the second or middle period; and Twelfth Night: the third or mature period.

The Taming of the Shrew is chosen to represent the first period because it is the most suitable among the four comedies and it

contains the most features of romantic comedies. The other comedies in this period are not selected for this study for the following reasons: The Comedy of Errors is really a farce rather than a romantic comedy. (Chute. 1956 : 24) Shakespeare's comedies are often described as romantic comedies with the exception of The Comedy of Errors. (Frye. 1982 : 87) The Two Gentlemen of Verona is not very successful. None of the many situations and scenes seems very interesting because the people are not very real. They move about in obedience to the plot instead of to themselves and the men in particular "are cut out of lace paper. "(Chute. 1956 : 45) Moreover, it is not very funny and there is a dark side in its plot. Love's Labour's Lost is less a story than a game. The plot is as light as a soap and its charm lies in the kind of dancing light only. (Chute. 1956 : 31) It is also an incomplete story. For the second period, A Midsummer Night's Dream is chosen because it is Shakespeare's first comic masterpiece (Muir. 1965 : 5) and it reaches the very height of Shakespeare's poetic fancy. (Tilak. 1981 : 28) Although The Merchant of Venice is also one of Shakespeare's masterpieces, it contains many lines that express bitter contempt and eternal hatred, and occasionally it seems almost too serious to remain a comedy (Vandiver. 1964 : 357), for its theme is money with the attempted murder climax. (Chute. 1956: 59) Much Ado about Nothing is a comedy but even the more sympathetic Elizabethans would hardly have found the sight of a young girl fainting at the altar after a false accusation on her wedding day an amusing sight. (Boulton. 1960 : 143)

Twelfth Night is chosen to represent the third period because

it is the happiest and liveliest of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. It is one of the most light-hearted plays. (Chute. 1956 : 91) It is a blend of music and revelry, realism and romance, the most cunning prose and the most delightful poetry. (Dent. 1938 : 137) The other two are not selected because As You Like It has a few darker undertones. It is a distillation of the spirit of pastoral romance and a satire - sometimes a mockery of the pastoral idea. (Campbell. 1966 : 15) However, many critics agree that both As You Like It and Twelfth Night are good examples of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. The only difference is that there is a greater range and depth of characterization in Twelfth Night than in As You Like It. Wilders comments that it has practically no setting. The Forest of Arden is characterized by its lack of features. It is seldom referred to in any detail. (Wilders. 1988 : 153) The Merry Wives of Windsor is not interesting and it is sometimes described as a contemporary comedy of intrigue. (Muir. 1965 : 5)

The Purposes of This Study

The purposes of this study are the following:

1. To study the elements of Shakespeare's romantic comedies.
2. To analyse three of Shakespeare's romantic comedies written at different periods between the 1590s and 1601; the experimental period, the middle period, and the mature period, in order to show their development.

The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be the following:

1. To show the development of Shakespeare's romantic comedies written at different periods to help readers to understand and appreciate them more.
2. To show the major elements of Shakespeare's comedies.
3. To provide background knowledge for those who are interested to further their study of other comedies; either by Shakespeare, his contemporaries, or writers of a later date.

The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is as follows:

1. To cite some features of Elizabethan drama that influenced Shakespeare's romantic comedies.
2. Three comedies out of ten from the 1590s up to 1601 will be analysed. They are:
   - 2.1. The Taming of the Shrew (the experimental period : 1584-1594)
   - 2.2. A Midsummer Night's Dream (the middle period : 1594-1599)
   - 2.3. Twelfth Night (the mature period : 1599-1608)

Definition of Terms

1. Romantic Comedies

Romantic comedies are plays that deal with domestic life,

with love and courtship and they end with marriage or the prospect of marriage, the means whereby families are united and regenerated. Moreover, they are funny and make the audience laugh. Some of Shakespeare's romantic comedies are concerned with a love affair that involves a beautiful and idealized heroine; the course of this love does not run smooth, but overcomes all difficulties to end in a happy union. They are light-hearted plays. (Abrams. 1957 : 26)

2. Development

Development means gradual growth or a process in which plot, characterization, theme, and diction, as seen in three selected comedies, change or mature.

3. Plot

Plot means how Shakespeare presents his story.

4. Characterization

Characterization means the portrayal of each character's distinctive features.

5. Diction

Diction means the choice of words Shakespeare employs in the selected romantic comedies to make his audience laugh. This study will focus on puns, ambiguity, paradox, malapropism and wordplay.

The Procedures

This study is a descriptive research, which follows the following procedures:

1. Studying the features of Elizabethan drama in texts that have some influence on Shakespeare's romantic comedies.

2. Setting the criteria for choosing Shakespeare's romantic comedies based on outstanding scholars.

3. Analysing three of Shakespeare's romantic comedies; The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Twelfth Night in terms of:

3.1. Plot

3.2. Character

3.3. Theme

3.4. Diction

4. Discussing and describing the development of Shakespeare's romantic comedies.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one contains an introductory discussion, a review of related literature, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the definition of the terms used, and the procedures. Chapter two discusses and explores the nature and background of Shakespeare's romantic comedies and the influences from other periods and playwrights. The next three chapters concern the analysis of the three selected comedies; The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Twelfth Night, respectively. Chapter six reveals the findings from the analysis of those three comedies as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE AND BACKGROUND OF SHAKESPEARE'S ROMANTIC COMEDIES

INFLUENCES FROM OTHER PERIODS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

Shakespeare's comedies were largely influenced by two Roman writers, Terence and Plautus. The Comedy of Errors, Shakespeare's first comedy, is clearly based on the Menaechmi of Plautus. In this play, Shakespeare was experimenting. He was dissatisfied with mere farce, so he humanized the characters by presenting them with basic human problems. (Muir. 1965 : 3-4) However, the differences between the comedy of Shakespeare and that of Plautus were: firstly, in spirit, the Latin type is realistic, satiric,earthy; Shakespeare's is poetic, sentimental, and romantic. Secondly, Plautus' is full of sex; Shakespeare's is full of love. Thirdly, Plautus weaves plots of cunning intrigue; Shakespeare chooses simple tales of wooers and their wooing. Finally, "the character focuses are different. With Plautus, it is the old men and the rascally men servants who come first to mind, then the young sparks lusting for illicit liaisons or trafficking without delicacy for possession of attractive concubines; and the girls they pursue flit across the scene and are only a supplementary part of the plot, permitted to make our personal acquaintance only in direct proportion to the extent of their alleged impropriety. In Shakespeare's play, all is different. Old men withdraw to the wings. Cunning servants, deprived by his plots of extensive opportunity to acquire skill in scheming, survive mainly as natural clowns. It is the young folk who occupy the centre

of his stage and the hero, gaining grace in the mysteries of wooing, discards many of the traits of Plautus' character, and replaces them with the finer emotional feeling, the nobility of mind, and the sweetness of soul which closely reflect the romantic ideal of manhood. An even greater change is suffered by the girls of the older tradition. The characters are changed both in quality and in significance. The heroine has in fact become the very incarnation of the spirit of Shakespeare's comedy" (Charlton. 1966 : 75-76).

When Shakespeare began to write, he had several models. His comedies were developed from the tradition established by Peele, Lyly and Greene (these people belong to the group of writers which is called "The University Wits", young graduates from Oxford or Cambridge). His comic world has "echoes of folk lore and country practices and has its roots in classical comedy - in the country revels honouring the wine and vegetable god Dionysus, who suffers, dies, and returns to life." (Alexander. 1979 : 29)

The influence from Lyly's comedies was the witty exchange between servants and pages, "the sophisticated conversations of heroines, the use of song as an integral part of a play, the grouping of characters, and the tightening of prose rhythm. Shakespeare learned from Greene the interweaving of different plots." (Muir. 1965 : 3) Greene's best plays are romantic medleys in which he seems to have been experimenting with "the possibilities of variety in a double or multiple plot. He is able to vary the exchanges between one tale of wonderment and another of romantic love. This method of construction, with a developed or symbolic parallel between two

separate plots, which may also contrast with each other, became the commom method of the Elizabethans. The romantic elements in the comedy of Lyly and Greene were developed by Shakespeare." (Ford. 1955 : 417) Peele's influence was slighter. Shakespeare may have been impressed by his use of blank verse (Tillyard. 1983 : 24). Moreover, Shakespeare could read Italian comedies. He probably knew something of the **commedia dell'arte** (a form of comic drama developed about the mid-sixteenth century by a group of professional Italian actors. These actors improvised the dialogue around a given scenario, a brief outline of a drama) (Muir. 1965 : 3). Finally, medieval folk-festivals, based on ritual, were a major influence on Shakespeare's comedies. He included various folk-festivals in his comedies (Tillyard. 1983 : 23, 29).

SOME FEATURES OF THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

There had always been music in Elizabethan plays, deriving from the earliest dramatic traditions. In daily life, too, an Elizabethan, whether nobleman or peasant, loved music and had found it as common as eating or drinking or working (Lerner. 1967 : 335). Moreover, it is common for the playwright of this period to write in verse. The characters can reveal themselves more fully and precisely than they ever would in real life (Dean. 1961 : 4).

The following are some stage conventions of the Elizabethan drama:

1. The Dumb Show

The dumb show in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods

almost disappeared after about 1620. "If it was used on the stage, it provided a powerful adjunct to a play when it was integrated into the action. Silent action or action accompanied by music is powerful in a play; it can provide, in a scene, a play-within-a-play. The main function of the dumb show is to summarise the action for the audience; for example, the dumb show in Hamlet, enacted before *'The Murder of Gonzago'*, and introduced to the royal audience by the Prologue and the two dumb shows in Webster's The White Devil, where the first portrays an action in mime and speeds up the plot, since the events need not be shown on stage, and the second removes a strange action one step further back from the world of reality." (Banks. 1985 : 144)

2. The Prologue, the Epilogue, and the Induction

A prologue is an introductory poem or speech, which originally explained or commented on the action of the play it preceded. It usually announced the theme of the main drama. In Elizabethan times it was known as the Chorus. (Packard. 1988 : 406) Examples are Christopher Marlowe's The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy (Andrea's Ghost summarises the action of the play for the audience before the action begins), and in The Winter's Tale - the Chorus moves the action forward sixteen years between Acts Three and Four. (Banks. 1985 : 146)

An Induction is a particular kind of preliminary scene in a play. It is not directly connected to the main plot. Its function is to introduce the play that follows to the audience by "creating a kind of parallel play-world - the world of Christopher Sly in

Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew. Alternatively, it takes the form of a dramatized 'statement of intent' or artistic APOLOGY, during which the actors and sometimes a figure representing the dramatist discuss the coming play or suggest its underlying intentions. This approach is more characteristic of Ben Jonson and John Marston." (Trussler. 1989: 85) Examples are Jonson's Bartholomew Fair and Marston's The Malcontent.

A play often ends with an Epilogue, a speech at the end of a play and spoken by one of the actors as Puck does in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Feste in Twelfth Night sings a song as an Epilogue to end the play, and Rosalind in As You Like It assures us that 'good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues'.

3. A Play-within-a-Play

Banks (1985 : 147) states that "this convention carries with it some of the effect borne by the dumb show. The language of plays-within-plays is always elevated and distanced from that of the main plot." Examples are *'Pyramus and Thisby'* in A Midsummer Night's Dream, which provides humour in the way it is acted by the 'rude mechanicals' and bridges the gap between waking and sleeping as the plots are resolved, *'The Murder of Gonzago'* in Hamlet and *'The Play of Hieronimo'* in The Spanish Tragedy, which comment on and duplicate the action of the main plot.

4. The Sub-Plot

Banks (1985 : 147) comments that "this convention is extensively used to reinforce the impact of the main plot. It sometimes acts as a comment on, or a commentary to accompany the main

plot. It is often used in a comedy."

5. The Soliloquy

A soliloquy is a long speech in which a character, alone on the stage, speaks his thoughts aloud. The essential dramatic feature of the soliloquy is one kind of speech which is to be taken as true. The characters do not deceive themselves or their audience in uttering them; soliloquies express the true feelings and the true thoughts of those speaking. The best example of all is found in Hamlet's soliloquies.

6. The Aside

The aside is "the half-way stage between dialogue and the soliloquy. The character is engaged in dialogue or action and yet wishes to express innermost thought, comment on what is happening, or address the audience to bring them into a secret. The aside is used for humour, to express thought, to point up an action, or to identify an actor with the audience by voicing their thoughts." (Banks. 1985 : 148)

7. Overhearing

Banks (1985 : 149) says that overhearing is "a clumsy, stylised device which demands that the audience can accept the antiphonal commentary uttered by those doing the overhearing of an action or soliloquied speech uttered by another character. Nevertheless, it is a device used often during this period in order to advance and even complicate the plot, reveal character, or provide the dénouement to an action. In Twelfth Night Maria, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian observe and comment for the audience's sake on the

way Malvolio is tricked into believing that Olivia loves him. During these incidents the characters of both the overhearers and the overheard are revealed. And in The Duchess of Malfi, Cariola is sent to overhear Antonio's pledge of love to the Duchess so that the 'contract in a chamber' is seen as the equivalent of a marriage contract itself."

8. Disguise

Disguise is a change of costume or facial appearance. It aims to conceal the identity of a character or an actor on stage. On the stage, disguise need not be realistic. One of the reasons why disguise was the common device dramatists favoured was that there were no actresses during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Boys could dress up as girls then disguise themselves as boys again. Through disguise, a character could be a different character and bring confusion to the plot and sometimes provide comedy. Examples are Julia, who disguises herself as 'Sebastian' in The Two Gentlemen of Verona; Portia as the Doctor of Law in The Merchant of Venice; Helena dresses herself as a pilgrim in All's Well that Ends Well; Volpone disguises himself as a mountebank in Jonson's Volpone; and Francisco, the Duke of Florence as a Moor, Mulinassar in Webster's The White Devil.

Shakespeare's Romantic Comedies

A comedy, as a dramatic composition with a happy ending, always aims at the production of laughter. A Shakespearean comedy has both these elements: it has a happy ending and it makes us laugh.

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"Follies and affectations are exposed and ridiculed, and the treatment is gentle and sympathetic, as it should be in a comedy." (Abrams. 1957 : 27)

Shakespeare's comedies are not satiric but romantic. Alexander (1979 : 29) comments that "in all his comedies (except The Comedy of Errors), he ignores the classical unities of time and place (involving the limitation of the action to a single place and a single day); and in that alone of his comedies the audience's sympathies are suspended in favour of an enjoyment of plot and narrative pace. ..... Shakespeare deploys the exotic and the strange: while his humour remains regcognizably English, his settings are romantically remote (Illyria, the Forest of Arden, Belmont, Athens) and he makes free use of improbabilities like salvation from shipwreck. .....Shakespeare's comedies uphold the pleasure principle and the cyclical nature of human life: all his comedies end in marriage and the possibility of another generation."

Stephen (1984 : 52) concludes that in the comedies, love plays a major role, "with the plots of the plays usually based on at least one, and more often two, love affairs. Good, healthy, and happy relationships usually end in marriage and marriage is used as a symbol of harmony and happiness. The capacity to give and receive love is an essential ingredient of the hero or heroine in a comedy; the figures who have this most abundantly are the twins Viola and Sebastian in Twelfth Night, and Rosalind in As You Like It. Characters who lack the capacity to love, such as Malvolio in Twelfth Night or Don John in Much Ado About Nothing, are left as

outsiders at the end of their respective plays, and not allowed into the final festivities of the comedy."

Shakespearean comedy grew out of national tastes and traditions. "There is a free mingling of the comic and tragic, the serious and the gay, for Shakespeare instinctively realized that life is a mingled yarn of joys and sorrows, and it would be unnatural to separate them." For example, at the beginning of A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hermia is given three days to agree to marry a man she does not love. If she does not agree, she will either be executed in accordance with the law of Athens or spend the rest of her life in a convent. The aim of Shakespearean comedy is not "corrective, or satiric but innocent good natured laughter. Follies are exposed and ridiculed but the laughter is gentle and sympathetic, and there is no moral indignation, or the zeal of a reformer. Shakespeare's comedies are not satiric but poetic. They are not conservative but creative. They are imagination rather than pure reason." (Tilak. 1981 : 26-27)

Brockett (1980 : 34) states that "romantic comedy is most closely related to the comedy of character, for it usually treats the struggles, often those centering around a love affair, of characters who are basically admirable. It is best illustrated by Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and As You Like It, in which the main characters are lovers pursuing normal and sympathetic goals. A comic response is aroused primarily because of ludicrous devices the characters use in pursuing success and misunderstandings or complications that result. In romantic comedy, the more boisterous action is usually relegated to subplots involving minor but ridiculous characters."

As Shakespeare returns again and again to passions that disrupt social order, it might be felt that he writes with the intention of warning people against acting in an anti-social or unruly way. Shakespeare is exploring the reality of human experience, the way in which people do act. He is making us aware of how society is complex because man is complex, "of how individual instincts and passions disturb any ideal of a harmonious society. He writes to explore both the good and bad qualities in human nature. He is concerned to ask questions about how we can or should behave in such a complex world, rather than to offer any answers. At the end of a play, we do come away with an increased awareness of the problems and choices and difficulties that man has to face up to." (Peck. 1985 : 9)

Shakespeare's comedies are funny and they make us laugh, but they also have very serious elements in their themes and plots, and often concern themselves with some of the weaker aspects of human nature. (Stephen. 1987 : 37)

Some of the basic decisions that Shakespeare made in planning his comedies helped to ensure a "predominantly wide dramatic focus." He usually presented more than one pair of lovers and these lovers' stories were developed simultaneously and involved disguise and over-hearing. With these techniques, his comedies are interesting and have "a wide dramatic force." (Brown. 1972 : 11-12)

Shakespeare's romantic comedies are all light-hearted plays even though they can contain darker elements. Shakespeare has a great ability to create comic characters and amusing situations.

In his plays, several characters usually fall in love and this leads to a series of comic mix-ups (Peck. 1985 : 92). Moreover, some of his characters are sharply individualized like Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream (Ford. 1955 : 87). "In the full spectrum of Shakespeare's characters we find at one extreme obsessive figures proudly wedded to inflexible principles in their pursuit of honour. Hotspur in Henry IV Part I with his attractive vigour and Coriolanus in Coriolanus with his cold, alienating obduracy are doomed to go down to defeat because they are equally incapable of adapting to an alternative role in face of political necessity. At the other extreme we find characters imbued with a cynical contempt for all principles who operate entirely out of pragmatic self-interest. The dedicated pursuit of a chameleon-like flexibility in role playing produces, at its worst, an appalling villain beyond all human sympathy such as Iago in Othello. But there is something cold and alienating about successful, pragmatic politicians like Octavius Caesar in Antony and Cleopatra and Tullus Aufidius in Coriolanus. Shakespeare's most sympathetic characters are generally-speaking, those who are able to stand in a middle ground between these extremes. Rosalind in As You Like It, Viola in Twelfth Night, Portia in The Merchant of Venice and Helena in A Midsummer Night's Dream display a flexibility in playing roles allied to a native virtue. Their facility in adopting disguises allows them to experience a variety of roles, to work actively towards their own happiness, and to rescue others from the sterile postures in which they have trapped themselves." (Brennan. 1986 : 70)

Shakespeare's gay comedy - the comedy before Hamlet and the problem plays - is "fundamentally saturnalian rather than satiric. It dramatizes pleasure as a release from normal limitations, and the judgements implicit in its humour primarily concern the relationship between man and nature. The plays give form to feeling and knowledge by movement which can be summarized in the formula: through release to clarification. Shakespeare's gay comedy is related to the social rituals of Elizabethan holidays such as Mayday, Midsummer-eve, Hallow-e'en, the twelve days of the Christmas season ending with Twelfth Night, etc. The festival occasion provides a pattern for the organization of impulse and awareness of those comedies where Shakespeare drew largely and directly on holiday motifs, like Love's Labour's Lost, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Twelfth Night." (Barber. 1981 : 245-246)

Shakespeare gives a high place to women as if they were queens of comedy. Because they are women, these heroines have a more appropriate quality of personality than men "to shape the world towards happiness. In his women, hand and heart and brain are fused in a vital and practicable union, each contributing to the other. Perhaps it was primarily because Shakespeare found women more sensitive to intuition and more responsive to emotion that he first promoted them to dominion the realm of comedy. He found, moreover, in their instincts a kind of finely developed mother-wit, a variety of humanized common-sense." (Lerner. 1967 : 340)

Shakespeare's romantic comedies produce a feeling of well-being. They may arouse smiles or quiet laughter but seldom

boisterous laughter (Brockett. 1980 : 34-35). The simplest pattern is that "in a well-ordered society, characters fall absurdly in love. It makes them act in a foolish way, something that is seen and heard in their actions and words. What we are exposed to is a huge irrational force that can throw life into total confusion." (Peck. 1985 : 94) Part of the romantic appeal is to our liking for suspense; they are dramas of averted threat, beginning in trouble and ending in joy. "They appeal to the romantic senses of adventure and of wonder, and the improbability, the marvellousness is part of the pleasure." They are plays in two tones, they are comic as well as romantic. There is often something to laugh at even in the love stories of the nobility and gentry. What makes us laugh are firstly, the amusing language as in Bottom's and Dogberry's malapropisms in A Midsummer Night's Dream and Much Ado About Nothing, Grumio's misunderstandings in The Taming of the Shrew, Sir Andrew's lack of knowledge of certain words in Twelfth Night, and Feste's nonsense phrases, admired by Sir Andrew. Secondly, the comic spectacle combines costumes and stage-business, for example, ass-headed Bottom embraced by the Fairy Queen in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Malvolio in Twelfth Night, with his yellow stockings and cross-gartered, and Petruchio in The Taming of the Shrew, wearing rags to his wedding. Third is comedy of character like Bottom who wants to play every part, Dogberry who is silly and clumsy, Launce in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby in Twelfth Night. Fourth is comedy of situation, for example, Malvolio treating Olivia as though she had written a love-letter to him (Olivia is a

countess and Malvolio is Olivia's steward in Twelfth Night), Orlando's mock wooing of 'Ganymede', a young 'man' pretending to be Rosalind, who is, in fact, Rosalind in disguise, and the attempts by the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon to choose the right box in The Merchant of Venice. "By slapstick, caricature or sheer ridiculousness of situation, comedy can be exaggerated into farce, which Shakespeare knows how to use on occasion." (Pickering. 1985 : x-xi)

Moreover, Shakespeare gets his audience to laugh with his characters as well as at them. His principal characters usually laugh too. They often find themselves in absurd situations, and sometimes do ridiculous things, but though we laugh, they usually laugh too. They usually produce witty dialogues that make us admire as well as smile at them. Most of the chief characters are delightful people. (Wilson. 1962 : 23)

A common characteristic of Shakespeare's comedies is the use of disguise. Women to disguise themselves as boys may have been suggested by the fact that there were no actresses on the Elizabethan stage; but Shakespeare does not appear to have used this device so frequently merely to simplify the task of his actors. The boy who played Rosalind, for example, had to pretend to be a girl, disguised as a boy (Ganymede), acting the part of Rosalind. "Disguise enabled Shakespeare to symbolize one of his favorite themes, the contrast between appearance and reality. Disguise and mistaken identity are prominent features of Shakespearean comedy." (Muir. 1965 : 2-3) Stephen (1984 : 39-40) comments that "disguise is both a theme

and a source of comedy. The most obvious form of disguise is the dressing-up of female characters in male clothing, as with Viola in Twelfth Night and Rosalind in As You Like It. A disguise of this nature allows for multiple ironies. Disguise in another form is seen in the use of eavesdropping. One of the funniest sequences in Shakespeare is the orchard scene in Twelfth Night, in which the steward Malvolio unwittingly unburdens himself of all his private thoughts of love in the sight of his enemies. Eavesdropping is also a significant feature in Much Ado About Nothing, and is the method by which the lovers are brought together."

The most common strategy Shakespeare uses to create "the illusion of mental life and complex character is the soliloquy." (Newman. 1985 : 3) Shakespeare also employs this device in his romantic comedies. Oliver in As You Like It (Act I Scene 1) uses it to express his jealousy and hatred of his brother, Orlando, and his plan to get rid of him, Antipholus of Syracuse in The Comedy of Errors (Act III Scene 2) utters his thoughts and intention and so does Benedick, in Much Ado About Nothing (Act II Scene 3) and Julia in The Two Gentlemen of Verona (Act IV Scene 4).

One of the techniques Shakespeare employs in his plot construction is a separation of the major characters. "Since separation is a primary motif of the romance form and romance is a major influence on this drama, it is not surprising that it is an element in a large proportion of his plays. Shakespeare is skilful in using separation of characters as seen in Twelfth Night, where there is a separation between Orsino and Olivia from the beginning of

the play. They finally meet at the end of the play. This separation does not so much make Orsino's love seem rarefied and ethereal, it makes it seem ludicrous, feeding, as it does, on no actual substance but on the self-indulgence of a fevered imagination." (Brennan. 1986: 112) In The Comedy of Errors, two sets of twins wander through the same town without meeting each other until they are driven almost mad by the confusion. And in Much Ado About Nothing, Hero and Claudio rarely speak to each other even though they are not separate. This is a different process of separation - a verbal interaction that prevents characters from gaining knowledge of each other. It can be seen that part of Shakespeare's success comes from the scenes he chooses not to write. "In sewing various plots together, inventing new characters, or in altering the time frame, Shakespeare is not simply filling out a two-hour entertainment or making its action more plausible, he is finding the most effective way of framing a story that had attracted him so that he might maximize its impact. One of the key elements in his strategy developed out of his understanding of how much interest can be generated in a relationship where characters meet rarely and briefly." (Brennan. 1986 : 105-107) His plots are often complicated - "lovers are separated by distance or misunderstanding parents at odds with children, men struggling with ill-understood duty. Each comedy ends in ordered resolution and satisfies the audience." (Brown. 1972 : 15)

The plot structure Shakespeare employs in his comedies can be divided into three stages. They are:

Stage 1: the problem presented at the beginning is faced by a pair of lovers or a group.

Stage 2: the complications and confusions which occur are caused by factors outside the control of the characters affected. Moreover, the characters face their increasing problems in good heart. It is in this stage that most of the humour occurs.

Stage 3: the dénouement or the solution to the problems is also caused by factors outside the control of the main characters. It often involves some kind of revelation or discovery or correction of a misunderstanding. At this stage, all the problems are solved, leaving us with a happy ending. (Grose ; unpublished)

Shakespearean comedy is different from traditional classical comedy. "Classical comedy is conservative. It implies a world which has reached stability sufficient for itself. Its members are assumed to be fully aware of the habits and the morals which preserve an already attained state of general well-being. The main interest is the exposure of offenders against commom practice and against unquestioned propriety in the established fitness of things. Hence, its manner is satire, and its standpoint is public common sense. But Shakespearean comedy is a more venturesome and a more imaginative undertaking." (Lerner. 1967 : 332) Tilak (1981 : 28) concludes that "Shakespeare's comedy has a romantic setting. The world of his comedies is a rainbow world of love in idleness. The action takes place in some distant far off land out of Shakespeare's imagination. In this land of romance and enchantment, the inhabitants have no other business but that of love-making."

Shakespeare's earliest style is quite distinguishable. His rhythms are regular. Rhymes are common. In the comedies, there is much clever language, especially when young gentlemen are talking (Harrison. 1966 : 170). As Shakespeare's experience grew, his early style disappeared rapidly. During his time, stories in the theatre were in verse. Audiences were accustomed to it and enjoyed the musical sounds of the words, and the actors found it easier to memorize (Chute. 1956 : 12). Behind the plots and characters of Shakespeare's plays is a level of larger significance in which questions are being raised about the whole nature of life in society. "Writing in verse is an effective way of forcing these questions onto our attention. We are confronted with an action sufficiently stylised to be not just a mirror image of life, but something at a tangent to real life, so that we do not simply become absorbed in the action but realise that there is a larger pattern of significance inherent in the play. But it goes further than this. Poetry is highly ordered language: when Shakespeare writes in verse his lines are usually in blank verse - that is, unrhymed lines, each line containing ten syllables." (Peck. 1985 : 10) Boulton (1960 : 129, 138) comments that "all drama is more dramatic than life, or is a selection of the most dramatic portion of life; but poetry in drama implies that the play is removed one step further from literal realism. Shakespeare uses verse with aristocrats, or when a servant is showing nobility, and prose with villains or cynics." Moreover, Crane (1951 : 66) states that "verse implies tension, pattern, formalism; prose, freedom and relaxation.

Verse is the proper vehicle for higher passion; prose, for rational discussion and calm resolution. The comic problem reaches its highest point in words. Therefore, Shakespeare has employed prose extensively in his comedies. His late comedies show a decline in the quantity of prose but the form loses nothing of its special function or value."

In conclusion, Shakespeare's romantic comedies contain these features:

1. Atmosphere of Optimism

Shakespeare's comedies usually have an optimistic atmosphere. We can enjoy the characters and appreciate the story without any anxiety about the outcome. We are confident that in the end, disaster will be averted, and we enjoy seeing how it is averted.

2. Festive Ending

Comedy traditionally has a festive dénouement. Shakespeare was influenced by the classical comedies, which usually ended with a wedding or a feast or both. "Although Shakespeare varied the classical pattern, he provided an equivalent air of festivity, often with an earthy reference to the coming consummation of the marriage." (Frye. 1982 : 84)

3. Non-satiric and Genial Tone

The characters in Shakespeare's comedies speak with gentleness and his comedies are not satires.

4. Predominance of Young Lovers and of Marriage

The comedies of Shakespeare "are usually built around the relations of young men and women in love, leading to marriage.

Hence, these plays are often described as romantic comedies." (Frye. 1982 : 87)

5. Background Roles for Older Characters

Young lovers are the usual protagonists and older characters usually "appear as a part of the background and step out at the end to assist or bless the young lovers, or to resolve the complications which would otherwise prevent a happy ending. However, there are also the parents and the older generation whose foolishness and myopia create problems which the youngsters must solve if they are to be united. Shakespeare employs one of the most persistent themes of comedy, one which goes back to the Greeks and is still with us today: the conflict between generations." (Frye. 1982: 89)

6. Muting of Evil

Shakespeare presents evil "either in a form which can be readily controlled or in a form so extravagant, so overdone and almost melodramatic, that we laugh at it rather than worry about it." (Frye. 1982 : 90)

CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The Taming of the Shrew was probably written in 1593 or 1594. It belongs to the first or experimental period of Shakespeare's comedies. This play is based on the medieval conception of the obedience owed by a wife to her husband.

PLOT

The play begins with an Induction. Christopher Sly, a tinker, emerges drunk from an inn and falls asleep by the side of the road. He is found by a nobleman, returning from a hunt with several retainers. As a joke the nobleman has Sly taken to his house, placed in his fairest chamber, and dressed up in rich clothes. When he wakes up, Sly finds himself surrounded by attendants, including his 'wife' (who is actually the nobleman's page in disguise), who congratulate him upon his recovery from a fit of insanity which has lasted for fifteen years. At first, he insists that he is 'by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker' (Induction II.17-19), but he eventually allows himself to be convinced that he is indeed a great noble gentleman. 'To induce merriment and to prevent a return of the disorder,' a company of travelling players perform before him this comedy of The Taming of the Shrew.

All quotations are from Shakespeare : The Taming of the Shrew, edited by G.R. Hibbard, 1968.

ACT ONE Lucentio, the son of Vincentio, a wealthy merchant of Pisa, has come to the busy Italian city of Padua, a centre of the arts, to study. He is accompanied by his servant, Tranio. The young men listen as Baptista, a rich merchant of Padua, announces that his younger daughter, Bianca, will remain unmarried and confined to her home until her elder sister, Katherina, is wedded. Katherina is known as a 'hilding of a devilish spirit' while Bianca is famous for sweetness and gentility. Naturally, Bianca has suitors, Gremio and Hortensio, who are dismayed by Baptista's decision. They agree to forget their rivalry long enough to find a husband for Katherina, which is a rather hopeless task because of her shrewishness. Lucentio, meanwhile, has fallen in love with Bianca.

Overhearing Baptista request Gremio and Hortensio to send him schoolmasters for his daughters, Lucentio decides to let his servant, Tranio, take his place in Paduan society, that is to be 'Vincentio's son' and to 'keep house, and port, and servants', while he disguises himself and tries to get a position as a schoolmaster to Bianca. Tranio, on the other hand, is to take the place of Lucentio and assist him by wooing Bianca so she has three suitors now. In good time, Hortensio meets his old friend, Petruchio, a prosperous merchant from Verona, who comes to Padua to seek a rich wife. Hortensio tells him about Katherina's wealth and beauty. However, he warns him that she is 'renown'd in Padua for her scolding tongue.' Petruchio at once determines to have her, regardless of her quick temper. Gremio and Hortensio agree to share the expenses of Petruchio's courtship. Hortensio asks Petruchio to introduce him

into Baptista's house as a music teacher for Bianca.

ACT TWO Together Petruchio, Gremio and Tranio go to Baptista's house. Petruchio brings his friend, Hortensio, disguised as a music teacher, Licio, that he may have access to Bianca; Gremio has hired the true Lucentio as a tutor in language (Cambio) that he may read love books to her on his behalf; and Tranio presents a lute and some Greek and Latin books. Petruchio is impatient to begin his wooing, and his introduction to Katherina comes just after she has broken the lute across Hortensio's head. She gives him a violent tongue lashing, but he praises her gentleness, protests that he finds her 'pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous, but slow of speech'. Ignoring her blows and her protests, he announces that they will be wedded on the following Sunday. Gremio and Tranio (still pretending to be Lucentio), boast of their riches hoping to win Bianca's hand. Baptista agrees to give Bianca to the one who can assure her of the greater dowry. Each tries to outboast the other, and Baptista at last agrees on the Sunday following Katherina's wedding to accept the supposed Lucentio, but insists that his father, Vincentio, guarantee the settlement.

ACT THREE Under the jealous eye of Hortensio, Lucentio, in the guise of the tutor Cambio, secretly reveals his true identity to Bianca, as well as his love for her, during a Latin lesson. On the appointed Sunday when Katherina and Petruchio are to be married, Petruchio deliberately keeps the wedding party waiting. He finally arrives dressed in shabby clothes and riding a broken-down horse and refuses to change into more suitable clothes. During the ceremony he behaves like a madman, knocking the priest down, tossing wine in the

sexton's face, and at last kissing the bride with such 'a clamorous smack that all the church did echo.' As a climax he refuses to stay for the wedding feast, and in spite of Katherina's vigorous protests, carries her away to his country house, as if he were rescuing her from thieves.

ACT FOUR Petruchio's attendant, arrives at his master's country house to warn Curtis and the other servants that the newlyweds are on their way. According to Grumio, the trip from Padua was full of misadventures. Katherina's horse stumbled, Petruchio beat Grumio so violently that Katherina had to wade through the mud to restrain him and then both horses ran away. On their arrival, Petruchio begins to tame Katherina. He finds fault with all his servants and throws out the supper because it is burnt while Katherina urges him to be patient.

In Padua, Hortensio and Tranio witness a tender scene between Bianca and Lucentio. Hortensio, realizing that Bianca loves Lucentio, decides to marry a rich widow who loves him. Biondello, another servant of Lucentio, reports that he has found a Mantuan pedant who resembles Vincentio. He and Tranio tell the pedant that the Duke of Padua has decreed the death penalty for Mantuans who enter his territories and offer to protect him if he will pose as Lucentio's father and help him with the marriage negotiations.

Katherina, meanwhile, is completely worn out because she has not been permitted to eat or sleep for days. When a haberdasher and a tailor arrive with new clothes for her, Petruchio scornfully rejects them, declaring they are badly-made in spite of Katherina's

protests. Petruchio decides to bring Katherina back to visit her father in Padua. On the way, he comments on the moonlight and when Katherina points out that it is the sun that is shining, he answers angrily and sharply that if she argues with him, he shall go back. Katherina gives up. Then they meet an old man on the road, Petruchio addresses him as a young girl and Katherina immediately agrees, only to be contradicted by Petruchio. The man turns out to be Vincentio, who is on his way to Padua to pay a surprise visit to Lucentio.

ACT FIVE Petruchio, Katherina and Vincentio arrive at Baptista's house to find the pedant there claiming to be Lucentio's father. Tranio refuses to admit that he knows him. Vincentio assumes that Tranio has murdered his son. Then he is arrested on the orders of Tranio and Baptista. The confusion is cleared up by the appearance of Bianca and Lucentio, who have just been secretly married. They apologize to their fathers and are forgiven.

At the banquet that follows, Petruchio bets 100 crowns with Lucentio and Hortensio, who has married the widow, that his wife is more obedient than theirs. Bianca and the widow refuse to come when their husbands have summoned them, but Katherina comes at once. The play ends with Katherina instructing the other two wives on the duty and obedience they owe their husbands.

The play can be seen as a reworking of two very old traditional stories: the story of the strict father who will not let his beautiful younger daughter marry until his elder daughter, whom no one wants to marry, has found a husband; and the many ancient stories on the theme, who should be master in the house, the husband or the wife.

CHARACTERIZATION

Like the other early comedies, there is very little depth of characterization in this play. However, Katherina and Petruchio are more interesting than the others, who are essentially conventional types.

Katherina is the elder daughter of Baptista of Padua. She is a rich, young and beautiful girl with a quick temper and known as 'a shrew' or 'Kate, the curst'. She is the 'humour'* character in the play (humour here means a person's state of mind; mood; temper) and the 'humour'is her bad temper. She shows the greatest improvement in behaviour. This change is the result of outside pressure applied by another person. She feels inferior and frustrated because of Bianca's numerous suitors and her own lack of a suitor. Her bad temper becomes more extreme as time goes by and no suitor bids for her. Moreover, she realizes that her father favours her younger sister more than her. He shows more care for Bianca. In addition, she has heard herself

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* According to the medieval theory of humours, the human body was made up of four humours : melancholy (cold and dry), phlegm (cold and moist), blood or sanguine (hot and moist), and bile (hot and dry. This theory was used to explain human behaviour and appearance. When the humours were in balance, a person was in good health but when they were not in balance, a person was sick. So one character might be melancholy, phlegmatic, sanguine, or choleric, depending on which humour was dominant.

blamed, and her sister praised all the time. She is a girl of spirit in revolt against the society she is living in. As Petruchio says,

> If she be curst, it is for policy,
> For she's not froward, but modest as the dove.
> She is not hot, but temperate as the morn.
>
> (II.i.285-7)

Her shrewishness is a role she has adopted in self-defence, and it disapppears when she eventually meets a man who can not only stand up to her but also appreciates her for what she is and responds to the challenge she offers.

Her father has settled a high dowry on her, with the condition that she has to be married before her younger sister, who has many suitors. This makes Katherina get very angry , she storms at her father:

> What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see
> She is your treasure, she must have a husband.
> I must dance bare-foot on her wedding-day,
> And for your love to her lead apes in hell.
> Talk not to me, I will go sit and weep,
> Till I can find occasion of revenge.
>
> (II.i.31-6)

She is sharp-tongued; 'Renowned in Padua for her scolding tongue' (I.ii.99). And when Baptista allows her to marry Petruchio, she bursts out:

> Call you me daughter? Now I promise you
> You have showed a tender fatherly regard

To wish me wed to one half lunatic,

A madcap ruffian and a swearing Jack,

That thinks with oaths to face the matter out.

(II.i.278-82)

She has various descriptions for Petruchio; 'a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen', 'a frantic fool', 'a madcap ruffian and a swearing Jack' etc.

Her shrewishness consists of rebelling violently against the conventions of the rest of her family. She challenges the authority of her father, secretly torments her younger sister, breaks the lute over her music tutor's head and reacts violently to her prospective husband at first sight. Apart from her jealousy to her sister, she is waspish and difficult, stubborn and shows her own will quite overtly. She objects to being treated simply as part of Bianca's wedding arrangements:

I pray you, sir, is it your will

To make a stale of me amongst these mates?

(I.i.57-8)

She does not believe what most people do and she is not an obedient daughter. However, after being tamed, her character has changed, as Baptista comments:

Another dowry to another daughter,

For she is changed, as she had never been.

(V.ii.113-4)

She has changed from being a shrew and treating others violently to being obedient and having sympathy for others. At the beginning, she

is independent, self-willed, shrewish and intolerable, but in the end, after being tamed, she becomes a model of wifely obedience and duty. She becomes the most submissive of the three brides. She comes to Petruchio immediately when he sends for her while the other two brides do not. She also urges the two brides to be obedient to their husbands. Katherina has finally accepted her natural role as a wife; hostility, petulance, and recalcitrance have been replaced by affection, good humour, and partnership. She sees herself in a new light, to take on a fresh personality, and to assume a different role in life from that which she has had previously. Her transformation is foreshadowed in the Induction, where the Lord gives his instructions to his page Bartholomew as to the behaviour he is to assume when he appears disguised as Sly's wife. Bartholomew is told that he must do the drunkard 'duty',

> With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,
> And say 'What is't your honour will command,
> Wherein your lady and your humble wife
> May show her duty and make known her love?'
>
> (Induction I.112-5)

and he tells Sly,

> My husband and my lord, my lord and husband,
> I am your wife in all obedience.
>
> (Induction II.105-6)

While Katherina tells the other two wives at the end of the play, after her transformation that

...love, fair looks, and true obedience -

Too little payment for so great a debt.

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,

Even such a woman oweth to her husband.

(V.ii.152-5)

The Lord's instructions to his page foreshadow Katherina's instructions to the other two wives 'the duty they owe to their husband and lord' at the end.

Petruchio is a fortune hunter from Verona. He arrives in Padua with only one thought in his head: to marry a rich wife:

I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;

If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

(I.ii.74-5)

When he hears about Katherina, he determines to wed and tame her.

For I am he am born to tame you, Kate,

And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate

Conformable as other household Kates.

(II.i.269-71)

He is bold, brave and very proud of himself. He fears nothing because in his time he has heard lions roar, has heard the sea 'rage like an angry boar', and has heard 'the battle sounds, neighing steeds, and the clang of trumpets'. As he had travelled in dangerous forests, been a sailor and a soldier before so he has no reason to fear a shrew. He asks,

And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,
That gives not half so great a blow to hear
As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?
Tush, tush, fear boys with bugs!

(I.ii.205-8)

He is very clever and cunning in wooing Katherina. He develops the process in manner both farcical and fantastic, yet effective.

And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale.
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with dew.
Say she be mute and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence.

(II.i.169-76)

He knows why Katherina has become a shrew and finds the right method to cure her. He perceives that Katherina, whom the men of Padua see as a devil and whom her father calls 'thou hilding of a devilish spirit', is in fact a woman of spirit who is bad-tempered because she has never met a man who is her equal and capable of standing up to her. He diagnoses the cause of her bad temper with immediate insight and great accuracy, at his first meeting with her father, he says:

I am as peremptory as she proud-minded;
And where two raging fires meet together,

They do consume the thing that feeds their fury.
Though little fire grows great with little wind,
Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all.

(II.i.131-5)

Petruchio recognizes a kindred spirit in Katherina, and is willing to put up a good fight with her. When Hortensio enters 'with his head broke' after his ineffectual attempt to teach Katherina how to play the lute, and tells him what actually happened, Petruchio admires her vigour and cries out:

Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench.
I love her ten times more than e'er I did.
O, how I long to have some chat with her!

(II.i.160-62)

Appreciating Katherina's wild, proud animal spirits, Petruchio equates her with another fierce difficult creature he is familiar with, the haggard or wild falcon, and imitates the way it is tamed; denying it sleep and food, and when it has been tamed, it will become very attached or 'very loving to the man' which is just what Petruchio wishes Katherina to be. He explains:

My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged,
For then she never looks upon her lure.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come and know her keeper's call,
That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites
That bate and beat and will not be obedient.

She eat no meat today, nor none shall eat.

Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not.

(IV.i.176-84)

When she shouts, he tells her he loves her sweet and gentle voice, and when she rages about the room, he admires her charming way of walking. He is witty in using figures of rhetoric to overcome Katherina:

Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor,

For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich,

(IV.iii.167-8)

He has hit upon a technique that maddens her by calling her 'Kate', and she cannot find a way to turn it back on him. He pretends that he knows only the good side of her:

You lie, in faith, for you are called plain Kate,

And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst.

But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,

Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,

For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,

Take this of me, Kate of my consolation -

Hearing thy mildness praised in every town,

Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,

Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,

Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife.

(II.i.184-194)

Despite her display of temper on their first meeting, he uses only sweet words to describe her because he realizes the fact about

her own lack of admiration from other people around her:

> For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,
> But slow in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers.
>
> (II.i.239-240)

He has his own ways in taming Katherina such as arriving late and in old, shabby clothes for the wedding, refusing to let her stay for the dinner, finding fault with the accommodation, boisterously scolding his servants, taking her food and new clothes from her, and making her call the sun the moon. However, he manages to show his concern for her in everything he does to tame her, such as when Katherina tries to make him stay for the wedding feast, he seizes her and carries her away, shouting energetically that he is rescuing her from thieves, 'Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, Kate' (III.ii.237); when they arrive at Petruchio's country house after the cold, dirty and unpleasant journey, the servants serve very good meat but Petruchio knocks them about, saying that the food is unfit to eat and in the end Katherina gets no food at all; and when the tailor shows them the new and beautiful clothes Petruchio has ordered for Katherina, Petruchio finds fault with them and rejects them so Katherina does not get them either. He abuses the Haberdasher and the tailor without restraint or mercy. He is behaving more violently than Katherina herself but with such a sunny air of doing it all for her comfort that she cannot do anything against him. He adopts roles in order to achieve his end and he takes a delight in doing so. His aim is to make himself a kind of mirror - a mirror that exaggerates Katherina. His displays of temper are a 'caricature' of hers.

Absurd and unreasonable, they enlist her sympathies for those who suffer under them. When he knocks over a basin of water and then blames the servant for letting it fall, Katherina begs Petruchio, 'Patience, I pray you, 'twas a fault unwilling' (IV.i.142).

Not only does Petruchio show Katherina what she is, through his own exaggerated parody of her wild and unreasonable behaviour, but he also shows her what she might be and what he wants her to be, through the way in which he treats her and talks to her. His offensive and outrageous actions and speeches are always directed at others, never at her.

Petruchio deliberately outdoes Katherina in his display of perversity and bad temper so that he can master her in her own outbursts of bad temper, as one of his servants comments, 'He kills her in her own humour' (IV.i.166) and finally, turns her to be a gentle and obedient wife.

> This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,
> And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.
> He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
> Now let him speak - 'tis charity to show.
> (IV.i.194-7)

He is very proud of winning the wager because of his wife's obedience and he says to Katherina, 'I charge thee, tell these headstrong women what duty they do owe their lords and husbands.' (V.ii.129-30)

Bianca is the gentle, sweet younger daughter of Baptista. Her father loves her more than he does her sister, Katherina. He forbids

her to get married until her older sister, the shrewish Katherina, is wedded. She is wooed by Hortensio and Gremio, but is won by Lucentio. Unlike her sister, Katherina, she is attractive to men, charming in manner. She stands out in contrast to her vigorous sister. Her gentleness and popularity are in contrast to the loud and violent temper of Katherina. She seems to be a dutiful, obedient and humble daughter. She lets her father control her will. To please her father, who wants his daughters to be well-educated, she says she loves music and reading:

> My books and instruments shall be my company,
> On them to look and practise by myself.
>
> (I.i.82-3)

Her father is deceived by her, so he would like to have tutors 'in music, instruments, and poetry' for her.

She pretends to be humble to her sister, Katherina:

> Or what you will command me will I do,
> So well I know my duty to my elders.
>
> (II.i.6-7)

She even lets her sister do whatever she wishes. She lets her tie her up and strike her. However, Katherina recognizes that her sweet disposition is part of a deeper strategy,

> Her silence flouts me, and I'll be revenged.
>
> (II.i.29)

When we see her with her rival tutors, her essential nature is revealed. She turns out to be a girl who likes to do anything she pleases:

I am no breeching scholar in the schools,

I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,

But learn my lessons as I please myself.

(III.i.18-20)

She enjoys carrying on a double flirtation, joins with Lucentio in fooling his rival, and generally behaves like the accomplished minx that she is. In due course, the apparent submissiveness completely disappears. Her gentleness and submissiveness are part of an act put on to impress other people. She realizes that in the society, in which she lives, deception is a woman's most effective weapon. She is the centre of the complicated intrigues.

Although she seems to be an obedient daughter at the beginning, she has secretly married Lucentio (disguised as her tutor), ignoring her father's authority, and at the end of the play she has changed from what she appears to be at the beginning: gentle, modest and submissive, to be a difficult and self-willed wife. Lucentio is very upset at her disobedience, which makes him lose his bet.

Baptista is a wealthy merchant of Padua, the father of Katherina and the gentle Bianca. He is like fathers at that time who controlled their children. Moreover, like the fathers of other Shakespeare heroines (for example, Egeus in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Capulet in Romeo and Juliet, and Prospero in The Tempest) he is watchful of his daughters and eager to find them the best education and husbands available. He is the family tyrant and he is a major cause of Katherina's shrewishness. He sets up conditions for his two

daughters' marriage. First, he will not allow Bianca to wed until Katherina has a husband even though he knows that it is unlikely because Katherina is commonly known as a shrew. Second, he will let Bianca marry the suitor who can offer the most money:

> 'Tis deeds must win the prize, and he of both
> That can assure my daughter greatest dower
> Shall have my Bianca's love
>
> (II.i.335-7)

Bianca is literally put up for auction, and sold to the highest bidder. Money plays the most important part when marriage is arranged. Baptista is a good merchant even in the business of his daughter's marriage as when Baptista and Tranio comment on Katherina's match:

> BAPTISTA
>
> Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,
> And venture madly on a desperate mart.
>
> TRANIO
>
> 'Twas a commodity lay fretting by you,
> 'Twill bring you gain, or perish on the seas.
>
> BAPTISTA
>
> The gain I seek is quiet in the match.
>
> (II.i.319-23)

He is short-sighted and easily deceived for he never suspects the elaborate deception going on around him, which culminates in the elopement of Bianca with the real Lucentio. Tranio, the servant in his master's clothes, is accepted at face value by Baptista, and so

is his supposed father, the pedant. He is consistently mistaken about everything and everybody.

Lucentio is an accomplished young student from Pisa. He is the son of Vincentio, a rich merchant of Pisa. He is the typical handsome young man of a romantic comedy who has fallen in love with a beautiful girl, Bianca, at first sight.

> I found the effect of love in idleness,
> And now in plainness do confess to thee,
> That art to me as secret and as dear
> As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was -
> Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio,
> If I achieve not this young modest girl.
>
> (I.i.146-53)

He admires her beauty and he is determined to marry her.

> .....I saw sweet beauty in her face,
> Such as the daughter of Agenor had,
> That made great Jove to humble him to her hand,
> When with his knees he kissed the Cretan strand.
>
> (I.i.164-7)

He asks his servant, Tranio, to help. He devises a deception to win Bianca's hand on the advice of Tranio, 'If you love the maid, bend thoughts and wits to achieve her.' (I.i.175) He knows that the only way to become successful is to be near Bianca so he disguises himself as a tutor in language and teaches Bianca. However, he does not teach her anything but woos her instead, while Tranio disguises

himself as 'Lucentio'and becomes another suitor for Bianca. He lies to Gremio that he would read love books to Bianca on his behalf;

> Whate'er I read to her, I'll plead for you
> As for my patron, stand you so assured,
> As firmly as yourself were still in place,
> Yea, and perhaps with more successful words
> Than you, unless you were a scholar, sir.
>
> (I.ii.152-6)

He gains Bianca with the use of artifice and intrigue. Then he secretly marries her in St.Luke's Church. His deception leads his father to misunderstand that Tranio has murdered him and taken his possessions. He is almost taken to jail. Lucentio is described as 'a deceitful son.'

Although he wins Bianca, he does not get an obedient wife. At the end of the play, Lucentio bet with Petruchio and Hortensio 'whose wife is most obedient, to come at first when he doth send for her, shall win the wager' (V.ii.66-8) and his wife did not come so he lost. They had a quarrel when Bianca came later:

> BIANCA
>
> Fie, what a foolish duty call you this?
>
> LUCENTIO
>
> I would your duty were as foolish too!
> The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca,
> Hath cost me a hundred crowns since supper-time.

BIANCA

The more fool you for laying on my duty.

(V.ii.124-8)

Hortensio is one of Bianca's suitors. He is a friend of Petruchio's. He tempts Petruchio to court Katherina by revealing her large dowry so that he may marry Bianca, but he is honest enough to tell Petruchio the truth about Katherina's shrewishness. He disguises himself as a music teacher to woo Bianca but he loses her to Lucentio. He becomes a figure of fun. Katherina breaks the lute over his head while he is trying to teach her and Lucentio and Bianca use him as their butt. His music lesson with Katherina ends with the destruction of his lute. Later he marries the widow who loves him.

Tranio is Lucentio's intelligent and resourceful servant and confidant. He is cunning. He helps his master by disguising himself as Lucentio then becomes one of Bianca's suitors. He outdoes Gremio in impressing Baptista with his family's wealth. Gremio leaves with the comment:

Sirrah, young gamester, your father were a fool

To give thee all, and in his waning age

Set foot under thy table. Tut, a toy!

(II.i.394-6)

He can persuade Baptista to let him marry Bianca because he offers more than Gremio. Finally, he is able to find a 'deceiving father' to guarantee his wealth.

Gremio is a pantaloon (a pantaloon is a buffoon usually a weak-minded, old man, who is the butt of laughter) who seeks a young wife. He is one of Bianca's suitors. He unwittingly engages his rival Lucentio as Bianca's tutor, thereby losing her himself. He also fails in the bidding for Bianca's marriage.

Biondello is called by his old master, Vincentio, a 'crackhemp' and a 'notorious villain.' He adds much to the comedy of the play. He also helps carry out the masquerade in which Tranio replaces Lucentio.

Grumio, Petruchio's diminutive servant, 'a little pot and soon hot', tells the story of the journey of the newlyweds from Padua to the country house. He has considerable executive ability, as he is sent ahead to make preparations for the master and his bride, including orders for food and new style feminine clothing.

THEME

This play can be divided very clearly into three parts: the Induction, the main plot (Petruchio and Katherina) and the sub-plot (Bianca and her lovers).

The main theme of the main plot is the question of whether wives should be obedient to their husbands in order to lead happy married lives. Katherina is famous for her shrewishness. She has a scolding tongue and she gets angry all the time. Moreover, she becomes violent when she is angry. She strikes those who make her

angry. She is not obedient even to her father. People call her 'a curst shrew' or 'Kate, the curst'. No one wants to be near her. Then Petruchio whose father died and left him great fortune, comes to Padua to seek a rich wife. With the help of Hortensio, he becomes Katherina's suitor. He ignores her shrewishness and violence, praises her, and then settles the wedding date. He is determined to tame her by using the methods of taming a wild hawk or haggard, in order to make her 'meek, and loving to the man'. He never follows her will. Despite her protest, he carries her off to his country home. Once they arrive there, he starts giving her a lecture on the virtues of moderation and restraint,'Making a sermon of continency to her' in his 'taming-school'. He himself demonstrates shrewishness exactly as Katherina had done before, such as scolding, brawling, striking people, throwing things, etc. He finds fault with everything; food, bed,new clothes, so that Katherina does not eat nor sleep nor get new clothes. He also beats his servants violently and scolds them loudly. As a result, Katherina feels sympathy for them and begs him to be patient. In other words, Petruchio tames Katherina by bringing her to an awareness of her own shrewishness, thus inducing her to mend her ways. Finally, Katherina becomes a gentle, humble, patient and obedient wife. She agrees with him even though she knows that it is stupid: for example, she agrees that the sun is the moon and the old man is a young girl. At the end she proves to be the most obedient wife among the three brides by coming to Petruchio as soon as he sends for her while the other two brides, Bianca and the Widow, refuse. Then she gives a long lecture to Bianca and the Widow on

'what duty they do owe their lords and husbands'. Petruchio is very proud of 'her new-built virtue and obedience.' There is absolutely no romance in this plot. Shakespeare has given us a deliberately unromantic love story.

The sub-plot is a deliberate contrast with the main plot. It is a typical romantic love story of a handsome young man, a beautiful young girl and a strict father. After a series of confusions and disguises, they secretly get married against the father's wish, but are finally forgiven and have a happy ending. The conventional ending to a romantic love story is that "they all live happily ever after". But when Lucentio sent a message to Bianca saying he wanted to see her at the end, Bianca sent a message back saying that she was busy and could not come. It appears that Shakespeare has suggested that the romantic love story might not have the typical happy ending and that the married life of Lucentio and Bianca, who is not obedient to her husband, might not be idealistic. On the other hand, he is clearly saying that the marriage of Petruchio and Katherina is going to be very satisfactory and the play ends with Katherina declaring her love for her husband and master, Petruchio. They gain full knowledge and have absolute trust in each other.

The Induction seems to be the framework for the drama itself, but then it disappears completely. It appears to be only the starting point for a play-within-a-play. But it does not turn out to be a play-within-a-play because the situation in which the actors perform for Sly is never mentioned again and <u>The Taming of the Shrew</u> ends when the play ends. In the Induction Christopher Sly, the

drunken beggar, is boastful, resentful and ignorant. He is a good subject for the trick played on him by the nobleman. When he wakes up in his fine clothes in the nobleman's castle, surrounded by servants and his lady, he refuses to believe that he is a lord who has just recovered from a strange illness and his memories as Sly are a lunatic delusion. But the trick is so complete that he is finally deceived and believes that he really is a lord and that 'Christopher Sly' the beggar must have been part of a dream he had while he was sick. The point here is that reality is not always what it seems to be, which is a very commom theme in Shakespeare's plays and it is this theme that links the Induction to the play itself. Sly is the perfect link between the world of the audience, to whom he would be a familiar figure, and the world of the play. However, after he leads from the reality of everyday life to the imagined world of the play, he disappears. In addition, the Lord's intructions to the page to be obedient to Sly in the Induction is linked to Katherina's instructions to the other two wives at the end of the play.

Again Shakespeare has returned to the world of appearance and the world of reality. The world of appearance shows what seems to be true, whereas the world of reality is what actually is true. The theme that unites the two plots of The Taming of the Shrew is that of appearance and reality. The girl who appears the shrew turns out to be the obedient wife; and the girl who appears meek turns out, on marriage, not to be so. On several occasions during the play, characters are using disguises or pretending to be someone else. For example, Baptista agrees to let Lucentio marry Bianca because his

father has given a guarantee of his wealth. But in reality he is not talking to Lucentio or his father, but to Tranio and a pedant pretending to be the father. Indeed, so many disguises and tricks are used that, by the time Vincentio arrives, everyone (except Petruchio and Katherina) is in a state of complete confusion.

This theme of reality is also clearly stated at the end. On the surface everyone expects Lucentio and Bianca, the marriage of love, to be happy, and they expect Petruchio and Katherina, the marriage of convenience, to have a difficult time. However, Shakespeare leaves us wondering if the opposite is not more likely.

COMEDY AND DICTION

The Taming of the Shrew, is a comedy of character, since the main interest and action come from the personality of Katherina, who is an example of what the Elizabethans called a 'humour' character. In her case the humour is bad temper. The shrewish wife had long been established as a comic figure on the English stage when Shakespeare wrote this play. There is also some comedy of situation in the Induction and in the fact that several characters use disguise at different times. There is also a little comedy in the character type of the pedant and there is comedy of situation as in the riotous fun and confusion of Act Five scene 1, where the real father of Lucentio arrives unexpectedly in Padua and meets his supposed father, the Pedant; and when Petruchio first meets Katherina, which is a lively scene. Audiences have always enjoyed this scene, for the fun of seeing two strong wills pushing against each other, both of

them quite without any sense of fair play and both of them determined to win. Moreover, Shakespeare uses "reported description", which was a favourite of the audience at that time. Examples of "reported description" can be found in Act Three scene 2, when Biondello describes Petruchio's horse and the happenings just preceding the wedding; and when Gremio describes what has happened in the church during the wedding ceremony; and in Act Four scene 1, when Grumio, who is sent on ahead, describes Petruchio and Katherina's journey to his country house to Curtis, another servant. These events occur off-stage, and Shakespeare reveals them to the audience through the eyes of minor characters.

Apart from what has been discussed above, Shakespeare also uses wordplay such as pun, paradox and ambiguity.

Examples of a pun are as follows:

1) KATHERINA

I pray you, sir, is it your will

To make a stale of me amongst these mates?

(I.i.57-8)

'a stale of....mates' means a laughing-stock of me among these contemptible fellows and with a pun on 'stale' meaning 'a prostitute'.

2) PETRUCHIO

Here, sirrah Grumio, knock, I say.

GRUMIO

Knock, sir? Whom should I knock? Is there any man has rebused your worship?

PETRUCHIO

Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.

GRUMIO

Knock you here, sir? Why, sir, what am I, sir, that I should knock you here, sir?

PETRUCHIO

Villain, I say, knock me at this gate,

And rap me well, or I'll knock your knave's pate.

GRUMIO

My master is grown quarrelsome. I should knock you first,

And then I know after who comes by the worst.

PETRUCHIO

Will it not be?

Faith, sirrah, an you'll not knock, I'll ring it.

I'll try how you can *sol-fa* and sing it.

He wrings him by the ears

(I.ii.5-17)

The word 'knock' here means 'knock on the door for admittance' but Grumio takes the word in its other sense of 'beat' or 'strike' and he understands that Petruchio asks him to knock someone who treats him badly. Then Petruchio says 'knock me here soundly', which means 'knock the door for me', but Grumio thinks Petruchio asks him to strike him so he asks, 'why I should knock you here, sir?' Grumio realizes his mistake at last:

.....'Sirrah, knock me here, rap me here,

knock me well, and knock me soundly?' And come you

now with 'knocking at the gate'?

And for the word ring and wring, Petruchio says 'I'll ring it,' meaning 'I will ring the door-bell' then he wrings Grumio's ears (he twists his ears).

There is also a malapropism made by Grumio, who has made a mistake with the word 'abused' by replacing it with 'rebused'.

3) GRUMIO:.....he will throw a figure in her face, and

so disfigure her with it that she have no more eyes to

see withal than a cat. (I.ii.112-4)

Grumio is using the word figure in two senses: (1) hurl a figure of speech at her (use figures of rhetoric); (2) subject her to the influence of the kind of spell-binding figure used by conjurers and magicians.

4) HORTENSIO: I think she'll sooner prove a soldier.

Iron may hold with her, but never lutes.

(II.i.145-6)

'prove a soldier' can either mean 'become a soldier' or 'put a soldier to the test'. So Hortensio means he thinks Katherina will be a soldier or test a soldier when she strikes him with a lute.

5) HORTENSIO: Why no, for she hath broke the lute to me.

I did but tell her she mistook her frets,

And bowed her hand to teach her fingering,

When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,

'Frets, call you these?' quoth she, 'I'll fume

with them.'

And with that word she struck me on the head,

(II.i.148-153)

Hortensio uses the word frets meaning 'the rings of gut or bars of wood upon the lute to regulate the fingering but Katherina uses it to mean 'irritation' or 'annoyance'.

6) KATHERINA:

Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing;

They call me Katherine that do talk of me.

Here Katherina plays on the words heard and hard, which were pronounced 'hard'.

7) PETRUCHIO:

Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,

For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,

Petruchio is playing on the word Kates. Cates means 'delicacies'.

8) PETRUCHIO:

Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee!

For knowing thee to be but young and light-

KATHERINA:

Too light for such a swain as you to catch,

And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

PETRUCHIO:

Should be? Should-buzz!

For the word light Petruchio means 'not heavy' but Katherina means 'quick-witted'.

Petruchio is playing with the words 'be' and 'buzz'. First is 'be' and 'bee'. Then 'buzz' means: (1)the noise made by bees, and (2) rumour or scandal.

9) PETRUCHIO:

Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?

In his tail.

KATHERINA:

In his tongue.

PETRUCHIO:

Whose tongue?

KATHERINA:

Yours, if you talk of tales,and so farewell.

There is a pun on tail and tales.

10) PETRUCHIO:

And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate

Conformable as other household Kates.

Petruchio says, 'a wild Kate' but also means 'a wild cat'.

There are also some paradoxes used in this play. A paradox means a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement. Some of those found in this play are as follows:

1) LUCENTIO: And let me be a slave t'achieve that maid

2) PETRUCHIO: But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,

With gentle conference, soft and affable.

3) PETRUCHIO: This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong
humour.

4) KATHERINA: .....if I should sleep or eat,
'Twere deadly sickness or else present death.

Funny characters and misunderstandings by certain servants also bring laughter, for example,

1) GRUMIO: She was, good Curtis, before this frost. But thou know'st winter tames man, woman, and beast; for it hath tamed my old master, and my new mistress, and myself, fellow Curtis.

CURTIS: Away, you three-inch fool! I am no beast.

By naming himself third, Grumio has equated himself, and therefore his fellow-servant, Curtis, with the beast. Hence Curtis says, 'I am no beast.'

2) GRUMIO: Lend thine ear.

CURTIS: Here.

GRUMIO: There.

He boxes Curtis's ear

CURTIS: This 'tis to feel a tale, not to hear a tale.

3) CURTIS: I call them forth to credit her.

GRUMIO: Why, she comes to borrow nothing of them.

Chute (1957: 45) in An Introduction to Shakespeare explains that "The Taming of the Shrew was an adaptation of an older play.

Shakespeare took what was originally a tidy little farce and transformed it into a vigorous and colorful one. But it remains a rather heartless play, and although Katherina and Petruchio are entertaining they are not particularly real people. After that, Shakespeare wrote no more farces. A farce depends on situations rather than characterization and gives very little room for the development of real human beings."

Wilders (1988: 48) states that in The Taming of the Shrew, "Shakespeare combined three different plots, each one taken from a different source. The story of the poor tinker who is deceived into believing he is a nobleman, which forms the Prologue to the play, belongs to folklore; the story of the rebellious daughter who is tamed into a submissive wife had already been the subject of many tales and ballads; and the story of the nobleman who changes roles with his servant and gains access to the woman he loves was taken from an existing play, The Supposes by George Gascoigne, which was translated from an Italian comedy, I Suppositi, by the poet Ariosto. By combining and interweaving the three stories Shakespeare created a number of contrasts: between the apparently meek but actually wilful Bianca and the boldly rebellious but finally submissive Katherina; between Lucentio's romantic love with Bianca and Petruchio's unashamedly mercenary marriage to her sister; between the secretive devious courtship of the younger sister by her suitors and the resolutely open seizure of Katherina by Petruchio. Moreover, as Christopher Sly is persuaded that he is 'a lord indeed' because he is treated as though he were one, so Kate is gradually induced to become

'pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous' because her husband repeatedly assures her, in the face of all the evidence, that she is so. Shakespeare thus gives to the central characters and situations a strength and vividness absent from the original versions by inviting us to compare and contrast them with one another."

Hibbard (1968: 11) comments that "The Taming of the Shrew still remains today one of the most popular of all Shakespeare's comedies in the theatre, the place for which its author intended it. Thousands of people go to see it every year, not only in the English-speaking countries but also on the Continent, where it is a great favourite. Nor are the reasons for its wide international appeal far to seek. They lie in its main theme: that battle of the sexes which is as old as the Garden of Eden and as new as the latest love-affair - and in the way in which this theme is worked out. Precisely because Shakespeare's central concern in this play is with action, characters, and ideas, rather than with poetry and atmosphere, and because the play relies for its effect on broad and obvious contrasts between characters and attitudes instead of subtle discriminations between them, it loses much less in the process of translation than do such comedies as A Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It, or Twelfth Night. Essentially of the theatre and for the theatre, The Taming of the Shrew goes on living because it has, in the first place, that necessary quality of all good drama, a delight in vigorous events subjected to the discipline of a coherent, well organized, and significant plot."

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

A Midsummer Night's Dream was probably written in 1595 or 1596 and it has been considered one of Shakespeare's masterpieces. It is one of the most magical plays ever written, using rural superstition and folk tales as its source. It is a story of young lovers, dreams, and the fairies who lived in an enchanted wood near Athens. Most of the action takes place by moonlight in a lovely and changable world.

PLOT

ACT ONE opens as Theseus, Duke of Athens and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons set their wedding date for four days' time. Theseus has ordered Philostrate, his master of the revels, to 'stir up the Athenian youths to merriments'. They are interrupted by Egeus, an Athenian nobleman, who complains that his daughter, Hermia, refuses to marry Demetrius, to whom she has been promised, because she favours Lysander. Egeus tells Theseus that if Hermia refuses to obey him, he wants her to be punished according to the law of Athens, that is to be executed. Theseus tells Hermia that she has four days to think about it carefully then make up her mind. If she still refuses to obey her father, she must choose either to die or enter a convent for the rest of her life. To escape the Athenian law, Lysander and Hermia decide to elope and get married outside Athens. They plan

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All quotations are from The Macmillan Shakespeare : A Midsummer Night's Dream, edited by Norman Sanders, 1971.

to meet the following night in a wood outside Athens then run away together. At that time, Helena, who had been Hermia's friend since childhood, comes in and they tell her their plan, hoping to make her happy because she is in love with Demetrius. They hope that when Hermia is away from Athens, Demetrius will love her again. In order to gain his favour, Helena decides to tell Demetrius that Lysander and Hermia are planning to elope. She hopes that he will pursue Hermia to the wood and she will follow him.

There is a group of Athenian mechanicals (craftsmen) who are preparing to put on a play, 'the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe', to entertain the royal couple on their wedding. These mechanicals are: Quince, a carpenter; Bottom, a weaver; Flute, a bellows-mender; Snout, a tinker; Starveling, a tailor; and Snug, a joiner. They also plan to meet in the wood to rehearse their play.

ACT TWO The action is confined to the wood outside Athens the next night. The Fairies have also gathered in order to bless the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. Oberon, the fairy King, and his wife, Titania, are quarrelling over the possession of an Indian boy whom Titania has reared. All nature is disturbed by their quarrel.

Oberon is unable to acquire the boy so he gets angry. To punish Titania, Oberon sends the knavish Puck, his hobgoblin jester, to get a flower, the juice of which squeezed into sleeping eyelids will make the victim fall madly in love with the first live creature that he sees. Oberon plans to embarrass Titania by causing her to fall in love with a monster. While Puck is gone, Oberon, who is invisible to

humans, overhears Helena trying to win back the love of Demetrius, who is pursuing the runaway lovers and is chiding the foolish Helena for following him into the wood. Oberon decides to change Demetrius's mind for him so when Puck comes back with the magic flower, after Helena and Demetrius's departure, he commands Puck to find 'the young Athenian', whom Puck will know 'by the Athenian garments he hath on', and squeeze some flower juice into his eyes, so that when he wakes up, he will fall in love with Helena again. Oberon himself seeks Titania and finds her asleep on a flowery bank. He squeezes the juice of the flower into her eyes. Soon afterwards Lysander and Hermia enter. They are lost in the wood and tired out. They both go to sleep, but out of each other's sight. Puck enters and sees Lysander. He thinks this is 'the young Athenian' that Oberon meant and squeezes the flower juice into his eyes. Later, Helena, who is wandering alone now, comes in and finds Lysander. Lysander awakes, sees her and falls instantly in love with her. Helena is horrified and runs away with him chasing her. Hermia wakes up and is surprised that Lysander has left her sleeping there alone. She wanders off in search of him.

ACT THREE In another part of the wood, Puck finds the mechanicals rehearsing their play and decides to be both a spectator and an actor. He takes part by putting an ass's head on Bottom's shoulders because he seems foolish in his eyes. The other mechanicals are frightened to see Bottom with the ass's head so they run away. Bottom, thinking his friends are playing jokes on him, and singing to keep up his courage, awakes Titania, who sees him and immediately falls in love with him. She takes him to her private place and

orders the Fairies to wait on him. Meanwhile, Puck is reporting to Oberon about the Fairy Queen falling in love with the ass-headed Bottom and that he has already put the flower juice into the eyes of the young Athenian. At that moment, Hermia and Demetrius come quarrelling through the wood. Hermia accuses Demetrius of having murdered Lysander and runs away from him. Demetrius does not follow her because she is very angry and should be left alone. He, himself, is very tired so he lies down and sleeps. Oberon realizes that Puck has made a mistake by putting the magic juice into the wrong man's eyes. To put things right, he orders Puck to bring Helena while he, himself, puts the magic juice into Demetrius's eyes. So when Helena, who is being pursued by Lysander, comes to the place where Demetrius is lying, Demetrius wakes up, sees her and falls in love with her. Both men tell Helena how much they love her but Helena does not believe them. She is very upset because she thinks they have planned to make fun of her. In the meantime, Hermia, who hears the noise, comes to join them. Helena thinks Hermia is also participating in the two men's plan to play tricks on her. Hermia asks Lysander why he left her alone. Lysander convinces her he does not love her any more, but loves Helena. This makes Hermia angry with Helena because she thinks she has seduced Lysander. She starts chiding Helena. They all angrily accuse each other of stealing their lovers or playing unkind tricks. The two men seek a level place to fight, and Helena, fearing to be left alone with the angry Hermia, runs off with Hermia after her. Oberon, observing the confusion, decides that he must put right all these mistakes and confusions. He orders Puck to

arrange it. By magic, Puck leads all four of them back to the place and sends them all to sleep - Demetrius by Helena and Lysander by Hermia, then he removes the enchantment from Lysander's eyes with the juice of another flower.

ACT FOUR While the lovers sleep on the ground, Titania carries on her absurd courtship of the ass-headed Bottom. Since Oberon has acquired the Indian boy, he removes the charm from Titania, who wakes up thinking she has had a strange dream. But then she sees Bottom and understands the trick Oberon has played on her. Puck removes the ass's head from Bottom's shoulders and all the Fairies depart, leaving the four lovers and Bottom sleeping on the ground.

The next morning is the day of the wedding and Theseus, Hippolyta and the court come into the wood to hunt. They are surprised when they find the four lovers asleep in the wood. The lovers are awakened by the hunting horns. Lysander sees Hermia and falls in love with her as before. They confess that they were planning to elope. Egeus at once demands that Theseus have Hermia executed, but Demetrius interrupts, saying he no longer loves Hermia, but loves Helena. Theseus is amazed by this sudden change, but he orders that the two couples shall be married at the same time as Hippolyta and himself. They all leave to prepare for the wedding, leaving Bottom still asleep alone. When Bottom wakes up, he immediately thinks of the rehearsal. But when he realizes he is alone, he thinks the other mechanicals have played a trick on him by leaving him alone asleep. He tells the audience that he has had a very strange dream, but no one would believe him if he told it, so he

won't. He goes off to find his friends.

At Quince's house, the mechanicals are worried about what has happened to Bottom because they cannot perform the play without him. Snug comes in to tell them that the weddings are over and the whole court is waiting for the play to begin. At this point, much to their relief and joy, Bottom arrives and they leave to perform the play.

ACT FIVE The 'most lamentable comedy' of Pyramus and Thisby performed by the mechanicals is chosen by the Duke to pass the three hours' time before their bedtime. Bottom plays Pyramus, Flute plays Thisby, and the others play Wall, Moonshine, and Lion. The mechanicals end their play with a dance. It is now midnight. The court leaves and the three newly-married couples go to their rooms. When everyone has gone, the Fairies come in. Oberon and Titania lead them in dancing and singing blessings for the three couples and the play ends with an epilogue spoken by Puck to present the apologies of the actors and to beg the audience to applaud.

CHARACTERIZATION

There is a greater variety of characters in A Midsummer Night's Dream than in any of Shakespeare's earlier comedies. The characters in this play can be divided into four different groups, namely, Theseus, Hippolyta and the court of Athens, the young lovers, the mechanicals, and the Fairies.

GROUP ONE Theseus, Hippolyta, and the court of Athens. This group of characters represents the world of order, authority, and

rationality. The one exception is Egeus, who causes disorder, demands the authority to cruelly punish his own daughter, and shows his irrationality.

Theseus is the Duke of Athens. He enjoys hunting. He is a sportsman, and a kind, patient, helpful ruler. He is a successful soldier, having defeated the Amazons in battle. He is a figure of authority who represents government and law. When people have problems, they come to him. Egeus comes to him to complain about his daughter, who refuses to marry the man he has chosen for her, and he wants Theseus to use his authority to punish her. Theseus is tolerant of Hermia's sharp refusal and he gives a reasonable and restrained answer. He urges patience on the headstrong young lovers and shows himself prepared to listen to reason. Theseus tries to maintain the order and harmony of his kingdom and the power of the law, so he tells Hermia to think about it carefully before she makes up her mind. He also tries to convince Hermia to obey her father. He is very pleased at the end, when Demetrius tells him he now loves Helena, which means all the conflicts are gone. He tells Egeus to let Hermia marry Lysander. His decision resolves the conflict. He has a rational and mature attitude toward love. When Hippolyta wonders about what the four young lovers have told them, he explains:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
>
> (V.i.4-6)

He finds pleasure in the loyalty of the lowliest of all his subjects. He is a good Duke. He cares for his people,even the lower class like the mechanicals. He has chosen to watch the mechanicals' play even though Philostrate has told him it is not a good performance. He knows they have tried very hard. He feels sympathetic towards the group of the mechanicals and would like to encourage them.

Hippolyta is the Queen of the Amazons, captured by Theseus after she had lost to him in battle. She is going to marry Theseus. She takes no part in the affairs of state and rarely speaks. We know that she is a former warrior queen of great beauty from Titania's savage remarks to Oberon. Although she appears to believe in the lovers' tale of their adventure in the wood, she seems to lack imagination. Yet she is important in providing an image of mature love as a contrast to the headstrong young lovers. As she watches the performance of 'Pyramus and Thisby', she teases the actors in good humour. Her overall impression is a favourable one.

Egeus is a very old-fashioned, irrational nobleman. He shows no close paternal love to his daughter, Hermia, but he is mean to her instead. His opening lines in the play show that he has no affection for her:

> Full of vexation come I, with complaint
> Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
>
> (I.i.22-3)

He never thinks of her happiness nor cares for her feelings when he

demands that she marry the man he favours, Demetrius. He is a tyrannous, cruel, and bad father because he asks the Duke to put his own daughter to death according to the law of Athens if she does not marry the man he favours. He has never listened to his daughter who wishes to choose her own husband, nor Lysander who tries to explain to Egeus that he is as rich as Demetrius and also belongs to as good a family as Demetrius. Furthermore, Lysander loves Hermia and is always faithful to her while Demetrius loved Helena before. Egeus believes that Lysander has tricked his daughter into falling in love with him.

GROUP TWO Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius. They are caught up in the world of disorder and confusion for which they themselves are partly responsible. They are at the stage of late adolescence when they fall suddenly and irrationally in and out of love and transfer their affections rapidly from one to another. They are victims of the illusions created by Puck.

Hermia is a daughter of a nobleman, Egeus, who is a difficult and interfering father. She is self-confident. From her first words in the play we find her determined and fiery. She is determined to marry the man she loves, despite her father's disapproval. She wishes her father would let her choose her own husband. She states:

> I would my father looked with my eyes.
>
> (I.i.29)

Her passion is the most important thing for her so she immediately

agrees to Lysander's plan to elope from Athens. Helena admires her beauty and her sweet voice and wishes she had such charm to win back Demetrius' heart. Hermia has a dark complexion: Lysander insultingly calls her 'Ethiope' (meaning 'blackamoor'). She is sensitive to comments about her dark appearance. She is short: Helena says to her, '....you puppet' and Lysander calls her,'dwarf, minimus of hindering knotgrass'. She reacts furiously when she thinks Helena has seduced Lysander and she is ready to hurt Helena. She has a sharp tongue. She storms at Helena:

> How low am I, thou painted maypole? Speak!
>
> How low am I? I am not yet so low
>
> But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.
>
> (III.ii.299-301)

She is quick-tempered as we see when Helena begs the two men to save her from being attacked by Hermia because she knows how aggressive her friend is. She is the most consistent of the lovers. She is loyal and steady in her love for Lysander.

Lysander is a young man in love with Hermia. He is proud of himself. He is the most forthright of the lovers. When Egeus demands Hermia marry Demetrius, he tries to convince them that he is more suitable for Hermia because not only does he have the same status and wealth as Demetrius, but he also loves her dearly and never changes his mind like Demetrius, who had been in love with Helena before. His argument is powerful. He understands the problem, shows great tenderness towards Hermia, and tries to cheer

her up:

The course of true love never did run smooth;

(I.i.134)

He cannot think of anything else but running away from Athens so that he can marry Hermia. He belongs to the world of illogical passion. His language is impressive and beautiful until his transformation by the magic juice. He issues a direct challenge to Demetrius, whereas Demetrius simply makes vague threats; his rudeness and cruelty to Hermia under the influence of the love juice are outrageous:

Hang off, thou car, thou burr! Vile thing,

let loose,

(III.ii.262)

He tends to be the spokesman for the lovers: both when they wake up in the wood and when they come to watch the mechanicals' playlet.

Helena is an Athenian maid who is in love with Demetrius. She is Hermia's close friend. They were classmates. They grew up together 'like to a double cherry, seeming parted but yet an union in partition' (III.ii.210-1). She is taller than Hermia, who calls her, 'thou painted maypole?', 'her tall personage'. Moreover, she is more feminine than Hermia. She knows herself that she is not quarrelsome and she is a coward, lacking physical aggression. In her reaction to a sudden reversal of the situation and the behaviour of Hermia she seems cowardly and timid. She begs Lysander and Demetrius to save her from Hermia. And when Lysander has gone to fight with Demetrius to win her love, she runs away from Hermia:

I will not trust you, I,

Nor longer stay in your curst company.

Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;

My legs are longer, though, to run away.

(III.ii.348-50)

She has unwittingly betrayed Hermia by telling her 'escape plan' to Demetrius hoping to win his love back. The effect of love not only drives her to break the trust of her best friend but also causes her to behave in a way which is shameful. She finds it distasteful to try to woo Demetrius because she feels that it is a woman's role to be wooed:

Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex.

We cannot fight for love, as men may do;

We should be wooed, and were not made to woo.

(II.i.240-2)

She is very upset when both Demetrius and Lysander fall in love with her because she thinks they want to mock her. She shows the irrationality of her attitude in her attempt to justify her betrayal of the trust placed in her by Hermia and Lysander in this way:

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,

And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.

Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;

Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste;

And therefore is Love said to be a child

Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.

(I.i.234-9)

Demetrius is an Athenian youth who is rejected by Hermia but favoured over Lysander by her father. He is hardly distinguishable from his friend and rival, Lysander. He is rather selfish. Even though he knows that Hermia loves Lysander, he still wants to marry her. His love is inconstant. He had loved Helena before he turned his love to Hermia. However, in the end, he loves Helena again because of the spell of the love juice. He is very cruel to Helena, the girl he used to love, when she follows him into the wood. Helena tells Hermia how cruel he is:

> But he hath chid me hence, and threatened me
> To strike me, spurn me - nay, to kill me too.
>
> (III.ii.316-7)

GROUP THREE The mechanicals. They are uneducated workers, who intend to present a play to celebrate the wedding of Theseus but they have no imagination. As a result, the tragedy of 'Pyramus and Thisby', which they chose to perform, turns out to be a comedy. Quince, the carpenter, is the director of the play. He is sometimes angry with Bottom but always puts up with him and recognizes his value. Flute, a bellows mender, is to play the part of Thisbe. Tom Snout, a tinker, is to act as the Wall, Snug, a joiner, acts as the lion while Starveling, a tailor, as the Moonshine. Bottom is outstanding among these mechanicals and becomes almost the major character in the play. He is one of Shakespeare's most memorable creations.

Bottom is a weaver and the star actor among his friends. Nothing can put him down or prevent him from being entirely and happily himself. He is also self-confident: the Fairy Queen's falling in love with him does not drive him mad, and when he acts 'Pyramus' before the Duke and his court, he believes he does it perfectly. Apart from being self-confident, he is practical and excitable. The audience can both laugh at and with him. He is simple minded, funny, and praised by his friends to have 'the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens'. His friends recognize his qualities; they know that without him they simply cannot go on and his performance will attract attention, 'if he come not, then the play is marred' (IV.ii.5) Although he is self-centred, all his friends regard him with great affection. When he finds out that the Fairy Queen has fallen in love with him, he retorts with his self-knowledge and common sense:

> Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays - the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends.
>
> (III.i.142-6)

He is able to point out about reason and love. He also has a capacity for survival and to adapt as we can see in his adventure in the wood. He is able to adjust himself to new circumstances when he meets the Fairy Queen and the fairies. He gets along very well with them. He is calm and rational. He does not tell anyone about his

dream in the wood because he knows that they will think he is mad, 'for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian' (IV.ii.29) and 'Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream' (IV.i.203). Nobody will believe in the most extraordinary thing that happened to him - the beautiful Queen of the Fairies falling in love with him. He is ambitious and enthusiastic and in his eagerness, wants to take all the parts in the playlet. Although Quince is the playlet's director, Bottom keeps giving him instructions all the time as when all the mechanicals are together at Quince's house, Bottom tells Quince,

> You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.
>
> (I.ii.2-3)

Then

> First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.
>
> (I.ii.8-10)

He believes that he is able to act every character very well. When he is cast to play 'Pyramus', 'a lover that kills himself, most gallant, for love', he proudly admires himself,

> .....If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes! I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest. - Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant. I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split:
>
> (I.ii.26-30)

Then when Quince asks Flute to play 'Thisbe', Bottom says he can act 'Thisbe' very well,

> .....let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: 'Thisne, Thisne!' 'Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! Thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear!'
>
> (I.ii.52-5)

And he feels like playing 'the lion' too, so

> .....I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will roar that I will make the Duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

However, they are afraid the 'roar' will frighten the ladies so Bottom suggests,

> .....I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove. I will roar you an'twere any nightingale.
>
> (I.ii.81-3)

His solutions to their problems while they are rehearsing the play are funny such as writing a prologue, telling the audience Pyramus is not really killed and in fact he is Bottom the weaver; about the lion Bottom suggests,

> .....half his face must be seen through the lion's neck, and he himself must speak through, saying.....
> ....I would entreat you - not to fear, not to tremble.

.....let him name his name, and tell them

plainly he is Snug the joiner.

(III.i.35-44)

Moreover, he suggests a man being a Wall and 'let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.' (III.i.67-9)

Bottom is one of the main link characters in this play. He is involved in all the four groups of characters and he is the main source of humour in this play.

Stephen (1987 : 94) comments that Bottom has "a vast enthusiasm for life, and is a natural leader, both features which make him attractive and distinctive. He has total self-confidence, however, ill-founded it might be. He has a native shrewdness that lets him see some things other men might not see. He is practical, hugely self-confident, utterly egotistical, and excitable all at the same time. Most of all, he has the capacity to dominate a stage, be it the stage of his 'Pyramus and Thisby', or the real stage of A Midsummer Night's Dream."

GROUP FOUR The fairies. They represent the world of illusion, magic, and fantasy. This world is complete in itself. It is beautiful but contains mystery and exotic powers, which have sometimes caused disorder and destruction. There are no lasting passions because they are not human. However, although they are superhuman, they show some human characteristics such as quarrelling with each other, falling in love, playing tricks on others, etc.

Oberon is the King of the fairies. He inhabits dreams; his activities are exotic and removed from human experience and he describes how he

> .....sat upon a promontory
> And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the sea-maid's music.
>
> (II.i.149-54)

He is jealous. He wants to obtain his Queen's Indian boy and make him his page. When Titania refuses to surrender the boy to him, he embarrasses her by applying Puck's magic juice to her eyes while she is sleeping and makes her fall in love with the ass-headed Bottom. He shows his sympathy to the young lovers by ordering Puck to use the same magic on Demetrius, causing him to fall in love with Helena. He helps the young lovers to be properly paired. He enjoys considerable supernatural power; he can make himself invisible and knows the magical properties of the flowers and herbs, he can upset and bring harmony to nature and is impatient when his will is obstructed. We do not know how well he governs his realm. All we know is that he wants to dominate his Queen. He wants her to be submissive. He causes disorder and confusions. On the contrary, Theseus is a great warrior, governs his realm with rationality, and always keeps order and exercises his authority to maintain peace and harmony in his kingdom.

Titania is the Queen of the fairies. She is determined and unwilling to give in to persuasion. Having refused to give Oberon the Indian boy, Titania is put under a magic spell and suffers a humiliating, wild, foolish love for Bottom. She inhabits a world of dancing, music and flowers, a world of sensuousness and beauty. She enjoys lying among scented flowers and she reveals a most passionate nature once she falls in love with Bottom.

Puck * is a gay, mischievous spirit known for practical joking and shape-shifting. He is Oberon's jester. He is referred to by the names, Robin Goodfellow and Hobgoblin. He plays many pranks in the wood near Athens, including changing the head of Bottom to that of an ass. One fairy describes him as 'that shrewd and knavish sprite' and

> .....that frights the maidens of the villagery,
> Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
> And bootless make the breathless housewife
> churn,
> And sometime make the drink to bear no barm,
> Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their
> harm.....
>
> (II.i.35-9)

He is 'that merry wanderer of the night', who enjoys transforming himself, such as, 'a fat and bean-fed horse', 'a roasted crab', or 'a three-foot stool' and playing tricks on humans. He is able to

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* Puck is a mischievous but harmless country elf in English folklore.

bring darkness as when Oberon orders him to 'overcast the night' and he seems happiest when he is causing confusion. When he eavesdrops on the mechanicals' rehearsal, he interferes with it by putting an ass-head on Bottom and when the other mechanicals run away in terror, he follows and leads them

> Thorough bog, thorough bush, thorough brake,
> thorough brier.
> Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
> A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire:
> And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and
> burn,
> Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.
>
> (III.i.105-9)

He is boastful of his ability to 'put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes' and to travel faster than an 'arrow from the Tartar's bow'. Although he enjoys watching people arguing and fighting, once he shows his sympathy for Helena and Hermia:

> Cupid is a knavish lad
> Thus to make poor females mad.
>
> (III.ii.450-1)

The reason why Shakespeare chose Puck to speak the Epilogue at the end of the play may be that he belongs to the group of the dream-like characters. Sanders (1971 : 16) says that "Oberon's confusing wilderness and Theseus's orderly human society are the two poles on which the play's structure rests. The groups of characters move between these two worlds: from society orderly but filled with

problems, through a natural wilderness, to emergence into the society of the first part newly harmonious and revitalized."

Alexander (1979 : 55) concludes that " A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of the most structurally symmetrical of Shakespeare's plays. The action begins in Athens where all the mortals, as opposed to the fairies, are introduced. The lovers and the mechanicals withdraw to the wood, where they are 'worked upon' by the fairies. When the night's adventures of the lovers are over and, with morning, the power of the fairies wanes, Theseus and Hippolyta bring their hunting party to the wood. Their departure to Athens for the wedding celebrations brings home the lovers and the mechanicals; and with midnight ('fairy time'), the visit of the fairies to the court. The play is framed by the court nuptials of Theseus and Hippolyta which we know from the first act must conclude the action: Hermia's choice must be made by then, the mechanicals' play must be ready. Within this frame are three sub-plots, all overseen by Oberon: the lovers' adventures, the quarrel and reconciliation of Oberon and Titania, the theatrical efforts of the mechanicals. This play is the first of Shakespeare's plays to demonstrate his skill in drawing a number of threads into a coherent whole."

THEME

The theme of this play is love in association with illusion and reality and Shakespeare demonstrates it through four different groups of characters, who represent four different worlds.

The first group - Theseus and the court - stand for reality, reason, and sanity. It is a well-ordered, mature, and rational world, which demonstrates the adult love between mature people, Theseus and Hippolyta. Theseus represents "the spirit of reason and the forces of necessity" (Sanders. 1971 : 10). In his opinion, the four young lovers are irrational because they are under the power of imagination.

The second group - the four young lovers - represent the world of disorder and confusion caused by their passions and illusions. They are educated people who behave in an extravagant way because they are in love. Their attitudes towards love are irrational. Once Lysander and Hermia encounter the difficulty of their love - Egeus's demand to bring the full force of the law on Hermia if she marries the man she loves instead of the man he had chosen, which means either death, or life in a nunnery for her - they start behaving stupidly and irrationally. They plan to elope, which is risky if it fails. Hermia is determined not to marry Demetrius even though it can bring an end to her life. Helena is foolish to betray her best friend, Hermia, by revealing the plan to Demetrius, whom she follows into the wood. Demetrius forgets his love for Helena and pursues Hermia, who does not love him. These four young lovers are suffering from an illusion caused by their irrational passion. Then, when they are in the wood, they are the victims of illusions created by Puck. As a result, they quarrel, suffer and get confused by the wrong pairing. Lysander, under the power of the magic juice, falls in love with Helena instead of Hermia and so does Demetrius. The two men

fight in order to win Helena's favour. Helena is very upset because she does not believe that the two men really love her. She is sure they are mocking her. Hermia gets angry with Helena and is ready to fight her.

The next group is 'the mechanicals' - Bottom and his friends - the world of uneducated and single-minded workers. They are trying to create an illusion: the play they intend to present to celebrate the wedding of Theseus. Becoming actors, they move into a world of illusion, which requires the imagination of both the actors and the audience. However, these actors have no imagination at all and manage to leave very little imagination to their audience. They present a wall on the stage by putting 'some paster, or some loam, or some roughcast' on a man, Moonshine by a man with a lantern, dog and thorn bush. Snug as Lion tells the ladies not to be frightened because it is not a real lion but only himself, a joiner. And to avoid terrifying their audience, Bottom suggests they have a prologue to explain that Pyramus is not really dead at all but it is in fact, Bottom, the weaver, who acts as Pyramus. Bottom, while acting as Pyramus, stops to talk to Theseus as Bottom himself. The play, 'the tragical love-story of Pyramus and Thisbe' performed by the mechanicals, is parallel to the love-story of Hermia and Lysander in that Pyramus and Thisbe also have difficulty caused by their parents in their love. They decide to elope, like Hermia and Lysander, but their story ends in tragedy because, unlike Hermia and Lysander, they do not have a supernatural manager like Oberon to make sure that tragedy is avoided. Bottom is a special case because he unwittingly

enters the world of complete illusion, the fairy world, when Puck puts an ass's head on him and the Fairy Queen falls in love with him.

The last group - the Fairies - demonstrates the world of almost total illusion and fantasy. It is a supernatural world, with a court that contrasts to that of Theseus. The fairies' powers can bring disorder and destruction to the natural and human worlds. Although they cause a lot of confusion, they eventually create peace and happy marriages for the lovers.

As is common in his romantic comedies, Shakespeare emphasises the idea of love and marriage. Brooks (1979 : cxxx) says that "love and marriage is the central theme: love aspiring to and consummated in marriage, or to a harmonious partnership within it. Three phases of this love are depicted: its renewal, after a breach, in the long-standing marriage of Oberon and Titania; adult love between mature people in Theseus and Hippolyta; and youthful love with its conflicts and their solution, so that stability is reached, in the group of the four young lovers."

Apart from this, Shakespeare associates the idea of love with the idea of seeing: love-sight, true or false, belongs to the wide-ranging subject of appearance and reality. The conflict in the main plot starts from this love-sight - Egeus sees Lysander as a deceitful lover of his daughter while Hermia insists that her vision of Lysander is true love-sight, no induced fantasy, but valid. She wishes,

I would my father looked but with my eyes.

(I.i.56)

When she and Lysander talk about their problem, she complains, 'O hell! To choose love by another's eyes' (I.i.140). Moreover, Oberon uses the juice from the magic flower which, once applied to a victim's eyes, will make him fall in love with the first live creature he sees; that is, to see is to love. Oberon applies this magic juice to his Fairy Queen while she is sleeping, saying,

> What thou seest when thou dost wake,
>
> .....
>
> In thy eye that shall appear
>
> When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.
>
> (II.ii.33-9)

Thus, when the Fairy Queen wakes up and sees ass-headed Bottom, she falls in love with him instantly,

> .....mine eye enthrallèd to thy shape:
>
> And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
>
> On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.
>
> (III.i.138-40)

Like the Fairy Queen, Lysander, after Puck has put some magic juice on his eyelids, wakes up, sees Helena and falls in love with her. He tells her,

> Reason becomes the marshal to my will
>
> And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
>
> Love's stories written in Love's richest book.
>
> (II.ii.126-28)

And when Helena is jealous of Hermia's attractions, she says,

My ear should catch your voice, my eye your

eye

.....

O, teach me how you look,.....

(I.i.188,192)

In conclusion, A Midsummer Night's Dream is a play concerning illusion, reality, love-sight, play-acting and dreaming as the title of the play indicates. The four young lovers wake up in the wood and wonder whether all the confusions and strange happenings they had the night before are real or only a dream. To them, it is too extraordinary to be true. This is the common feeling humans have after they have had a dream. Dreaming itself is a reality. It is the contents of a dream that leaves men in doubt. As a result, they usually wonder after waking up whether their dream is true, exactly the same as the four young lovers and Bottom do. Pickering (1985 : 40) states that "Shakespeare is always aware of the doubtful reality of a play. He uses the term shadows to describe actors, and how real is a shadow. In Puck's final speech the playwright seems to be playing the ultimate trick on us by suggesting that, perhaps, the whole play was a dream and we have been sleeping all the while. But there is a truth in the play which gives his imaginative work a very special quality."

COMEDY AND DICTION

The comedy in this play proves that Shakespeare is "a great master of comedy". He utilised all three types of comedy: of

character, of situation, and of words or verbal humour.

The funniest characters are the crude mechanicals, especially the memorable Bottom, who significantly contribute to the enjoyment of the play.

There are a lot of comic situations. In the first place, we have the proud, beautiful, passionate fairy Queen falling in love with the rustic, unimaginative, ass-headed weaver, Bottom. Secondly, the crude artisans make fools of themselves in front of the sophisticated court. The play performed by the mechanicals turns out to be a comedy instead of a tragedy because of the lack of imagination of the actors. Moreover, as they are workers, there is a contrast between who they are and what they are doing, that is, they are acting heroic, noble rôles. Thirdly, the young lovers say and do silly things when they are in love. Their behaviour is irresponsible and irrational. Then they are brought under a magic spell, which causes a lot of confusion.

Apart from the funny characters and situations, word-play - punning, mispunctuation, and malapropisms - are sources of humour, as, for example,

1). The night when Lysander and Hermia are alone in the wood, they agree on the place where they should lie:

LYSANDER

Then by your side no bed-room me deny,

For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily.

Now much beshrew my manners and my pride

If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy

Lie further off, in human modesty:

(II.ii.57-63)

Hermia plays on the word 'lie' meaning 'to lie down to sleep' and 'to tell a lie'.

2). The scene when Hermia is angry with Helena because she thinks Helena has stolen her love, she says to Helena:

You juggler, you canker blossom,

You thief of love! What, have you come by night

And stol'n my love's heart from him?

(III.ii.285-7)

'Canker Blossom' is a kind of wild rose but here Hermia means the 'canker worm that eats at the flower'.

And when they quarrel about their statures, Hermia talks about Helena's height. The word 'high'(line 297) means 'well regarded' and 'tall':

And with her personage, her tall personage,

Her height, forsooth, she hath prevailed with him.

And are you grown so high in his esteem

3). Snug's part as Lion:

.....

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;

(V.i.221)

The word 'fell' is a pun meaning: (1) fierce, angry;

(2) skin coat.

And Demetrius' reply to Theseus' comment:

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

(V.i.226)

There is a pun on the words 'best' and 'beast'.

4). Theseus, Demetrius and Lysander comment on Bottom as Pyramus:

DEMETRIUS

No die, but an ace, for him! For he is but one.

LYSANDER

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead, he is nothing.

THESEUS

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover,

and yet prove as ass.

(V.i.299-304)

'ass' (line 304) is the pun with 'ace' (line 299).

The following are some examples of misuse of words, mispronunciation and malapropisms:

1). When Bottom rehearses his part, 'And Phibbus' car' (I.ii. 35), he mispronounces it. The correct one is Phoebus'car, the chariot of the sun-god Phoebus Apollo.

2). Bottom boasts to his friends:

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice: *'Thisne, Thisne!'*

(I.ii.52-5)

Bottom is attempting to pronounce the name 'Thisbe' to display his ability to pronounce the requisite 'little voice' in Thisbe's reply to her lover's call.

3). When Bottom suggests they should be careful not to let the lion's roar frighten the ladies, he says, 'But I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove.' (I.ii. 81-2). Bottom uses the word 'aggravate' (meaning 'make worse or more serious') instead of the right one, 'mitigate' (meaning 'make less severe or violent')

4).'We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously.' (I.ii.107) Here, Bottom incorrectly uses the word obscenely meaning 'unseemly' instead of 'seemly' meaning 'proper, correct'.

5). When Bottom gives a suggestion to 'the lion', he says,

> ".....you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck, and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect: 'Ladies', or 'Fair ladies-....."
>
> (III.i.35-8)

Again, he misuses the word defect. The correct one should be effect.

6). When Quince suggests there should be a character playing "the Moon", he says, '....one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine.' (III.i.57-9) Quince uses the wrong word, disfigure. What he means here is 'to figure (in the sense of represent) the Moonshine'.

7). When Bottom is rehearsing, he says,

Bottom as Pyramus

Thisbe, the flowers of odious savours sweet-

Quince

Odours-odours!

Bottom as Pyramus

-odours savours sweet;

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.

(III.i.79-82)

Bottom uses the wrong word 'odious' (meaning 'hateful') instead of odours (meaning fragrances).

8). When Flute as Thisbe is rehearsing his part, he says, *'I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb'* (III.i.94) instead of Ninus' tomb. 'Ninny' means 'Fool'.

9). When Bottom wakes up and wonders about his dream, he produces a confusing soliloquy: 'The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was.' (IV.i.207-10)

10). When Quince praises Bottom's voice, he says, '....he is a very paramour for a sweet voice' (IV.ii.12). The correct word is paragon, meaning 'a model of excellence or perfection'. The word 'paramour' means 'illegal lover'.

Another technique Shakespeare employs to make us laugh is the use of mispunctuation. In Act Five, Scene One, Quince's Prologue is funny because his mispunctuation of the speech turns it into nonsense.

If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think we come not to offend

But with good will. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider then we come but in despite.

We do not come as minding to content you,

Our true intent is: All for your delight.

We are not here: That you should here repent you

The actors are at hand; and by their show

You shall know all that you are like to know.

(V.i.108-17)

The right punctuation should be,

If we offend, it is with our good will

That you should think we come, not to offend,

But with good will to show our simple skill:

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider then, we come - but in despite

We do not come - as minding to content you;

Our true intent is all for your delight:

We are not here that you should here repent you.

The actors are at hand; and by their show

You shall know all that you are like to know.

(Brooks. 1979 : 165)

Unlike The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream contains three plots - the story of Theseus and Hippolyta is a framework for the four young lovers main plot, the mechanicals'

preparation and rehearsing of the playlet, while the fairy plot links and joins the other two plots together. These plots are prettily interwoven and reveal a mastery of the multiple-plot technique that is lacking in the earlier comedies. He had become more confident and skilfull in his art. With regard to characterization, only Bottom is more fully drawn than those in the earlier comedies but there is a wider variety of characters in this play. Moreover, Shakespeare created more humorous characters like Bottom and his friends, and funny situations like the play-within-a-play performed by the mechanicals in front of the Duke of Athens and his court. The comedy of this play is more refined than that of The Taming of the Shrew. (See Chapter VI)

In addition, The Taming of the Shrew "moves us into illusion and keeps us there while A Midsummer Night's Dream moves us freely in and out of illusion, giving us a clear sense of both its fragility and its integrity." (Leggatt. 1974 : 112)

Sander (1971 : 5) comments that in A Midsummer Night's Dream, "Shakespeare's subjects are obviously love, courtship, marriage, and play-acting; and by extension the wider, more abstract implications of these topics: emotion, reason, judgement, imagination, illusion, reality, fancy."

John Russel Brown in The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare edited by Campbell (1966 : 549-50) comments that this play suggests that "lovers like lunatics, poets, and actors, have their own truth which is established as they see the beauty of their beloved, and that they are confident in this truth for, although it seems the

silliest stuff to an outsider, to them it is quite reasonable; it also suggests that lovers like actors, need, and sometimes ask for, our belief, and that this belief can only be given if we have the generosity and imagination to think."

C.L. Barber in the same book edited by Campbell (1966 : 550) concludes that the humour of the play "relates superstition, magic and passionate delusion as fancy's images. The actual title emphasises a special attitude by calling the comedy a dream and a midsummer night's dream implies association with the specific customs of Midsummer Eve, a magic time. It was a time when maids might find out who their true love would be by dreams or divinations."

Campbell (1966 : 778) states that "the creation of a wholly new and dreamlike world peopled with fairies was not Shakespeare's only achievement in A Midsummer Night's Dream. His base mechanicals were by far the most successful low-comedy characters that he had yet conceived, perhaps because, instead of basing them on stock characters of Roman or Italian comedy, he drew them directly from his own appreciative observation of clumsy village theatricals. The pompous Bottom and his fellow players are as hilariously recognized today as they were in 1595. Having created two worlds at opposite extremes - the moonlight and gossamer realm of the fairies and the real and earthbound one of village artisans - Shakespeare ingeniously blended these worlds with a more conventional one of nobles and aristocratic lovers. The elaborate but unified structure of this masque-like comedy reveals the easy mastery of complicated dramatic organization that the playwright had acquired."

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF TWELFTH NIGHT *

Twelfth Night was probably written for performance on the Twelfth Night, that is the last night of the Christmas holiday, January 6th. The Twelfth Night is a merry-festival with a lot of festivities such as feasting, drinking, dancing, joking, laughing and merry-making. This merry atmosphere was employed in this play, which is a delightful, light-hearted comedy, full of love and laughter and it is the last comedy Shakespeare wrote before he turned to the so-called 'dark comedies' and tragedies.

PLOT

Sebastian and his sister Viola, a young gentleman and lady of Messaline are near identical twins. They are shipwrecked near the coast of Illyria. Orsino, Duke of Illyria, is in love with Olivia, a wealthy Countess in the town. She has recently lost her brother.

ACT ONE The captain, a few sailors and Viola are safe on shore. Viola is sad because she has lost her brother but the captain assures her that he had seen her brother fasten himself to a strong mast. The captain also tells her about the strange land and the Duke Orsino, who is in love with Olivia, the daughter of a count who died twelve months ago, leaving Olivia

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* All quotations are from Shakespeare : Twelfth Night, edited by M.M Mahood, 1968.

to the protection of her brother, who shortly after died. For the love of her dear brother, she has sworn to mourn her dead brother for seven years and is refusing to be approached by any man. Viola, to be safe, decides to disguise herself as a boy named 'Cesario' and with the help of the captain she serves Orsino, the Duke of Illyria as a page. Although Olivia admires Duke Orsino, she cannot love him. In the meantime, Viola, disguised as Cesario, has become Orsino's favourite pageboy. He tells 'Cesario' about his love for the lady Olivia and how she has refused to see his messenger. Then he asks 'Cesario' to carry his love messages to Olivia. Viola successfully delivers Orsino's love message to Olivia which is a difficult task for her because she has fallen in love with Orsino. This is the first emotional complication. Matters are further complicated when Olivia falls in love with 'Cesario'. Olivia rejects Orsino's love but shows how much she favours 'Cesario' and reveals her passion by pretending that 'Cesario' left her a ring which she tells Malvolio to return to 'Cesario', who realizes that Olivia has fallen in love with 'him' because 'he' did not leave her a ring. 'Cesario' returns to the Duke and reports Olivia's refusal to him. But the Duke persists, hoping that 'Cesario' will be able to persuade Olivia, and he asks 'Cesario' to go to Olivia again.

Olivia's prolonged mourning is not to the liking of her drunken, dissolute uncle, Sir Toby Belch, who is warned by her maid Maria that Olivia is displeased with his late hours and excessive drinking. Maria is also critical of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a wealthy

but foolish and faint-hearted knight, who keeps Sir Toby in funds. Sir Toby encourages him to win Olivia's hand and persuades him to stay a month longer. Other members of Olivia's household include her clown, Feste, another servant, Fabian, and her conceited, ego-centred and ill-tempered steward, Malvolio.

ACT TWO Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, whom she supposes to have been drowned in the shipwreck, arrives in Illyria with a sea captain, Antonio, who saved his life and is an old enemy of Orsino's. Sebastian enters Illyria alone while Antonio is waiting for him. But later on, he decides to follow Sebastian into Illyria.

At Olivia's house, while Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are enjoying themselves and Feste's song, Maria enters to complain about their behaviour. She is soon followed by Malvolio, who declares that Olivia has threatened to expel Sir Toby if he does not improve his behaviour. Malvolio has been trying to dominate Sir Toby and Olivia's servants. As a result, Maria plots with Sir Toby to get him into trouble with Olivia. They take advantage of his self-love and self-importance to lead him to believe that Olivia has fallen in love with him. Their anger increases when they overhear Malvolio considering the possibility of marrying Olivia and acting in a superior manner towards Sir Toby. Under Maria's plan, Malvolio comes across a love letter written in a hand that resembles Olivia's, but is actually Maria's. He convinces himself that he is the unidentified man to whom it is addressed and decides to follow its instructions hoping to win Olivia's favour, 'to be surly with servants' (II.v.145), to smile in her presence, and to wear yellow

stockings, cross-gartered.

ACT THREE Viola as Cesario pays another visit to Olivia, who reveals her love for 'him' openly. Sir Toby and Fabian trick Sir Andrew into challenging 'Cesario' to a duel, as a rival for Olivia's hand. They are not willing to fight and they are scared of each other even before the duel takes place because of Sir Toby's and Fabian's report. 'Cesario' almost confesses 'his' real identity when 'he' faces Sir Andrew. Fortunately, Antonio, who is following Sebastian, appears. He rushes in to rescue - as he supposes - his friend Sebastian. Recognizing the sea captain as an old enemy of the state, officers arrest him. Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian so he asks for his money and is dismayed when she replies that she does not know him.

Malvolio, meanwhile, has appeared before Olivia in the manner recommended by the letter - over-familiar, smiling frequently, wearing yellow stockings, cross-gartered and quoting passages from her letter. Olivia, thinking her steward mad, asks Sir Toby to take care of him.

ACT FOUR Pursuing'Cesario', Sir Andrew encounters Sebastian and attacks him but he cannot overcome him. Sebastian wounds Sir Andrew, who is saved by the arrival of Olivia, who mistakes Sebastian for 'Cesario' so she leads him into her house. Although Sebastian is very surprised at the courtesy of Olivia, he agrees to marry her instantly.

Meanwhile, Feste, pretending to be good Sir Topas the curate, questions Malvolio, who has been locked in a dark room. When Sir Toby

proposes that they end their prank because of Olivia's displeasure with him, Feste agrees to bring Malvolio a light and writing materials for sending a letter to Olivia.

ACT FIVE The Duke Orsino with 'Cesario' and other attendants appear before Olivia's house just as the Duke's officers enter with Antonio, who accuses 'Cesario' of the basest ingratitude. They are all confused because 'Cesario' knows nothing about what Antonio has told them. The situation is more complicated when Olivia enters and addresses 'Cesario' as her husband. 'Cesario' denies this also but Olivia sends for the priest to testify to the marriage. Orsino is furious because of the betrayal of his favourite pageboy. Then there is more confusion when Sir Toby and Sir Andrew enter bleeding and accuse 'Cesario' of wounding them. The appearance of the twin brother Sebastian astounds all, but clears up all the confusions. The twins are united and Orsino, learning that his page is actually a lovely lady, is willing to marry her. Olivia is reminded of Malvolio, who is released and shows her the letter that has been the cause of his grief. Seeing the handwriting, she guesses that it was Maria's. Fabian explains that Maria was encouraged by him and Sir Toby, who has married Maria in the end. Malvolio is outraged and humiliated. He storms out swearing revenge. Orsino tells him to calm down. Finally, Orsino decides to marry Viola. The play ends with Feste singing a song as the Epilogue about the imagery of wind and rain, knaves and thieves.

CHARACTERIZATION

Viola is a young noblewoman and a twin sister of Sebastian. They resemble each other so much that when Viola dresses up in man's clothes, she can be easily mistaken for her twin brother. She is a resourceful and practical person who makes the best of her unfortunate situation. As soon as she reaches a strange land, Illyria, she begins to make resourceful plans for her survival and safety by disguising herself as a boy and becomes Duke Orsino's pageboy named 'Cesario'. She asks the captain,

> Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him.
> It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing
> And speak to him in many sorts of music
> That will allow me very worth his service.
>
> (I.iv.57-60)

Her gift in singing and poetry helps her win Orsino's favour. He trusts her and asks her to take his love message to Olivia. Orsino tells her,

> .....Cesario,
> Thou knowest no less but all. I have unclasped
> To thee the book even of my secret soul.
>
> (I.iv.12-4)

Unfortunately, she falls in love with Orsino but she understands her difficult situation very well and manages to get through it. Because of her disguise, she cannot express her love to Orsino but it is even worse when she is asked to send his love message to lady Olivia. She is absolutely loyal, sincere and

devoted to Orsino. She undertakes the task of wooing Olivia on Orsino's behalf:

> I'll do my best
>
> To woo your lady. (*Aside*) Yet, a barful strife!
>
> Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife.
>
> (I.iv.41-3)

Although she has fallen in love with the Duke Orsino, she faithfully carries his message to Olivia.

Goddard (1951 : 304) says that Viola is "modest, sweet, gentle, generous, tender, true and quick-witted." She is able to gain Olivia's admittance and deliver Orsino's message while other messengers had been refused. Her witty speech wins Olivia's heart. She admires Olivia's beauty when she lets her see her face. Her reaction to the possible death of her own brother is much more realistic than Olivia's and she rightly criticizes Olivia's chosen isolation as a waste of her beauty,

> 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white
>
> Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on.
>
> Lady, you are the cruellest she alive,
>
> If you will lead these graces to the grave,
>
> And leave the world no copy.
>
> (I.v.228-32)

Few of the characters in the play can resist Viola's charm of personality. The captain is willing to help her fulfil her plan. She gains the Duke's trust in three days, because of her skill in music and her intelligence as well as her subtle charm. And she

easily persuades Olivia to unveil her face, though they have just met. Olivia is impressed with Cesario's appearance.

She displays her dignity and breeding in refusing Olivia's tip,

I am no fee'd post, lady; keep your purse.

(I.v.273)

She is intelligent enough to understand the meaning of Olivia sending the ring. She also realizes that this will make the situation more complicated because her master Orsino, with whom she has fallen in love, loves Olivia, who now falls in love with her in disguise. However, she believes that time will help sort it all out. She adjusts herself rapidly to the new situation, simply trusting that all difficulties will be gone soon.

O time, thou must untangle this, not I!

It is too hard a knot for me t'untie.

(II.ii.40-1)

She realizes how seriously disguise causes misunderstanding,

Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness

Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.

How easy is it for the proper false

In women's waxen hearts to set their forms.

Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,

For such as we are made, if such we be.

(II.ii.27-32)

She is also gifted in speech and charm, both of which help to increase Orsino's affection for her, but which fail to bring him out of his love-blindness. She never, however, loses hope nor her

energy. She is as clever as Feste.

Like Orsino, she often shows her feeling for the poetry of words. Her sincerity and deep feeling are revealed when she is at last able to declare her love for the Duke:

After him I love

More than I love these eyes, more than my life,

More by all mores than e'er I shall love wife.

(V.i.133-5)

Her courage and good sense almost desert her only when she is on the point of fighting a duel:

.....A little thing would

make me tell them how much I lack of a man.

(III.iv.293-4)

Viola's patience is rewarded when Orsino marries her in the end.

Orsino is the Duke of Illyria. He does not show any capacity as a ruler until the last act. He is in an unreal mood of emotion. He thinks he is in love with Olivia but in fact he is in love with love. He does little to show his love to Olivia. He does not woo her himself but sends his favourite pageboy, 'Cesario' instead:

O, then unfold the passion of my love.

Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith.

It shall become thee well to act my woes;

She will attend it better in thy youth

Than in a nuncio's of more grave aspect.

(I.iv.24-8)

He loves music, songs and poetry:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.

(I.i.1-3)

He is unable to understand Viola's advice after her first meeting with Olivia. His expressions of love lack consistency and his moods are changable. He forgets his generalization that men's fancies are more giddy and weaker than women's are; five minutes later, he is insisting that there is no comparison between the love a woman can bear him and that he owes Olivia. Feste sums him up:

Now the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal.

(II.iv.72-4)

He is reasonable in giving a fair hearing to Antonio, despite Antonio being an old enemy. But he shows his small-mindedness, almost childishness when he finally meets Olivia and she rejects his love:

Since you to non-regardance cast my faith,
And that I partly know the instrument
That screws me from my true place in your favour,
Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still.
But this your minion, whom I know you love,
And whom, by heaven, I swear, I tender dearly,

Him will I tear out of that cruel eye
Where he sits crownèd in his master's spite.
Come, boy, with me, my thoughts are ripe in mischief.
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.

(V.i.119-129)

Finally, he quickly recognizes Viola's worth and is happy to marry her.

Olivia is a rich Countess, beautiful and virtuous. She is the efficient head of a great house, managing its affairs and commanding her followers with smoothness. She is absorbed in herself and her own situation. She has been mourning for her dead brother and forswears to be approached by any man for seven years. She uses this excuse to refuse to see Orsino or listen to his messenger. Valentine, a gentleman attending on the Duke, reports,

The element itself, till seven years' heat,
Shall not behold her face at ample view,
But like a cloistress she will veilèd walk,
And water once a day her chamber round
With eye-offending brine; all this to season
A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh
And lasting, in her sad remembrance.

(I.i.27-33)

But when she sees the attractive boy 'Cesario', she, like Orsino, finds her affections changing more quickly than she had thought

possible and she falls in love with him. 'Even so quickly may one catch the plague?' (I.v.248), she asks herself.

She is tricked into appearing foolish when Feste questions her:

> Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?
>
> OLIVIA Good fool, for my brother's death.
>
> FESTE I think his soul is in hell, madonna.
>
> OLIVIA I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
>
> FESTE The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul, being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.
>
> (I.v.61-7)

She is quick in understanding, witty in speech and warm-hearted towards those around her.

After she has met 'Cesario', she confesses to herself that she is in love with him; yet she keeps her head and speaks most wittily when 'Cesario' arrives. At the same time her uncle, Sir Toby, is causing her a good deal of trouble, and she wisely attempts to control him and Sir Andrew through her maid Maria:

> What a caterwauling do you keep here! If my lady have not called up her steward Malvolio and bid him turn you out of doors, never trust me.
>
> (II.iii.70-3)

At the end of their second meeting, Olivia declares openly her love for 'Cesario'. Viola tells her indirectly that she cannot return this love.

She treats Malvolio kindly and refuses to make fun of him when she learns about his foolishness over the love-letter:

> Alas, poor fool! How have they baffled thee!
>
> (V.i.367)

and earlier:

> .....Let some of my people have a special care of him. I would not have him miscarry for the half of my dowry.
>
> (III.iv.62-4)

In general, she is more intelligent than Orsino, but lacks almost all the qualities that Viola has such as vitality, spontaneous good humour, realism, common sense. Unlike Orsino, she is apparently more aware that she has made a fool of herself and the last sequence is noteworthy for how little she actually says to her new husband.

Malvolio is Olivia's steward, the highest member of the servant class and in charge of Olivia's domestic arrangements. He is a good steward, and Olivia values him. He is also a fool in love, but it is self-love.

He is a conceited, serious, self-righteous and self-important person. He is, as Maria says, 'a kind of puritan'*. He treats other members of the house badly including his mistress's uncle. He bursts

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* A puritan is a person who is devoted to strict morals. He is dry, humourless and against all kinds of entertainment, including drama.

in on Sir Toby's boisterous and excessive festivities with Sir Andrew and Feste, and expresses his disapproval as if he were the owner of the house,

> My masters, are you mad? Or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your coziers' catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, person, nor time in you?
>
> (II.iii.85-91)

His words are addressed to a guest who is socially his superior so Sir Toby retorts:

> Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?
>
> (II.iii.110-2)

Malvolio in this play represents a type of puritan, an anti-entertainment person and is deliberately made fun of. He is intended as a satire on the Puritans. He is very strict and against all kinds of pleasure or entertainment, so he is against Feste, whose duty is to sing, play music, and make people laugh. Moreover, Feste can avoid any trouble, say anything to Olivia, and gain her favour even though he has done something wrong. Malvolio objects to Olivia's laughing at Feste's jokes and he considers Feste a shamelessly rude and disrespectful clown whose manner is very bad. Feste does not like Malvolio so he joins in the trick Maria plays on Malvolio.

He is an ambitious steward. In his favourite daydream, he pictures himself as "Count Mlavolio", 'Having been three months married to her (Olivia), sitting in my state.....' (II.v.43-4), 'Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet gown, having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping.....' (II.v. 46-8). He dreams of receiving the courtesies of his former superior:

> Toby approaches, curtsies there to me.....

and

> I extend my hand to him thus - quenching
> my familiar smile with an austere regard of control....
>
> (II.v.60,65-6)

His strict Puritan moralizing and total lack of humour make him hateful to other members of the house. He has set himself so high that he is ready to be tricked. Maria's trick works successfully because of his high opinion of himself and too little understanding of others. Maria knows his weaknesses very well as she states:

> The devil a puritan that he is, or anything,
> constantly, but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass that cons
> state without book and utters it by great swathes; the
> best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with
> excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all
> that look on him love him - and on that vice in him will
> my revenge find notable cause to work.
>
> (II.iii.140-6)

He would never be deceived that Olivia is in love with him if he did not value himself so highly. He is pleased with how lucky he is, he says to himself,

> .....I thank my stars, I am happy! I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be praised!.....

(II.v.163-6)

He is kept in the dark room for madness and made fun of. At the end after being released, he announces angrily:

> I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!

(V.i.375)

He is fully aware of his humiliation but his character has not changed at all.

Feste is a fool.* He is an expert in his profession. His wit is sharp and well-controlled, as Viola comments:

> This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;
> And to do that well craves a kind of wit.

(III.i.58-9)

He himself believes that it is, 'Better a witty fool than a foolish wit' (I.v.32). He is very good at amusing and pleasing all

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* In those days, the court and the rich kept a fool in their household. A fool has a licence, which meant that he was able to say anything others could not, to his master and the others.

sorts of people. He is capable of understanding other people and deft in adapting his humour and songs according to different people and situations. Viola sees most clearly this aspect of the fool's art:

> He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
> The quality of persons, and the time,
> And, like the haggard, check at every feather
> That comes before his eye. This is a practice
> As full of labour as a wise man's art.
> For folly that he wisely shows is fit;
> But wise men, folly-fallen, quite taint their wit.
>
> (III.i.60-6)

He describes himself as Olivia's 'corrupter of words' since that suggests wordplay, the sort of wit his employer wishes to hear. He knows he can sing well and in various styles. His good humour and fun makes him become a favourite of everyone except the humourless Malvolio.

He is clever enough to be able to prove his mistress a fool when she commands, **'Take the Fool away'**. He proves her to be a fool herself because she is mourning for her dead brother whose soul is in heaven. Moreover, he wins Orsino's praise for proving that he (Feste) is the worse off for his (Feste's) friends because they:

> .....praise me - and make an ass of me.
> Now my foes tell me plainly, I am an ass; so that by my foes, sir, I profit in the knowledge of myself, and by my friends I am abused. So that, conclusions to be as kisses, if your four negatives make your two affirmatives, why

then, the worse for my friends and the better for my foes.

(V.i.16-21)

Throughout the play, he shows his ability in repartee. In a war of words, he can "hold his own against anybody". Viola praises his wit when she remarks,

I warrant thou art a merry fellow and car'st for nothing.

(III.i.25-6)

He wittily uses difficult words, long names and quotations from Latin and Greek.

All the characters in the play adore him and admire his wit except Malvolio. He has many clever devices to get money. He is a fool by profession, but he is the wisest man among the comic characters.

Singing is his profession and he takes natural pleasure in this occupation. When the Duke gives him money for his 'pains' in singing, he answers,

No pains, sir. I take pleasure in singing, sir.

(II.iv.67)

Lott (1959 : xx) says that Feste is also "a good character actor, as he shows it when he plays the part of Sir Topas, which successfully deceives Malvolio. He is indeed 'for all waters', serious or comic, learned or nonsensical, the wit or the practical joker, just as the occasion seems to suggest. And he knows where his skill lies:"

Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines everywhere.

(III.i.37-8)

He is one of Shakespeare's most musical fools; he tells the Duke that he takes pleasure in singing. He sings beautiful songs and joins in Sir Toby's revelry, leading in the catches,* and falls in with Sir Toby's musical dialogue in front of Malvolio.

Sir Toby Belch is Olivia's uncle, who is a fat and cheery old reveller with good humour. He is loud and boisterous. He is full of life and fond of teasing people, drinking and singing. He thinks that

These clothes are good enough to drink in, and so be these boots too; and they be not, let them hang themselves in their own straps.

(I.iii.10-2)

and

.....I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria.

(I.iii.35-7)

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* A catch is a short, part-time musical composition sung by three or more voices, each taking up the melody in succession, the second singer beginning the first line, as the first goes on to the second line, and so on. (Eagleson. 1986 : 39)

In spite of his relatively high place in society, he is by nature, irresponsible, coarse and thoughtlessly devoted to the social pleasures of food and drink. His view of life is revealed in his disapproval of Olivia's grief:

> I am sure care's an enemy to life.
>
> (I.iii.2)

Fergusson (1958 : 55) says, "in contrast to the more subtle wit of Maria and Feste, his brain exerts itself in the broad humour of farce and nonsense. He is fond of using words of his own making or application. He baffles Sir Andrew by terms like 'accost' and 'pourquoi'. He teases Maria by his sarcastic praise of Sir Andrew's qualities and knowledge. He makes fun of Sir Andrew, by commending his hair and his dancing and by instructing him how to challenge 'Cesario'. Afterwards, he enjoys reporting how both Sir Andrew and 'Cesario' are brave and evil. As a result, the two combatants are terrified of each other before the duel takes place."

He torments Malvolio by treating him like one possessed by the devil and he is responsible for locking Malvolio in the dark room. He loves comic songs. He loves Maria for her wit and sharp tongue. In the end he marries her.

He humours Sir Andrew by praising his dancing, keeps him in hope of obtaining Olivia, and cheats him of some two thousand ducats. Unlike Sir Andrew, he is not a coward. He is prepared to stand up to Sebastian. On the other hand, he takes his defeat and injury in good spirit.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek is a foolish knight. His appearance and character are a contrast to Sir Toby. While Sir Toby is loud, boisterous, full of life and humorous invention, Sir Andrew is shallow, stupid, imitative and cowardly. He is deceived by Sir Toby into wasting his time and money in hoping to win Olivia's hand. Maria speaks of his dry hand, implying his physical weakness.

Fergusson (1958 : 56-7) comments that "his feeble and passive mind is his most outstanding characteristic. He states himself 'many do call me fool' (II.v.80) and 'I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has; but I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit.' (I.iii.80-3)"

He has been trained in the knightly accomplishments of dancing and fencing, and has spent his time on them and on bear-baiting. His education is poor; he regrets that he has not studied the arts. He does not know the meaning of 'pourquoi', though Sir Toby ironically informs Maria of his knowledge of three or four languages. He uses Sir Toby as a model to copy in conduct and speech; he picks up terms from Viola, 'odours, pregnant, and vouchsafed' in order to increase his poor education. His shallow mind makes him incapable of seeing Sir Toby's shady purpose in making him stay on at Olivia's house. He is easily taken in by the explanation which Sir Toby and Fabian make of Olivia's favour to Viola. Without hesitation, he believes in Sir Toby's frightening report of Viola's fierceness. His opinions of others are based on the most superficial observation. He calls Viola a 'rare courtier' because of the affected speech she uses. He admires Feste for his sheer nonsense, not for his wit. He says,

> By my troth, the fool has an excellent breast. I had rather than forty shillings I had such a leg, and so sweet a breath to sing, as the fool has. In sooth, thou wast in very gracious fooling last night, when thou spok'st of Pigrogromitus, of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus. 'Twas very good, i'faith. I sent thee sixpence for thy leman, hadst it?
>
> (II.iii.18-24)

He has complete faith in Sir Toby. He follows Sir Toby in everything including those activities that make him appear foolish like dancing, drinking, and dueling. He frequently repeats Sir Toby's words.

He is a coward. Maria calls him 'a great quarreller; who has a gift of a coward to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling' (I.iii. 27-8). He boasts of his bravery but he fails in the duel. Being afraid of'Cesario', he is willing to give his horse to her in order to get out of the duel. In the end, he threatens to charge Sebastian with battery, 'though I struck him first' (IV.i.34) and is driven to see a physician, moaning over his wound.

Maria is Olivia's witty waiting-woman. She is small as Sir Toby calls her,'the youngest wren of mine'. She is full of life and sensible. Fergusson (1958 : 50) states that "her intimacy with her mistress and the trust placed in her are shown in her repeated scolding of other members of the household, of Feste when he was absent from the house, of Sir Toby for his drinking and Sir Andrew's

companionship, and of the three companions for their carousing late at night. She appears to be of noble birth and well educated as we see in her relative intimacy with Olivia, her familiarity with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, and her skill in writing the letter to Malvolio."

Like Feste, she knows how to please her mistress. She is gifted with considerable intelligence and wit. She is able to exploit the weaknesses of the others. She studies Malvolio's nature and comes to know him through. She knows what weaknesses he has, and plays upon them so well that he readily falls into her trap and is fooled by her. She tells Sir Toby,

> .....For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him. If I do not gull him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I can do it.
>
> (II.iii.129-32)

Fabian calls her, 'my noble gull-catcher' while Sir Toby praises her as the 'most excellent devil of wit!'. When Malvolio begins to act on the letter she has written in her mistress's hand, she pretends to be innocent:

> He's coming, madam, but in very strange manner.
> He is sure possessed, madam.
>
> (III.iv.8-9)

She dislikes Malvolio and wants to take revenge on him. She creates both the tricks played on him - the letter which makes him appear mad and the interview with 'Sir Topas'. Malvolio is deceived by the letter she wrote and believes his lady is in love with him and so

acts strictly according to the instructions given in the letter.

She knows how to win Sir Toby, whom she wants to marry. Sir Toby praises her wit and intelligence,

> I could marry this wench for this device,
>
> (II.v.175)

and

> No other dowry with her but such another jest.
>
> (II.v.177)

and in the last act we hear that Sir Toby has married her as a reward for writing the letter.

Sebastian is Viola's twin brother. He is a noble and brave young man, fresh and lively, generous, modest and considerate, loyal and kind-hearted. He resembles Viola so much that when they appear together in the end and Viola is disguised as a boy, it is difficult to distinguish between them. Orsino remarks,

> One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons!
>
> (V.i.213)

He quickly wins the devoted friendship of Antonio and is grateful to him for having saved his life. However, he is a rash young man, who spontaneously agrees to marry Olivia, a lady he has only just met.

He stands up for himself when attacked. He enjoys the resolution of Olivia's mistake and helps her to accept it.

Antonio is a fine man, a man of action and also of deep affections. He adores Sebastian so much that he follows him to

Illyria even though he knows that it is very dangerous for him. He is a minor character and chiefly serves to complicate the action by his confusion of Sebastian and Viola, and to reveal Orsino's capacity of ruler and judge.

He is a loyal and devoted friend to Sebastian, caring for him after the shipwreck, giving him his money to buy things in town, and offering his help throughout. He is brave and risks his life following Sebastian into the town. He defends himself before the Duke with dignity; his spirits are not depressed by his arrest, but he is deeply hurt by Viola's denial of knowing him and having received money from him.

THEME

Twelfth Night is different from other romantic comedies. It is not about young lovers, who meet, fall in love and go through difficulties until they can happily marry. It is a play about separation. Everything seems to go wrong, but it is sorted out in the end. The main characters are separated all the time until the last scene where they finally meet each other and have a happy ending. Orsino, who thinks he is in love with Olivia, has never met her. Viola, who is separated from her brother after the shipwreck, disguises herself as a boy and, after becoming Orsino's pageboy, falls in love with him. She is separated from Orsino because of her disguise. Olivia, who is determined to separate herself from the society of men, falls in love with Viola in disguise and again disguise separates her from the one she loves because Viola cannot

return her love. Malvolio is also separated in the sense that he is separated from reality. The idea of separation causes a great deal of trouble and all the lovers make fools of themselves in their attempts to attain their goals. Finally, at the end of the play, only Viola gets the lover she wants through her own efforts while Orsino and Olivia get theirs by accident.

Shakespeare appears to suggest that "success as a fulfilled human being, and even one's hold of life, is often shown as depending on one's ability to distinguish appearance from reality. In this play, characters can lack self-knowledge, but are allowed to learn it and knowledge of others without enormous sacrifice. Orsino thinks he is in love but in reality it is only the idea of being in love that he likes, and he has a totally false image of himself. Similarly, Olivia thinks she can lock the world away, but underestimates her own need to live in the outside world, and be loved in it. Both characters are allowed to learn from the mistakes and to marry the right partners. This is the theme of appearance and reality. That is the need to come to an honest and accurate picture of the world in which we live as quickly as possible, and in particular to acquire self-knowledge, and hence accurate knowledge of other people, their character and their motives." (Stephen. 1987 : 51)

Shakespeare also seems to imply in this play that deception and delusion affect life. There are two forms of deception: self-deception and deception resulting from disguise. Everyone deceives or is deceived, while several deceive to be deceived. "We are cheated by our fellow-mortals, by fortune, by accident; but always

the chief deceiver is ourself - our sentimentality, our vanity, our fears, our egoism. Duke Orsino and Olivia are the victims of self-deception. Viola's disguise deceives others, and results in the comedy of mistaken identities." (Tilak. 1981 : 253)

Viola, a young and beautiful lady, is ship-wrecked on the shores of Illyria, a strange country unknown to her. She decides to disguise herself as a boy and takes up service as a page with the Duke Orsino of Illyria. She thinks of this device because she is alone, friendless and unprotected and afraid of dangers she may face. But her disguise results in endless complications in the main plot because it is a source of delusion. She becomes Duke Orsino's page so the Duke is deceived by her disguise. And because of her wit and charming personality she gains his trust and is employed as his messenger of love.

Tilak (1981 : 253) states that Duke Orsino is "the victim of self-deception. He thinks that he is passionately in love with Olivia, but in reality he is in love not with anybody but with love itself. He enjoys the luxury of being in love. He listens to music or lies comfortably instead of going to his beloved and courting her. His love for her is merely a delusion, for no true lover would court his beloved by sending a handsome young man as a messenger. That his love is merely a delusion is also seen in the fact that he easily, and without regret, transfers it to Viola."

Viola in the meantime falls in love with the Duke. Her love is true, sincere and self-sacrificing. As she is disguised as a boy, she cannot express her love. Even though she loves him so

passionately, she acts her part as a messenger of love honestly and sincerely. It is very difficult for a lady to court another lady on behalf of the man she loves, but Viola is very patient and never reveals her hopeless passion. She represents Shakespeare's ideal of love.

Olivia is equally self-deceived and deluded. She is in love with grief as the Duke is in love with love. She thinks that she is grieved because her brother is dead and she is determined not to be approached by any man for seven years. But as soon as she sees Viola disguised as 'Cesario', she is deceived by her disguise and falls in love with her violently and passionately. She takes her to be a handsome young man, forgets all about her brother and so wants to marry 'him'. Thus Viola loves the Duke, but cannot reveal her love to him; the Duke loves Olivia, who loves Viola, disguised as 'Cesario'. All this complication is caused by disguise. Other characters in the play are also deluded by Viola's disguise. Thinking her to be a young man, Sir Andrew challenges her to a duel. Antonio mistakes her to be Sebastian, and so fights on her behalf and gives a 'bloody coxcomb' to Sir Toby. When he is arrested, he accuses her of ungratefulness. Just as Viola is mistaken for Sebastian, so Sebastian is mistaken for Viola. Feste takes him to be 'Cesario' and so takes him to his mistress who mistakes him for 'Cesario', and marries him. Thus it is the disguise of Viola which directly leads to Olivia's marriage with Sebastian, who is a stranger and entirely unknown to her. However, the truth is revealed in the end, and then it is realized that it has all been a comedy of mistaken identities.

Tilak (1981 : 253) also comments that "Malvolio and Sir Andrew are also victims of self-deception. Malvolio is in love and deludes himself into believing that he has such excellent qualities that everybody falls in love with him. He is sick of self-love. While he has a high opinion of himself, he has a poor opinion of others. He is against the revelry and merry-making of the other comic characters who live in the house. Thus he constantly rebukes not only Feste and Maria, but also Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. The result is that all these characters are angry with him and want to have their revenge on him. Malvolio deceives himself into thinking that his lady is in love with him. It is owing to this delusion that he falls an easy victim to the conspiracy of the comic characters. He is gulled and made a laughing-stock by them. He easily falls into the trap of Maria and we get the ridiculous spectacle of Malvolio, cross-gartered and yellow stockinged, with smiling face. All have a hearty laugh at him. His self conceit makes a fool of him. Sir Andrew too is deluded enough to suppose that a rich and cultured lady like Olivia, much sought after by the best man in the country, will ever love and marry him. The result is that he is easily befooled by Maria and Sir Toby and we get the comic episode of the duel."

COMEDY AND DICTION

In Twelfth Night, humour runs through the whole play, especially in the sub-plots. Examples are the witty jokes, and comic songs of Feste, his spirited repartee with Maria, Olivia and the Duke; the odd behaviour of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew; the pranks carried out

on Malvolio and Sir Andrew and Viola. There is also a comedy of situation. Much of the play's humour is of this sort. Instances are found in the meeting of Maria and Sir Andrew; Feste's regaining of Olivia's favour; Malvolio's vain attempts to stop the revellers; his reading of Maria's letter, watched by the three in the box-tree; Sir Andrew's and Viola's mutual fear of each other before the duel; the miscarried attack of the knights on Sebastian; Feste's role as Sir Topas before Malvolio. This play is full of music and beautiful verse especially the witty conversations between the chief characters, including Feste. There are still a great number of puns but very few malapropisms.

Examples of puns and wordplay that Shakespeare employs in this play are:

1) In act I scene 3, Sir Toby and Maria are talking about Sir Andrew:

SIR TOBY Who? Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

MARIA Ay, he.

SIR TOBY He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria.

MARIA What's that to the purpose?

SIR TOBY Why, he has three thousand ducats a-year.

MARIA Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats; he's a very fool, and a prodigal.

(I.iii.16-22)

Sir Toby uses the word 'tall', meaning 'courageous' but Maria takes the word in its usual sense.

2) And Maria describes Sir Andrew:

....he's a great quarreller; and but that he hath the gift of a coward to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling, 'tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave.

(I.iii.27-30)

She plays on the word 'gift', meaning 'natural ability' and 'present'.

3) In addition, Maria puns on the word dry:

SIR ANDREW Wherefore, sweetheart? What's your metaphor?

MARIA It's dry, sir.

SIR ANDREW Why, I think so. I am not such an ass, but I can keep my hand dry. But what's your jest?

MARIA A dry jest, sir.

(I.iii.69-73)

She means 'stupid' and 'mocking, ironic'.

4) Sir Toby makes fun of Sir Andrew's hair:

Excellent, it hangs like flax on a distaff; and I hope to see a huswife take thee between her legs and spin it off.

(I.iii.97-9)

He puns on the words 'huswife' and 'hussy', which had the same pronunciation in Shakespeare's time.

5) In act I scene 3, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are talking about a galliard (a dance):

SIR TOBY What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

SIR ANDREW Faith, I can cut a caper.

SIR TOBY And I can cut the mutton to't.

SIR ANDREW And I think I have the back-trick, simply as strong as any man in Illyria.

(I.iii.113-7)

Sir Andrew uses the word 'caper' as a dancing term, meaning 'a leap on the fifth step of the dance' but Sir Toby means 'caper sauce', which was served with mutton.

6) And then Sir Toby says to Sir Andrew:

.....Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig. I would not so much as make water but in a sink-apace. What dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in? I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg it was formed under the star of a galliard.

(I.iii.120-6)

He puns on the word 'sink', meaning 'sewer' and a 'cinquepace', meaning 'a lively dance'.

7) In act I scene 5, Maria is asking Feste about his absence from the house,

.....My lady will hang thee for thy absence.

FESTE Let her hang me. He that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colours.

(I.v.3-5)

Feste puns on 'colours' (military standards) and 'collars'.

8) Viola talks to Sir Toby when she comes to see Olivia:

VIOLA My legs do better under-stand me, sir, than I
understand what you mean by bidding me taste my legs.

SIR TOBY I mean to go, sir, to enter.

VIOLA I will answer you with gate and entrance.

(III.i.77-80)

She puns on 'gate' (the right to pasture) and 'gait' (the manner of walking or running).

9) In act III scene 2, Sir Toby instructs Sir Andrew to write a challenge to 'Cesario' for a duel, '.....Let there be gall enough in thy ink, though thou write with a goose pen, no matter. About it!'. (III.ii.46-8) He puns on the word 'gall', meaning 'an ingredient of ink and bitterness'.

10) In act III scene 4, Sir Andrew is showing his written challenge to Fabian and Sir Toby:

SIR ANDREW Here's the challenge, read it. I warrant
there's vinegar and pepper in't.

FABIAN Is't so saucy?

(III.iv.142-4)

Fabian puns on the word 'saucy', meaning 'impudent' and 'piquant'.

11) In act V scene 1, when Orsino is talking to Feste:

ORSINO Thou shalt not be the worse for me: there's gold.

FESTE But that it would be double-dealing, sir, I would
you could make it another.

ORSINO O, you give me ill counsel!

(V.i.26-9)

Feste puns on the word 'double-dealing', meaning 'a double donation' and 'duplicity'.

Finally, there is a malapropism in Sir Andrew's reply to Olivia about who has hurt him:

> The Count's gentleman, one Cesario. We took him for a coward, but he's the very devil incardinate.
>
> (V.i.177-8)

He uses the wrong word 'incardinate' instead of the correct one 'incarnate'.

Apart from puns, Shakespeare employs repartee, which is more witty and refined than the previous device, for example,

1) Olivia is saying that Feste 'grow dishonest' after his long absence and Feste retorts:

> Two faults, madonna, that drink and good counsel will amend. For give the dry fool drink, then is the fool not dry. Bid the dishonest man mend himself: if he mend, he is no longer dishonest; if he cannot, let the botcher mend him. Anything that's mended, is but patched: virtue that transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that amends is but patched with virtue. If that this simple syllogism will serve, so; if it will not, what remedy? As there is no true cuckold but calamity, so beauty's a flower. The lady bade take away the fool; therefore I say again- take her away!
>
> OLIVIA Sir, I bade them take away you.

FEST Misprision in the highest degree! Lady, *cucullus non facit monachum*; that's as much to say as I wear not motley in my brain.

(I.v.38-52)

Feste also plays with the word 'mend', by which he means 'repair' and 'reform'. Then he puns on the word 'cuckold' with 'cockle' meaning 'weed'. Finally, he plays on 'Misprision' meaning 'wrongful arrest' and 'misunderstanding'.

2) In act III scene 1, Viola as 'Cesario' is talking to Feste:

VIOLA Save thee, friend, and thy music. Dost thou live by thy tabor?

FESTE No, sir, I live by the church.

VIOLA Art thou a Churchman?

FESTE No such matter, sir; I do live by the church. For I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

VIOLA So thou mayst say the king lies by a beggar, if a beggar dwell near him; or the Church stands by thy tabor, if thy tabor stand by the church.

(III.i.1-10)

Viola also plays on the meaning of 'lies by - dwells near' and 'go to bed with'.

3) In Act V, Scene 1 Feste proves to Orsino why he thinks a foe is better than a friend as already quoted on page 119.

Summers (1957 : 135) comments, "For his festival entertainment, Shakespeare freshly organized all the usual material of the romances -

the twins, the exile, the impersonations - to provide significant movement for a dance of maskers. Every character has his mask, for the assumption of the play is that no one is without a mask in the serio-comic business of the pursuit of happiness. The character without disguises who is not ridiculous is outside the realm of comedy. Within comedy, the character who thinks it is possible to live without assuming a mask is merely too naive to recognize the mask he has already assumed. He is the chief object of laughter. As a general rule, we laugh with the characters who know the role they are playing and we laugh at those who do not; we can crudely divide the cast of Twelfth Night into those two categories."

Mahood (1968: 9-10) says that the music of Twelfth Night provides "much more than the festive framework to the play. Two kinds of music are integral to the comedy itself. On the one hand, there are the straight love songs, O mistress mine and Come away, death; on the other, snatches of songs that satirize love or are sung in a way that burlesques sentiment: My lady is unkind, perdy; Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone ; and the ballad of Susanna and the Elders, which reflects the impropriety of Malvolio's passion for Olivia. This is a deliberate contrast, basic to the nature of a festive play. The union of romance and satire, of poetry and wit, in Twelfth Night, corresponds to a union found in festive rites wherever they are performed in the world: a union between the invocation of nature's plenty and the ritual abuse of powers that may work against her blessings. Twelfth Night is a festive play not just because it was written for a feast and has a high-spirited plot but

rather because it is in itself a kind of saturnalia to invoke the festive virtues and to exorcize the killjoy powers."

John Masefield in Twelfth Night edited by Dent (1938: 136) comments that this play presents "images of self-deception, or delusional sentimentality, by means of a romantic fable and a vigorous fable. It shows us three souls suffering from the kind of sickly vanity that feeds on day-dreams. Orsino is in an unreal mood of emotion. Olivia is in an unreal mood of mourning for her brother. And Malvolio is in an unreal mood of self-importance."

Campbell (1966 : 903) states that "the main romantic plot - Viola's love for the Duke - is the poet's development of a typical Italianate comic situation, both of *commedia dell'arte* (popular comedy) and of the *commedia erudita* (learned comedy) based on Terence and Plautus. The common elements include a pair of indistinguishable twins and a girl disguised as a page, who follows her errant lover abroad and insinuates herself into his service. (Shakespeare uses these situations in his early comedies like The Comedy of Errors and The Two Gentlemen of Verona.) She usually adopts this stratagem in order to recover his love; in Twelfth Night it is merely in order to protect herself, a timid and modest girl, from the advances of rude men and when she talks, Shakespeare composes for her some of the loveliest lyrics that he ever wrote. The complication arising out of a sentimental girl's falling in love with a girl disguised as a page are also conventional in Italianate comedy. All these elements in the main plot are like those in a fairy story. They form a strong contrast to the realistic, broad comedy of the subplot that unfolds

in Olivia's manor house. Since Olivia's establishment was in a transitional stage between a medieval castle and a Tudor country house, it contains some of the elements of the older, fast-disappearing organization."

Unlike The Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night is more complex and more sophisticated, especially in terms of characterization. The characters are given more detail, both physical and emotional. Therefore, they are more like real people. In other words, they are more fully drawn. In addition, Twelfth Night does not follow the customary pattern of romantic comedies, where the chief characters, usually young lovers, have conflicts with their older generation of parents and rulers and end with the young lovers' triumph, in which the lovers make peace with their elders and themselves assume adulthood and often power. However, in Twelfth Night, there is no elder generation to cause the conflicts. Finally, Shakespeare employs a great number of witty exchange conversations between the main characters plus music, songs and dance, which makes Twelfth Night more outstanding and refined than other earlier comedies.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter consists of the conclusions from the analyses of the three plays as well as recommendations for further study.

Although Shakespeare repeated over and over again a number of his favourite comic devices and ideas, each comedy was an attempt to do something different. The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Twelfth Night, all end in marriage and the possibility of another generation like most romantic comedies do. However, the atmosphere of each play is different. In The Taming of the Shrew, which belongs to his experimental period, where Shakespeare was trying out reshaping and rewriting old plays and stories, learning his craft by imitating other plays and inventing his own stories, he chose to write about the battle between the sexes and he leaves us to decide what kind of marriage will lead to a happy life: the marriage of romantic love of Lucentio and Bianca or the marriage of convenience of Petruchio and Katherina. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, which belongs to the second period of his comic writing, by which time he had gained more experience, his focus is on love in association with illusion and reality. The play has a happy atmosphere. The product of his mature period, Twelfth Night, which was intended to be staged for the Twelfth Night festival, a time of pleasure, is a thoroughly festive play. Chute (1956 : 91) says that "Twelfth Night is one of the most light-hearted of the plays." Although the play ends with marriage, Shakespeare hints in the last

song sung by Feste that the couples may face some difficulties in the future:

> But when I came to man's estate,
>
> With hey-ho, the wind and the rain;
>
> 'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
>
> For the rain it raineth every day.
>
> (V.i.390-3)

Peck (1985 : 105) comments that "...a closing song from Feste with imagery of wind and rain, and knaves and thieves is a way of acknowledging that there are always problems. Life is always complex because there is always a tension between the desire for order in society and natural forces - both in nature and mankind - which threaten and undermine order and stability. But the strongest of these forces - the passion of love - is not only foolish and disruptive but also attractive and necessary."

It can be clearly seen that Shakespeare's early comedy, The Taming of the Shrew, is a boisterous comedy with characteristics similar to a farce. Its humour is coarse and cheap. There are many scenes where characters shout, beat each other, knock others down or throw things. In the next comedy, A Midsummer Night's Dream, such scenes are confined to the appearances of the mechanicals. Finally, there is almost none of this aspect in the comedy of the last period, Twelfth Night, which is more subtle. It can be concluded that Shakespeare's ability in writing comedies has fully developed. Love and music are harmoniously blended in such a happy atmosphere. Moreover, farce and witty humour are skilfully brought together.

As stated before, the main purpose of this thesis has been to reveal the development in Shakespeare's romantic comedies in terms of plot, characterization, theme, and diction, and from the analyses of the three comedies, namely, The Taming of the Shrew (1593-1594), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595-1596), and Twelfth Night (1600-1601), the following conclusions can be drawn.

PLOT. There is a marked development in the plot construction between the experimental and mature periods. In The Taming of the Shrew, he used the structure and much of the detail of Ariosto's comedy as his model and for its Pantaloon and Pedant, he used the character types of the commedia dell'arte. However, he added an Induction in which Christopher Sly, the drunken tinker, is set to watch a play, the story of the taming of Katherina by Petruchio, which came from the tradition of unsophisticated farcical plays. Therefore, the play depended much on situations. "The actions seem mechanical and there are crude exaggerations and extravagant poses, like the Kate-Petruchio story, which is marked by all the extravagant and grossly exaggerated emphasis of farce" (Goddard. 1951 : 69). The main plot runs parallel to the Bianca-Lucentio sub-plot before they finally join together at the end of the play. There is almost no link between these two plots. The only links are that Katherina and Bianca are sisters and Petruchio is a friend of Hortensio.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare employed a device like that of Love's Labour's Lost by arranging that the performance of Pyramus and Thisbe, intended to celebrate the royal wedding,

brings the mechanicals to court to be observed by Theseus, Hippolyta, and the young lovers. Here, however, it is more complex than the earlier play because the wedding also brings the fairies to the court to bless the lovers. In this play we can see that Shakespeare has become more adept in handling various plots. Through the characters of Puck and Bottom, the three plots of A Midsummer Night's Dream are more closely linked than the two of The Taming of the Shrew. Puck, the agent of magic, belongs to the group of fairies and he is ordered to bring the magic flower for Oberon to use on Titania as a result of their quarrel. He also manipulates the four young lovers, confuses them, puts the enchantment on them and puts things right for them. Further, he observes the mechanicals' rehearsal then puts an ass-head on Bottom, providing Titania with her absurd lover. Finally, he comes to Athens to bless the wedding of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta. Bottom, who is only a craftsman, also participates in the other two plots. He is the major actor in the playlet his company performs in front of the court and the young lovers and he is the only human who knowingly makes contact with the fairies. Through these links the play has a tighter structure than The Taming of the Shrew and, generally speaking, more action.

Although both plays follow Shakespeare's typical plot structure, that is, they begin with potential sadness and end with happiness, the degree of potential sadness is more extreme in A Midsummer Night's Dream than in The Taming of the Shrew. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Egeus wants his daughter to marry a man she does not love, otherwise, she will be executed. After her

strange adventure in the wood, she is allowed to marry the man she loves through the intervention of Theseus. Hermia is brought very close to death but the case of Katherina in The Taming of the Shrew is not as severe as Hermia's. Katherina only faces the problem of being single all her life which in turn would prevent Bianca from getting married because of her father's condition.

Within the frame of sorrow turning to joy in A Midsummer Night's Dream, there is a comic plot of mistakings which Shakespeare distances from the real world (the palace where the play begins and ends) by placing it in the wood at night time. In this place, lovers, both humans and fairies quarrel, change partners, are enchanted and are restored. Not until the end of his career did Shakespeare employ fantasy again in his comic writing. The setting makes it possible for Shakespeare to bring into the plot the immortals and magic as well as the transformation of the young lovers and Bottom. Shakespeare skilfully blended the four stories: the Theseus-Hippolyta marriage as the frame for the young lovers' adventure in the wood, the quarrel and reconciliation of Oberon and Titania, and the attempt to produce a play by the craftsmen. Muir (1965 : 5) states that ".....in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare combined a series of interrelated plots. The quartet of young lovers who change partners under the influence of Puck's magic juice, the quarrel between Oberon and Titania and her love for an ass, and the tragical mirth of Quince's play, all exhibit the irrationality of romantic love; and even though the love of Theseus and Hippolyta is more mature and stable, we are reminded of earlier amorous episodes in Theseus'

career. The speech on the resemblance between the lunatic, the lover, and the poet sums up ironically the necessary role of the imagination in human affairs. The play is the first in which Shakespeare used imagery to create a unified atmosphere."

Unlike The Taming of the Shrew, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, in Twelfth Night, Shakespeare moved away from creating conflicts caused by the older generation. In The Taming of the Shrew, the old father, Baptista, sets a difficult condition that his beautiful younger daughter can get married only after her sister, Katherina the shrew, does. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, the old father, Egeus, imposes obstacles to the course of true love; he demands that his daughter marry a man she does not love. Shakespeare does not use this kind of plot in Twelfth Night. The plot structure of Twelfth Night is more interwoven and skilfully blended than in The Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Both plots are harmoniously linked together and subtly related to each other. Viola, who has no part in the Malvolio plot, meets Malvolio, the clown, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Antonio. It is not essential for her to meet them but Shakespeare created situations in which she does. Parrott (1929 : 131) states that "we get the delightful episode of the mock duel between the page Cesario and Sir Andrew. Here for the first time the romantic and comic plots touch, and henceforth they are closely interwoven." The linking characters are Feste and Viola and the sub-plot takes place within Olivia's household. All the strands of the plots are brought together in the last scene. It can be seen that Shakespeare's skill in telling stories has developed. Roberts

(1960 : 5) comments that "Twelfth Night is a structural joy. The main plot is complicated but compact, and the sub-plots ripple through the play with ease. Although a great deal happens, the structure of the play is very smoothly handled." Frye (1982 : 140) concludes that "the sub-plot is in no sense parallel to the main love action, but treats various types of revelry, trickery, and high jinks including Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and Malvolio, among others. These two plots run concurrently, without mirroring each other, and flow together at points like tributary rivers which join their usually separate streams." Separation is emphasised in Twelfth Night. Viola is separated from her twin brother, which leads her to meet and fall in love with Orsino, disguise herself as a boy and woo another lady for her beloved, resulting in the lady falling in love with her. Orsino, who thinks he is in love with Olivia, is separated from her until the last scene. Muir(1965 : 7) says that "most of the dramatic devices used in Twelfth Night are repeated from previous comedies. But the total impression is quite different from anything previously written by Shakespeare." Jenkins in "Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*" edited by Muir (1965 : 73) states that Shakespeare combines the plots of The Comedy of Errors and The Two Gentlemen of Verona. He does not, however, combine them in equal degree.

In conclusion, a clear progression can be seen in Shakespeare's handling of plot from the parallelism of The Taming of the Shrew, through the triple plot structure of A Midsummer Night's Dream, to the subtle interweaving of Twelfth Night.

CHARACTERIZATION. As with plot, here too we can see a clear progression from the experimental to the mature periods. In The Taming of the Shrew, the characters are not fully drawn. They are not portrayed in detail. They lack the individuality which we find in the later comedies because Shakespeare seems to have begun with stock figures and stage types such as the stock figure of a shrew, a bombastic tamer, a boastful soldier, and the character types of the commedia dell'arte. Although Katherina and Petruchio are entertaining, they do not seem real. The funny characters are rustic clowns like Grumio and Curtis, who arouse laughter by their ignorance, misunderstandings, crude exaggerations and uncontrolled behaviour. Alexander (1979 : 42) states that "....a characteristic of farce is that the devices and the workings of plot are of more importance than individual characters and the play's emotional content."

In A Midsummer Night's Dream by comparison, we get a clear portrait of each group of characters. We know how and what the young lovers do and think when they fall in love and when the course of their love does not run smooth, but we can hardly remember each of them as an individual. On the contrary, we remember Bottom as an individual. Not only is he the main source of comedy in this play but also one of the story link characters. Moreover, he is the only human who knowingly has contact with the fairies. There is an absurd contrast when Titania falls in love with him when he has an ass-head on. It can be concluded that Shakespeare is interested in the situations rather than the characters so the characters in A Midsummer Night's Dream are not so deeply drawn except Bottom.

Pickering (1985 : 41) says that "A Midsummer Night's Dream is sometimes thought to be 'weak' in the area of characterization. It is true that the play provides no penetrating psychological study of human beings such as we find in Macbeth or King Lear but that is to judge the play by the wrong criteria. The interest lies in the situations, ideas, images, atmosphere and spectacle: the characters sustain all of these rather than providing profound revelations of themselves. Nevertheless, the text does give the actor a considerable number of clues for the creation of believable and fascinating characters." Alexander (1964 : 142) concludes that "the skill with which Shakespeare combines his subject, the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta, with contrasting counter-subjects is a developed form of the technique found in the other early comedies. Now to this is added his growing powers of characterization that make Bottom the weaver the first of Shakespeare's masterpieces in this kind."

Finally, when these two plays are compared with Twelfth Night in terms of characterization, we can clearly see Shakespeare's development in portraying his characters because they are more like living men and women than those in his earlier comedies. They are more vivid and individualized than the characters in The Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Viola has become one of Shakespeare's most memorable heroines. Twelfth Night is dominated by her. There are no such heroines in The Taming of the Shrew or A Midsummer Night's Dream. She is an ideal for a happy and successful marriage. We know her in detail: how and what she thinks and does. She is full of sweetness and common sense, "the most

lovable of Shakespeare's heroines " (Parrott. 1929 : 133). Her gifts and wit are clearly displayed through her ability in repartee. Chute (1957 : 73) states that "Shakespeare's gift for creating real people is clearly seen in Twelfth Night. Viola's notions of how to behave as a boy are entirely her own, and like most of Shakespeare's heroines she knows how to make fun of herself. This is an art that the girls in the comedies possess naturally." Sir Toby and Sir Andrew belong to the loud, boisterous and funny group of characters, but here Shakespeare makes them more realistic and fully drawn than other characters in the same type. The other characters, Malvolio, Maria, Olivia, Orsino, and Feste, are deeper and more fully drawn; therefore, they are more true to life. Parrott (1929 : 132) comments that "high comedy such as Twelfth Night is marked even more by power and subtlety of characterization than by deft and entertaining plot. And it is not too much to say that the characters of this play rank high in Shakespeare's gallery of masterpieces. ..... It is in the character of Viola, that Shakespeare achieves his supreme triumph in the play. ..... she is the most modest, the most wistful, of all his ladies of romance." In addition, Roberts (1960 : 5) concludes that "the characters, from major to minor, are extremely well drawn. Perhaps Viola, the main character, is the most memorable of the group because she is a charming package of warmth, good sense, brightness, and virtue."

There is also an obvious development in Shakespeare's comic characters. In The Taming of the Shrew, the comic characters Grumio and Curtis are low clowns. They are servants who arouse laughter

through their mishandling of language because of their ignorance. They cause unintentional humour with puns, misunderstandings, together with knocking each other about. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, the comic characters, Bottom and his friends, are still low characters. They are the uneducated workers in Athens but they are more developed, especially Bottom. Much of the humour of the play is presented by them in their attempt to perform a tragedy which turns out to be a comedy because they are trying to act out the life of the aristocrats, while they are only rough workers and they leave nothing to the imagination of their audience. They break the rules of acting when Bottom stops acting Pyramus and talks to his audience before shifting back to Pyramus. Finally, the comic characters, Feste, Fabian, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, in Twelfth Night demonstrate considerable further development. They are witty, except Sir Andrew, who is a foolish knight. "Feste is more intellectual and refined than Bottom and the other low characters in the earlier comedies." (Stephen . 1984 : 39) His humour is verbal and witty. Parrott(1929 : 129) states that "Shakespeare develops a group of broad comedy figures, gathering at the house of Olivia, whose pranks serve as a refreshing interlude to the romantic plot." Roberts (1960 : 5) says that "the comic characters provide the audience with a great variety of laughter, from light-hearted to scornful (in the case of Malvolio). Feste, the clown, is a wise fool."

THEME. The development in terms of theme, which is quite different from the other two elements discussed above, is also clear.

Shakespeare's main themes involve the world of appearance and the world of reality. In the later romantic comedies, the themes are more profound and more realistic. The views he conveyed are broader. This movement can be seen through the more interwoven plots and greater depth of characterization. The significant subject of Shakespearean comedies is love but Shakespeare gave it a distinctive treatment in each comedy. In his early comedy like The Taming of the Shrew, romantic love appears in the sub-plot only and Shakespeare seems to indicate that having an obedient wife would lead to a happy married life through the story of Katherina being tamed by Petruchio. We have to accept his proposition. Then in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare associates love with illusion and reality, a more complex idea than that of The Taming of the Shrew. And he also conveys the similarity between lovers and poets. Finally, in his mature comedy, Twelfth Night, there is a character, Malvolio, who is left outside the world of happiness and order at the end of the play.

Shakespeare seems to emphasise that self-knowledge, good spirits and attitude can help anyone falling in love to win his or her true love as seen in the case of Viola, who becomes one of Shakespeare's idealized heroines. He also emphasises the results of self-deception and deception resulting from disguise. In addition, Alexander (1979 : 80) comments that "the theme of deceit and self-delusion are combined in the superb sub-plot - the gulling of Malvolio by Maria and Sir Toby." When we reach the end of The Taming of the Shrew, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, we have to accept that the marriages of the main characters are going to be happy without

any real evidence in support, but in Twelfth Night, we have reasons to believe that the main characters are going to be happy. In conclusion, there is a greater profundity of thought and a broader view on love and successful marriage in the theme of Twelfth Night than in The Taming of the Shrew and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

COMEDY AND DICTION. The last point to be looked at is the development in terms of comedy and diction. From the analyses of the three comedies, the development in this aspect is also clearly to be seen. In The Taming of the Shrew, Shakespeare employed some of the characteristics of a farce and low comic characters. Therefore, the humour of this play comes from the knockabout scenes , the physical violence, and the misunderstandings of the rustic clowns. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, he created his own clown, Bottom, whom we both laugh at and laugh with. Tilak (1981 : 50) concludes that "....by the time of A Midsummer Night's Dream, his humour enriches itself by coalescing with fancy..... His powers now work in deeper harmony than before. Bottom is incomparably a finer effervescence of the absurd than any preceding character of Shakespeare's invention." Shakespeare created funnier and more sophisticated characters and situations than those in The Taming of the Shrew. He was more skilful in using puns and wordplay. For example, in The Taming of the Shrew, the pun on the word knock when Petruchio asks his servant Grumio to knock (on the door), is over-worked. Generally speaking, Shakespeare becomes more adept at handling puns from The Taming of the Shrew, through A Midsummer Night's Dream, to Twelfth Night. In

Twelfth Night, he used puns and wordplay in a more subtle and sophisticated way than in his earlier comedies. For example, when Viola exchanges conversation with Feste, she puns on the word 'lies by', where she means 'dwells near' and 'goes to bed with'.

In addition, Shakespeare employed repartee or witty exchanges between characters that have impressed his audiences so much that most people agree that Twelfth Night excels his earlier comedies. For example, we cannot help smiling when Feste proves that Olivia is 'a fool' to mourn for her brother or when he proves to Orsino that a friend is worse than a foe. Tilak (1981 : 50) states that "Twelfth Night affords illustration of almost every species of humour - of character, incident and situation. In this period, his humour shows greater maturity and refinement."

In conclusion, from the analyses of these three Shakespearean comedies, there is an obvious development in terms of plot, characterization, theme, and comedy and diction. The development from The Taming of the Shrew, through A Midsummer Night's Dream, to Twelfth Night can be seen through the interrelationship between these elements. In The Taming of the Shrew, Shakespeare borrowed already existing different stories, then reshaped them. It was the time when he had just started writing comedies so he was experimenting, trying out dramatic devices and techniques. The characters in The Taming of the Shrew lack the individuality which we begin to find in A Midsummer Night's Dream and which is clearly manifest in Twelfth Night. A Midsummer Night's Dream benefits from his greater experience and developing skill, though he is still to some extent

experimenting, especially with regard to multiple plots. He was more confident in creating his own story and characters. Although he still depended on some certain sources, he added his own creation and imagination. Then when he came to the end of his romantic comedies, he was very mature and skilful. He made use of stories and devices he had employed in his earlier comedies but constructed them in such a harmonious way, in such a festive atmosphere, that his Twelfth Night is considered by many critics to be his most successful romantic comedy.

From what has been discussed above, we can obviously see Shakespeare's development in his comic writing. A Midsummer Night's Dream, his first comic masterpiece, is more refined and subtle than The Taming of the Shrew. Pickering (1985 : 5) comments that "A Midsummer Night's Dream is a sophisticated play, both thought-provoking and highly entertaining. It is composed of two particular blends which have always created popular entertainment. The first of these is a blend of fantasy and reality and the other is a blend of music, dance and language." Charlton (1966 : 122) states that "...in its technical aspect, it is the work of a master of language and of plot : but its greatest attainment is that embodied in it, the controlling power shaping its form and texture, there is this first considerable apprehension of the enduring attitude of comedy, the spirit which gives to comedy its vital significance for man and endows it with the permanence of a fine art." Twelfth Night, is the most subtle and sophisticated of the three comedies analysed because firstly, Shakespeare's growth in handling his plots, portraying his

characters, and creating comedy has increased. Parrott (1929 : 131) says that "...nowhere else in Shakespeare's comedies do we have so deft, so entertaining and so happy a piece of plot-construction." And Summers in Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism, edited by Dean (1957 : 143) comments that Twelfth Night is "the climax of Shakespeare's early achievement in comedy. The effects and values of the earlier comedies are here subtly embodied in the most complex structure which Shakespeare had yet created. But the play also looks forward: the pressure to dissolve the comedy , to realize and finally abandon the burden of laughter, is an intrinsic part of its perfection." Secondly, the ideas he conveyed are broader. Finally, his ability in employing dramatic devices is more advanced. In brief, we can conclude that there is quite an obvious development from The Taming of the Shrew to Twelfth Night. Alexander (1964: 115) concludes that " As Shakespeare produced comedies in every period of his work for the theatre, and as each phase of this career is marked by fresh developments, we must expect even the comedies to call for a considerable latitude of response: The Comedy of Errors, which must be among the earliest of Shakespeare's essays in this mode, is obviously very different from the last, The Tempest. Between them lies a wonderfully varied series of pieces that reveal the dramatist's constant effort to develop the range of his art and to deepen its significance."

RECOMMENDATIONS

As this thesis has covered the development of Shakespeare's

romantic comedies in terms of plot, characterization, theme, and comedy and diction by analysing three plays, representing three different periods of time, the other romantic comedies should also be analysed in more detail and a further study of different types of comedy written both in the same period and later on, would be beneficial because it will help one understand and appreciate this kind of play more fully. The recommendations are as follows:

1. A detailed study of the other seven comedies is suggested.

2. A comparative study between the comedies covered here and the later comedies is advised.

3. A comparative study between Shakespearean comedies and the comedies written by his contemporaries is strongly recommended.

4. A comparative study between comedies of manners is suggested. Examples are Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost, Jonson's Bartholomew Fair, Sheridan's The School for Scandal, Etherege's The Man of Mode, Congreve's The Old Bachelor, Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer, and Steele's The Conscious Lovers.

5. A detailed study of verbal humour techniques in other comedies written by other writers is recommended.

6. As Shakespeare is a great dramatist and he wrote a number of different types of plays, analyses of the other types are recommended with the useful background knowledge of this thesis.

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