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PAPER IV (OPTIONAL -1)

SHAKESPEARE

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SECTION A
HENRY – IV PART –I
HISTORY PLAY

Introduction

As far as possible, a play presents human actions in terms of cause and effect in a serial order. The characters in a play are, as a rule, products of the playwright's imagination and fancy. They may also be from legends, folklore, mythology, history and the like. Whatever may be the origin of the action and the characters it is the proud privilege of the playwright's imagination to cast them in any shape as he likes. That is to say, the playwright may recast them in his crucible of imagination and fancy, the net result being transformed entities.

In the next few pages we are going to discuss one of Shakespeare's history plays. History may be defined as the record of the political consequences of human actions.

When a playwright takes his theme and characters from recorded history his hands are tied. He has to adhere to the facts of documented history, even though his treatment could be imaginative and artistic. In other words there should and would be broad agreement between known facts and treated facts. Nevertheless, considerable freedom is enjoyed by the dramatist since he is an unacknowledged legislator.

Shakespeare's History Plays

We find that sometimes Shakespeare's history – plays are referred to as chronicle plays. We may, from the academic standpoint, draw a distinction between them: when historical events in the consequence get emphasis, we have a chronicle play; when, on the contrary, an interplay of historical figures and their actions gets emphasis, we have a history play. Here A.C. Bradley helps us when he says character issues in action and action issues in character. Peter Ure refers to it as the continuum of the inner man

and the outer man, with actions and motives for action, with what happens to the personality as a result of its commitment to a course of action. Thus, in a serious history play we have an equal emphasis on both the documented events and facts and the persons responsible for the events and facts. From the laymen's point of view a chronicle play is just a dramatization of a piece of history and a history play is to say the least, comedy or tragedy. For the sake of convenience we will call Shakespeare's history plays just history plays.

Shakespeare wrote TEN history plays. We will just list them.

King John
Henry VI Parts I, II & III (three plays)
Richard III
Richard II
Henry IV Parts I & II
Henry V and
Henry VIII

Classification/Grouping

In the above we have two groups of four plays each, called tetralogies sandwiched between King John and Henry VIII. Henry VI Parts, I, II, III and Richard III are called the second tetralogy. The first is also called the Yorkist tetralogy and the second the Lancastrian Tetralogy, so named on the basis of the House of the York and Lancaster (The Wars of the Roses-Henry VI and Richard III were of the Yorkist family. The wars began in 1485, Henry VII who ascended the throne married Elizabeth of York and put an end to the feud. The Lancastrians chose a red rose as their emblem, while the Yorkists chose a white rose as theirs and hence the name "The Wars of the Roses").

Kind John stands aloof in the beginning of the list and Henry VIII stands at the end.

The reason for grouping the history plays is that in the tetralogies action spills over from one to the other, from the first to

the last. That is to say, Henry IV is an extension of Richard II and Henry V is an extension of Henry IV. Similarly, Richard III begins where Henry VI Part III leaves off.

Introduction to Henry IV Part I

Perhaps you recall what I said in my notes on A Midsummer Night's Dream'. The study of a Shakespearean play begins with a study of the probable date of composition and the sources and antecedents.

Date of Composition

There is general agreement that Henry IV (Both parts) was written in 1597 following. The Merchant of Venice and Richard II' in 1596. The Stationer's Register has an entry showing Henry IV registered on 25 February, 1598.

Sources

Shakespeare began his career as a playwright in 1590-91 and the first plays he wrote were three parts of Henry IV and Richard III. So we may safely guess that he began his contemplations on British History long before the plays on the Wars of the Roses were written. He searched for materials which were on record, and registers and laid his hands on the "Chronicles of England", Scotland and Ireland" by Raphael Holinshed (The second augmented edition of 1587). The Chronicles were at that time the most up-to-date, authentic and authoritative source book of English History, written in more than three and half million words, starting with the Sons of Noah and extending up to and including 1587. Shakespeare very lavishly borrowed from the Chronicles. (Incidentally some of his greatest plays had their raw materials taken from the Chronicles of Holinshed. E.G. Lear Macbeth and Cymbline). He crosschecked his materials with Edward Hall's account of the English Civil wars published in 1548 The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Families f Lancaster and York). He must have used other Chronicles and histories, earlier history plays, historical poetry, manuscript materials Etc, because throughout the reign of Elizabeth books on history poured from the presses both original works on English and

foreign history and translation of modern European and classical historians, illustrating the Tudor English Man's keen and persistent interest in history and related matters. John Stow's A Mirror for Magistrates, a verse account of twenty tragedies of historical personages, too, could have influenced Shakespeare. The Bible, Church Homilies, earlier anonymous plays like " The famous Victories of Henry V" plays like Woodstck", Soliman and Persueda (anonymous), the Wild Prince Hal stories Ballads of Percyand and Douglas and a few others also could have supplied the playwright with materials.

Introductory Remarks on How to study a History Play by Shakespeare:

The 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries considered Shakespeare's history plays as chauvinistic, a kind of national epic where England is the hero. In the present century the approach has changed. Each play can be treated individually and accorded status as an in-tact play. However none can deny the continuity.

There is broad agreement amongst critics and interpreters on how to study history plays. The study may be based on

a) The Tudor Myth Interpretation
b) The nature of Kingship Interpretation
c) The Action-Reaction Interpretation

We shall be very brief in explaining the above.

The Tudor Myth :

The Tudor King were looked upon as the divinely appointed rulers of England. Any revolt against the appointed King (The Lord's anointed Monarch) would lead to disaster. The supposition was based on the Divine Right theory. It was a popular belief. Let us see how it was arrived at.

England was torn into two by the Wars of the Roses. The Lord was warning England. But why? King Richard II has been deposed and the throne unsurped by Henry Bolingbroke. Years of suffering followed, consequent upon unauthorized Kingship and the civil wars. Peace, plenty and prosperity, stability in the form of good

Government etc. Came back only when the right king occupied the throne. Henry VII was the King who, through marriage united the warring families of York and Lanscaster. This was symbolically interpreteds the disappearance of peace and prosperity on usurpation and their return on the restoration of Kingship to its rightful owner.

Such a view entertained by 'Elizabthan's in general was flatering to Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare too fostered this view. However, we have to admit that it was mere superstition. Yet, there is a good deal of symbolic truth in this E.M.W. Tillyard has demonstrated in his 'Elizabethan World Picture' how order was looked upon during that period-the Great Chain of Being. Shakespeare himself tells us about this in several of his plays-the most famous being the speech by Ulysses in 'Troilus and Gressida'Menenius' parable of the Somach land, the limbs in 'Coriolanus' and the parable of the beehive given by the Bishop of Canterbury in 'Henry V' As this is very useful information, applicable not only in the history plays but also in other plays, we shall dwell on it at some length.

The universe was considered a system of interlocking subsystems of order, degree and hierarchy. It was so ordained by the Lord God. One of the subsystems was the; Nation-State. Society was broadly divided into three orders-the feudalistic, the ecclesiastical and the scholastic, the first having all temporal power and the second the spiritual, while the third was occupied with study (which by the way, was monopolized by the clergy) The feudalistic order was headed by a monarch, the representative deputy on earth of the Lord (just as the Pope at the Vatican was the spiritual leader of the ecclesiastical order) The monarch inherited his title by right of blood succession. Beneath him were the descending orders of rank. A self defined hierarchy consisting of the Nobles commoners etc,. (such orders were said to exist in the animal world and the vegetable world too the lion being the king of the animals and the oak being the monarch boad) Each social level owed the

duty of allegiance/obedience to the one above it and all owed obedience to the monarch.

Any disturbance of the order would lead to serious consequences. At the same time, strict observance and obedience to this system demanded putting up with inept rulers, evil rulers, cruel rulers etc. and their misrule. This might lead to usurpation. And usurpation was an offence against God's ordinance. A usuper who threatened, seized and possessed the true king's throne was exposed to the same threat himself. Rebellion was against all norms of God and nature. So rebellion bred rebellion; rebellion was self perpetuating; rebellion was a chain reaction, a never ending process.

Yet, the process had to end. Proper atonement, expiation of offence, would break the chain reaction. Order would be restored and new order would be a superior one. The deposal and assassination of Richard the Second by Henry Bolingbroke led to the civil wars-the wars of the Roses which lasted several decades and which ended with the ascension to the throne of the rightful King, Henry VII.

The Nature of Kingship

It held that each history play analyses the ideal of Kingship, the sort of King England must have the sort it actually has its merits and defects etc. This widens the scope of the plays by bringing moral and ethical considerations into the ambit of interpretation. Here character analyses earn primary consideration.

Action-Reaction Interpretation

All of us are familiars with the third law of motion as stated by Newton: every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Here, in the plays it is held that each action has its inevitable results. Struggle for the corruption of power, clash between those in power and those out of power etc. always exist in the form of reversible reaction. The plays do not judge any action on its merits. The spectators/readers have the privilege to judge.

Why did Shakespeare write the History Plays?

Of the 37 plays Shakespeare wrote 10 are History plays, i.e. more than 25% and so there should have been sound reason for his writing them. The great upsurge in national pride and national self awareness in the last years of the 16th century coming to a peak euphoria in 1588 with the defeat of the Spanish Armada might have prompted him to satisfy the audience's craving for knowledge of the their country's past. And, perhaps, a better reason could be man's political behavior. Shakespeare's use of history consists in selecting, shaping, amplifying and quite often, adding to chronicle material in order to intensify concentration on political issues and on their human consequences.

Synopsis of the Tetralogy

I have already remarked that Henry IV is just one of the plays of the Lancastrian Tetralogy and there is the spill over of action from one to the other starting from Richard II and ending with Henry V. for a better understanding of our play some familiarity with all the four constituent plays is necessary, as the continuity of plot and action is crucial to guarantee an organic wholeness. Hence this synopsis.

Richard II

In this play King 'Richard' is represented as a bad rulers, Machiavellian King, murderer of his uncle, play actor, addicted to foreign fashions, susceptible to flattery and misled by parasites, guilty of exorbitant and unjust taxation. Neurotica and eccentric. He cares more for his happiness and joy than for the discharge of his kingly duties. John of Gaunt indicts him in no mincing terms. The indictment enrages Richard. Richard confiscates the entire estate of John of Gaunt on the Latter's death. Henry Bolingbroke (later King Henry IV) son of John of Guant, banished by Richard sometime earlier, returns ignoring the banishment in order to claim his inheritance, when Richard is away in Ireland. Henry capitalizes on his absence. He wins the support of the lords and barons of England who are totally dissatisfied with Richard's misrule. Richard and his people return and find that things have changed in London. He wallows in self-pity and despair, when he learns about Bolingbroke's insurrection.

Ably assisted by the feudal lords. Henry grows stronger and more assertive day by day. He manipulates the lords. An astrte calculating politician (though there is some justification possible for his insurrection) he uses his friends. Richard's self-pity is more and more visible. So also the greed for power of Henry. These are in a way balanced. Richard the Lord's anointed King, his direct deputy on earth, is deposed, taken to the Tower of London and later imprisoned at Pomfret Castle and killed by Pierce of Foten after a struggle and is body brought to Henry who has ascended the throne as usurper....

The action of Henry is tantamount to the breaking of the Great chain of Being and violation of the Divine Right. Now we can see, or at least anticipate, hell in England, as Nemesis takes over and retribution begins to befall, it is just a matter of time Henry IV will be cut down to his original size.

We shall quote a few lines from Richard II to trace the transfer of power from Richard to Henry. York says:

"Great Duke of Lancaster (Henry), I come to thee
From plume plucked Richard who with willing soul
Adopts thee heir, and his high spceptre yields
To the possession of thy royal hand
Ascend the throne, descending now from him
And long live Henry: the fourth of that name".

Bollingbroke replies

"In God's name. I'll ascend the regal throne"

The Bishop of Carlisdle stongly condemns the action and prophesies

"Marry, God forbid!
Worst in this royal presence may I speak
Yet best beseeming me to speak the truth
Would God that any in this nobie presence

Were enough noble to be upright judge
Of noble Richard! Then true nobleness would
Learn him forbearance from so foul a wrong
What subject can give sentence on this king?
And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?
And shall the figure of God's majesty
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years
My lord of Hereford here, whom you call king
Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king
And if you crown him, let me prophesy-
The blood of English shall manure the ground
And future ages groan for this foul act
Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels
And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
Shall kin with kind and kind with kind confound;
Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny
Shall here inhabit, and this land he call'd
The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls"

Carlisle is charged with treason and taken prisoner. Richard is forced to surrender his crown. Henry ascends the throne. Henry is no fool. He realizes his sin and contemplates expiation, when after the murder of Richar, Sir Pierce of Exton brings the body to Henry Henry , says:

"Exton, I thank thee not; for thou hast wrought
A deed of slander with thy fatal hand
Upon my head and all this famous land"
Now Exton says;
"From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed"
Henry concludes the play with the following speech:

Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow
Come, mourn with me for what I do lament
And put on sullen black incontinent.
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land.
To wash this blood off from my guilty hand.
March sadly after, grace my mourning here
In weeping after this untimely bier."

Henry IV Part I

The play begins with Henry's declaration of undertaking a crusade to ward off the evil befalling England.

"Therefore, friends,
As far as the sepulcher of Christ-
Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross'
We are impressed and engag'd to fight-
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy.
Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whom acres walk'd those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were mail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross."

Henry appears rather happy as he has succeeded in crushing the rebellions against his throne. But the happiness lasts only a short while. As he is in the process of congratulating himself, news of further uprising reaches the court. Henry, the usurper is being hounded by Nemesis. He can never expect an easy rule over England. The powerful Earls of Worcester and Northumberland have turned against him. In this they are assisted by Harry Percy (or. Henry Percy). Nicknamed Hotspur. The irony is that it is was they who helped Henry ascend the throne. Henry realizes that no man can be trusted, his son included; the Prince of Wales, his son, is reported to be totally irresponsible, to riot and reel and while away his time with a bunch of no-good drunkards who have Sir. John Falstaff as leader. The father and the son are strangers, the former

not able to understand the latter. Henry secretly wishes that his on were like the chivalrous Hotspur. He cannot bring himself to guess that the prince is perhaps learning much form his mischiefs, from tavern life etc. who knows? One day he may become a good king, because of his indulgences.

Now the story divides. Tow parallel actions progress: Scenes of Court intrigues with the conspiracy and the plotted rebellion is of the lords, consisting of the Percise, Douglas and Glendower etc against Henry, the tavern intrigues robbery on Gadshill, the deception played on Falstaff by Prince Hal and Poins and the like Hotspus and his wild and tempestuous displays of heroism adventure, impetuosity, obsession with honour etc is contrasted with Falstaff who stands for cynical materialism and fondness for good living. The prince has a tight rope walk between tfem.

The parallel lines meet at Schbuewsbury where in a battle the rebels and the king meet,. The Prince saves his father's life, kills Hotspur and takes away the latter's accumulated honours and wears them as his ornament. The play ends with this victory even though all the rebels have not been defeated which keeps in reserve the potential for a new outbreak of civil war. There is no certainty at all, for a long time to come, about peace descending on England.

Henry IV Part II

The struggle between the usurper king and the rebels continues. The news of Henry Percy's death reaches the ears of his father, the Earl of Northumberland. He swears revenge and in his thirst for vengenance he prepares to let loose the dogs of war, caring nothing at all for the chaos he might trigger in the country. But his revenge will be camouflaged in the cloak of religion, righteousness and justifiable indignation. The late King Richard, whom everyone intensely disliked while he was alive is to be used as rallying cry against Henry IV.

Falsta'f and his foolery are frowned upon and meet with disapproval, Shakespeare prepares the ground for the rejection of Falstaff through some actions on his part like his exploitation of the hostess, his contempt for the Lord Chief Justice, as well for the Prince himself. Similarly the intrigues and the counter intrigues around the throne are not favorably dealt with by Shakespeare. Both Henry and his country are sick. Henry is moody and contemplative. He runs over his efforts to posses the crown in a review and reminds himself of the fact that he has not relished his success at all. He is tired of everything. He cannot sleep. He cries, "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown"

Falstaff cheats the Prince by exploiting his commission, Prince John cheats the rebels. He breaks his word, arrests the rebel leaders when the latters army had dispersed and accepting the proposal for a peaceful settlement and executes them without any qualms of conscience. Perhaps the sins of the father have descended upon the sons. Prince Hal has to establish and show his integrity.

The News of John's treachery nearly kills the King. Prince Hal comes to visit his father and addresses the crown, thinking that his father is dead. He takes the crown away. Henry, waking, finds the crown gone, thinks that his son covets his crown and desires to supplant him. Picnce Hal explains. The words ring of honey, sincerity and probity. The father is reconciled to the son. Henry dies, hoping that the future of England is safe in the hands of his son.

Prince Hal is crowned King Henry V. Henry V rejects Falstaff. His new responsibility demands the rejection of the man who is vice, sloth, vanity. Riot and Devil. He is no longer the wild, madcap Hal. He is now the king of England and the cannot associate himself any longer with Falstaff.

Henry V

The play opens with a chorus who introduces the theme. The Arch bishop of Canterbury praises the reformed character of Henry V.

"The King is full of grace and fine regard.....
The courses of his youth promised it not.

The breath no sooner left his father's body
But that his wildness mortified in his
Seem'd to die too. Yea, at that very moment
Consideration like an angel came
And whipped the offending Adam out of him
Leaving his body as a paradise
T'enevelop and contain celestial spirits
Never was such a sudden scholar made:
Never came reformation in a flood
With such a sudden scholar made:
Never came reformation in a flood.
With such a heady currence, scourging faults..."

Well, the praise continues for a long while over several lines.

The actor of the play consist in the Bishop's persuading him to claim his right in France. The Dauphin's insulting message is replied to defiantly and war is declared. At Southampton Henry condemns Lord Scroop, Sir Thomas Grey and Earl of Cambridge to death for treason, for plotting against his life. The invasion of France follows and the siege and the capture of Harfleur. At Harfleur he inspires his men to further attacks with his famous speech " Once more unto the breach...." Running to 34 powerful lines. In the English camp before the Battle of Agincourt (1415) he disguises himself and moves amongst his men. He is troubled by the heavy weight of kingly duties and responsibilities. Before the battle he once more inspires his men with a string speech. After the battle he orders all the prisoners of war killed. He meets the French Court at Troues and arranges a treaty. He meets the French court at Troyes and arranges a treaty. He woos Princess Katharne. He is formally betrothed to her as part as part of the peace treaty.

The knaves, Nym and Bardolph, and the braggart, Pistol, provide relief to the high seriousness of the play.

Mistress Quickly reports the death of Falstaff in the second Act.

In the foregoing account I have attempt to trace the story line of the tetralogy from the beginning of Richard II to the end of Henry V. I hope that now you have reasonably good grasp of the

main events of the plays. However, the synopsis is no substitute for the plays.

It is now time for us to concentrate on our play. Henry IV part I' which is prescribed for general study.

We shall now attempt a scene by scene summary of the play.

Scene by Scene Summary : Introduction

The structure of Henry IV Part II is so organized as for the action to alternate between the King's court and the castles of the rebel lords on the one hand and the tavern and its neighbourhood on the other. The result is a constant contrast between the two. Henry, by virtue of his position as the ruler, has to take care of and belong to both the world. Prince Hal, thanks to his nativity, belongs to the court and by his professed activities, to the tavern world. So the father and the son connect the two parallel worlds which meet later at the battlefield at Shrewsbury and get merged into each other.

As we will be attempting a critical and evaluative study of the play scene by scene here we will satisfy ourselves with just a skeleton of the play.

Act. I Scene I: London –the Palace

King Henry talks at length about his projected crusade when news of more rebellions reaches him. Many feudal lords are dissatisfied with his rule and defiantly challenge his sovereignty. Some of Henry's forces have been defeated: some of the forces have defeated the trouble makers and quenched the rebellion. Hotspurs words and actions, reported to henry is all praise for Hotspur, though. He sees "riot and dishonour stain the brow of my young Harry" (Prince Hal) And his plans for the crusade, to expiate the sin of usurpation, are given up in the face of these civil disturbances.

Act I Scene II

The focus shifts to London, apartment of Prince

Falstaff and Prince Hal are talking to each other. Later Poins

joins them, it is clearly indicated that all of them refuse to acknowledge and abide by the authority of the King and the laws of the country. Falstaff is hoping for a riot of misrule when Prince Hal comes to power. The scene ends with the soliloquy of Prince Hal, Which indicates that the Prince knows what he is doing and his riotous friends cannot corrupt him, howsoever hard they try.

Act I. Scene III

Windor Castle, The Council Chamber.

King Henry, Northumberland, Worcesterm, Hotspur, Walter blunt and others are present-the Lords who had helped the King ascend the throne after assisting him in the deposal of Richard II. Trouble brews. They are out questioning the authority of the King. Their defiant non allegiance infuriates the King. Who violently reacts-which is suggestive of his feeling of insecurity. Hotspur's character gets ample display – his hot, quick temper, rashness, defiance of authority, and overflowing arrogant self-confidence. The King departs. The rebel lords plot against the king and their motives are revealed. The scene ends with Worcester promising to direct the future course of action.

Act. II. Scene 1

Rochester: an Inn Yard

The non-existence of a strong central authority is felt. There is corruption and disquiet in England. Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold, Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, as Yeats says. Nothing much happens in this scene. However, mutual suspicion, a fall in standards, a terrible feeling of insecurity etc. are suggested as pervading life in England.

Act II. Scene II

Gad's Hill. The Highway

The anti-social elements Prince Hal, Falstaff, Points, Bardolph, Peto are presented. Intelligence is collected about the arrival of a group of merchants, Robbery is Planned and executed.

We find in open defiance of the law of the country and a flouting of the king's authority. The law breakers derive strength from the Prince, their leader. There is some fun but the merchants travellers, who have been robbed, are miserable. The robbing of the robbers is hilarious comedy. Falstaff, for all his bulk abd pomposity, betrays his cowardice.

Act.II Scence III

Hotspur's exorbitant preoccupation with his own self, his own courage and reputation and his supreme self-confidence are revealed. It is somewhat cloying. His relationship with his wife where romance is totally lacking is shown. He is indifferent in accepting the gravity of the situation.

Act II. Scene IV

Eastcheap. The Boar's Hed Tavern:

The Prince and poins. The teasing of Francis, the drawer. The arrival on the scene of Falstaf and associates. There follows a valiant attempt of Falstaff to show his conceit, to cover his cowardice and to retain his reputation for courage. The concocted story of the men in buckram displays evasion of reality. Hal's grasp of the real Falstaff is made known. The mock interview reveals Falstaff's delusion. We will not be surprised if Hal gets ready to dismiss Falstaff for ever from his friendship. The Sheriff arrives and Hal play acts in an attempts of face saving. The Prince's attempt to pay the money back to the merchants with interest shows his integrity as well as his disapproval of wickedness.

Act III Scene I

Bangor. The archdeacon's House.

The rebel leaders, Hotspur, Worcester, Lord Mortimer and Owen Glendower, have assembled. The talk reveals the true nature of Glsendower his bombast-and Hotspur's making fun of him. Glendower's daughter dotes on Mortimer. There is just a shade of romance.

The rebels quarrel amongst themselves over how the spoils of the war, if they defeat the king, are to be divided. "The archdeacon hath divided it into three limits very equally. "The next few lines describe what their portions are. This shows their greed for power and possession. Similarly, the scene reveals Hotspur's intolerance of pride, imperfections and impatience in others, which he possesses in abundance.

Act III, scene II

London, The Palace,

The king and the prince along with others. Others leave at the king's request, An intimate talk between the father and the son follows. The prince shown his integrity. Henry's words reveal his known standards of conduct-cold, calculating, expedient, unmoved by moral considerations-in short; a typical Machiavellian King. A contrast is struck between the two.

Blunt appears and reports of the preparations of the rebels their projected arrival at shrewsbury. "A mighty and fearful head they are ...As ever offer'd foul play in a state.". But Henry is game. He announces his plan of action.

Act III. Scene III

Falstaff's character shows itself. His calculation, immoral exploitation of the hostess's liking of him etc. are exposed. The prince arrives with Peto. hal and Falstaff meet. Hal's words come with a finality: "there'so room for faith, truth nor honesty in this bosom of thine....." We learn a lot about Falstaff and the Prince's assessment of him. The prince rises to the occasion. His efficient handling of matters relating to the impending civil war is shown.

Act IV Scene I

Shrewsbury. The Rebel Camp.

Before the battle. Letter from Hotpur's father about his not coming to Shrewbury to join them. Worcester's words assess the damage caused by the non-participation. Hotspur refuses to

understand and to relent and summarily rejects wise counsel, caring very little for others involved in his actions, thereby betraying his egocentrism.

Act IV Scene II

A Public road near Coventry.

Falstaff has abused and misused his recruiting commission. We get a taste of Falstaff's in human callousness and his utter selfishness.

Act IV. Scene III

Shrewsbury. The Rebel Camp.

Hotspur, Worcester, Douglas and Vernon discuss the confrontation, Blunt, representing the King, arrives with gracious offers from the King. The rebels, however, do not trust the King, a usurper. Hotspur recapitulates to Blunt the events of the past about how his people helped the King. However, the offer of the King will be considered and the decision communicated to him the following morning. There is the general drift that Henry is not trustworthy.

Act IV. Scene IV

York. The Archbishop's Palace

In case the rebels are defeated in their attempts at overthrowing the usurper, preparations for other rebellions should be made this is the topic of discussion between Sir Michael and the Archbishop of York. York fears that Henry may attack him and like minded people.

Act V. Scene I

Shrewsbury: the King's Camp.

Prince Hal is represented here as very magnaimous, vigorous, intelligent and chivalrous to the nth degree. In other words, the potential, Hitherto only suggested, not revealed, of the prince is realized. As may be expected, Falstaff remains unchanged at the most critical of moments. This may be said of Hotspur, too. Hotspur is tempestuous, still greedy for reputation (his pet word is

honour) His ego blinds him. Flastaff is contrasted with Hotspur, for the former 'honour' is a just a word, a mere scutcheeon as he says in his catechism on honour

Act. V. Scene II

Worcester tells Sir Richard Vernon "O, no, my nephew must not know, Sir, Richard, the liberal and kind offer of the Kind", and Vermon says, 'Twere best he did'. But Worcester does not onform Hotpur about the king's offer, on account of selfish interests, what is worse, Worcester misinforms; "The king will bid you battle presently". Preparations for the war get under way.

Act. V. Scene III"

Shrewsbury. The battle field.

Battle is raging. Blunt disguised as Henry IV is killed by Douglas., There is confusion everywhere.

Falstaff's words tell us that even three of his 150 recruits have not survived-which shows the true character of the man. Prince Hal shows his disgust of Falstaff in no mincing terms. On discovering a bottle of sack on his person.

Act. V. Scene IV.

Battle rages. King Henry is saved from Douglas by Hal. Douglas flies from Hai. Henry is happy that "thou hast redeemed thy lost opinion and show'd thou mark'st some tender of my life..." Hotspur arrives. Hal and Hotspur fight. Douglas returns and fights with Falstaff. The latter pretends to fall dead.

Hal wounds Hotspur mortally. Hotspur surrenders all his 'honour' to Hal and dies. Hal pays a rare tribute to the dying man.

Hal spies Falstaff lying dead and feels sorry for the man. He departs. Falstaff gets up and gives a speech saying, " The better part of valour is discretion". Thus showing his cowardice as well as zest for life. He carries Hotspur's body on his back, when the two princes, Hal and John appear he throws Hotspur's dead body at their feet and claims that he killed him-a blatant lie which Hal comments on. Hal's intense dislike of Falstaff is strongly suggested.

Act. V. Scene V.

King Henry is happy. He congratulates all on their splendid victory. But no peace is guaranteed. Other rebellions are already on the way. Worcester and Vermon are sentenced to death. Other judgements will soon follow. Douglas, now a prisoner of war is to be released. ransomless and free in recognition of his valour

What has really happened is that Prince Hal has rewritten his father's estimate of him. He is not what he has taken to be.

Critical Evaluation of 'Henry IV Part I' of a VERY GENERAL NATURE

Henry IV, written a couple of years after Richard II, follows the latter directly in historical time. It is a wonder of words and action, a free play, though a member of the Lancastrain tetralogy, expansive, inclusive and complex. Whereas Richara II marks the death of medievalism, Henry IV celebrates the birth of modernism, through the renaissance. The full-bloodedness of Hotspur and Prince Hal and the peak zest for life tavern life, love life, the battle life and the different kinds of Elizabethan English used on all these occasions bear testimony to this buoyancy of life. We may say, from an aerial view of all the history plays, that together they constitute a national epic of England- an epic starting from the reign of King John and ending with Henry VII. However, the action in Henry IV is confined to just about a year from the battle of Holmedonin September, 1402 to the battle of Shrewsbury in July, 1403.

The main plot deals with king Henry, Prince Hal and the rebels; the subplot deals with Falstaff and his friends including Prince Hal. Henry and Hal belong to both these plots, running parallel to each other and all meet at Shrewsbury and merge into one another.

Henry starts the play with the words: "So shaken as wer are, so wan with care," we hear from him about 'freighted peace' 'new broils' 'children's blood' trenching was channels' 'bruise,' armed hoof's etc, etc. Well, all these phrases are related to battle and

bloodshed. Soon we realize that England is facing troubled times. Wer guess that the situation is attributable to Henry's usurpation (Recall that the play is an extension of Richard II and we all know what took place in the play) Henry does not fit into the throne well; he is wearing borrowed robes and the strange garments cleave not to their mould but with the aid of use. He has got Richard killed and has been contemplating expiation for the regicide in the form of service of our lord-undertaking a crusade' as far as to the sepulchre of Christ'. He has sinned and so is being punished in every conceivable way; he is shaken' is wan with care on incessant reports on his wayward son, Prince Hal. The projected pilgrimage now is twelve month old' and is being postponed again. We have a situation here where Henry is denied the chance of pilgrimage, paralleling the denial to Macbeth of the privilege to pray, a men stuck in my throat'. By mere pilgrimage or prayer, the King's offence cannot be washed off. He has been responsible for the death of God's deputy on earth i.e. the anointed King. The sin has got worse because he continues to enjoy the fruits of the murder. We can presume now that he is joint to have together times in the future. And, true, news arrives about several revolts-Mrotimer has been taken prisoner by the wild Glendower and a thousand of his people have been butchered and their bodies mutilated by Welsh women; the confrontation between Hotspur and the valiant and approved Scot' Archibald at Holmedon, where, of course, Hotspur has won the war taken many prisoners, etc.

Henry displays his intense sorrow as well as his jealousy of Northumberland, Hotspur's father on having

A son who is the these o honour's tongue
Amongst a grove the very straightest plant
Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride....

Whereas he sees riots and dishonour' stain the brow of my young Harry'. He even entertains the wish that at their infancy some night-tripping fairy had exchanged in cradle clothes our children.

Henry is annoyed that Hotspur has refused to surrender the prisoners of war to him except one Mordake. Earl of Fife Westmoreland alleges that Hodtspur's disobedience and breach" of allegiance are the result of Worcester, Hotspur's uncle, misguiding him.

Henry is asking for trouble when he says; 'I have sent for him to answer this'. In the same breath he declares, 'And for this casue we must neglect our holy purpose to Jerusalem"

Nemesis is out to get him. King Henry has bitten into more than what he can chew and swallow. He has offended God by challenging and destroying the Divine Right of Richard II by brutally murdering him.

Shakespeare here presents us with a problem. Richard was thoroughly incompetent, but was protected by his Divine Right to the throne; Henry had good intentions and also enough competence to bring political stability and prosperity to England but had no Divine prerogative. Deposing Richard alone would give him a chance to rule and the deposal will be condemned by God. Thus even though the aim were good. the intentions were good, the means were not. Here there are no alternative means either. We have an insolvable problem.

Hotspur and Prince Hal are sketched as diametrically oppose to each other. The word riot used to refer to Hal tells us about the "morality" character similar to Voice, Devil, Vanity, Sloth, and the like. The father has nothing about his sons to be proud of instead he is ashamed of him and wishes he were not his son. The play contains explicit references to the "morality" traits of Falstaff.

What is significant here is that the internecine wars that torture and torment England have brought about untold misery and misrule to the English people. There is no escape route for them, as the person responsible for all these is still their king. To make matters worse, the sins of the fathers visit upon their children. It is a chain reaction. Who can break it ?-this is the million dollar question.

The 'wan with care' king has his definitive contrast in Falstaff who hasn't a single care in this world. I believe that Falstaff is like Lear who is more sinned against than sinning' or like Shylock who has equal numbers of supporters and detractors. If Henry is at the helm of court life, Falstaff is at the helm of country life; Falstaff belongs with the ordinary people of the world. If ordinary people can have a ruler from amongst them, Falstaff should be given the pride of place. He is, therefore, a central figure. The abuse that is heaped on him and the brutal rejection of that man a little later make him a tragic hero as much as Richard is a tragic hero. He is the chief Lord of Delight, is full mirth and life. His overindulgence has perhaps a cathartic effect on spectators and the readers of the play.

We may not be ready to applaud the actions and words of Falstaff, but we may accept the view that the disorder he symbolizes is rooted elsewhere, Society is sick, and the source of sickness is at the centre of the state (It is a poisoned fountainhead) in the form of a usurper king...." the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. The Blood dimmed tide is loosed and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned....'The unlawful king, the stench of the decaying corpse of King Richard II refusing to remain covered and buried, causing convulsions all around, the unending civil wars, a riotous prince and heir to the throne all these and a Falstaff with his chaotic life symbolically project a very sickly state. By association with the prince of the land Falstaff becomes and instrument in the hands of Nemesis.

Prince Hal's words to Falstaff are revelatory; For Falstaff hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons and clocks the tongues of bawds and dials the sign of leaping houses and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta. And the world sum up the corporate life, which we find in and around the taverns and other places bustling with activity, which is sadly lacking in the court, the envious court, where the king is wan with care. We are reminded of the Duke Senior of 'As You Like It' where many young gentlemen flock to him everyday and fleet the time carelessly and

we find Prince Hal, the number one gentleman of the country to be one of them who flock to Falstaff..

Any attempt to evaluate the tavern scenes is likely to meet with stumbling blocks. The humour and the bubbling life are to be experienced through the live show and the vibrant lines. The enjoyment is infectious. The prose language is rich. One example is enough. Falstaff says....."We that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars and not by Phoebus".....They are men foresters whose guardian angel is Diana, the moon goddess, and their activities are at night. Phoebus, the sun god, by association is the King whose activities are supposed to be during day. but ironically, the sun is too much in the clouds these days, whose luminosity is lost because of his nefarious activity of usurpation.

The words of Hal interpret the moon symbol differently-the ebb and flow of the sea, the rise and fall of their luck, the approach to and the climbing of the ladder to the gallows. What we find here is a balance between the exuberance of Falstaff and the controlled austerity of Hal. Aren't there always two sides to the coin ? Aren't they both essential to keep it current ? Prince Hal is warning Falstaff, in his own language, against excesses, against topsy-turvying the law and order situation in London, as there will always be gallows and gallows are meant for antisocial elements(like him) He wastes no time in informing the spectators about his ability in judging character.

'I know you all, and will a while uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness....."

He gets educated about English common life through his association with the representatives of those sections of society – which education will stand him in good stead when he becomes king.

What endears us to Falstaff and his friends is their senior delinquency with juvenile mischief-the child's sense of gaiety and play and zest for life, with not a care in this world. In fact, they are far from the madding crowd and world of envy, corruption, malice,

Hunger for power and position-the world of palace and the courts of the feudal lords.

However, we are intrigued by the double standards and play acting of Prince Hall. I guess Falstaff and his associates deserved a better deal from Hal. He could have mended them. He did not, This does not mean that Falstaff is not what he is given out to be. He is a liar and a thief: he is a glutton and a lazy bum: he is a cheat and a womanizer, Let me ask you a question. Amongst us, who is not all of these at least to some extent? You need not answer. I can guess what your answer will be. And it explains why we feel drawn to Falstaff. He is HUMAN more human than most others.

When we come to the second half of the play, we find the philosopher in Falstaff. His catechism on honour and his soliloquy after his pretended death are enough to show his practical wisdom. His words are opposite to those of Hotspur in meaning. I may say that in him the Dionysian and the Appollonian meet-the former the god of noisy revelry and the latter of music and poetry (symbolic of control, measure, orchestration, organization, concord etc. etc.) in spite of his excessive drinking of sack, do we ever find him drunk? The answer is a loud No, suggesting the Supreme control he has over his mental faculties.

King Henry's praise of Hotspur seems rather premature as later developments show. The King is furious on account of the insubordination of the rebel lords. He makes a tactical error by antagonizing the Earl of Worcester by dismissing him from his presence. Note the words of Worcester:

"Our house, my sovereign lieges
Little deserves the courage of greatness to be us don it
And that same greatness too which our own hands
Have help to make so portly".

Worcester, makes no secret of their hand in the assassination of Richard and the crowing of Henry as King Henry IV

and charges Henry with ingratitude. Now listen to what Henry says to Worcester:

"Worcester: get thee gone, for I do see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye
You have good leave to leave us: when we need
Your use and counsel we shall send for you."

Worcester is one of the most influential and strong ring leaders of the rebels. The King's ingratitude will not be tolerated by him and his followers, amongst whom we have Hostspur.

Hotspur's explanation and justification of refusing to surrender the prisoners of war are not acceptable to Henry, who finds rebellion in Hotpur's eyes too. His language is exquisite poetry. His declamations are power-packed and smack of heroism and spirited youth. The King's refusal to ransom his brother-in-law which estranges him from his erstwhile supporters. Besides, there is the threat of action against him and his father, Northumberland. See what Henry says:

Send me you prisoners with the speediest means
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me
As will displease you. My Lord Northumberland
We license your departure with your son.
Send us your prisoners, or you will hear of it.

The fury of Hotspur is understandable. He will not send them....

"Albeit I mak a hazard of my head'

We can now safely predict their turning against the kind at the earliest opportunity. For them the king is now 'ingrate and canker'd Boiling broke'. The matter is further explained. Richard had proclaimed Mortimer the next of blood the heir to the throne after him which tells us about Henry's intense dislike of Mortimer. The change of loyalty is evident in Hotspur's words when he says....'that men of your nobility and power/Did gage them both in an unjust behalf/To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose/And plant this thorn, this canker Boling borke?

The rest of the play is about how the confrontation takes place between the king and the rebel lords and how temporarily the king defeats them and how immediately afterwards other c vil wars break out.

Hotspur's obsession with honour at any cost blinds him to the hard realities of the situation. Honour and the quest for it are, thematically speaking, crucial to the play Hostspur says:

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moor
Or dive into the bottom of the deep
And pluck up drowned honor by the locks
So he that both redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities'

Note the underlined phrase where the egoism and egotism of Hotspur are manifest. He seems to think that he alone qualifies to be the minion of honour. He feels ashamed of having had to kneel before Henry IV when he returned form exile (in 1399)

" I am whipped and scourg'd rods
Nettled, and stung with pismires when I hear
Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke.....
When I first bowed my knees
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke."

The powerful, rhetorical speeches of Hotspur are suggestive of the militant nature of the man. However, he can be romantic in a very economical way as is shown when he is with his wife, Kate. But the occasions are very few.

Worcester, the ring leader, is hatching a plan of action involving more like-minded rebels and supporters of their cause, including the Archbishop of York too. Hotspur is very happy that he can avenge the ingratitude of the King.

The comedy involving Falstaff relieves the tension of action mounting everyday. It is also symbolic in that it tells us that every

thing is not all right in the country. The king seems to have lost his grip and the law and order situation is very bad. The language is prose, suitable to such characters.

The tavern scene prepares us for future action. Falstaff's character and the law and order situation is very bad. The language is prose, suitable to such characters.

Later, the meeting of Hotspur, Worcester, Mortimer and Owen Glendower is a welcome departure. Hotspur's contempt for the magic and charms of Glsenddower threatens the coalition but for the timely intervention of the others present on the occasion. The scene is important as Shakespeare shows that they are also greedy for power and possession. Hoping for the deposal of Henry, the realm has been divided up into three by York-one part to Mortimer, one part to Glendower and the remainder to Hotspur. But Hotspur is not at all happy about his share and declares so. The leave taking scene between Mortimer and his Welsh wife, the daughter of Glendower, is touchingly romantic. The poetry is exquisite and a welcome departure from the tense atmosphere of wars and intrigues, conspiracy and hatred.

The talk between Henry and Hal helps in the removal of the father's misunderstandings about the son. For the first time we find them together exchanging thoughts and feelings. Henry tells him of his past, how he kept away from the people to avoid over exposure and take psychological advantage of the people and then how he 'dressed myself in such humility that I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts loud shouts and salutations from their mouths, even in the present of the crowned king'(i.e. Richard II).... The long speech tells us about Henry's histrionic talents which helped him to be popular and caused Richard's unpopularity. Hal promises to redeem himself. Henry's revealing the plot against him by the rebel lord and Hal's promising to be more himself follows.

The arrival of Blunt triggers Henry's plan of action: a three pronged action, one led by John another by Hal and the third one by himself. They will march with their armies and will meet at an

bellion.

Once more a tavern scene amd Hal is more business like now. He assigns duties and responsibilities to each of his friends. Falstaff is given his commission, too. Hal's words are grave:

The land is burning, Percy stands on high

And either we or they must lower lie.

The action picks up terrific momentum and we are now at the rebel camp at Shrewsburry. A few days have elapsed.

Hotspur, Worecester and Douglas are startled when they get a letter from Northumberland which says. 'He cannot come, my lord, he is grievous sick'. It is 'serious setback, a main to us. Hotspur though stunned at first, recovers and comforts himself and others. Worcester is too unhappy and says. This absence of your father's draws a curtain that shows the ignorant a kind of fear before not dreamt of. But Hotspur says, making light of his father's absence. You strain too far/ I rather of his absence make this use; It lends lustre and more great opinion / A larger dare to our great enterprise'.... Worcester's maturity and wisdom are ignored. "Fools dare where angels fear to tread. Sir Richard Vernon's words about the enemy are ominous. Hotspur laughs at the warning hidden in the information.

'Let them come! They come like sacrifices in their trim'

And to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war

All hot hand bleeding will we offer them.

How wrong and proud Hotspur is only time will Tell! How different from Falstaff for whom the better part of valour is discretion by virtue of which he is still alive!!! Hotsour's reluctance to look before he leaps lands himj on a heap of troubles. Doomsday is near, die all, die merrily. The waste is never considered. What a waste!!!

Falstaff is never ashamed of whom he has picked as his men.

'No eye hath seen such scarecrows and they are food for

powder, food for powder, they'll fill a pit as well as better. However, it is abuse of power and trust'. We begin to disapprove of Falstaff and his actions.

The advice of Vernon and Worcester is rejected by Hotspur. Everything is against the rebels; yet the stubbornness of Hotspur does no relent. It is utter foolishness on his part and invitation to trouble and destruction.

Blunt, the ambassador from Henry to the rebels, has come with the offer of peace and promise of the redressal of the rebel's grievances. The past history is one more time recapitulated Hotspur opens his heart and lists his grievances. Blunt seems to think that Hotspur is not prepared for any treaty. Nevertheless, Hotspur will convene a meeting of his friends, discuss and then let the king know. Here he shows some practical wisdom and tactical maturity.

Sir Michael and the Archbishop of York discuss the latest position. It should be advisable to be forewarned. The chances of the rebels winning are minimal as their key supporters like Glendower, Northumberland and Mortimer are not participating. Nor are their forces made available. The king and his men after defeating Hotspur and others may march York and his supporters. This in turn tells us that the civil wars break out again and again and the king can never hope to go on his pilgrimage to have peace in England.

The generous offer of Prince Hal 'to save blood on elther side/ Try fortune with him (Hotspur) in single fight is not communicated to Hotspur by Worcester. The latter lies to him and the battle is precipitated. Hal predicts it and it comes true.

The battle proves many things. Bravado does not pay off; discretion does. Falstaff's trick gets rebuke and disgusts Hal. Hotspuir gets killed by Hal but the honour is claimed by Falstaff. The battle is over; the guilty are punished; the generosity and magnanimity of Hal releases Douglas from the prisoners' camp.

Both the armies march towards Wales to fight with Glendower

and the Earl of March with the fond hope that Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway.' Peace remains a dream. The play ends but the action continues through the second part of the same play.

We cannot but feel sorry about the colossal waste war causes. Throughout the play a contrast is struck between Prince Hal and Hotspur, but both are quite aware of the potentialities of each other. The short scenes they appear in throw a flood of light on several facts of their personalities.

One of the most striking features of Henry IV is the poetry that such prosaic characters as Falstaff and Hotspur use. The endless intrigues at the court, the high-flown talk about loyalty, allegiance, gratitude and ingratitude; war, services, etc, etc. are too heavy to bear and the heaviness is considerable, which is brought down with the help of Falstaff and his fiends as well as through the revelation of the various sides of the principal figures of the play.

The world of Henry IV is like a Persian carpet where too many patterns are visible, all interwoven into the main design. Segregation is impossible without damaging the pattern. Thus only an aerial survey should be attempted and not any individual analysis.

The design is clearly discernible, though.

The story tends to become whole only with the closely following part II and Henry V and we have attempted a synopsis of the same for the sake of completion. We shall stop here with that.

A detailed analytical study of the principal characters brings out, through comparisons and contrasts, similarities, differences, peculiarities, typical whims and fancies and so on,. The play is more an analysis of the profiles of these political personages as history is preferable to a thematic study. Likewise, a stylistic study of the language throws open their mental make up-very clearly seen in Falstaff, Hal, Henry, Hotspur, Worcester etc. etc. and to a lesser extent in the minor characters.

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There are innumerable books on Shakespeare and his plays Any good books will do admirably well.

SECTION -B

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare tried his hand in the tragedy of adolescent lovers as early as 1595-96 when he wrote Romeo and Juliet. Some fifteen years later he tried his hand in the tragedy of middle-aged loves in Antony and Cleopatra. In both these plays the hero and the heroine have more or less the same level of prominence, as the titles suggest. Whereas we cannot expect any intellectual maturity in the young lovers, Romeo and Juliet, we expect in Antony and Cleopatra, who are already in the prime of life. And our expectations are fulfilled. Antony has had his fill before he meets Cleopatra and fall for her; Cleopatra has had hers before she meets Antony. So it appears safe for us to assume that they did know what they were going in for. In other words, they were responsible for whatever happened to them. They brought about their own tragedy. We cannot say the same about Romeo and Juliett, because it was an accident, a quirk of fate, that wasted them; being immature in every respect and too tempestuous in their blind love for each other, they could not have paused and taken stock of themselves.

Activities:

Read the play Romeo and Juliet ' (or at least a synopsis of the play) Later, after studying the synopsis of Antony and Cleopatra Given here, see how they compare.

Introduction to Antony and Cleopatra'

Shakespeare wrote three Roman plays -Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus'. The titles are enough to suggest what the subject matter of these plays is. All the plays are tragedies and all are based mostly on Plutarch's "Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans " translated into English by Sir Thomas North (1579) Julius Caesar' was written probably in 1599, Antony and Cleopatra in 1607 or the early part of 1608 and Coriolanus between 1607 and 1608. Antony and Cleopatra' may be said to take off from where 'Julius Caesar leaves off in terms of Roman and Egyptian history

Date of Composition

There is an entry in the Stationer's Register under 20th May, 1608

Richard Blunt entered also for his copy by the like authority a book call Antony and Cleopatra....Which tells us that the play must he written in 1607 or early 1608, as strong echoes of 'Antony and Cleopatra' are found in plays entered in the Register in the early weeks of 1607. So we may revise our stand on the date of composition as 1606 or 1607. For our general study this accuracy is enough.

Sources and Antecedents

Shakespeare is indebted to Plutarch, Amyot and Sir Thomas North for the Roman plays.

Jacques Amyot (1513-1593) was a French writer whose version of Plutarch was translated into English by Sir Thomas North (1535?-1601?)

Sir "Thomas translated many a few of which are: Diall of Princes". The Moral Philosophy of Doni and Plutarch's Lives"".

"Lives" that Shakespeare used was not a straight translation North made additions to his first edition (1579) from other authors and brought out a new edition (1595) It was an exquisite work in good Elizabethan English prose (extracts are easily available) Shakespeare has drawn heavily from this for his classical

references too. He has lifted phrases and sentences from North and incorporated them in his plays without bothering to change them at all. Besides, he must have learnt a few things from Samuel Daniel's (1) "Cleopatra" (1594, 1607) (2) "Letter form Octavia to Marcus Antonius", countess of Permbroke's" "Antonius" translated from Robert Farmier's Senecan tragedy "Mac Antoine" and Appan's "History Chronicle of the Roman Wars" (1578).

Activities

Extracts from North's 'Plutarch' are given in the Arden Edition of Antony and Cleopatra. Read them and see for yourselves how lovely North's English prose is.

The Roman plays of Shakespeare: A Brief Summary

I consider it desirable for us to have some acquaintance with the Roman plays so we shall have an idea of how Shakespeare treated Roman history just as he treated British history in his ten history plays.

We start with "Julius Caesar" which leads on to "Antony and Cleopatra'. However, these synopses are no substitute to the plays roper. "Coriolanus" is left out as it is not prescribed for us and as it is not related in any way to the other two plays.

JULIUS CAESAR

Julius Caesar after defeating the son of Prompey, returns in triumph to Rome. He is warned on arrival by a soothsayer 'beware the ideas of March'. When Caesar says, "He is a dreamer' let us leave him". We learn from Casca that Julius Caesar was offered a crown three times by Mark Antony in the market place in front of numerous Romans and on all the three occasions Caesar refused to accept it; Casca is vague about it, though.... 'but for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it....'.

Caesar refuses to be forewarned by the portents of the night before his assassination. His wife, Calphurnia, is worried sick and being superstitious, tries to dissuade Caesar from going to the Capitol the following day. Decius Brutus who arrives on the scene

persuades him to ignore the portents and go on with his business. He interprets the dreams of Calphurnia and the portents as favourable signs.

Caesar: Calphurnia here my wife stays me at home.

She dreamt tonight she saw statue,

Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,

Did run pure blood.

Decius Brutus; this dream is all amiss interpreted

It was a vision fair an fortunate....

And he goes onto elaborate on the symbolism of the vision.

Artemodorous has written a scroll where he merntions the conspiracy of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Cimber and Decius Brutus as warns Caesar's. The ideas of March are come says, "Ay Caesar, but not gone'. At the Capitol he refuses to listen to the petition of Cimber. It is now established that Caesar is a dictator. So the conspirators stab him to death. Marcus Brutus, his best friend, is the first to do so.

Martk Antony avenges Caesar's assassination. Both Brutus and Cassius die. Pindarus, Cassius slave, under instructions from his master stabs Cassius and Brutus stabs himself to death (He runs on his sword) Antony refers to Brutus "This was the noblest Roman of them all'.

During the Renaissance , there remained two different views of Julius Caesar. One view was that he was a dictator/tyrant; the other a great ruler and statesman. Shakespeare presents him as ambiguous. Cassius, Caesar's worst enemy, says:

He doth bestide the narrow world

Like a Colossus, and we petty men

Walk under his hudgo legs and peep about

To find ourselves dishonourable graves...

And Antony says that Caesar was... the noblest man

That ever lived in the tide of times

Readers and spectators regrettably look at Caesar through the eyes of the conspirators who consider him ambitious. Antony establishes through his arguments that Caesar was never ambitious (the funeral orations)

Shakespeare presents here a profound irony. The assassination of Julius Caesar is followed by an Autocratic Rule to prevent Which Prevent Caesar was Assassinated.

There is no mention of Cleopatra or Julius Caesar's involvement with her in the play.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Let us now learn something about the historical Antony and Cleopatra as they lived their lives in the first century B.C.

The historical Antony, Marcus Antonius, was born about 83 B.C. and dies in 30 B.C. He was one of Julius Caesar's most distinguished friends and admires. Immediately after the assassination of Caesar he arouses the fickle Roman mob against Brutus and Cassius and forms an alliance with Octavius Caesar, Julius Caesar's adopted son (and heir who later became the famous Emperor Augustus). The alliance does not last long, though. Under the second triumvirate Mark Antony is allotted Asia as his province. It is then that he meets Cleopatra (42 B.C) the Ptolemaic Queen of Egypt-a Greek speaking, highly charming, intelligent lady who had been Julius Caesar's mistress for some years.

It is at this point of history that Shakespeare picks up the story from Plutarch.

Antony, after becoming Cleopatra's lover, is very hesitant and reluctant to give up the voluptuous pleasures of Egypt. When the political situation in Rome changes from bad to worse, and when his wife, Fulvia, dies he returns to Rome. He marries Octavia, a widow and the sister of Octavious,it is a marriage of convenience of political expediency and a tactical move. There is a temporary, uneasy truce. Octavius has meanwhile decided to have supreme control. Antony returns to Egypt: It is expected. Antony is now a doomed man. He prepares to fight. We realize that he has no longer

any appetite for warfare. At the battle of Actium the Egyptian fleet deserts the Roman navy of Antony. Antony is defeated. Soon after, Antony prepares to fight again and suffers a more severe and crushing defeat, when Octavious attacks Egypt. Meanwhile he receives a false report of Cleopattra's death. Unable to bear the pang of separation, he tries to commit suicide by stabbing himself. He is seriously injured. He is carried to the monument where Cleopatra has taken refuge. He is lifted to the Queen and dies in her arms. He thus defeats the secret ambition of Caesar who has wanted to take him prisoner and parade him before the Roman mob in triumph... Cleopatra follows her lover. She applies a poisonous snake to her breast, which bites and kills her. The pretty worm of the Nilus' frees from her possible bondage to Caesar.

At the end it is the love of Antony for Cleopatra and the love of Cleopatra for Antony that triumph over the tricks of Octavius Caesar

Now you have a bird's eyeview of the play. We shall attempt a scene by scene summary of the text which will be followed by a very general critical evaluation. By the time we come to the end of the evaluation. I am confident that you shall have an excellent idea of the play.

THE TEXT USED IS THE ARDEN EDITION OF M.R. RIDLEY

METHUEN (1967)

Act. I. Sc.I

The scene is set in a room in Cleopatra's palace in Alexandria.

Philo, a friend of Mark Antony, opens his talk with Demetrius, another friend of Antony with the condemnation of Antony for his subjugation to Cleopatra-how his captains 'heart is pledged to and his goodly eyes are focused on Cleopatra's tawny front' how he has degenerated to the level of the 'bellows and the fan to cool a gypsy's lust. How the tripe pillar of the wporld is transform'd into a strumpet fool. Antony and Cleopatra enter. Followed by the latter's

ladies, the train and a few eunuchs fanning her. Antony dotes on her plays with her and indulges in lover's talk. He has no patience to listen to news from Rome. Cleopatra mocks at his saying that he is the hen-pecked husband of Fulvia, he is being at the beck and call of young Octavius etc, etc. Antony's words in reply to her charges need quoting.'

"Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space,
Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man; the nobleness of life
Is to do thus (He embraces her) when such a mutual pair,
And such a twain can do it, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless."

The show woman that Cleopatra is continues to mock him

But Antony takes it easy and suggests revelry. Note the words:

"Let's not confound the time with conference harsh:"

Then follows a rare tribute to Cleopatra

"Fie, wrangling Queen!
Whom everything becomes, to chide, to laugh,
To weep: how every passion fully strives
To make itself, in thee, admired!"

Antony refuses permission to the messenger form Rome to deliver the message. Antony and Cleopatra retire. Philo and Demetrius observe how Antony belittles Octavius and becomes short of the typical Antony trait when he forgets himself. The Romans are reported to be in the know of Antony's degeneration (in ther eyes)

Sc.II

The ladies of Cleopatra, Chairman and Iras, Enobarbus, Alexas, Mardian, the eunuch, a soothe sayer and others- in another room in Cleopatra's palace in Alexandria.

Their talk is on fertility sexual fulfilment, health, wrinkles, old age, marriage, children, drinking and the like. This shows that the Egyptians are obsessed with fertility and resual fulfilment and that they live in a world of fantasy and dreams. The soothsayer's predictions are not taken seriously.

Cleopatra enters and asks for Antony,. She sends Enobarbus to look for him and bring him to her. Antony appears, but Cleopatra departs ignoring him to playfully annoy him, to make him impatient. Antony is listening to reports From Rome: Fulvia is dead, civil disturbances are on the increase, enemies are encroaching upon Roman territory and so on. Antony is unhappy and indignant that it is his being away from Rome that has resulted in all these disasters. Another messenger arrives. Antony in an aside says:

"These strong Egyptian fetters I must break.
Or lose myself in dotage."

Now we know that Antony is aware of what he is doing. Fulvias's death makes him feel guilty. Again he says:

"I must from this enchanting queen break off.
Ten thousand harms more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch..."

When he tells Enobarbus about his plan to leave Alexandria for Rome, the latter tells him, in the form of a warning, how Cleopatra will react: Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly. Antony who knows her inside out remarks: She is cunning past man's thought. Enobarbus too knows her well. See what he says...'Her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love. We cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests and almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her.'

He calls her a wonderful piece of work.

Anyway, we find that the worldly wisdom and self appraisal of Antony have asserted themselves. He is going back to Rome to

neutralize the threat to the Roman Empire from Pompey and others.

Sc.III

A room in the palace of Cleopatra in Alexandria.

Cleopatra is with her ladies. Having studied Antony quite closely in the past several months, she knows his likes and dislikes very well. Antony appears. She refuses to listen to him fearing that he is leaving her. She cannot bear the estrangement even for a few days. She says:

"Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going.
But bid farewell, and go: when staying
Then was the time for words; no going then;
Eternity was in our lips, and eyes,
Bliss in our brow's bent; none our parts so poor,
But was a race of heaven."

She calls him the greatest soldier of the world and alleges that he is turn'd the greatest liar.

At long last, Antony tells her about the urgency of his return and mission...Roman gravity triumphs over the histrionics of Cleopatra. Yet she infuriates, him through her jabbing words. At the same time she refers to him as 'How this Herculean Roman does become the carriage of his chafe'. But go he must. The parting words speak volumes for their love for each other:

"our separation so abides and flies.
That thou residing here, goes yet with me
and I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee.

Sc. IV

Rome. Caesar's house

For the first time Rome is presented.

Ceasar has been getting reports of Antony's philandering and wasting of time...he fishes, drinks, and wastes the lamps of

night in revel; is not more manlike than cleopatra...caesar remarks that our great competitor' is no different from a woman. Lepidus speaks very high of Antony and his words should be quoted in full.

"I must not think there are
Evils now to darken all his goodness:
His faults. in him, seem as the spots of heaven.
More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary
Rather than purchas'd.."

Caesar, every inch a Roman, cannot approve of Antovy's levity

He reveals what Antony is guilty of..."Let us grant it is not
Amiss to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,
To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave
To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet
With knaves that smell of sweat...
tis to be chid:
As we rate boys, who being mature in knowledge,
Pawn their experience too their present pleasure.
And so rebel to judgement.

Reports show that Pompey is growing stronger every hour. Menecrates and Menas, the pirates. make the sea serve them. Caesar now desperately needs the assistance of Antony. In a long speech he describes how Antony was in the past and wishes that he were there.

'Antony leave thy lascivious wassails'...he cries

Sc.V.

Cleopatra's palace in Alexandria: Cleopatra, Charmian, Iras and Mardian are present

Shakespeare does not mince words when he tells us about Cleopatra's sexual fantasies, obsession with Antony and the like.

We have here a replica of scene II with Cleopatra participating in the discussions

See what Cleopatra says:

"O Charmian!

Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?

Or does he walk? Or is on his horse?

O happy horse to bear the weight of Antony!

Do bravely, horse, for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st

The demi-Atlas of this earth,the arm

And burgonet of men. He's speaking now

Or murmuring, 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'

For so he calls me. Now I feed myself

With most delicious poison, Think on me,

That am with Phoebes amorous pitches black,

And wrinkled deep in time. Broad-fronted Caesar,

When thou was there above the ground, I was

A morsel for a monarch: and great Pompey

Would stand make his eyes grow in my brow

There would be anchor his aspect and die

With looking on his life".

The words overflow with love of Antony.

Charmian makes fun of Cleopatra saying that she used to say similar things about Caesar. The queen gets a chance to compare and contrast the two...

"I will give thee bloody teeth

If thou with Caesar paragon again

My man of men".

And she explains how she happened to be infatuated with Caesar:

When I was green in judgement, cold in bold,

To say as I said then.

We learn how promiscuous Cleopatra had been in her youth and how much she has changed after she got to know Antony.

Act II

Scene I

Messina. Pompey's house

Pompy and his pirate friends are discussing their plans. Pompey claims that he is popular. 'I shall do well: The people love me. And the sea is mine; My powers are crescent. And my arguing hope/Says it will come to the full'... He hopes to attack and conquer Octavius, though Menas dampens his enthusiasm saying that Lepidus and Octavius are a mighty pair. Pompey counts on Antony's absence and sensual indulgence. He says that 'in salt Cleopatra' charms of love, witchcraft and beauty join hands and are a formidable force keeping Antony's brain fuming. Various reports on the unexpected arrival of Antony in Rome. Pompey is alarmed and unhappy. However, he and the pirates do not think that "Caesar and Antony shall agree together" Nevertheless, as they have a common cause and a common enemy, they may join forces.

Scene II

Antony and his train have arrived in Rome. Enobarbus and Lepidus discus policy matters. Lepidus, cautions: Let Antony watch his tongue with Caesar. Antony appears. Soon Agrippa, Maecenas and Caesar too arrive on the scene. There is the initial display of anger, disappointment and disapproval between Antony and Caesar. However, timely intervention of the elders delays damage. A temporary truce is in sight. Agrippa suggests that the new widower, Antony marry the widowed sister of Caesar, Called Octavia and that will bring them together in more than one way. It is welcomed. Soon they disperse leaving Agrippa, Enobarbus and Maecenas We have now the famous Description of Cleopatra in her barge on the river Cydnus, given by Enobarbuss. Agrippa is amazed. Enobarbus predicts that Antony will not leave the Egyptian queen

"Never, he will not

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

Her infinite variety: other women cloy

The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry

Where most she satisfies. For vilest things

Become themselves in her that the holy priests

Bless her, when she is riggish".

Maecenas words describing Octavia lack luster, as they follow this description immediately:

"If beauty wisdom, modesty can settle

The heart of Antony, Octavia is

A blessed lottery to him".

Scene III

Rome. House of Octavius

Antony and Octavius with Octavia between them.

Antony tells Octavia that business may call him away and asks her to think of him his best. The brother and the sister depart leaving Antony alone. A soothsayer arrives and warns Antony to beware of Caesar. Antony is at a disadvantage in the presence of Caesar. Antony too knows it. Then he says, which makes the prediction of Enobarbus true:

"And though I make this marriage for my peace.

I' the east my pleasure lies".

Scene IV

Rome. A Street.

Lepidus, Maecenas and Agrippa are getting ready to march with their armies to the appointed place.

Scene V :

Alexandria. Cleopatra's palace. Cleopatra, Charmian, Iras and Alexas

As usual, Cleopatra is too preoccupied with the thoughts of Antony to take any interest in any other affair. She recollects her intensely happy moments with him. Her maids too have happy recollections.

A messenger from Rome arrives and informs Cleopatra about Antony's marriage with Octavia: Cleopatra is on the verge of insanity and vents her anger on the poor messenger. The queen heaps curses on him and explodes into irrational fury and frustration. Immediately afterwards, she realizes her mistakes and becomes, repentant:

"These hands do lack nobility, that they strike

A meaner than myself; since I myself

Have given myself the cause"

Yet her fury and sorrow break out. She finds it hard to believe that her Antony marries to Octavia. She wants to know more about the woman who could compete with her and win over her man. She tries to make some sense out of the situation. She is heart-broken.

Scene VI

Near Misenum

From one side of the stage enter Pompey and his army; from the other enter Caesar, Lepidus, Antony Enobarbus, Maecenas, Agrippa, Menas and their soldiers.

Before the battle is begun, they prefer to talk and sort out their difference of opinion. The talk is candid 'heart to heart, and about political affairs. An agreement is reached; battle is averted; unnecessary bloodshed is warded off. In the course of various discussions'. Enobarbus and Menas talk about Cleopatra and Octavia. They are compared and contrasted with each other. Enobarbus remarks: Octavia is of a holy, cold and still conversation. He forecasts: 'He (Antony) will to his Egyptian dish again'. Then shall the sights of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar; and

that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use this affection where it is. He married but his occasion here.

The prediction comes true.

Scene VII

Abroad Pompey's galley off Misenum.

Celebrations of the truce between Pompey and Caesar are on. All the important male characters are aboard. They discuss all sorts of things. Egypt. Cleopatra, Nile-pyramids, snakes etc., etc., Pompey's refusal to comply with the suggestion of the pirate, Menas to murder all the triumvirs and throw their bodies overboard reveals his nobility as a Roman and it leads to Mena's deserting him. Caesar has to return; he has business to look after. All retire.

ACT III

Scene I

A plain in Syria.

Ventidius, sent by Antony to fight the Parthians, returns in triumph. He and his friends are proud and they recall their grand captain Antony. However, Ventididus does not like to overreach which might offend Antony., He will report to Antony about the outcome of the battle.

Scene II

An antechamber in Caesar's house.

Enobarbus, the one-man chorus, describes the leave-taking scene to Agrippa. All are unhappy. Antony is leaving and looks very unhappy. So does Octavius. At last all leave and go their separate ways. Antony and Ocatvia together. The words of Antony sound rather hollow, though.

Scene III

Alexandria. Cleopatra's palace

Present are Cleopatra and her ladies-in-waiting. Cleopatra

is fed with information on the looks of Octavia. 'She creeps; Her motion and her station are as one/She shows a body rather than a life. A statue than a breather.' Cleopatra now looks back and regrets her annoying Antony . She will write to him. She hopes that everything will turn out all right.

Scene IV

Athens. A room in Antony's house.

Antony and Octavia are present'

Antony is furious about the latest actions of Ocatvius which have offended Pompey and also himself. He tells Octavia about her brother's actions. The poor woman is torn between her loyalty to her brother and her love and respect for her husband. She is sad that there has appeared a chasm between Antony and Octavius. Antony asks her to go to Octavious and act as ambassador to drive some sense into him.

Scene V

Athens. Antony's house Present are Eros and Enobarbus

They discuss the rift that has appeared between Pompey and Octavius.

Pompey and Octavius are charging each other with all kinds of offences. Octavius uses Lepidus against Pompey and then deprives him of his position as one of the triumvirs. Pompey escapes to the east and gets killed there (under orders from Antony, perhaps)

Eros and Enobarbus then go in search of Antony.

Scene VI

Rome. Caesar's home.

Octavius has received intelligence that antony is already in Alexandria with Cleopatra. He is fuming and fretting. And, once again, Antony is mismanaging his office; very generously he has given away kingdoms to all and sundry. He is violating all the orders of Octavius

The arrival of Octavia further infuriates him. Though married she is again a virtual widow, thanks to the wayward Antony is in Athens, whereas he is actually in Alexandria, Maecenas has the right words:

"Each heart in Rome does love and pity you
Only the adulterous Antony, most large
In his abominations, turns you off,
And gives his potent regiment to a trull.
That noises it against us.

We may safely guess that at the earliest chance Caesar will avenge his sister's humiliation. He asks her to be patient....

Caesar has already challenged Antony, asked for explanation and demanded his share of the spoils of war. Antony has raised an army in anticipation of war.

Scene VII

Near Actium. Antony's camp

Enter Cleopatra and Enobarbus

Enobarbus does not approve of Cleopatra's participation in the wars.

She is distracted

"Your presence must need puzzle Antony
Take from his heart, take from his brain, from's time
What should not then be spar'd. He is already
Traduc'd for levity, and it is said in Rome
That Photinus, an eunuch, and your maids
Manage this war."

Cleopatra stands firm. She claims that she has a charge in the war and so "I will not stay behind"

Antony and Canidius arrive. The former shares information with Cleopatra. Both Canidius and Enobarbus advise Antony against certain steps he has been contemplating on. The Roman

navy is better equipped; Antony's side stands a better chance on land.

Antony rejects their advice.

Cleopatra offers her sixty sails.

A messenger arrives and informs them about Caesar's advance. Antony prepares for a naval battle. A soldier warns Antony against it

"O noble emperor, do not fight by sea
Trust not to rotten planks...
Let the Egyptians
And the Phoenicians go a ducking : we
Have us'd to conquer standing on the earth
And fighting foot to foot."

Antnony dismisses his words summarily, But Caidius endorses them, saying:

"Not in the power on't: so our leader's led
And we are women's men"

We learn that they are not at all hopeful of winning the war.

Scenes VIII...X

The battle begins. Soon Enobarbus reports:

"Naught, naught, all naught, I can behold no longer
The Antoniad, the Egyptian Admiral
With all their sixty fly, and turn the rudder:
To see't mine eyes are blasted."

The flagship of Cleopatra runs away from the attack and is followed by the fleet as a whole. It is a shame

Scarus says

"The greater cantle of the world is lost
With very ignorance we have kissed away
Kingdoms, and provinces"

A couple of lines later, Scarus says:

On our side like the token's pestilence
Where death is sure. Yon ribaudred nag-of Egypt
Whom leprosy o'ertake! I'the midst o'the fight
When vantage like a pari of twins appear'd
Both as the same, or rather ours the elder,
The breeze upon her, like a cow in Jun
Hoists sails, an flies".

This is taken up by Enobarbus as follows:

"Mine eyes dis sicken at the sight, and could not
Endure a further view".

And continued by Scarus again as:

"She one being loof'd
The noble ruin of her magic Antony
Claps on his sea-wing and (like a doting mallard)
Leaving the fight in height, flies after her
I never saw an action of such a shame:
Experience, manhold honour ne'r before
Did violate so itself"

Disgusted with Antony's actions Caniduius decides to desert Antony and join Octavius:

"To Caesar will I render
My legions and my horse, six kings already
Show me the way of yielding".

Enobarbus decides to stay with Antony for a little while longer.

"though my reason sits in the wind against me"

Scene XI

Alexandria Cleopatra's palace

Antony enters with his attendants. He is so ashamed that he admits.

"It is ashamed to bear me...
I am so late in the world that I
Have lost my way for ever...
I have fled muself, and have instructed cowards
To run, and show their shoulders...
...for indeed I have lost command".

He bids his attendants to leave him. Go their ways, taking his treasure from his ship (which he has hoarded) But they are not ready to do so.

Cleopatra arrives with her ladies. She is shaken too: She seeks Antony's forgiveness.

"O my lord, my lord
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought
You would have followed".

Antony explains:

"Egypt, thou knew's too well,
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
And thou shouldst tow me after. O'ver my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st and that
They-beck might from the bidding of the gods
Command me".

He acknowledges he control over him

"You did know
How much you were my conqueror and that
My sword, made weak by my affection, would
Obey it on all cause"

However, he soon recovers his lost poise:

Fall not a tear, I say, one of them rates
All that is won and lost: give me a kiss
And even this repays me.

Scene XII

Egypt Caesar's camp

The ambassador from Antony is sent back empty handed; Caesar does not grant any of the requests of Antony. The words of the ambassador show to what extent Antony has fallen. But Caesar is too ready with all sorts of offers to Cleopatra. See what he says:

"I have no ears to his request. The queen
Of audience nor desire shall fail so she
From Egypt drive her all-disgraced friend,
Or take his life there. This if she perform
She shall not sue unheard"

Caesar sends Thyreus to win Cleopatra for him, believing that she can be tempted:

In their best fortunes string: but want will perjure
The ne'er touched vestal: try thy cunning, Thyreus.

Scene XIII

Alexandria Cleopatra's Palace

Enobarbyus comforts Cleopatra saying that Antony is at fault.
"Antony only, that would make his will
Lord of his reason. What though you fled
From that great face of war, whose several ranges
Freighted each other? Why should he follow?
The itch of his affection should not then
Have mixed his captainship at such a point
When half top half the world opps'd he-being
The mered question. T'was a shame no less
Than was his loss, to course your flyinf flags
And leave his navy gazing".
The ambassador returns and delivers Caesar's reply. Antony

terribly upset, thinks that Cleopatra will do Caesar's bidding. "She will yield us up stupid and short Sighted. He challenge Octavius to a single combat, which we know, Caesar will pooh-pooh. Hearing that, Enobarbus comments.

thou hast subdued his judgement too

A servant observing no protocol arrives with a message that an ambassador from Caesar wants to see Cleopatra.

Enobarbus feels almost time for him to leave Antony for Caesar.

"Antony is a fast sinking ship".

Thyreus kisses Cleopatra's hand, is caught red-handed by Antony. Fury overcomes him. He orders that the man be soundly whipped-which violates all the norms of decency, decorum and convention besides courtesy and protocol. Antony's anger and frustration know no bounds. He uses very abusive language to condemn Cleopatra.

"I found you as a morsel, cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher, nay you were a fragment
Of Cneius Pompey's besides what hotter hours
Unregistered in vulgar fame you have
Luxuriously pick'd out".

He waxes eloquent forgetting that he is blame. Cleopatra declares her unstained love and devotion. He is satisfied. He regains hope. He will prepare for another battle. That night they will celebrate in a fitting manner.

Now Enobarbus has the last words on the stupidity of Antony. He decides to quit him of ever.

"Now he'll out stare the lightning. To be furious
Is to be frighted out of fear, and in that mood
The dove will peck the estridge and I see still
A diminution in our captain's brain
Restores his heart; when valour preys on reason

It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek
Some way to leave him."

Act IV

Scene I

Before Alexandria Caesar's camp

Caesar laughs at the idea of a single combat. Maecenas remarks

"... never anger
Made good guard for itself"

Caesar decides to fight the last of the many battles the following day

Scene II

Cleopatra's palace in Alexandria

Antony learns that Caesar has no intention of a single combat. He is surrounded by Cleopatra and her ladies and others who have been of service to him in the past. There is some histrionics visible here. He is very optimistic and hopes to win the next battle. The women weep.

Scene III

Before the palace.

Soldiers hear subterranean music. One interprets it as the God, Hercules, deserting Antony. It is a bad omen. Antony is no longer under the protection of Hercules.

Scene IV

A room in the palace of Cleopatra

Antony is putting on his armour. Cleopatra helps. The soldiers are ready too. Cleopatra is happy that Antony is quite confident of winning.

Scene V

Antony's camp

Antony is informed of Enobarbus desertion. He is terribly upset and blames himself. He orders that all of Enobarbus material possessions be sent to him. He observes:

"Say, that I wish he never find move cause
To change a master O, my fortunes have
corrupted honest men..."

Scene VI

Caesar's camp

Caesar orders to begin the fight and take Antony as prisoner alive. He hopes that peace will be restored. Enobarbus contemplates and finds himself wretched, guilty. But it is now too late. The soldier goes to him with all his material possessions 'plus bountys over plus' He says....'Your emperor continues still Jove' Enrobarbus suffers excruciating agony Read what he says:

"I am alone the villain of the earth
And feel I am so most. O Antony
Though mine of bounty, how wouldst thou have paid
My better service, when my turpitude
Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows by heart:
If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean
Shall outstrike thought, but thought will do't I feel
I fight against thee? No, I will go seek
Some ditch, wherein to die: the foul's best fits
My latter part of life."

Scene VII

Battlefield

Battle rages. It appears that the Romans have been beaten Antony is happy.

Scene VIII

Under the walls of Alexandria

Antony sends a message to Cleopatra informing her about how he has succeeded in driving the enemy away to his camp. He orders celebration of the event. Cleopatra is jubilant.

Scene IX

Caesar's camp

The heart-broken Enobarbus has lost his will to live. He is torribly shaken. He repents that he is a master-leaver and fugitive. After his infamous revolt, the best he can do is to die. He falls, swoons and dies, His body is carried to the guards by some soldiers who see him.

Scene X - XII

Between Two camps

The war is going to be waged by sea. The leader will watch the action from a top hill nearby. Caesar arrives with his army. Swallows have built their nests on the sails of cleopatra's ships-which is a very bad omen: the augurers are grim and refuse to talk.

Antony watches and discovers that his navy has been defeated.

Antony cries out

"All is lost:
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me
My fleet hath yielded to the foe, and yonder
They cast their caps up, and carouse together
Like friends long lost. Triple turn'd whore, tis thou
Hast sold me to this novice, land my heart
Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly:
For when I am prevented upon my charm
I have done all..
.....
.....

Betray'd I am
O this false soul of Egypt this grave charm
Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home:
Whose bosom was my crownet my chief end
Like right gipsy. hath at fast and loose
Beguiled me to the very heart of loss"

When Cleopatra comes before them. He drives her away

"Ah. thou spell Avaunt!"

His languages is so abusive that she immediately leaves. His fury is evident in the following words.

"Tis well thou art gone
If it be well to I love, But better" twere
Thou Fell's into my fury for one death
Might have prevented many. Eros, ho!
The shirt of Nessus is upon me, teach me
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o'the moon
And with these hands that grasp'd the heaviest club
Subdue my worthiest self, The witch shall die
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me and I fall
under this plot: she dies for it,.....

Scene XIII

Cleopatra and her ladies retire to the monument. She sends Mardian, the eunuch , to tell Antony that she died with the name of Antony on her lips. Mardian is to report to her how he takes her death.

Scene XIV

Cleopatra's palace, Another room

The talk between Antony and Eros shows how shattered Antony is. He blames Cleopatra for his fall. Mardian appears on

his mission. He reports that Cleopatra is no more. Antony is remorse-stricken. He does not care to live any longer. His torch Cleopatra, is out and he cannot stray in the dark. He cries out "I come, my queen....Stay for me.....

.....

Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand

And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:

Dido, and her aeneas, shall want troops,

And all the haunt be ours...."

Antony begs Eros to put an end to his life. But Eros kills himself to avoid the horried deed. Antony falls on his sword with the intention of killing himself, but does not die at once: he is seriously injured. Even in this attept he bungles.

The guards who see this cannot bear the pain. Then diomedes appears and informs Antony how Cleopatra feared of the dire consequences of her earlier message and how she sends word that she is alive as well. She wants Antony to go to her. Some guards arrive and Antony wants them to carry him to Cleopatra at her monument.

Scene XV

It has been a fatal mistake on Cleopatra's part to lie. Realization dawns on her too late.

Cleopatra refuses to be confronted. When sorrows come, they cone in battalions, Cleopatra and her ladies try to haul the dying Antony up..., when some of the most poignant words are heard from Antony:

"I am dying, Egypt, dying

I here importune death a while: until

Of many thousand kisses, the poor last

I lay upon thy lips".

Cleopatra is swept away in a flood of sorrow and despair. She says:

"I dare not, dear,

Dear my lord, pardon: I dare not

Lest I be taken; not the imperious show

Of the full fortun'd Caesar ever shall

Be brooch'd with me, if knife, drugs, serpents, have

Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe

Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes,

And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour

Demurring ypon me; but come, come, Antony...."

Antony is heaved up. A most touching scene follows. Cleopatra's anguish is best expressed in her own words:

Noblest of men, woo't die?

Hast thou no care of me, shall I abide

In this dull world which in thy absence is

No better than a sty-O see, my women;

The crown o' the earth doth melt"

Antony dies in the arms of Cleopatra. Cleopatra cries:

"My lord?

O, wither'd is the garland of the war,.

The Soldier's pole is fall'n: Young boys and girls

Are level now with men: the odd is gone,

And there is nothing left remarkable

Beneath the visiting moon".

She faints and after a while regains consciousness. The gods have

'stolen our jewel' 'Our lamp is spent'. For her there is now a vacuum in her life, which can never be filled, she decides:

"Ah, women women! come we have no friend

But resolution and the brifest end".

Antony's body is carried away.

Act.V

Scene I

Alexandria. Caesar's camp

Caesar orders Dolabella to go and ask Antony to surrender, when Decretas enters with the sword of Antony and reports Antony's death.

Caesar's words show how great Antony was:

"The breaking of so great a thing should make
A greater crack. The round world
Should have shook lions into civil streets,
And citizens to their dens, The death of Antony
Is not a single doom, in the name lay
A moiety of the world"

Maecenas remarks:

"His taints and honours wage equal with him."

Agrippa observes:

"A rarer spirit never did steer humanity."

Everyone is sad that such a fate overtook Antony. His faults, whatever their nature be notwithstanding, he is great.

The messenger from Cleopatra is heard and sent back with the promise of cheer to her. Caesar follows it up with the despatch of his own messenger/ambassador Proculeius, with instructions:

"Go and say
We purpose her no shame : give her what comforts
The quality of her passion shall require,
Lest, in her greatness, by some moral stroke
She do defeat us. For her life in Rome
Would be eternal in our triumph: go"

It is now clear that Caesar wants to own her. She will be the richest feather on his cap.

Scene III

Alexandria. A room in the monument

Cleopatra has no respect for Caesar. She contemplates suicide when Proculeius arrives and delivers Caesar's message. Note the words:

"Be of good cheer:
Y'are fall'n into a princely hand; fear nothing
Make your full reference freely to my lord,
Who is full of grace, that it flows over
On all that need. Let me report to him
Your sweet dependency and you shall find
A conqueror that will pray in aid for kindness
Where he for grace is knee"d to."

Cleopatra play-acts and tries to send him back guaranteeing good conduct. When soldiers enter from behind she fears that they are going to be taken into custody and tries to commit suicide, When Proculeius demands of her temperance, she says:

"Sir I will eat no meat, I' ll not drink sir-
If idle talk will once be necessary,
I'll not sleep neither, This mortal house I'll ruin,
Do Caesar What he can, Know, sir that I
Will not wait pinioned at your master's court,
Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me, rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark nak'd and let the water-files
Blow me into abhorring, rather make
My country's high pyramids my gibbet,
And hang me upin chains."

Dolabella arrives and Proculeius departs. Cleopatra says

some excellent things about her Antony.

"His legs bestrid the ocean, his rear'd arm,
Crested the world: his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends,
But when he meant to equal, and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder, For his bounty,
There was no winter in't an autumn'twas
That grew the more by reaping his delights
Were dolphin-like, they show'd his back above
The element they lived in: in his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets: realms and islands were
As plates dropp'dd from his pocket."

How can a man like Antony be replaced? Will there ever be a substitute?

Caesar now arrives along with his train. Cleopatra kneels. He has a few words of consolation and advice to her. She surrenders to him a list of all her material possessions- which list is incopmlete and her deception is exposed, much to her embarrassment. Caesar makes light of the offence. He leaves, Iras speaks out.

"Finish, good lady. the bright day is done,
And we are for the dark."

Dolabella too leaves, after extracting a promise from her to behave. Cleopatra's words about the vulgar Romans indicates her total contempt for the: mechanic slaves with greasy apons, rules, and hammers.....in their thick breaths, rank of gross diet, etc. She will never tolerate her being displayed as a whore in Rome.

Her mind is made up, She orders her maids to dress her up like a queen as she is going to meet her Antony.

The arrival of the rural fellow is announced. She must have asked him to come. She says;

"What poor an instrument

May do noble deed! he brings me liberty.
My resolution's plac'd and I have nothing
of woman in me: now from head to foot
I am marble constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine.
She asks the rural fellow.
Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?"
Yes, he has.
Cleopatra cannot wait any longer. She asks her maids;
"Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have
Immortal longings in me. Now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.
Yare, yare, good Iras: Quick: methinks I hear
Antony call. I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act. I hear him mock
The luck of Caesar.....Husband, I come.
Now to that name , my courage prove my title!
I am fire, and air, my other elements
I give to baser life....."
She kisses Iras. Iras at once falls dead
She applies an asp(Which the rural fellow has brought in his basket) to her breast saying:
"Come, thou mortal wretch.
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and despatch. O, couldst thou speak,
That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass,
Unpolicied!"
Charmian calls Cleopatra the Eastern star. She is !

Cleopatra applies another asp to her arm and, in another moment, dies.

Charmian has the finest epitaph for inscription.

"Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close,
And golden phoebes; never be beheld
of eyes again so royal!"

Cleopatra has succeeded in deceiving Caesar. Charmian applies an asp to her body and dies.

Dolabella arrives on the scene; immediately afterwards. Caesar arrives there with his train.

The sight shakes him. He speaks some of the most poetic words in praise of Cleopatra.

"Bravest at the last, She levell'd at our purposes , and being royal.
Took her own way.....but she looks like sleep.
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.....
She shall be buried by her Antony
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous:"
And how true the last words are !!!

Critical Examination of a very general nature.

To attempt a critical evaluation of Antony and Cleopatra in a casual easy way in the course of a few pages is one of the worst indiscretions students of Shakespeare can think of. However, we have to attempt one and here it is.

Antony and Cleopatra has 34 plus dramatist personae. The action is spread over different parts of the Roman Empire. The Arden Edition of the play gives 5+7+13+15+2=42 scenes in the course of the customary 5 Acts. These make the play very diffuse.

As a result, there has been considerable reluctance on the part of Skakespeare scholars to accord it a place along with the GREAT tragedies - Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello and Lear. But if you ask me, I woul;d say that in spite of the above mentional blemishes, the play is a GREAT tragedy and it deserves a place with the ones already known to be Great. I hope to prove my point as we go along.

As the play lacks cohesion, our evaluation too tends to be lacking in cohesion. This is no deterrent, though. By the time we finish our commentary, all of us will surely have a very good idea of what the play is about, besides being the story of Antony and Cleopatra of the first century before Christ. For the sake of convenience, we shall follow the same order as is given in the play.

When Philo. Antony's friend, censures his general's dotage overflowing the measure, he is suggesting that Antony does nothing at all within measure. Whatever he does overflows the measure-meaning that he is generous, magnanimous, gregarious, loving, lovable, negligent, irresponsible etc., to a fault, dotage not exempted. Thus there is an abundance about him which is beyond containing. Which is overflowing. What we find later in the play corroborates this observation.

Antony is represented as bigger than human. He is general captain (leader of men) like Mars etc. He used to glow his armour. His large chest has now become the bellows and the fan to cool a gypsy's lust. Egypt is said to be the land of the gipsies. So Queen Cleopatra is the greatest gypsy. In short, Antony, once a Mars - like general and captain, has been reduced to the level o an instrument to satisfy the lust of Cleopatra. Antony has lost his temper. One of the three poles (pillars) of the Roman Empire has been transformed into a strumpet's fool, Cleopatra being the strumpet. The censure is proved as standing on firm evidence. Antony exhibits his love of Cleopatra in exaggerated terms (note the idea of overflowing) Here is a point we should consider carefully. Shakespeare uses cosmic imagery to refer to the hero and the heroine of the play; they are more than human, almost superhu-

man in their portraiture by Shakeshpeare.

Cleopatra plays with Antony just as a cat plays with a mouse. For her it is ecstasy; for Antony it is at times agony. But the love Antony has for her makes him put up with it. It is Cleopatra's love of Antony that makes her take such liberties with him This is evident on several occasions in the play. Thoughts of Fulvia (Antony's wife) Rome and such mundane matters do not please or engage. Antony any longer. His world has changed. He now belongs to a world where the values are diametrically opposed to those in Rome. He cares nothing at all for Rome or Tiber, or the wide arch of the empire or his role as one of triumvirs. He argues that empires and kingdoms refuse to distinguish between man and beast, as they are dungy earth' Antony's space is in Alexandria, near Cleopatra. The nobleness of life is for them to be in a perpetual embrace.

The naughty Cleopatra is unique: everything to chide, to laugh, to weep becomes the wrangling queen. What ever she does is admirable and fair. She is every inch a show woman.

Antony's refusal to hear the messenger from Rome forms part of his tragic flaw. ie his dereliction of duty and responsibility. He originally belonged to a world where he was bound by certain norms certain do's and don'sts He should not ignore them, as he still belongs there, at least legally, as one of the triumvirs.

Next what we find is the typical world. The ladies'maids and servants of Cleopatra and a soothsayer reveal the national characteristic an obsession with fertility, sexual fulfilment, dreams fantasies etc., etc., Theirs is a world of nature-of decay, of death o change, where things are circumscribed by time, are subject to transformation. We know reality differs from illusion and delusion Let us, though somewhat prematurely, compare the world of Rome and the worlds of Egypt against each other.

Rome stands for a world of solid achievement: something certain, masculine; dry, prosaic, disciplined, well-organized, politically expedient, cold, calculating, controls it, possesses it. Reason and hard intelligence govern it; it is the time-honoured west, the occident. Egypt, on the contrary stands for a world which is by

and large, feminine, tender, graceful soft, charming, emotional and passionate, poetic, illusory, disarrayed, romantic, fulfilling in a fantasy way, least bothering about planned future etc. For the Egyptians it is the here and the now that matter most. There is design easily discoverable in Rome: but Egypt is a riot o colours with no discoverable pattern at all. In Rome people exist; in Egypt people live (hence Antony's remark; our dungy earth alike feeds beast as man) The dungy earth or Rome feeds beasts; the dungy earth of Egypt feeds men. See how economically Shakespeare distinguishes between the dry Rome and the wet Egypt.

It is out of this Rome that Antony, a Roman, has crossed the floor to Egypt, to Cleopatra, the queen of the exotic gipies, notorious for their lust fulness and lustiness. But the million dollar question is can Antony get rid of his shadow his past? We at once notice the predicament of Antony, He will be a misfit in the new world where he faces a totally different system of values. However he braves it and in that process, he gets bewildered, perplexed and dazed. He tries to belong to both the worlds. It is a strenuous, balancing act-a tightrope walk. The slightest tilt will bring him crashing down and he will be destroyed. I shall have more to say on this; contrasting worlds confounding our protagonist.

Now that Antony's world has changed (he thinks so), he cannot endure to hear anything from and about the world of his past. Hence his impatience with the messenger; the messenger has brought news about his wife's death, his brother, Lucius, civil disturbances in Rome and the like. However, on second thoughts, he realizes that he must listen. Their significance makes him observe.

"These Egyptian fetters I must break

Or lose myself in dotage"

So, Antony does know that he is in chains, a slave, one who has no freedom of any kind. 'Must' suggests absolute necessity, compulsion, duty etc...If he does not, he will continue to be what Philo described him to be; a strumpet's fool; an instrument to cool a gypsy's lust. After a few lines he says:

"I must from this enchanting queen break off.'

The queen is enchanting (with the associations of sorcery witchcraft, charm, spell, delightfulness). Is Antony one like the Knight-at-arms of John Keat's La Bella Dame sans Merci? Is Cleopata one like the archetypal Femme Fatale (the Lamia, snake woman, harpy, yekshi etc.) Enobarbus, the one man chorus (actor, observer, commentator) has studied Cleopatra inside out. He is all praise for her . He lavishly uses cosmic images to refer to the possible heart-break of Cleopatra. May be, 'She is cunning past man's thought. but she is a wonderful piece of work.

Antony confides in Enobarbus. Fulvia's death, civil disturbances in Rome etc. etc. call for Antony's presence in Rome. But Antony's departure from Alexandria will create an indescribable situation in Egypt. Cleopatra will be miserable. Antony is serious, though. He reprimands Enobarbus for his levity. He has no alternative left. He MUST go

In the next scene we see Cleopatra in the company of her ladies. We are astonished to learn how much she has fathomed Antony and his mental make-up. She does not mince swords while refereeing to Antony's mouth-made vows of love, attachment, loyalty etc. She is so sad that she loses control over herself She cannot suffer the pang of separation:

When you sued staying

Then was the time for words no going then

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,

Bliss in our brows'bent...,

She charges the greatest soldier of the world with being the greatest liar' of the world (Note the superlatives here)

But the characteristic Roman gravity at least triumphs over, at least temporarily, the histrionics of Cleopatra. It is business that calls Antony away. His pleasure lies in the east, with Cleopatra. He swears:

"That soldier, servant. making peace of war

As thou affects".

It is here that we notice both Cleopatra's sincerity and her artifice. Is she dissembling or is she genuinely affected? It is rather difficult to answer the question. We have the image of a play throughout Antony and Cleopatra'

Antony is referred to as the 'Herulean Roman' and until the end of the play this comparison is retained. Cleopatra is frightened lest Antony should forget her once he is away.

"O, my oblivion is a very Antony

And I am all forgotten"

We are now convinced that Cleopatra has been play acting. When she realizes that she cannot prevent Antony's departure, she, with consummate skill, manipulates the situation-which has the right of honesty and sincerity.

"Your honour calls you hence

Therefore, be deaf to my unpitied folly

And all of the gods go with you. Upon your sword

Sit laurel victory..."

These words are truly Roman and lit is quite strange and ironic that they are spoken by one who is no Roamn at all.

The next scene provides us with an occasion to acquaint our-selves with Octavius. Octavius has a list of accusations against Antony. We know that he is not wrong. At the same time the list points at the imperfections of Antony. He has been acting, of late, unlike a triumvir.

Intelligence is brought about Pompey's insurgency. Pompey is gaining popularity and Caesar is sinking immpopular favour and estimate.

We see a world where the yardstick is different to measure people with. Pirates are attacking Roman ships and encroaching upon the Roman shores. In short, it is the absence and apathy of Antony that have precipitated the political crisis.

"Pompey thrives in our idleness"

Caesar and Lepidus reveal themselves. They have political business to transact, intelligence to collect, battles to fight during which they have hardly any time to live. Meanwhile, Caesar remembers how Antony was as a soldier. As a matter of fact, every important character has a past which is constantly remembered and felt nostalgic about.

Cleopatra has to have mandragora so that she 'might sleep our this great gap of time/My Antony is away.' Her thoughts are on what man and woman do-'what Venus did with Mars'. In cosmic images she describes how it was with her and Antony in the recent past. She calls him the 'the Demi-Atlas of this earth the arm and burgonet of men'. See how she crews the cud of memory. Here is a passion recollected in tranquility.

"...He's speaking now,
Or murmuring, 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'
For so he calls me,. Now I feed myself
With most delicious Poison Think on me,
That am I with Phoebus'armorous pincehs black,
And wrinkled deep in time...

In the same speech she recalls her exploits with Caesar and Pompey. Cleopatra interprets Antony's frame of mind as reported be Alexas as the happy union of the east and the west: 'O heavenly mingle !'. When her maids make fun of her past stints with Caesar she rubukes them saying her 'man of men' is incomparable and her salad days showed just that she was inexperienced and cold in blood'. She is now mature, experienced, worldly wise and knows that Antony is her man, her only man, the man of men. She should know, because she has had quite a few in her youth.

The coming together of Pompey and the two pirates, Menas and Mencrates, show their hunger for power and possession. Pompey is an excellent judge of human character, one who has studied all the variables in the game of war. He knows his timing is good to attack Caesar and win Rome. The rich life of Antony with Cleopatra is beautifully summed up by Pompey:

"Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wan'd lip!
Let witchecraft join with beauty, lust with both,
Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
Keep his brain fuming: Epicurean cooks
Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour,
Even till a Lethe'd dulness..."

The message brought Varrius disturbs him a little bit; he, however, soon recovers to comment on Antony's leaving Alexandria.

The higher our opinion, that our stirring
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck
The ne'er lust-wearied Antony.

This is an excellent assessment of Antony from one who knows him intimately. He thinks there is enough cause for Caesar and Antony to join hands: then have a common enemy to face and defeat and their chances are better if they stand together. It is political and military expediency that might join them. They may never agree on any other matter, especially the finer aspects of life.

Antony has reached Rome, Lepidus warning that Antony must be entreated to soft and gently speech indicates Antony's hot temper. Enobarbus will not ask his master to do so as it is against Antony's nature. Antony arrives: Caesar too, with Agrippa and Maecenas. There is a good deal of mudslinging against one another, charges and countercharges are made. Soon they settle down, with quiet Roman dignity and decorum, to serious talk of mutual concern. Agrippa suggests marriage between Octavia and Antony.

It is quite clearly a marriage of convenience, at best; there is no love of affection possible between them. See what Agrippa says:

"To hold you in perpetual amity
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts

With an unslipping knot...

By this marriage.

All little jealousies which now seem great,

And all great fears, which now import their dangers,

Would then be nothing...

Pardon what I have spoke

For it is a studied, not a present thought

By duty ruminated.

But Agrippa is terribly mistaken; time will tell what kind of damage this alliance will lead to.

That settled, Agrippa and Maecenas are left alone. It is now we have the famous description of Cleopata on her barge -a tribute to the queen in honest terms. It is clear that the 'Rare Egyptian' is inseparable from her intense sexuality and her ability to transform anything and everything she is involved with, to put her stamp on everything that falls within her reach and sphere. And any encounter with her world calls for a sea change too. (Not how the once mundane Caesar Pompey. Antony and later Caesar (Augustu s) change) Cleopatra is the 'Royal wench' who can make 'defect perfection'

. Perhaps the last words on her are those of Enobarbus, in answer to Maecena's observation.

Maecenas: Now, Antony must leave her utterly.

Enorbarbus: never he will not:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

Her infinite variety: other women cloy

The appetites they feed; but she makes hungry.

Where most she satisfies. For vilest things

Become themselves in her, that the holy priests

Bless her, when she is riggish

These words sum up the magnetic charm of the enchantress, called Cleopatra. How can any one better this tribute to womanhood?

Well, it is as much an ominous prediction as a rare compliment. Cleopattra, we find, lives up to it.

The warning words of the soothsayer 'If thou dost play with him at any game; thou art sure to lose, disturb Antony. Experience has shown this to be true. He prepares to leave Rome for Alexandria. However, note his excuse:

"And though I make this marriage for my pece.

I'the east may pleasure lies..."

In Antony's list of priorities, pleasure comes above duty, familiar obligations etc. In Rome, unfortunate by, it is a topsy turvy list, for which he will not be forgiven.

In Alexandrja the desperation of Cleopatra is quite marked. She cannot any longer endure her estrangement from Antony. As mentioned earlier, some of her past and glorious moments with her Antony torture her. To make maters worse, she learns now that Antony is married to Octavia. She has fallen from the frying pan to the fire. She loses all restraint and behaves like a mad woman. It is the intensity of her sorrow that makes her rail against everybody and everything. She at once sends a messenger to get a report on the looks of Octavia her rival.

The battlefield. Pompey and his friends on one side; Caesar, Antony, Lepidus and their friends on the other. Roman wisdom prevails, Before the battle begins, they talk to see if a battle can be averted. The talk is fruitful. A temporary truce is arranged evidencing political strategy and avoidance of waste, the triumph of wisdom over passion and rage. In the ensuing informal get together, once more the one-man chorus, Enobarbus, observes that the band of their amity; Octavia is of a holy, cold, and still conversation.. 'He will to his Egyptian dish again; then shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Ceasar..Antlony will use his affection where it is. He married but his occasion here.'

What we learn here is how Cleopatra differs from Octavia, her rival. Recall the contrast between the East and the West. It is

applicable here.

When Pompey is tempted by Menas, the pirate, to murder the triumvirs who are on board the ship, he shrinks away from the heinous idea in the name of honour honour which he was familiar with and proud of while his father was alive. Now it has become a mere word (Remember Falstaff) Menas deserts Pompey-which has disastrous consequences. However, the words are ambiguous; he would like to be emperor, but his means would be straight. The end cannot justify the means.

Of all the persons, only Caesar prepares to leave the ship which shows his obsession with business, mundane things: our graver business frowns at this levity.'

Next we enter a world of hectic/ambitious political activity. We also hear Antony equated with the god, Jupiter, the fabulous bird, phoenix etc; while Caesar is identified as the Jupiter of men.

The poet in Antony has a few remarkable words to speak about Octavia. He is referring to the tear-laden eyes of Octavia:

"The April's in her eyes, it is love's spring,
And these the shower to bring it on
.....
Her tongue will not obey her heart. nor can
Her heart inform her tongue-the swan's down feather,
That stands upon the swell at the full of tide,
And neither way inclines."

Antony is leaving for Athens with his wife. She is taking leave of her brother.

The messenger sent by Cleopatra to collect information on Octavia comes back and reports:

"She creeps:
Her motion and her station are as one
She shows a body, rather than a life
A statue, than a breather'

The observation is profoundly symbolic. Shakespeare seems to imply that Ocatvia the statue can have a permanence, Loveliness, endurance and attractiveness which a breather like Cleopatra cannot have, cannot lay claim to. So what !!! A day with the enchatress is more cherishable than a lifetime with one like Octavia, a cold, dead statue.

Months have passed and Caesar's political ambitions have surface. He has waged new wars against Pompey. He is guilty of violating the norms of the treaty. Besides, he has started a character assassination of Antony. Under this pretext, Antony sends Octavia to her brother as ambassadress/arbitress, Octavia is now between the devil and the deep sea.

Caesar has used Lepidus in his wars against Pompey. Afterwards, he imprisons Lepidus, He will be in custody "till death enlarge his confine'. See what ambition leads men to.

Antony has gone back to Cleopatra, making Enobarbus' prediction come true. Octavia arrives in Rome to be with her brother with no display of pomp and power which infuriates Caesar. Now he has to avenge his sister's humiliation too. The political issue now becomes a personal vendetta. He charges Antony:

"Only the adulterous Antony, most large
In his abominations, turns you off,
And give his potent regiment to a trull,
That noises it against us."

Enobarbus tells Cleopatra what the Romans say about Antony and Cleopatra:

"Your presence needs must puzzle Antony
Takek from his heart, Take from his brain, from his time....

What should not then be spar'd. He is already traduced for levity, and it is said, in Rome that Photinus, an eunuch, and your maids manage this war."

Recall expressions like to cool a gipsy's lust' 'strumpet's fool' Egyptian fetters etc. etc.

Cleopatra's words show she is on a par with Antony, which Octavia can never be:

"Sink Rome, and their tongues rot
That speak against us! A charge we bear i' the war,
And as the president of my kingdom will
Appear there fore a man...
I will not stay behind"

There is political turmoil everywhere Battles rage. Caesar advances and poses a threat to everyday. Knowing soldiers warn Antony against a battle in the sea.

"O, noble emperor, do not fight by the sea'
Trust not the rotten planks...We
Have us'd to conquer standing on the earth
And fighting foot to foot."

But Antony will not listen, as he is a doomed man. The re-man comment' our leader is led, and we are women's men's comes true

In the ensuing naval battle when Cleopatra turns tail and Antony follows her, the battle is temporarily lost. The defeat is terribly demoralizing. The chagrin of Antony blinds him. He uses very abusive language to express his disillusionment. He however, forgets that he has been responsible for this degeneration His enchanting queen becomes 'the ribaudred nag of Egypt.'

Enobarbus Says:

"Mine eyes did sicken at the sight, and could not
Endure a further view."

Scarus' words are the definitive comment on the cowardly action:

She once being loof'd
The noble ruin of her magic. Antony

Claps on his sea wing, and (like a doting mallard)
Leaving the fight in height, flies after her:
I never saw an action of such a shame:
Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before
Did violate itself.

Shakespeare persists in tracing the degeneration of Antony. Antony blames Cleopatra for his failures. His lieutenatns think of leaving him in order to join Caesar. We can hardly blame them for this, as the better part to valour is discretion. Antony has failed in their kleyes; he has failed to live up to their expectations; he is ashamed of himself, too and advises his followers to leave him and make their peace with Caesar. However sentiments stand in the way. Antony seems to indulge in self pity. Once again he feeds himself on memory.

The arrival of Cleopatra makes Antony use nautical imagery to explain his dependence on her, not as a slave but as her love. Wer can scarcely find such poetry elsewhere.

Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings
And thou shouldst tow me after. O'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st and that
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
Command me:"

How much he loves and admires her is evident in the line:

"Fall not tear, I say one of them rates
All that is won and lost: give me a kiss
Even this repays me .."

The fall of Antony is beautifully described in the words of ambassador to Caesal. Caesar's dexterity as a political bargainer is highlighted in his answer to the man:

Ambassador: Lord of his fortunes he salutes thee, and
Requires to live in Egypt, which not granted.

He lessens his request, and to thee thus sues
To let him breathe between the heavens and earth,
A private man in Athens...
Caesar: For Antony

I have no ears to his request. The queen
Of audience nor desire shall fail, so she
From Egypt drive her all, disgraced friend,
Or take his life ther. This if she perform
She shall not use unheard..

The ulterior motive of Caesar is brought to light through his words to Thidias when he sends him as messenger to Cleopatra:

To try thy eloquence, now tis time, despatch:
From Antony win Cleopatra, promise
And in our name, what she requires, add more,
From thine invention, offers; women are not
In their best fortunes strong; but want will perjure
The ne'eer touched vestal; try thy scunning. Thidias....

From the above it appears that Caesar is a student of female psychology. But in this case, he is sadly mistaken, Time will tell him so. Cleopatra's flight and Antony's following her are being discussed between Cleopatra and Enobarbus, Antony is condemned by Ebnobarbus without any commiseration.

Cleopatra: Is Antony, or we, in fault for this?
Enobarbus: Antony only, that would make his will
Lord of his reason. What though you fled.
From that great face of war, whose several ranges
Freighted each other. Why should he follow?
The itch of his affection should not then
Have nick'd his captainship at such a point

When half to half the world oppos'd he being
The mered question. Twas a shame to less
Than was his loss, to course your flying flags,
And leave his navy gazing

Even Enobarbus who stood by Antony in Antony's amorous exploits with Cleopatra in the past is turned critic and endorses the view of his friends Philo and Demetrius. Antony should never have pledged his Roman wisdom and Roman masculinity to the inferior Egyptian impulse and indulgence. Antony's discretion seems to have left him when he Challenges Caesar for a single combat. Here again Enobarbus has his comments:

"Caesar, thou has subdued his judgement too."

What Enobarbus forgets is that long before that Cleopatra subdued his judgement and Antony had willingly surrendered it.

It is now time for us to be more precise about our evaluation of Antony in terms of his tragic flaw. It appears that as his doom nears, he commits a bludner. Fools dare where angels fear to tread . This saying holds best in the case of Antony. The result is that his friends and associates no longer consider him a role model. They look upon him as a sinking ship:

"..thou art so leaky
That we must leave thee to thy sinking for
Thy dearest quit thee."

Cleopatra's words to Caesar through Thyreus are those of an actress; she wants to buy time.

Antony's indiscretion is at its worst when he orders the whipping of Thyreus. It is of course, prompted by jealousy, self pity and, above all, fear that he might lose her to Caesar. He roars and blames Cleopatra for his degradation:

"You were half blasted ere I knew you, ha?
Have I may pillow left unpress'd in Rome,
Forborne the getting of a lawful race,

And by a gem of **women to be** abuse'd
By one that looks on **feeders**?
You have been a boggler ever.
But when we in our clear judgement, make us
Adore our errors, laugh at's while we strut
To our confusion
I found you as a morsel, cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher: nay you were a garment
Of Cneius Pompey's besides what hotter hours.
Unregister'd in vulgar fame, you have lusuriously pick'd out..."

The words ring out; But has he any right to condemn her for his weaknesses? He does not pause to listen to Cleopatra's feeble attempts to make her heard. All these tell us that the Roman soldier that he was is dead and the helpless lover, on the verge of the nerve-racking fear of losing his beloved, is born He has gained a new identity.

Cleopatra's declatomatory speech bring him back to his normal self, at least for a short while. Antony says:

"I am satisfied. Caesar sits down in Alexandria, where I will oppose his fate. Our force by land hath nobly held, our sever'd navy too have knit again...
I will be treble sinew'd hearted, breath'd
And fight maliciously..."

In the same breath he orders:

"Come, let's have one other gaudy night: call to me
All my sad captains, fill our bowls once more:
Let's mock the midnight bell.

What we see here is the desperation of a drowning man; his panic drags him deeper and deeper. Enobarbus hits the nail on its head when he says:

"Now he will outstare the lightning; to be furious

Is to be freighted out of fear, land in that mood
The dove will peck the estride; I see still
A diminution in our captain's brain
Rstores, his heart..."
And he prepares to leave his master
"It eats the sword it fights with ; I will seek
Some way to leave him."

Fear makes one cautious; it is absolutely for self preservation. A fearless Antony is a least cautious Antony. He is heading towards his 'self-induced' destruction, as all protagonists in tragedies, do. May be, Antony had the premonition of his impending doom. A few lines earlier he said:

"Aalack, our terrane moon
Is now eclipsed, and it portends alone
The fall of Antony

Where Cleopatra is the terrance moon; she is now darkened (in his eyes) has lost her lustre and popular superstition says it portends evil. The moon Cleopatra was controlling the rise and fall of Antony, the waters of the seas. (The moon causes the high and low tides)

We have already seen the debasement of Antony, See how the Romans look upon Antony, Maecenas says:

"When one so great begins to rage, he's hunted
Even to falling. Give him no breath , but now
Make boot of his distraction: never anger
Made good guard for itself."

Similarly, Caesar knows better than to accept Antony's challenge for a single combat:

"Let the old ruffian know
I have many other ways to die: meantime
Laugh at his challenge."

Honour and heroism have no relevance when death beckons.

The better part of valour is discretion, as Falstaff says. Caesar has discretion in plenty, while Antony lacks it totally. Antony's following words substantiate the truth of this observations:

"I hope well tomorrow, and will lead you
Where rather I'll expect victorious life'
Than death, and honour."

At night, the soldiers in the camp hear solemn music-which is interpreted as Hecules leaving Antony, suggesting that Antony's doom is near.

"It is the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd
Now leaves him."

Antony was supposed to have descended from him Shakespeare refers to Antony as the Hercúlean hero on several occasions in the play.

Desertion by ancestral god of protection will have disastrous results.

Dawn breaks, Antony is putting on his armour. He bids farewell to Cleopatra:

"Fare thee well, dame, whate'er becomes o'me:
This is a soldier's kiss. "
The fond hope of Cleopatra betrays her fears:
"He goes forth gallantly: that be and Caesar might
Determine this great war in single fight!
Then Antony.. "
The above unfinished sentence has sinister innuendoes

Antony hears about the desertion of Enobarbus. He does not consider Enobarbus guilty. His generosity and magnanimity are clearly discernible in the following words:

"Say, that I wish he never find more cause
To change a master O, my fortunes have
Corrupted honest men.

We can also find tracde of introspection here.

Caesar is hopeful of universal peace, as the battle ends..

On hearing the message from Antony, Enobarbus is terribly grief stricken, feels guilty and dies of a broken heart.

There follows a fierce battle. It is noticed that swallows have built in Cleopatra's sails nests-which is a bad omen.

The battle is lost, Antony's wishful thinking is at a dead end. His hopes of winning the battle are shattered. Once again Shakespeare is generous in describing the irrationality of Antony:

"All is lost:
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me:
My fleet hath yielded to the foe, and yonder
They cast their caps up, and carouse together
Like friends long lost. Triple turned whore, tis thou
Hast sold me to this novice, and my heart '
Makes only wars on thee, Bid them all fly:
For when I'am revenged upon my charm
I have done all..."
'He wallows in self pity:
"O sun, thy uprise I shall see no more,
Fortune and Antony part here, even here
Do we shake hands. All come to this? the hearts
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets
On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd
That overtopp'd them all."
He once again blames Cleopatra for his down fall.
"O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm
Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home
Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end

Like a right gipsy, that at fast and loose
Beguil'd me, to the very heart of loss."

When Cleopatra appears before him, he is at his cruellest,

"Ah, though spell! Avaunt!
Vanish, or I shall give thee thy deserving
And blemish Caesars' triumph."

Antony's degradation is evident in the language used by him while addressing Cleopatra:

"Let him take thee
And hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians
Follow his chariot, like the greatest spot
Of all thy sex. Most monster-like be shown
For poor'st diminutives, for doicts, and let
Patient Octavia plough thy visage up
With her prepared nails."

Scared, Cleopatra leaves, when Antony continues revealing his hatred (which is irrational and baseless, as is known to the audience)

"Tis well thou'rt gone
If it be well to live. But better 'twere
Thou fell'st into my fury, for lone death
Might have prevented many
The witch shall die
To the young Roman boys she hath sold me, and I fall
Under this plot: she dies for't

The degeneration or Antony is total. We can never forgive Antony for this accusation of Cleopatra, for these offensive remarks on her. She cannot be held responsible for his faults and actions. Antony's fury spends itself in the course o 49 lines of very powerful poetry while just one line is spoken by Cleopatra and that one line has a story to tell.

Cleopatra, then commits the worst blunder of her life. Unwillingly she makes the premises for Antony's death. Stationed for her

protection in the monument, she lets the information that she committed suicide reach Antony. This in turn prepares for Cleopatra's tragedy, too.

Antony was convinced that Cleopatra 'has pack'd ' cards with Caesar, and false-played my glory unto an enemy's triumph, Now he learns from Mardian, Cleopatra's messenger, that she is dead. Once again Antony forgets what he has been charging her with and says·

"The long day's task is done
And we must sleep
I will overtake thee Cleopatra and
Weep for my pardon....for now
All length is torture: since the torch is·out,
Lie down and stray no farther. Now all labour
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles
Itself with Strength: seal then, and all is done.
Eros! I come, my queen: Eros! -stay for me.
Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:
Dido and her Aeneas, shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours...

Eros comes. Antony asks him to kill him. Eros cannot bring himself up to it and so stabs himself to death. Antony falls on his sword in an attempt to commit suicide and here again he bungles He is seriously wounded, not dead.

It is here that the irony of fate is visible. Cleopatra, sensing the potential danger in her false message, sends Diomedesd to Antony to effect the correction. But Diomedes arrives too late. Antony is already half dead. The wounded Antony is carried to the monument.

Shakespeare is at his best here in giving us the quintessence of poetry: two middle-aged, experienced lovers raving mad over each other's loss which could have been averted but for oversight, for a tiny miscalculation. Antony's desperate, helpless cry over split milk, I'Am

DYING, EGYPT, DYING' keeps on echoing in our ears. He dies in her arms. Cleopatra's anguish, chagrin and abject hopelessness surface at this moment. She who envied Fulvia and Octavia, because they were Antony's wives, which she wanted to be and which she was not is know going to be widowed even before marriage. Our lamp is spent' and so she decides to put an end to her life, too. Having lived in Antony's company for such a long time, she cannot now even think of a life without him. She has to join him wherever he is.

Now we find a desperate Octavius who wants to possess Cleopatra, just as Caesar, Pompey and Antony possessed her. Dercetas brings to Caesar Antony's sword and informs him about Antony's death. Caesar pays an enviable tribute to Antony, his erstwhile corival,. Here, and elsewhere too, Shakespeare used cosmic imagery lavishly to describe Antony as more than human.

Cleopatra's ability to manipulate people is revealed next. We see how easily and cleverly she handles Caesar and his servants. Meanwhile she is getting ready for her show. Her first attempt at suicide is foiled by the Roman guards. But she has a strong will and exemplary tenacity.

She says she will persist in ther attempts.

"Sir, I will eat no meat. I'll not drink, sir;-
If idle talk will once be necessary,
I'll not sleep neither. This mortal house I'll ruin
Do Caesar what he can. Know, sir that I
will not wait [pinion'd at your master's court
Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up,
And show me to the Shouting variety
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me, rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark naked, and let the water -flies
Blow me into abhorring; rather make

My country's high pyramids my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains.

Cleopatra is very proud of herself; her fierce independence and nobility, her stature as the wonderful piece of work that Enobarbus speaks of, her magisterial status as the queen of Egypt are not to be surrendered to any one less than Antony; a magnificent obsession. She says.

"I dreamt there was an emperor Antony
O such another sleep; that I might see
But such another man!"

She might never see such another man as her Antony!!! Because

"His legs bestrid the ocean, his rear'd arm
Created the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail, and shake the orb
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in it; an autumn twas
That grew the more by reaping; his delights
Were dolphin-like, they show'd his back above
The element they lived in: in his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets: realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pockets."

In fact, the real Antony was much more than the Antony that Cleopatra dreamt about:

".....nature wants stuff
To vie strange forms with fancy, yet to imagine
An Antony were nature's piece, against fancy,
Condemning shadows quite."

Remember my earlier remarks; Cleopatra lives on memory; hers are emotions recollected in tranquility; these memories, being very

strong, are hard to erase.

The real Antony is nature's masterpiece that would discredit the shadowy figures of man's imagination and fancy. He looms too large and obliterates everything else.

Note the the theatricality of Cleopatra's kneeling before Caesar

Caesar says.

Arise, you shall not kneel:

I pray you, rise, rise, Egypt.

The repetition shows the urgency, the unease of Caesar before cleopatra, even though Caesar is the master and Cleopatra the prisoner of war. Perhaps, Caesar feels that he will never be able to really imprison her, sensing her natural superiority which refuses to be subdued. She is duping him, though, leading him to believe that she is all his. But Caesar is worldly wise and correct by guesses how clever she can be. The list of possessions she shows is immediately revealed as bogus; she is concealing a large amount of wealth. She tries to cover up her embarrassment in an exhibition of frustrated fury.

Caesar departs with the promise of a better future to the queen and the latter immediately gets ready for her deception of Caesar. She has correctly guessed what is in store for her in Rome. She cannot endure the humiliation and disgrace; she had rather die than stay alive as a slave. She is now ready for her final performance'.

The rural fellow (the clown) has arrived with a basket full of 'the pretty worms of Nilus' the deadly poisonous aspics.

Cleopatra dresses herself up as the Queen of Egypt in all her majesty and finery. She is, after all, the protagonist of her tragedy. She has immortal longings in her. Her mind is made up Shakespeare in some of the most memorable lines of poetry makes Cleopatra say.

"Now no more

The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.

Yare, yare, good Iras; quick; methinks I hear

Antony call, I see him rouse himself

To praise my noble act. I hear him mock'

The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men

To excuse their after wrath. Husband , I come

Now to that name my courage prove my title!

I am fire and air; my other elements

I give to baser life...."

When Iras falls dead, Cleopatra says:

"If thou and nature can so gently part,

thet stroke of death is as a lover's pinch

Which hurts, and is desir'd..."

She takes an asp from the basket and applies it to her breast, saying

"If she (Iras) first meet the curled Antony,

He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss

Which is my heaven to have."

A few seconds later she applies another asp to her arm and dies.

Chairman has the most exquisite epitaph on her mistress:

"Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies

A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close

And golden Phoebus, never be beheld

Of eyes again so royal!

Charmian approves of her mistress's action saying:

"It is well done, and fitting for a princess'

Descended of so many royal kings."

Chairman dies.

Caesar arrives with his train, rather too late. His fears have been well-founded. He has been fooled. He will always be short of one feather on his cap. And what a feather!!!

The maganimity of Octavius is evident in his words of praise for Cleopatra:

"As she would catch another Antony

In her strong toil of grace.

Let us change the word 'toil' to 'coil' we have the serpent of the nlle having her graceful coil around Antony, an unbreakable, strong- all- consuming, loving embrace which hurts and is desired. Caesar can never have it, though he haqs been yearning for it.

But Caesar grants he due:

She shall be buried by her Antony

No grave upon the earth shall clip in it.

A pair so famous

Charmian had pronounced the most exquisite epitaph on her mistress; Octaviuc has now pronounced the most exquisite epitaph to be carved on their combined grave. Can we ever hope to find another better than this?

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Prepared by

PROF. G.S. RAMAKRISHNAN

S.K.V.C.Thrissur

THE TEMPEST

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE ROMANCES

Towards the end of his career as a playwright Shakespeare wrote, between 1609 and 1611...four plays which share a few common characteristics, which also have noticeable differences and which are called the romances. The four plays are:

1. Pericles
2. Cymbeline
3. The Winter's Tale

and

4. The Tempest

These plays are better understood an appreciated if they are treated as members of a family, viewed in relation to one another.

Before we proceed any further, we will look at what the label romance means. Chambers English Dictionary lists the following meanings, among others, under 'romance'.

(a) a tale of chivalry

(b) any fictitious and wonderful tale

(c) a fictitious narrative in verse or pose which passes beyond the limits of ordinary life.

(d) a romantic occurance or series of occurences

(e) a love affair

(f) an imaginative lie et. etc..

Under 'romantic' we have pertaining to, of nature of, inclining towards or savouring of romance' fictitious, extravagant, wild, fantastic etc.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature, Second Edition, revised by Dorothy Eagle says:

Romantic : a word for which in connection with literature there

is no generally accepted definition. The O.E.D.Says: characterised...by invested..with romance or imaginative appeal 'where 'romance appears to mean redolence or suggestion of association with the adventurous and chivalrous: something removed from the scenes and incidents of ordinary life.

Other reference books tell us that a romance is

(a) a medieval tale based on legend, chivalric life and adventure or the supernatural

(b) a prose narrative treating imaginary characters involved in events remote in time or place and usually heroic, adventurous, or mysterious.

(c) a love story

(d) a class of such literature

(e) something (an extravagant story or account) that lacks basis in fact

(f) a product of imagination and fancy

For want of better information we will accept all the listed meanings for 'romance' and fortunately, they all apply to our plays.

The theme recurring in the plays is royalty lost and retrieved, order disturbed and restored: intimate familial bonds are ruptured, close blood relations are torn apart; but the bonds are re-established, the relations reunited. The net result is a stronger bonding of relations, a better, stable order. Those involved are sadder and wiser and 'calm of mind, all passion spent'.

Placing these plays in the context of Shakespeare, we find that Shakespeare is reworking some of his earlier themes from an altogether different angle and casting characters with some difference. For instance, we find the theme of usurpation in As you Like It', Henry IV, 'Macbeth' and 'The Tempest', the villainy of Iago is repeated in Iachimo; the usurper brother is repeated in "As You Like It" 'Hamlet', and 'The Tempest' as such and once removed in Henry IV (Henry being the cousin of Richard II). The heroines, Marina, Imogen, Perdita and Mirada, share common features and

remind us of the young adolescent heroines of the early romantic comedies. The mercy that is talked about in 'The Merchant of Venice' is found in the action in "The Tempest"". The pastoralism of "As you Like It" is repeated in 'The Winter's Tale ' and 'The Tempest'. The list is going to be a long one.

What, however, strikes us most is that in the plays the actions defy psychological probability. Let us here recall the various meanings listed under romance and romantic.

The romances are also called 'Plays of Reconciliation' as in them, Shakespeare appears to be occupied with forgiveness, reconciliation, the adjustment under heaven, of goodwill among men, this reconcilement coming about through the young and for the young (A Quiller-Couch).

The plays are rich in pageantry, and also masques, which indicates a changed audience taste, a characteristic of the early Jacobeans; these plays were presented indoors in the candlelight (the Blackfriars theatre) making possible special effects.

Introduction to "The Tempest'

The Tempest was first printed in the First Folio of 1623 by Heminge and Condell as the first play of the edition.

In many respects the text of the play is unique in that it contains elaborate stage directions, accurate. Act and Scene divisions and the like. In other words the text of the play had undergone careful editorial work before 1623.

Several theories have been suggested to explain the composition of the play like

(1) It is a reworking of an earlier play

2. It is an adaptation of a German play called 'DIE SCHONE' SIDEA by oneJakob Ayrer of Nuremburg

A good deal is known about the play's stage history. The play was presented at court in 1611 by Shakespeare's company - The King's Men. There is an account available to us as follows:

"Hallomas nyght was presented at Withall before ye Kings

Matie a play called The Tempest".

Date of composition

There us general agreement that The Tempest was written in 1611. The play has material incorporated in it not available before the latter half of 1610.

Sources and Antecedents

(1) The Bermuda Pamphlets:

Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Summers set out on an expedition to America in May. They had a fleet of nine ships and the number of colonists on board was five hundred. The idea was to reach Virginia to strengthen the colony of John Smith there.

In July the 'Sea Adventure' the ship carrying Sir Thomas and Sir George, was separated from the rest of the fleet by a storm and driven towards the Bermudas. It got stuck between two huge rocks, but was otherwise undamaged. All the mariners were able to reach the shore easily and to save most of the ship and the provisions. In July 1610 they set out for Virgina and soon reached the place.

But England had heard about the storm and the mishap in 1609 itself. Stories had spread detailing the adventures, strange experiences etc., of the mariners. Many a narrative was written and published on the expedition, the storm, the foundering of the ship, the extraordinary experience of the voyages, their escapades etc. etc.

However, only three pamphlets were influential in the writing of 'The Tempest' they were:

(i) Sylvester Jourdain's Discovery of the Bermudas (1610)

(ii) The Council of Virginia's True Declaration of the State of the Colony in Virginia (1610)

(iii) A later by William Strachy The True repertory of the Wreck (15/7/1610)

(2) Besides the above, Shakespeare must have read Robert Eden's History of Travel (1577) for the name Setenos, the account

of Sir Walter Ralegh's voyages, the account of Hariot and James Rosier on the religion and Ceremonies in Virginia and the like. There are also a cause of the 'Aneid' Heywood's Hierarchy of the Angels (for the name of Ariel0 and so on in the play.

(3) Montaigne's essay Of Canibals' (Translated by John Florio) is as a whole relevant to the play. It is said that 'Caliban is an anagram of Cannibal through and via 'Carib meaning A savage of the new world.

In addition to the above Shakespeare must have had access to a lot of classical literature relating to the imaginary golden world of the far away and the long ago. He must have accessed the folk tales of the middle ages. The masques, the pageants, the gods and goddesses of fertility, plenty and the prosperty etc indicate Shakespeare's erudition".

THE PLAY: SYNOPSIS

Prospero, the protagonist of 'The Tempest' was Duke of Milan before his banishment twelve years ago. He is both a scholar and a student and practitioner of the art of magic. With the help of Alonso, the king of Naples, Prospero's brother, Antonio had succeeded in depositing him. Prospero's was one who never liked power and position. He spent all his library (which was) dukedom large enough. The conspirators had caught him when he was totally off guard. He was consigned to a rotten canoe with his infant daughter and only child, Miranda, and thrown into the wild sea in the dead of night. Even rats had deserted the vessel. Divine providence intervened and brought the father and the daughter safely to an island, mysterious, lonely, an uninhabited but for two creatures, one, Caliban, a freckled whelp, hag-born and two Ariel a delicate spirit whom Prospero took charge. Sycorax, a witch and mother of Caliban, had imprisoned Ariel within the entrails of a river Pine. It was Prospero who had freed Ariel and later made him his favourite servant. Prospero tries to tame, help and train Caliban and also to teach him language. But the deformed creature had attempted an attack on Miranda's virtue, whereupon Caliban was condemned to serve the father and the

daughter as their household slave. Ariel was happy and gay and served Prospero faithfully by running errants for him. Caliban, despised and ill-treated, raged a perpetual was against his state of servitude.

When the curtain goes up, Prospero and Miranda have been on the island for twelve years. A storm builds up: it is a magic tempest, intentionally raised by Prospero with the aid of Ariel. A ship is brought ashore. On board the ship are Alonso, king of Naples an inveterate enemy of Propspero and Antonio, Prospero's brother and usurper of the ducal throne. Ferdinand, the fine young prince of Naples, is with them. There are a few members of the court too with them in the ship. There has been no loss of life. Around the entire assemblage, now that they have been brougnt to the shore safe and secure. Prospero begins to weave his magical spells. He has his design on Miranda and Ferdinand. He wants to see that they are brought face to face, they fall in love with each other at first sight and get married so that Naples and Milan are fused into one.

In the meantime, Sebastian, the brother of Alonso, and the evil Antonio conspire with each other, hatch a plan to slay Alonso. At the same time Caliban, having met Stephano and Trinculo, a drunken butler and jester from the ship and taking them to be gods, inspires them to murder Prospero, his master. But Prospero is all-seeing and all-knowing from his cell he watches over an controls their evil actions. The spark of love that appeared, wild the fire of love-was engineered by Prospero. Ariel is put to use, through his apparitions and quaint devices, to terrify miscreants. Soon afterwards, having 'austerely punished' the poor. Miserable Ferdinand in order to test his new-found love for Miranda, Prospero the task master, agrees that they shall marry. He presents a solemn masque performed by spirit actors, which is only broken off, when he remembers Caliban, his mean, base accomplices and their evil plans-the dastardly plot which the three were hatch in to murder Prospero. Prospero and Ariel then send diverse spirits, in the shape of dogs and hounds to hunt the insidious and ignoble

conspirators from the stage. Prospero then draws into his enchanted circle the band of courtly miscreants. Prospero reveals his identity as the Duke of Milan. But he is generous, may magnanimous and forgives his enemies on the condition that his dukedom is restored to him. To the penitent Alonso, who still believes that his son, Ferdinand, is drowned in the sea. Prospero brings the happy tidings that the prince is alive and well. He displays to all the prince and Miranda playing a game of chess.

Prospero's purpose has been accomplished. He was decided to give up his occult studies. He will bury his books and wand in a ditch deeper than did ever plummet sound.

He will leave the island and return to Milan. He has promised freedom to Ariel. He fulfils his promise by freeing him to the elements, where he will enjoy a life of heavenly freedom.

Caliban has been humbled by Prospero. At the end of the play all leave the island for Naples, leaving Caliban alone on the island.

THEMES OF THE 'TEMPEST'

Before we attempt and act by act, scene summary of the play, we could profitably attempt a study of the themes of 'The Tempest'. The study will very much help in understanding the play in its entirely.

'The Tempest' is a pastoral play, as it is concerned with the opposition of nature and art. Here it is the opposition between the world of Prospero's art and the world of Caliban's nature. Caliban, the natural man is at the centre of the play and it is against him that the civilized and cultured man is measured.

No comparison is offered in the play between a primitive innocence in Nature (the prelapsarian innocence or that before the fall of man) and a sophisticated decadence. In Caliban what we have is a typical (human?) being who has been deprived of Nurture. Nurture refines Nature and offers man a power over nature, including his own nature (i.e...character and conduct) Caliban represents a savages-symbolically, a natural man minus the grace of

god, sense minus mind-inshc:t, a beast for all practical purposes. Prosper represents the highest point of perfection in terms of art and wisdom (he is almost a sage; he is very much lacking in certain human qualities, though) Caliban belongs to the lowest rung of the social ladder. He has a duality in mental make-up. He has a human form and a beast by character-which makes him doubly dangerous.

This is better understood if we relate the characters of the play to one another. We may stratify the characters as follows. We ought to be careful while drawing these lines of demarcation as there is the possibility of a good deal of overlapping/trespassing. We begin with Caliban.

Caliban: close to the ape in the evolutionary chain: a savage and deformed slave for whom language is an instrument to curse man with; natural man devoid of all traces of culture; more beast and less human.

Caliban would be what a human would be like if born and brought up in an uninhabited island, just like any creature in nature. We have such characters as Caliban in children's stories, fairy tales, legends and the like.

Stephano and Trinculo: Human in form but somewhat beastly in character, vicious, earthly, amoral, ignorant - opposed to everything given by Hamlet in his description of man: 'What a piece.....' A little better than Caliban.

Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio, Feudal society corrupt to the core, guilty on all counts when nurture has had no impact. Culture and refinement, human society and Art havde been wasted on them. They are human beings representing evil. Sebastian and Antonio are worse than Alonso, as there is no sign of any transformation in them at the end.

Adrian and Francisco: Noble worthy, honourable human beings, detached, may uninvolved, from central action.

Gonzalo: Virtuous man, a model human being, different from Adrian and Francisco, in that he is involved in the action. He has

done, and is willing to do good deeds.

Ferdinand: a good, noble, refined, young prince-like Adam before the fall; typical Renaissance ideal of man.

Miranda: a pure, chaste, compassionate human female-like Eve, standing for a prelapsarian innocence extremely loving and lovable.

Prospero: a magus, reminding us of ancient Persian priests with magical powers-wise Man-almost similar to the sages standing in god's holy fire of sailing to Byzantium in whom flesh has been subordinated to the spirit. A super human with typical human frailties.

Ariel: pure spirit with no corporeal from and so not subject to any weakness characterizing flesh; reminiscent of Puck.

We have in the play an exact antonym of Ariel in the non-felt presence of Sycorax. She is Cliban's now deceased mother, a servant and instrument o fevil. She represents the evil and dark forces of nature (like the witches of Macbeth)

The play explores the idea of gorgiveness as contained in the words of Prospero: 'the rarer action is in virtue than in vegeance' It is an idea already explored by Aeschylus in his Oresteian Trilogy where the principal questions mooted are

What is justice?

How is justice related to vengeance?

Can justice be reconciled with the demands of religion, the violence of human feeling the Forces of Fate?

We find something exactly similar in the change in the concept of godhead from the Old Testament to the New estament from a god of revenge to a god of mercy.

As we continue with the exposition of the play all these tend too become clearer and appear in sharper focus.

Act by Act. Scene by Scene summary:

THE TEXT USED HERE IS THE ARDEN EDITION OF 'THE TEMPEST' EDITED BY FRANK KERMODE, 1968

Act.I.Sc.I

On a ship at sea. A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning is heard. There is pandemonium on board the ship. The mariners try hard to control the tossing ship. Alonso, King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, antonio, the usurper duke of Milan, Ferdinand, Prince of Naples and Gonzalo, an honourable, old courtier appear. Their presence is in fact obstructing the rescue operations of the mariners. The boatswain roughly orders them to their chambers and cabins. They obey. Within minutes all except Alonso appear. There follows a altercation between the boatswain and the courtiers.

The sailors are desperate. The ship is said to split. They run about the deck.

Sc.II

The island before Prospero's cave. Enter Prospero and Miranda. Miranda has seen the shipwreck. She thinks that her father caused the tempest and the shipwreck. Moved by pity she pleads with her father to tame the roaring waves and save the poor souls from drowning. He comforts her saying that no harm has been done. He continues that the whole thing has been designed and engineered by him 'but in care of thee'. He prepares the ground for the unfolding of their past. He tells her that she does not as yet know who she is and where he is from, that he is much more than what he is then (the master of a full poor cell. Thus he makes her inquisitive and greedy for information. At his request she removes the magic cloak from about Prospero's person. He asks her to be of good cheer. He has caused the storm and the wreck, but not a hair of any sailor has been harmed by them in that process. Miranda need not worry at all.

Prospero gets ready to tell her of their past. She was just three years old when the whole thing happened. She has a failt, dreamlike recollection of her childhood. Twelve years ago he was the duke of Milan, a prince of power. Miranda starts. She suspects some foul play for their presence on this uninhabited island (or was it a blessing?) An tonio, Prospero's younger perfidious

brother, whom Propsper trusted, was put in charge of the dukedom, while he spent all his time on his studies of the liberal arts. Prospero grew a stranger to the government and the people of Milan, a Antonio was very clever. Soon he won the trust and confidence of the people. He usurped the ducal throne and became all powerful. But how? He entered into a secret agreement with Alonso, the king:

"So dry was he for sway with' king of Naples

To give him annual tribute do him homage

Subject his coronet to his crown and bend

The dukedom, yet unbow'd...."

And, Alonso

"This king of Naples, being an enemy

To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit"

helped Antonio.

Antonio opened the gates of Milan one midnight and in he dead of darkness he and his accopmlices took Prospero and Miranda away from the palace. They dared not kill the two, because the people loved Prospero. The traitors put them on board a bark and then at some distance from the shore transferred them to a rotten carcass of a butt, not rigg'd not tackled, sail nor mast, the very rats instinctively hae quit it there they hoist us, to cry to the sea that roar'd to us. To sigh to the winds, whose pity, sighing back again did us but loving wrong. Prosper was brave. He strove hard to keep afloat for the sake of his dear daughter. By providence Divine and also win the help of food, water, clothes and other necessities that the noble Gonzale had provided them with. They braved the waves and succeeded. Gonzalo had also furnished Prosper with his books. From mine own library with volumes that I prize above my dukedom.

They have been on the island for twelve years now. The father had profitably taught the daughter everything a girl should know, Miranda is inquisitive. She demands to know the reason for raising this storm. He gives her part of the answer.

"By accident most strange, beautiful Fortune,
(now my dear lady) hath mine enemies,
Brought to this shore: and by my prescience
I find my zenith both depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop".

Prospero now puts Miranda to sleep, so that he would be able to continue with his activities without any interruption. Ariel enters. He informs Prospero that he was successfully and faithfully carried out the orders of Prospero. He describes what he has done. Ariel made the tempest; thunder and lightning; the ship split into two: Ferdinand, the prince jumped into the sea first. He is alone and kept away from the others and at present sitting all by himself sighting and crying his heart out thinking that all his people were drowned and he is the only survivor of the wreck. The ship has been carefully hidden, no damage done to it; the sailors are all under hatches stow'd ..... and left asleep. (earlier it was said the ship had been split into two everybody was convinced so with the help of the magic of Ariel-it was just an illusion) the rest of the fleet were first scattered and later brought together again. They left for Naples, thinking that all abroad the King's ship perished during the storm.

The King and his closest associates have been taken to another part of the island. Another set, consisting of Stephano and Trinculo has been taken to yet another part of the island. That is to say, we have four parties from the ship and they do not see one another (1) Ferdinand all alone in one part (2) Alonso, Sebastian, Gonzalo, Adrian and Francisco in another part (3) Stephano and Trinculo in yet another part (4) all mariners are safer in the ship.

Prospero tells Ariel that they have some more work to do. Ariel asks for his freedom: but the stern Prospero reprimands Ariel for his impatience. He reminds Ariel of his past miseries how Sycorax, the witch and mother of Caliban, had imprisoned him in

a cloven pine for a dozen years, how she died before she freed him, how Prospero rescued him and so on. Prospero also mentions the son of Sycorax, Caliban the son that she did litter here, greckled whelp hag-born-not honoured with a human shape 'who was the line inhabitant of the island when the father and the daughter arrived there. Prospero claims:

"It was mine Art.
When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape
The pine, and let thee out".

Ariel apologizes and humbly undertakes the tasks imposed on him by Prospero lest the latter should rend an oak and peg thee in his knotty entrails till thou hast howl'd away twelve winters'

He orders Ariel to assume the shape of a sea nymph and return visible only to the two of them. Ariel leaves and Miranda wakes up at her father's command.

The father and the daughter now go in search of Caliban, their slave and a villain. They cannot miss him. 'He does make our fire, fetch in our woo and serve in offices that profit us, Prospero calls out his name and his answer is heard. Ariel appears transformed into a sea nymph. Prospero gives secret instructions into his ear and Ariel leaves to carry them out'.

The language used by Prospero and Caliban between them show that there is nothing but hatred, intense dislike, for each other. Caliban curses his master; the latter then assures the former severe torture. Caliban claims that the island is his and Prospero tells him that the change of attitude is due to his recent attempt on the virtue of his daughter.

"Abhorred slave
which any print of goodness will not take,
Being capable of all ill! I pities thee.
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage.
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
With words that made them known. But thy wild race.
Though thou didst learn; had that in't which good natures
Could not abide to be with: therefore wat thou
Deservedly confin'd into this rock
Who hadst deserved more than a prison"

The response of Caliban is very revealing

"You taught ne language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse, The red plague rid you'
For learning me language!"

Prospero now threatens him with painful torture if he does not carry out his order. Scared Caliban leaves to do his assignments. Ariel appears invisible, playing and singing, followed by Ferdinand. Ferdinand is spell-bound. "The divine music crept by me upon the waters, allaying both their fury and my passion with its sweet air!" then the music stops: after a while it starts again. Instinctively he calls it 'no mortal business' nor no sound that the earth owes.

Prospero asks Miranda that she 'the fringed curtain of thine eye advance', Miranda looks in that direction and, astonished says; "What is it? A spirit? Lord how it looks about! Believe me sir it carries a brave form. But it is a spirit." For the first time Miranda is looking at a human form (young & handsome) in addition to her father. Prospero explains to her that it is no spirit, it is just as human as her and him: 'it eats, and sleeps and hath such senses as we have. It comes from the wreck, it is less handsome than it usually is, as it is stained with grief which is beauty's canker'.

Miranda's disbelief and astonishment are positive signs and wished for by Prospero he is happy; he thanks Ariel for this accomplishment, promising him freedom in just a couple of days. Meanwhile, Ferdinand sees Miranda and wonder struck asks her about herself. A conversation develops between them. She speaks Ferdinand's Language (thanks to her education under her father)

Ferdinand claims to speak the best language (like the King's English) and now Miranda speaks the same too. On being challenged on that, he says that he saw the wreck in which he lost his father, the king of Naples, and so he is king and he speaks the King's language, the best. He saw many others drowning including the Duke of Milan.

Prosper now knows that the two have fallen for each other. At the first sight they have changed eyes. Totally unexpectedly he becomes stern and charges Ferdinand (and Miranda is stupid fied) with some offence. Ferdinand offers to make Miranda the queen of Naples. But Prospero plans to make the attainment of love rather tough lest too light winning make the prize light. He calls Ferdinand a spy and alleges that he is on the island to spy on Prospero the master of the island. Sensing that things are taking a bad turn, Miranda goes to the defence of Ferdinand. There is nothing ill can dwell in such a temple. But her entreaties fall on deaf ears. Prospero calls Ferdinand a traitor, threatens to manacle his neck and feet together, to give him only sea water, casts a spell on him rendering him helpless and immobile. Miranda pleads with Prospero to treat him gently. Prospero turns a deaf ear to her pleas and continues to harass Ferdinand. He blames Miranda for having taken his side against him, her father. Ferdinand, now in a heap of miseries, says that he can endure any hardship 'might I but through my prison once a day behold this mind'. Prospero is now hundred percent sure that the two young ones are deep in love. Miranda tries to comfort Ferdinand telling him that her father is unlike what he appears to be before him at the time. Prospero promises Ariel freedom, provided he carries out all his commands. Ariel promises to do so. Now Prospero orders Miranda not to speak to and for Ferdinand and to follow him leaving Ferdinand alone.

Act II. Sc.I

Another part of the island, where we find Alonso. Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco and others.

Gonzalo tries to cheer up at least they are alive, having survived the storm and the wreck. Alonso feels no better, Antonio and

Sebastain, both evil, make fun of Gonzalo...They keep on chattering which irritates Alonso, who weeps over his son's death. Francisco tries to alleviate his misery and fear stating that the prince is alive, that he had seen him swimming to the shore. Alonso is not convinced. Now Sebastian adds insult to injury reminding Alonso (his brother) how all of them were against the marriage of Claribel (Alonso's daughter, Ferdinan'd s sister) to the king of Tunis, how Claribel herself did not want to marry him and it was because Alonso was adamant that the voyage was undertaken, the ship wrecked the prince drowned, there are now too many new widows in Naples and so on. He blames Alonso for everything. Gonzalo disapproves of Sebastian's way of accusing his brother. He waxes eloquent on how he will make a commonwealth on the island, reminding us of the Garden of Eden, where a state of innocence before the Fall of Man prevailed, a kind of Utopia a kind of Golden World, in short, an ideal world which exists only in dreams. Antonio and Sebastain continue to make fun of him,.

Ariel appears playing solemn music inducing sleep. All except Alonso, Sebastain and Antonio sleep. Just like Macbeth, they are deprived of sleep as they are guilty. Then Alonso too tends to fall asleep, being less evil than the other two. Antonio and Sebastain offer to guard Alonso when he goes to sleep. Ariel is preparing the ground for trapping the evil-doers. He leaves. Alonso sleeps. The two evil men plot against Alonso.

"Antonio stays.

And yet methinks I see it in thy face,

What thou shouldst be the occasion speaks thee, and

My strong imagination sees a crown

Dropping upon thy head."

Antonio is instigating Sebasain, as Antonio is more evil and vicious than Sebastain. He continues.

"Noble Sebastain

Thou let'st thy fortune sleep-die rather, wink'st

whiles thou art king"

The initial lack of understanding reluctance and the like are slowly but steadily overcome with very tempting words and soon Sebastain learns to speak the Language of his teacher. Antonio See what he says:

"Thy case, dear friend

Shall be my precedent; as thou got'st Milan

I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword; one stroke

Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest:

And I the king shall love thee."

But Antonio is very clever,. He wants Sebastain to do something as evil as what he is going to do (a kind of protection for himself, perhaps)

"Here lies your brother

No better than the earth he lies upon

If he were that which now he's like, that's dead

Whom I, with this obedient steel, three inches of it

Can lay to bed for ever; whiles you doing thus,.

To the perpetual wink for aye might put

This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence

Who should not upbraid our course..."

And a little later

"Draw together

And when I rear my hand, do you the like

To fall it on Gonzalo"

Prospero has already seen this conspiracy with his mind's eye and sends Ariel to avert this murder, Ariel awakens Gonzalo, by speaking into his ears. Gonzalo, cries out and all wake up to see Autonio and Sebastain with drawn swords with the intent of murder on their faces. When Alonso demands an explanation from them, they fabricate a cock-and-bull story and get away with it.

Gonzalo who has sensed the danger that Alonso is in prays:

"Heavens keep him from these beasts!

For he is sure, i'th island"

(The context may suggest that 'he 'and the him are in fact referring to Ferdinand. If we take the lines to be an aside, they could refer to Alonso, which make better sense, as he is the one now in danger from the beasts Antonio and Sebastain)

Scene II

Another part of the Island Caliban is at work. He curses Prospero for the heavy work imposed on him and the torutres he will have to suffer from at his hands, in case he disobeys. He is terrified of his master. He also hates him. His intense hatred is evident in his words. Trinculo appears. Caliban takes him to be a spirit sent by Prospero to torment him for his curses. He lies flat to avoid detection by Trinculo. But Trinculo spots him and takes him to be a strange fish first and then identifies him as an islander that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt. A storm gathers. He gets under the gabardine of Caliban to seek shelter from the stome as misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellow. Now Stephano arrives on the scene, dead drunk and with a bottle in his hand, singing. He sings, and drinks, drinks and sings. He spies Caliban and Trinclulo under the gaberdeen. Caliban continues to think that they are spirits of Prospero sent to torture him. He talks incoherently and Sebastian thinks that he is in pain and gives him some wine from the bottel. Trnculo is able to identify Stephano and calls him by his name. There is reunion of the two. All drink. The stupid Caliban thinks that the drink is from heaven, they are gods etc. etc., He promises to be their subject and to show them all the important places on the island. They agree. They are going to inherit the island, as their king and his fellows are no more. Caliban is happy since he has found new masters. They walk away led by the drunken beast Caliban.

Act.III. Sc.I

Before Prospero's cell

Ferdinand enters bearing a log. Lovesick, he does not grudge

and does his work thinking that after all he is doing it for his sweet mistress. Mirana appears. Propsero invisible watches at some distance. Ferdinand and Miranda exchange words of love..Prospero comments 'Poor worm, thou art infected'

Ferdinand calls her 'Admired Miranda' and says that she is so perfect and so peerless, and created of every creature's best!

Miranda's innocence (and ignorance) is revealed.Ferdinand then tells her that he is a prince, perhaps a king. To her question 'Do you love me?' He answers

"I beyond all limit of what else i'th world.

Do love, prize, and honour you."

Prospero, still invisible blesses them'

"Fair encounter of two most rare affections ! Heavens rain grace on that which breeds between them!"

Miran accepts Ferdinands's love

"I'am your wife if you marry me:

If not I will die your maid: to be your fellow

You may deny me: but I'll be your servant

Whether you will or no.

They pledge their love for each other; they will be husband and wife. Prospero is intensely happy that his actions are bearing fruit.

Scene II

Another part of the island. Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano appear. As they talk, Ariel appears invisible to them and listens to them. Caliban tells his new found masters about the 'tyrant', sorcerer', usurper Prospero. Ariel perplexes him by calling him liar every time he opens his mouth. Stephano thinks that it is Trinculo who is calling him a liar. There is utter confusion. Caliban tells Stephano how to murder Prospero first, his books are to be seized, then with thy knife' and then about Miranda. The beauty of his daughter; he himself calls her a non-pariel; 'I never saw a woman; but only sycorax, my dam and she... will become they bed, I War-

rant and bring thee forth brave brood'. Stephano is greedy. He says; Monster, I will kill this, his daughter and I will be king and queen....

Ariel will tell his master what these brutes are planning to do. Ge plays on a tabor and pipe. Stephano and Trinculo are shaken by the music. But Caliban comforts them. The music drifts and they follow it.

SCENE III

Another part of the island. Alonso, Sebastain, Antonio, Ganzalo and others. All are tired. Alonso, having failed to trace Ferdinand, accepts his death. Antonio and Sebastian continue with their plotting. At the earliest chance they will kill Alonso and Gonzalo.

The spectacular banquet scene follows. They are stupefied and can hardly believe what they see. As suddenly as the strange shapes appeared, they vanish, leaving behind the viands. Gonzalo assures that there is nothing wrong if they partook of the banquet. Alonso gets ready when Ariel appears in the shape of a harpy, claps his wings and makes the banquet disappear. The harpy Ariel speaks to Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio.

"You are three men of sin, whom Destiny-
That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in it, - the never-surfeited sea
Hath caus'd to belch up you; and on this island,
Where man doth not inhabit; you amongst men
Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;
And even with such-like valour men hang and drown
Their proper selves".

And Ariel, using a long speech, reminds them of how they usurped Prospero's dukedom of Milan and curses Alonso with Lingering Perdition. Ariel vanishes. First thunder and then music are heard.

The shapes appear and dance, with mocks and mows and

carry out the table.

Prospero is happy about Ariel's impeccable performance. All the principal figures are now in Prospero's custody, 'all knit up in their distractions'. He leaves them in that state and goes to Ferdinand.

Alonso is terrified. He has been reminded of his part in the past offence. He has been punished through the loss of Ferdinand. He will seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded, and with him there lie midded'. He leaves them and departs alone. Antonio and Sebastian follow.

Gonzalo observes that they are desperate and guilty. He will go after them and prevent anything untoward happening to them. Adrian and Francisco follow.

Act. IV. Sc.I

Enter Prospero, Mirnada and Ferdinand.

Prospero apologizes to Ferdinand for his austere punishment of the young man, who had better take his punishment to be trials of love. He offers Ferdinand the hand of Miranda in marriage, warning him that they consummate their marriage only after the marriage is solemnized in the proper way. Ferdinand gives his solemn promise to Prospero.

Prospero calls Ariel and orders him to bring the rabble to the place.

He warns the young lovers once more.

With Ariel's help he arranges a magnificent show featuring Iris, Juno and Ceres who appear and sing for the couple. Prospero has called them up with his art to enact his present fancies. Nymphs appear, sing and dance, all symbolic of fertility, plenty and prosperity. All on a sudden, Prospero starts, seeing in his mind's eye the plot against him by Caliban and his new masters. The pageant is abruptly ended. The spirits vanish, Ferdinand and Miranda go away. Prospero calls Ariel. Ariel has brought the evil men, subjecting them to painful exercises and left them in a filthy pool nearby.

Prospero is furious about the ungrateful brute, Caliban.

"A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nature can never stick; on whom my pain
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
And as with age his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers. I will plague them all
Even to roaring".

According to his master's instruction. Ariel has left Prospero's wardrobe on the clothesline. Seeing the clothes, Trinculo and Stephano fight between themselves for possession. Caliban knows the torture that Prospero will inflict on them if he sees them stealing the clothes. He tries to warn them, but, by then, it is too late, Prospero with his magic has created diverse spirits, in the shape of dogs and hounds, and sent them after the villains. Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo are chased all over the island by the dogs. They are subjected to convulsions, aged cramps and pinches too.

Now Prospero has all his enemies under control. He promises once again freedom to Ariel.

"Shortly shall all my labours end, and thou
Shall have the air at freedom; for a little
Follow, and do me service".

Act. V. Sc. I

Before the cell of Prospero

Enter Prospero in his magic robes, and Ariel

Prospero is happy that things are shaping up according to his plans. His charms and spells are working well; the spirits are obedient; the time is propitious. Ariel informs him that Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio are distracted and the other members are mourning over them, brimful of sorrow and dismay. Ariel adds that if Prospero sees them now, his heart would melt in compassion, his affections would become tender. Prospero becomes philosophical. If Ariel who is but air feels for them will not Prospero one of

their kind, that relish all as sharply passion as they, kinlier mov'd than thou art?' Let us recall that Prospero is the first and worst affected by their wicked deeds; yet his nobler reason' conquers his fury. He observes: ".....the rarer action is

In virtue than in vengeance; they being penitent,
The sloe drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further go release them Ariel;
And they shall be themselves".

Ariel departs; Prospero waxes eloquent and gives a list of his activities and accomplishments and then declares:

"But this rough magic
I here abjure; and when I have required
Some heavenly music, which even now I do
To work mine end upon their senses, that
This airy charms is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plulmmet sound
I'll drown my book".

Solemn music is heard. Alonso and others arrive and stand within the magic circle drawn for them by Prospero. Prospero very gracefully welcomes Gonzalo. HE does not extend such a welcome to the evil men: yet he forgives them. He appears before them in his ducal dress. He orders Ariel to go wake up the sailors and ask them to bring the ship to their place.

But before Prospero forgives them he charges the evil men with their wicked deeds-which perhaps disturbs them to some extent. Alonso is genuinely penitent. He seeks forgiveness and gets it;

They dukedom I resign, and do entreat

Thou pardon me my wrongs.

Prospero threatens to divulge to Alonso what Sebastian and Antonio tried to do to the king; but he does not (all in the form of

asides)

Aside to Sebastian and Antonio:

"But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,
I here could pluck his highness' from upon you
And justify you traitors; at this time
I will tell no tales."

However, Prospero's intense, undiluted hatred of his brother is evident in his words:

"For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault, all of them; and require
Mu dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know
Thou must restore.

Alonso then laments the drowning of his son. It is an unbearably heavy loss. Prospero joins him saying that he too has his most precious daughter. It is then that Alonso wishes that the children were alive and well so that they could have got married and be king and queen of Naples. Without further delay, Prospero reveals to them the spectacular view of Ferdinnd and Miranda plying a game of chess. Nothing short of a miracle, a vision, blessing.

Miranda sees them and immediately remarks with characteristic innocence:

"O'wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
That has such people in it."

Alonso is wonderstruck. He seeks the identity of the fairy. It is Miranda, Prospero's daughter; Ganzalo blesses them. All are happy

Ariel returns, the boatswain amazed following. The ship is in tact, so are all the crew. Everything has been a dream

Ariel is asked to free Caliban and others. They also appear

with the stolen clothes.

Prospero tells Alonso what they were up to, Caliban is not punished. He accepts and acknowledge his mistakes; He will be wise thereafter and seeks forgiveness.

All the sinners are forgiven, Prospero releases Ariel giving him his last job-a calm sea, a safe voyage to Milan. He invites all into his cave for some rest. They will leave the island for Milan/ Naples the following morning.

In the epilogue Prospero seeks the audience's permission to leave the island and to free him for his bonds.

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEMPEST OF A VERY GENERAL KIND

The Jacobean period starts in 1603. Shakespeare and hi company-the king's men moved into the small indoor private Blackfiras theatre in 1608. They took over a house style which considerably favoured tragedies and romances.

The romances are noted for their easy, off-hand, careless, supercilious treatment of dramatic method. e.g. The play 'pericles', has the whole Mediterranean sea as the place of action; The Winter's Tale, has a time span of 16 years The Tempest ' strictly observes the neo-classical unities of time, place and action-less than 24 hours, a small island and closely related and connected plot respectively.

However, there are quite a few things common to all the romances.

1. The stage effects are considerably more elaborate than the earlier plays.

2. Four young, exquisitely lovely daughters are the instruments of restoration, reconciliation and reunion of torn families.

3. The gods (or magic) intervene

4. Nature creates and heals.

5. Time is not destroyer, but preserver,

6. The sea acts as an instrument of family reunion.

7. Credibility is strained to the maximum

8. Verisimilitude is hard to find etc.

In 'The Tempest' we find things like romance, court masques, stage devices, voyager's narratives, neoplatonic theories of hermetic magic, pastoralism etc. which strongly smack of the changed aesthetic tastes of the new Jacobean audience. Wasn't Shakespeare playing to the galleries? The answer is an emphatic yes.

The title 'The Tempest' suggests disorder of the worst kind' (as opposed to music, suggestive of the highest order, harmony, concord) The calm that immediately follows a storm is far more pronounced and noticeable than otherwise. This idea is at the heart of the play. The Tempest, one of the elemental forces of nature, has been let loose to confound and trap the three evil men on board the ship. The tempest expends its fury on them; the result is distraction (the disharmonius functioning of human faculties which is again symbolic of discord in the context of the play). It is only through divine intervention that harmony/normalacy can be restored. Here divine intervention appears in the form of Prospero, the magus. Sin and expiation, crime and punishment, offence and atonement-what ever we may call them go one behind the other, Penance comes in the middle. Without penance there can be no expiation; punishment does not bear fruit; atonement is unattainable. Herein comes the role of confession and Prospero becomes the shriven. But that has to wait.

The tempest gives Prospero an occasion to talk to his daughter about their past. She is moved to pity on thinking that the ship might have had some brave soul in it and they might have perished. Prospero allays her fears; Tell your piteous heart there's no harm done. The long, somewhat monotonous exposition is meant not just for Mirnanda, but for the audience too. It is more like a prologue than an integral part of the play. As the plot unfolds, Miranda grows wiser; she is exposed to the harder and harsher realities of life, lying beyond the sheltered and protective environs

of the small island. But the wisdom that Miranda is exposed to is also sickening in that she has to come to terms with the evil forces of nature. (Of which she has had to come to terms with the evil forces of nature) of which she has had a taste with Caliban's attempts on her virtue, as represented by the wicked Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso, Like the Ancient Mariner she has to grow sadder and wiser in that order. The wonder that she exhibits is just like the wonder of a child on seeing new things which does not suspect the hidden dangers therein. The innocence is admirable; the ignorance is hardly so. It is this ignorance that she has to live the hard way to overcome, by returning to civilization, the envious court of Naples (like the court of Duke Frederick of 'As you like it') The gradual rewakening of Miranda is clearly visible through a stylistic analysis of her lines. It is experience, vanishing innocence, that we find possessing Miranda gradually. Is she not waking up from a fond dream? She asks her father.

"O, the heavens,

What foul play had we, that we came from thence?

Or blessed was't we did?"

'Foul ' play is possible only for humans, only by humans. The rude awakening is also a rude /initiation to a new life. The idyllic days are over. The pendulum is going to swing back to its original point.

By Providence Divine' they are brought to the island-blessedly helped hither in Prospero's words.

Twelve years have passed; the iron hand of justice has not dealt with the evil forces in so many years. Justice delayed is justice denied. Twelve precious years of Miranda's childhood and adolescence in the absence of material comforts cannot be easily dismissed. For which Prospero is to blame. Was it not he who neglected his ducal duties and spent all his time with his books? How could he fail to know his own brother and his true nature, when Abel and Cain were brothers and breasts they had sucked the same? was it not his job to 'know' being government head,

Who to trust and who not? If only he were a little cautions, things would not have been quite the same. So we cannot but conclude that Prospero paved the way himself for his banishment and his brother's usurpation of the ducal throne. In that the child did not escape the thunderbolt. She had become an exile just like her father.

The idyllic island would have become another Milan or Naples but for the governing presence of Prospero; Stepphano and Trinculo would have formed a government. We can very well imagine what sort of government they are capable of making. The good Gonzalo contemplates a commonwealth-autopia a golden world on it. With persons like Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso we can imagine what kind of a government will exist there. Caliban would have peopled the island with the likes of him but for the timely intervention of Prospero when he attempted an attack on Miranda's virtue. It would have been the reverse the more, the merrier'. The most important point to note here is the political slant the plot takes.

In the course of the long talk that Prospero has with Miranda, he refers to how Miranda helped sustain his interest in life. 'O a Cherybin thou vast that did preserve me'. The child is given the status of a guardian angel. The idea is reinforce later.

".....roused in me

An undergoing stomach, to bear up

Against what would ensue".

Thus Miranda did her mite to keep him alive. Gonzalo, the noble and gentle Neapolitan, did the lion's share of help by providing the rich garments linens, stuffs and necessaries' and furnishing from mine own library with volumes. The underlined portion clearly indicates the guilt of Prospero.

Their life on the island must have been quite hard. The help given by Caliban in household chores and that given by Arial in the magical activities of Prospero must have alleviated the rigor to some extent.

Just as Miranda is a Cherubin, Ferdinand is 'a thing divine', so Miranda describes him. 'It is a spirit' carrying a brave form' (here let us recall Hamlet's description of the ideal Renaissance man) There is nothing ill can dwell in such a temple; it the ill spirit have so fair a house good things will strive to dwell with it. But the evil Antonio, Sebastians and Alonso too have exactly similar 'brave' forms. We see here how limited the vision of Miranda is as far as humans are concerned. Caliban, a salvage and deformed slave got by the devil himself upon thy dam is an abhorred slave which any print of goodness will not take being capable of all ill. He is incapable of language because he is no human. He admits; 'you taught me language, and my profit on't is, I know how to curse'. In the light of the gospel according to John- in the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and the word was God- language made up of words. Is God and this presence of God in man in the form of language distinguishes man from animals. Animals do not curse; the devil does. Hence the status of Caliban is perhaps worse than that accorded to animals Prospero says; a devil, born devil, on whose nature, nurture, can never stick on 'whom my pains humanely taken all, lost, quite lost. And as with age his body uglier grows, so his main cankers'. His deformity is symbolic. This misshapen knave' whose mother was a witch this demidevil had plotted with Stephano and Trinculo to take Prospero's life. Even with a tiny intelligence he would have been a little grateful to his benevolent master for the latter's attempt at humanization; even animals show gratitude. At the end, however, it is Prospero's humanity and magnanimity that make him a trifle human- "I will be wise hereafter and seek for grace".

It is interesting to note that the plot has a wheel structure, divided into three sectors. Prospero is the axle and centre. With him are Miranda and Ferdinand. One sector is occupied by Gonzalo, Adrain and Francisco, one is occupied by Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano; the remaining one is occupied by Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso. There is very little interaction among/these sectors, while all interact with the centre. Prospero controls their actions with Ariel's help, just like a puppeteer. Ariel acts like an

umbrella covering all. Centrifugal forces draw all the characters towards, Prospero. Thus though there exists a paradigmatic relationship amongst all of them, there is the sectorial isolation which they are subjected to. Here the ancient adage helps; Birds of a feather Ferdinand and Miranda form a class apart. As already mentioned, they are divine and cherybin respectively; they go well with the magus who represents mercy and compassion, instead of the expected revenge, just as the change in the concept of godhead is already suggested in the Orestein Trilogy-how the instruments of revenge are transformed into angels of mercy (the Furies/Erinyes into the Eumenides) and grace, through divine intervention. (Read the Oresteian trilogy of Eschylus) T.S. Eliot uses this idea in his verse play 'The Family Reunion' Compare the god of revenge of the Old Testament (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth) and the God of compassion of the New Testament (Vengeance is mine). It is acceptance of this governing principle that erases the lines of demarcation among the three sectors which eventually (principled that erases the lines of demarcation among the three sectors which eventually) leads to a commonwealth. Man gets humanized through nurture.

We notice a significant change in the attitude of the savage. Caliban he has decided to be wise. But what the impact is on Antonio and Sebastian is not made clear by Shakespeare. They are hardcore criminals somewhat difficult to correct. Do they deserve this kind of a kindly, compassionate treatment? After all, a bamboo stick is the king of a vicious snake. Something similar do we find in the cast of Trinculo and Stephano. They too appear to be incorrigible. However, such persons do not matter in the larger scheme of things.

We learn most of the things about the island from the descriptions of the place by Caliban. Here is some inconsistency as he speaks excellent poetry while he claims that he knows only to curse. This island is described in glowing terms, remisnicent of a pastrol setting of the golden age-another Forest of Arden where people could lock and fleet time carelessly. The native Caliban

lived on perfect harmony with his immediate environment until usurpers came in the form of Prospero and Miranda. We are getting a glimpse of the emerging British colonial power, spreading its tentacles far and wide, conquering an displacing the natives and at time enslaving to do menial jobs, asserting their superiority and highlighting the inferiority of the natives for selfish interests.

Ferdinand and Miranda are idealized young lovers-who are very familiar creatures in the Shakespeare canon. Adolescent love is one topic Shakespeare was never weary of.

The play is rich in spectacles; The Tempest, the mesques the banquet, the game of chess, the display of rich clothes and stealing of them by Trinculo Stephano, their being chased by the hounds and dogs are instances of spectacles in the play.

The play is highly symbolic. We will take just a few instances to demonstrate this point.

Destiny has made the never-surfeited sea to belch up the evil doers. This is the symbolic night journey. The jumping into the sea is symbolic of Baptism. Ariel's speech beginning with the words you are three men of sin'.... Is symbolic of the day of judgement. Ariel's song 'Full fathom.....' is symbolic of the alchemical, baptism transformation of something base into something noble, lead into gold-here the evil men are changed into good men.

Before we conclude, we will discuss the seriousness of the offence of the evil men. The sin contemplated by Antonio and Sebastian is both regicide and fractricide. Alonso had a hand in the expulsion of Prospero and Miranda which makes him an ac- complice in the crime, but for providence Divine, both Prospero and Miranda would have been killed, in which case Alonso becomes a murderer along with Antonio and Sebastian, because in the Christian ethos, contemplation of evil is as bad as doing evil. This does not stop here. Recall the 'Atreus legend: the legend tells us that the sins of the father visit upon their children. It will continue to visit until the proper atonement is carried out. In Alonmso's case the sin will visit upon Ferdinand. It has to be broken and here

comes the greatness of Prospero. He exonerates the potential murderers, thereby freeing them from the continuing visiation of sin. Prospero is in fact saving them from eternal damnation.

Shakespeare is not bidding farewell to the world of drama as it is claimed by some. If it were true, how come he wrote. Henry VIII and collaborated in the composition of the Two Noble Kinsmen? The play is not an autobiography as claimed by myth makers.

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Lesson Prepared By

PROF. G.S. RAMAKRISHNAN

S.K.V.C. Trissur

SECTION C

GENERAL TOPICS ON SHAKESPEARE

1. THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE (STAGE CONVENTIONS, ACTIONS AND ACTING)

All students of Shakespeare should have a general notion of the stage conditions of Elizabethan times, for, this awareness helps one to explain the form the play takes on the printed page.

Shakespeare's arrival in London coincided with the first and greatest upsurge of English stage history of regular, commercial, metropolitan play production. In 1576, James Burbage erected at Shoreditch the first custom-built play house in London the Theatre. Later on, its material provided the basis for the Globe on Bankside. From the beginning of his career Shakespeare was associated with Burbage's sons, Richard, and Cuthbert, in speculative theatrical enterprises as an actor, as a company shares in the leading troupe of the age, and as a part owner of the Globe and later of Blackfriars. Shakespeare enjoyed special privileges in the theatre groups. Clearly he must have written his plays with a unique knowledge of the abilities of his friend Ricahrd Burbage and their fellow players and of the artistic effects possible at the Globe and at Blackfriars.

Shakespeare wrote his plays not for the boy companies. (Most of his contemporaries wrote for the boy companies) Most of his plays were first acted by his fellow players at public playhouses, mainly the Globe between 1599 and !609.

Unfortunately, our knowledge about the playhouses of Renaissance England is limited. Perhaps we know more about the ancient theatres of Greece or Rome, which survive in the

Mediteranen today. However it is obvious that the Elizabethan theatre was a flexible one. The players had to be ready to play the same piece in a variety of places. Nearly half of Shakespeare's plays opened at his own theatre, the Globe. More than twenty at the Theatre and the Curtain, two of the playhouses in use when Shakespeare came to London and before the Globe was built and at Blackfriars, a more exclusive covered theatre, and at court on royal occasions. It seems that Shakespeare's actors constantly experimented with the modes of production. Therefore the initial technical planning would have been modified before they went into the repertory. It must be borne in mind that there is nothing in Shakespeare's plays, either at the beginning of his career or at its end, that could not be easily fitted to any conditions, from a makeshift to an elaborate stage and equipment. Shakespeare's is preeminently a drama calling for a liberal imaginative collaboration from the audience. A Shakespearean play could pass in a theatre imposing the minimum of physical limitations. "Moreover, Shakespeare's theatre practice, the handling of actors and audience, each exploration of the stage's possibilities, suggests that he was fighting to free himself from conventional restrictions. With each new play his drama is enlarged, the actor is forced to review his craft, the spectator forced to a new response the possibilities of the stager are flexible (Shakespeare's stage, 8)

Basic features of the Elizabethan stage

Only very few definite sources are available to reconstruct the Elizabethan stage.

a) The comtemporary drawing of an Elizabethan stage rather an awkward second hand sketch, the copy of De Witt's (a Dutch tourists) of the Swan Theatre of 1596.

b) A few details from the surviving builders contracts for theatres of the time, those of the Fortune (1500) and the Hope (1613).

c) Some comments from comtemporary visitors to London.

The hallmark of the Elizabethan stage is the intimacy between the actor's action and audience. All available sources point

to the following basic pattern.

The Elizabethan (Shakespearean) stage was a symmetrically rounded or square auditorium only some 80 feet across, unroofed and surrounded by tiers of galleries. ""The actors worked on a platform of proportions which were impressive by any standard. The contract for the Fortune required that its 'stage should' contain in length Fortie and Three foot of lawful assize and in breadth to extend to the middle of the yeards ie., 43 feet wide by 27.5 feet deep, apart from any extension b kwards into a conjectural inner stage (Shakespearean stage 9). The stage of the Globe was also more or less of the same size. This platform was not a fixture. The yard which surrounded the platform was occupied by standing spectators. Hamlet comments on the practice of splitting the ears of 'the groundings' (the play was written in about 1601). Whenever the players had to share the yard with he spectators, the platform (scaffold) was raised, so that everybody could see everything well. Thus the Elizabethan playwright had to reckon with, a raised and very striking acting space, 'surrounded by the yard and the intimate huddle of the galleries' (II) Contemporary drawings suggest a projection built against one side of the wall of the auditorium, certainly over hanging at least part of the playing space. There used to be an adapted or permanent tiring-house or changing-room behind the façade, situated very near the acting area. In Deritts Witt's drawing of the Swan theatre it is marked as 'memoriam aedes' (actors house) Usually upstage doors provide access to the platform and in all probability by means of simple steps, into the yard and well. Besides, a gallery at first story level around the auditorium including the back of the platform. It provided a playing area at an upper level (Balcony scene, Romeo & Juliett) Elizabethan actors had a familiar sense of playing 'in the round' under varied conditions.

Remember, the basic parts of the Shakespearean (Elizabethan) stage are

a) A tight enclosing auditorium

b) A projecting platform almost as deep it was wide

c) Two upstage entrances on to the platform

d) At least one balcony

The very sparseness of the Elizabethan stage facilitated a very flexible performance which involved the multitude in general. The pit (yard) gallery (balcony) and the elite (box) Perhaps the key note of a Shakespearean play, obviously influenced by the Elizabethan stage, is a rare intimacy between the actors and the audience and hence the generation of a complex collective action. "A playhouse which permits at one moment the declamation of an actor, and at the next a whisper delivered in subtle tones but still heard, not only encourages adventurous patterns within a scene, or even within a speech, but also promotes the speed of speech, which can make a slight variation of tone or hesitation of voice a moment of exciting drama. Thus there are times when Henry V can be revered from a far, and times when he and the spectator become one'-(15).

In a Shakespearean play Midsummer Night's Dream, as you Like it, Julius Caesar, Othello or The Tempest the type of audience response and participation made possible by the Elizabethan stage calls 'upon otherwise untapped sources of sympathy & response'.

This in turn persuades the author to bring out the best in him. "He will be required to use his voice in every shade and his body with great flexibility: there is no better test of acting ability than a nature play by Shakespeare, and conceivably, no more "Exacting playhouse than the type of open stage theatre for which it was written. There would be many moments when the Elizabethan actor would be working as if under a microscope" (16).

Acting conventions are obviously decided by the optimum use of the proscenium Shakespeare made good use of the special contrast and the shifting foci of attention.

This gave the chance for actors to rush to the middle of the house with lines like.

"Open your eyes, for which you will stop

The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?"

(Induction, 2 Henry IV)

Hence ! home, you idle creature, get you home

Is this a holiday?" (Flavius, Julius Caesar)

The actors merge with the audience. There is no inflexible fourth wall. The Elizabethan stage made an act of creative collaboration' between the actors and the audience possible.

The absence of a drop curtain elaborate stage property' (setting) etc had a bearing on the use of prose and verse, couplets, symbolic depiction of battles, the utterances of many characters (Equivalent to directions for the conduct of the play) disguises etc. Just a few instances are given below:

'Go Sir Andrew: scout me for him at the corner of the orchard laike a burm – baily' (Twelth Night III, IV 180-1)

'I'll Meet you at the turn' (Timon of Athens, V, I, 46) probably suggest the corners of the stage.

One more important stage device was the stage-trap. There are many scene in Shakespeare tailored to this. The trap serves well the ghosts in Richard III, v, iii , the ghost of Hamlet's skull is pitched and it no which Lasertes and Hamlet must lead (V, I) Banquo's ghost (Macbeth III, IV), Macbeth's Witches and their apparitions (I, I, iii; IV, i) etc., These are only a few examples.

Shakespeare made good use of the balcony behind the platform proper. The range of uses to which he put it is evident form the following scenes.

Henry VI, I, VI-ii-the siege of Orleans-The English French confrontation in the same play, II, I, 38.

Romeo and Juliet, II V- (Balcony scene)

Richard II, III, ii, 61

Antony & Cleopatra IV, XV-' Enter Cleopatra and he maids aloft and they heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra in the same scene at line 37.

The two permanent fixed upstage doors too had a say on

Shakespeare's stager craft, individual confrontations, civil wars, the love lover conflicts etc are symbolically depicted thorough & by' these doors.

The inner stage facility (not very sure) enabled Shakespeare to design moving bed chamber, inner court/jail scenes etc.

The Elizabethan spectator took for granted matters of symbolism in character, or dress and underplayed the elasticity of place and time. Coleridge observed that 'The very nakedness of the stage was advantageous, for the drama thence became something between recitation and representation'. The Elizabethan stage conventions helped the Shakespearean actors to range between symbolism and naturalism. Scene changes are deftly announce or betrayed in conversational snatches. Shakespeare, never approved of silly realism or fatuous symbolism. He always held the mirror up to nature from which the spectator could easily read. Regarding stage properties (setting) and symbols too Shakespeare resorted to a reasonable imaginative course. As a playwright he could not exercise much control over the costume, but he always had an eye for the colour and cut.

Shakespeare's women characters and fools too are the off-shoots of the Elizabethan theatre.

In short, Shakespeare's plays lay before us 'fresh woods & pastures' where there is a happy blending of the Elizabethan stage, conventions, pregnant dramatic texts, talented actors and above all imaginative & sympathetic spectators.

2. SHAKESPEARE AND HIS AGE

Shakespeare was born in 1564, a little after Elizabeth I became Queen. He belongs therefore to the third generation of the Reformation in England. Shakespeare dramatized the bloody civil wars of the Roses in his history plays, from Richard II to Richard III. Form 1485-1558 England witnessed constant conflicts and radical changes. In 1558 England witnessed a second Protestant Reformation under Elizabeth I. The fear that since Elizabeth was

the last of her line, another period of disputed succession, civil war, and general anarchy would follow disturbed every statesman. Each of Shakespeare's History plays echoed this concern and fear to some extent. Thus the Age of Shakespeare was uneasy, even though some historians consider it "the age of the Renaissance".

The hold of the church became weak. Education specially in classics gained ground. The Elizabethans recognized and stressed that history was the record of moral law at work. The theme of Shakespeare's History plays is also the same, actually the echo of a common interest. The History plays meant much more to the Elizabethan audience. Elizabeth's privy council was very touchy about history and so they banned all history plays. Shakespeare then had to turn to Roman history for his Julius Caesar. In 1603 when the Queen was dying the playhouses were closed to guard against disorder. (Shakespeare's Richard II did create some problems in 1601).

In the History Plays Shakespeare presented men in political societies. His comedies and Tragedies depicted man as a social unit. And his age the Sovereign Queen was at the top. Common people had no access to her. Only the Privy Councilors had that privilege, that too on their knees. Therefore every poet eulogized the Queen. Shakespeare kept away from that Chorus. Next in order came the nobility. Shakespeare and the players knew well about them, for they depended solely on the favour of the Lord who had given them the license. The nobility were a class, very special and close to the Sovereign. Next toi the nobility in the chain of order came the knights and gentlemen. At the bottom, there were unnumbered poor and they were very poor. (For details please refer, Social History of England by Trevelyan).

Family life was far more important than today. But in Shakespeare's plays we get a different picture. Family affection is at a discount. Understanding between generations is slim. (e.g . Romeo & Juliet, King Lear, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest etc).

Men were the heads of family. Women enjoyed limited rights.

The power of betrothal is central to Measure for Measure. Elizabethan widows with properly got remarried soon. (Gertude in Hamlet is a case in point)

The Spanish Armada (1588) was only the beginning of a long war which lasted till 1598, even though the popular notion is otherwise. Shakespeare's audience and hence his plays shared this concern.

On 24 March 1603 the Queen died, The accession of King James I was unexpectedly smooth. Shakespeare, though widely known as an Elizabethan, actually wrote the greatest of his plays for king James I. He was really a more enthusiastic patron. Shakespeare and his company were among these who contributed to the entertainments. They got a shocking awareness of the old courtiers? Shakespeare's later plays reveal that the court life was rotten. They also betray a nostalgic desire to escape into the country.

An awareness of the social & historical background of Shakespeare enables one to understand and enjoy his plays better. In a way it augments one's understanding of humanity. "A great artist transcends his own generation. Nevertheless, the nearer we can come to Shakespeare in his own times, the fuller our enjoyment of what he wrote" (Harrison, introducing Shakespeare, 105)

Just as the historical and sociological changes had palpable impact on Shakespeare's plays, then prevailing philosophic, scientific and astronomical notions, too had its effect plays, Cosmic correspondences, analogical thinking, the Aristotelian premises of theology (Elizabethans still subscribed to that view) etc., are time and again the staple of Shakespeare's men and women's food for thougnt'. In many spheres of Elizabethan thought occurred transitions and revaluations; if not actual crises and reversals.

Shakespeare's best plays amply reflect and analyse the historical, political, social, religious, and transitional-currents of his age in a complex, comprehensive and gripping way often providing 'catharsis'. Shakespeare, the genius, stands in and out of his

age. He is the product of his age but he belongs to all ages, evens the ones to be born.

3. SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

Shakespeare's plays in general are remarkable for classical echoes. Obviously he must have extensively used the books of quotations. It may be argued by scholars like Dr. Farmer that Shakespeare had direct acquaintance with the classics. However, a close analysis of Shakespeare's plays reveal that his work is erected on a consciousness of literary conventions and literary methods, derived from the study of the classics in Grammar Schools.

Even his 'small latin' enabled him to get sense out of works not translated and a continuing memory of some texts that he read in Latin The clear presence of Ovid is most noticeable in Shakespeare's early work, but the Ovidian characteristics remain Shakespearean throughout his career. Of course, Ovid was one of the obvious sources of Shakespeare's facile, copius mellifluous rhetoric and verbal, wit.

Elizabethan playwrights in particular and writers in general made good use of common creativeness, Shakespeare "learned more about plays by living among players and playwrights than he did from any other source. Nor should we forget the amount that Shakespeare copied from himself". (A Companion to Shakespeare studies. Ed. Kennerth Muir and S. Schoenbaurn, 59) The link of Twelfth Night to The comedy of Errors and to The Two Gentleman of Verone is a good instance. The Hero-Claudio plot in Much Ado About Nothing appears in Aristo';s Orlando Furioso and Spenser's Fairy Queen. It also appears in prose in Bandello's Novel (1554) in Belleforeste's Histories Tragiques (1574) of Troilus and Cressida Shakespeare might have used the medieval versions of the Troy story (Chaucer, Lydgage, Caxton etc) and Renaissance treatment of the same theme in Chapman's Homer, Robert Greene's Euphues his Cansure to Philautus along with, in all probability the thirteenth

book of Ovid's Metamorphoses Shakespeare dependent on Multiple sources for his dramatic alchemy'. Kenenth Muir observes: "Shakespeare as a general rule, took more pains than his contemporaries in the collection of source material".

The source for Shakespeare's nine history plays was primarily Holinshed's Chronicles (1587 Edition). At the same time Horace's Ars Poetica provided him with the necessary rhetoric and constructive methods. Plutarch's lives provided Shakespeare with a dramatic framework that suited him well. The plays he bases on Plutarch, Julius Caesar, Coriolonus, Antony and Cleopatra are most consistently loyal to their source than any other play in Shakespeare.

For Shakespeare William Painter's Palace for Pleasure remained a constant source. He might have picked up his themes from available Italian translations too. It seems quite likely that he drew on Italian texts of it Pecorone (for the Merchant of Venice) of Giraldo Cintio's Hecatammithi (for Othello) and of Boccaccio (for the wager plot in Cymbeline) Shakespeare might also have turned to French translations of the Italian. The French quibbles in Love's Labours Lost throw light on this.

The Italian & French translations of bawdy comedies' also gave 'fertile material' for Shakespeare. The Bianca plot of The Taming of the Shrew, he might have directly picked up from Gascoignes Supposes rather than Aristo's Suppositi

Sometimes extant 'Old plays' too served as sources for Shakespeare. But it is a vexing problem for it is not easy to determine the nature of the use to which Shakespeare put such sources, from Hamlet is the classic instance of this. We know from Nashe's preface to Greene's Menaphon (1589), that a Hamlet play existed at that time. Think of the ghost in Ur-Hamlet. Definitely it clashes with the Ghost in Hamlet. For Kingear, in all probability, Shakespeare took clues from the extant play The True Chronicle History of King Lear and His Three Daughters. He made, what he willed,out of what he found, Since the 'old play' History of King Lear is still available, one could easily find out the radical imaginative

changes and absorbing dramatic layers that Shakespeare invented. In the old play 'there is no Fool, no madness' no poor Tom (who is derived, of course like the rest of the Gloucester plot, from Sidney's Arcadia) no storm, no banishment or disguise for Kent. Cordielia wins the battle at the end; the wicked dukes and the wicked daughters run away; Lear and Cordelia are restored to power and happiness. King Lear is nearest to the old play in the opening scene, but even here Shakespeare abandons the credible motivations of the sources and gives a quiet different quality to the action, (A companion to Shakespeare studies, 64) It is obvious that Shakespeare placed the old play in the context of the other available sources of King Lear story, like Holinshed, The Mirror for Magistrates, Spenser etc.

Whetstone's 'Promos and Lasandro', the play behind Measure for Measure, is also placed along with other available versions of the same story. He changed the basic traits of the story by making Isabella, a novice and sparing her any pollution in the bed of Angelo. Meriana is a true invention for this purpose, the substituted victim not only for Caludio but for Barnardine Shakespeare lends the play a new thermatic dimension. The Duke's feigned departure & sudden return to see the vices on his own is also a genuine Shakespearean leap.

Shakespeare was well read in contemporary English writing – Lyly, Marlowe, Greene, Chapman, Daniel, Sidney etc. He might have used their works too as sources if not strictly for themes, at least for his diverse characters, vital conflicts, vibrant rhetoric, mellifluous poetry and many other aesthetic devices.

Shakespeare used a wide variety of sources, as we have seen. But whatever he had borrowed, he transmuted into 'burnishing gold' in the mighty anvil of his boundless imagination. He drew a magic circle, with imagination all compact, around the matter and people that he transplanted (if at all he did so) to his domain from 'some other territory'. Therefore, though source hunting in Shakespeare is challenging and profitable it is not inevitable for apprehending and appreciating his plays.

(For further reading on this topic:

1. The introduction on this topic:
2. Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare by Geoffrey Bullough (Particularly the introduction chapters)
3. Shakespeare's Sources (Vol.I/1957) by Kenneth Muir)

4. THE SHAKESPEAREAN CANON

(Canon means recognized authentic works of a writer, in this context all the works attributed to Shakespeare and accepted by scholars in general)

Discovering the date of composition of a Shakespearean play is important to grasp the development of Shakespeare's art: but surviving Elizabethan records are far and few. The plays performed in Henslowe's theatres. 'Rose' and 'Fortune' are recorded in his Diary. But only a few Shakespearean plays were acted in Henslowe's during Shakespeare's life time. For other theatres no such Diary is available.

Determination of the dates of composition mainly on three kinds of evidence.

a. External- aclear mention or reference to a particular play. There are many:

e.g., In gesta Grayorum, an account of the famous 'Gray's in Revels' of 1594-95 there is a note that:

"On the night of the 28th Dec., after dancing and reveling with gentle women, a Comedy of Errors (like to Plautus his Menechmus) was played by the players.

A German traveler, Platter's (Diary-1599) visit to Globe Theatre Mentions Julius Caesar (Emperor Julius)

Simon Forman's notes – (1611) Mentions Macbeth, Cymbeline and The Winters tale-List of a dozen plays in Francis Mere's Palladis Tamia (1598)

Stationer's Register, Pepy's Diary

b. Internal-References to some identifiable event (s) in the play itself-very few. Shakespeare often only indirectly refers to topical events.

Quotations from other contemporary works with topical relevance.

e.g., As you like it (from Her & Leader unfinished work by Marlow posthumously printed in 1598) Twelfth Night (Reference to the new map in III, ii 84, The new map appeared in 1600).

c. Dating by style-quite difficult no objective test-Shakespeare's style markedly changed-Therefore the Shakespeare canon could reasonably be placed by style into four groups-Early, Mature, Concentrated and Late.

By a combination of these three methods the date of composition of every play can be approximately determined.

(For a full list of Shakespeare's works, the Shakespearean canon, please refer to the Complete works of Shakespeare by Peter Alexander, 1965. It's contents and introduction will be quite useful).

Distinction between Folio & Quarto editions.

Both refer to the size to the paper, used for printing the texts. (Folio- a sheet of paper folded once Shakespeare's plays were first printed in folio)

Quarto a sheet of paper folded twice one fourth of a full sheet. The first Folio edition.

In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, his old friends and fellow – actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, published the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays. (The edition gets its name from the size of the paper used). This edition is now known as the First Folio because of its format. This edition attributed thirty six plays to Shakespeare except Pericles. Three more Folio editions were issued in 1632, 1663 & 1685. Shakespeares players were against printing his plays. However 19 to 20 plays were printed in Shakespeare's life time.

The first Folio edition texts underwent many changes by

subsequent editing.

The Quartos (The Quarto editions)

The Quartos, so called from their format, contained single plays and were sold at six pence a piece compared with the pound charged for the Folio. Publishers rather than the actors took the initiative for publishing. Needy actors or some one who remembered the texts from the performance cooked up the texts. Seven plays were produced like this. The contention, The true Tragedy (these wwere pirated editions of 2nd Henry VI), A Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry V, and Hamlet. These are now known as the Bad Quartos.

Shakespeare and company resented this practice. They came out with fourteen authorized texts in quartos. They printed the plays that had become well-known through frequent performance. These may be called the Good Quartos. However, publishers might have used the original manuscripts (very often pirated). The multiplicity of extant 'texts' posed a severe challenge for Heminge & Condell. Still, they performed an admirable job in printing the Shakespeare text in the most authentic form possible in the First Folio & hence in the preservation of the Shakespeare Canon as such.

A note on another way of looking at the Shakespeare Canon. The plays of Shakespeare can be looked at, based on its nature (thematic concerns & life vision) as follows;

A. (a) early Comedies, (b) mature Comedies, (c) Problem Plays, (d) history Plays, (e) Tragedies, (f) Romances (Last Plays)

B. Other Works

(a) Narrative Poems. (b) Sonnets.

(b) The Shakespeare Canon is synonymous with the very moments of life in its elemental form and pristine beauty.

5. SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY

The imagery of Shakespeare is noted for its variety and richness

The images used by Shakespeare have a direct bearing to the motif and general air of the play. For him the image is rooted in the totality of the play and as such the imagery changes from play to play. The development of Shakespeare's art in general can be comprehended bette· by a study of his purposeful', provocative, and absorbing imagery.

"Every image, every metaphor gains full life and significance only from its context. In Shakespeare an image often points beyond the scene in which it stands to preceding or following acts; it almost always has reference to the whole of the play. It appears as a cell in the organism of the play. Linked with it in many ways". (Clemen the Development) of Shakespeare's imagery) lying beneath the whole construction of the play. Shakespeare uses metaphors as effective instruments. In his early plays he used images for simple functions. In due course, particularly in he later plays, they serve several aims at one point and plays a decisive part in the characterization of the figures and in 'voicing' the dramatic theme.

Caroline Spurgeon published her pioneering work on Shakespeare's Imagery and What it tells us (1935) She showed the importance of Shakespeare's imagery and its nature. But her approach was more statistical. She listed a wide variety of images and tried to stress their recurrence. In a very comprehensive and scientific way Spurgeon brought home to us the wide range (Nature, Animals, Domestic, Body, Daily Life, Learning, Arts, Imaginative) of imagery, Probably an organid approach would have been more exciting and enlightening.

Woolfgang H. Clemen in his book, 'The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (1951)' adopts a more fruitful method to interpret Shakespeare's imagery in relation to the dramatic context and content. In the early plays Shakespeare resorts to rhetoric to give strength to his imagery. For example:

"What fool hath added water to the sea,

Or brought faggot to bright burning Troy?"

(Tritus Andronicus, iii, I 68-69)

"When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth O'erflow? (III, I 222)

In early comedies his imagery is linked with quibbles.

e.g:- Imagery in Loves Laboru's Lost

The imagery becomes more functional in Twelfth Night

e.g:- "For women are roses, whose fair flower

Being once display'd doth fall that very hour" (TN, II, IV, 39)

Love is the main theme in early comedies and Shakespeare's imagery is as, a whole, opposite to it. Though elaborate, they rarely elucidate.

Eg:- "So sweet a kiss"

In Rome & Juliet in keeping with the sparkling mood of the young lovers the imagery also becomes quite shimmering & gingling

Eg: Romeo: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Juliet: Good pilgrim...

And plam to palm is holy palmer's kiss (I, V, 97)

In this play 'angles' 'stars' heaven etc just stand & wait to serve his imagery.

Just have a feel of a classic image in Romeo and Juliet.

"my bounty is boundless as the sea

My love as deep: the more I give to thee,

The more I have, for both are infinite" (II, II, 133)

In the middle period his imagery becomes more and more organic er tering to the structural form of the drama. Here abstractions are ex >ressed by the imagery.

Refer, as you like it, Henry IV Part I & Part II

The tragedies display Shakespeare's dramatic technique at its >est, the images becoming an inherent part of the structure.

In his great tragedies, the imagery also augments and accompanies the dramatic action, "repeating its themes; it often resembles a second line of action running parallel to the real plot, and providing a counterpoint to the events on the stage" (Clemen, 89) The imagery in a moving way suggests coming events, it turns the imagination of the audience in a certain direction and helps to prepare the atmosphere, so that the state of expectation and feeling necessary for the full realization of the dramatic effect is reached (Clemen, 89) In the complex tragedies things are hinted at, intimated; they are rarely clearly stated and for this imagery is most suitable.

Characteristics

(1) Ambiguity-Characters do not know what they say.
Eg. O. "setting sun,
the tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
... ponds tos' heels" (Coriolanus III I, 312-14

(2) Great passion/immensity of human emotion
e.g., "No, this my hand will rather
....green one red" Macbeth II II, 61-63
"let them throw...
Lilhe a wart" (Hamlet Vi 304-7)

(3) Display's the mutual relationship of the forces at work in human nature
Eg:- (r fer) Macbeth (I, vii, 19-29)
Refer: Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear etc
Julius Caesar (I, iii 72-75)

(4) Politic, Imaginative and dramatic
Refer: Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear etc.

(5) Last plays imagery of reconciliation/forgiveness
(For further reading: Refer the books by Caroline F, E, Spurgeon & Woolfgany H. Clemen already mentioned in the Notes)

6. SHAKESPEARE'S PROSE

Shakespeare resorts to prose for more than one purpose

(a) To give variety and thereby to generate dramatic alertness especially since his plays are mainly written in verse.

(b) To dramarcate, the characters especially to fix their social status. Characters of higher social status use mainly poetry

(c) Comic characters/clowns, fools soldiers etc. are assigned prose.

(d) To give his play's a popular dimension and to accommodate ill equipped spectators

(e) As a dramatic device to lessen tragic tension

(f) To approximate his plays to the spectrum of life

Nature of his Prose

More or less pre-classical

Main features-repetition, a love of epithets, emphasis and inversion, lengthy sentences (periods), some preference for nouns and abstracts before verbs, and finally a liking for architectural patterns of expression.

Chiefly Shakespeare uses prose for comi purposes.

Exaggeration or hyperbole is a feature common to all levels of Shakespeare's prose, for then only he could produce the intended effect; to awaken the audience.

'So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery' (Hamlet II., ii, 304)
'I think that the policy of that purpose made more in marriage than the love of the parties', (Antony and Cleopatra, II, VI, 126)

Even in prose Shakespeare is semi-poetic, for he always prefers the visual and the concrete. He packs his prose with metaphors very often half-allegorical

e.g: 'And them comes repetence and, with his bad legs falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave'. Much Ado About Nothing II, 1, 81)

In order to produce the visual effect Shakespeare depends on greater picture sequences and poetic charm

eg: It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover (As you Like it, III, ii, 245)

'I think he will carry this island home in his pocket and give it his son for an apple. And sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands' (The Tempest II, 1,90)

Shakespeare often uses prose to slow down the tempo of his verse. For this he uses the mass of ornamental details. In "his prose dialogues Shakespeare never sticks long to a train of ideas. Clowns, fools and courtiers have this in common they shift from one subject to another" (Shakespeare's Comic Prose, A Shakespeare Survey 8, 59) It should be noted that action in Shakespeare is mainly confined to verse. The prose scenes are more or less static, with little dramatic action. However, they often provoke fun through parallelism, antithesis and euphuism.

e.g. 'One woman is fair yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but fill all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace' (Much Ado About Nothing II, ii, 28-31)

Shakespeare creates speech he does not reproduce what the observes.

e.g. The speech of Falstaff and his gany. Henry IV)

The low comedy parts of Twelfth Night and The Tempest.

Another important trait of Shakespeare's art (use) of prose is his subtle differentiation of speech and its use for atmosphere effects.

Clown scenes-a) Comic relief, b) Revelation-Indirect of course, accidental resolution.

To prove this point see the comic scenes from Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, iii, Merchant offence, II ii, catechism of honour in Henry IV Dognerry verges scenes in Much Ado About Nothing, The grave diggers' scene in Hamlet etc.

At times Shakespeare uses prose for delicate differentiation and atmosphere courtly conversation.

Beatrice's speeches Much Ado about Nothing (At times)

Portia's speeches The Merchant of Venice

A higher percentage of rationalized prose is employed in his only dark comedy (a problem play) Measure for Measure, in which the brothel scenes and the prison scenes are important.

Shakespeare's use of prose thus is as imaginative and dramatic, as his widely acclaimed use of verse is. His prose too is "full of pretty answers".

For further Reading:

1. A Shakespeare Survey 8
2. Crane, Milton, Shakespeare's Prose (Chicago, 1951)

7. MUSIC IN SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare used music/snatches of popular adages/cadenced utterances of characters as a very effective dramatic device he took advantage of the Elizabethan love of music for his dramatic ends.

In his age, a wealth of dramatic music was readily available both in England and abroad as model and analogue. Shakespeare's contemporaries too sprinkled their plays with both vocal and instrumental music of a wide variety.

Probably, Shakespeare's plays, predominantly in verse, demand music and spectacular scenes to keep the audience alert. He might have though of using music/songs to put across ideas that he could not have well set forth in verbal discourse

Usually, the music is inserted in between the acts-practical consideration rest for actors and a chance for another set of performers audience kept amused.

At a more complex level music creeps into the very body of spoken plays (As you Like it, Twelfth Night, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest etc., have plenty of occasions to prove this point)

Music (Instrumental) is used as an augmenting device in

some crucial/merry making scenes. (e.g: Dumshow in Hamlet, the storm scene and the banquet scene in The Tempest)

Major-Categories

a) Stage music- an action on the stage which functionally demands music, for example, a banquet, screnade, or call to battle.

b) Magic music used to making someone fall in love, or fall asleep, or be miraculously healed (e.g: Glendower's daughter sings Mortimer to sleep in Henry IV, Ariel entices Ferdinand to these yellow sands (The Tempest) & the song of the Mosque in The Tempest: Antony and Cleopatra Music of the hauthboys is under the stage (Stage direction) Music of the spheres in Pericles all invisible and at times even heard only by those to whom it is sung)

c) Character music-reveals the essential nature of the character

Troilus & Cressida-Pandarus; love nothing but love, still love, still more!'

Othello-Iago-'And let me the canakin clink, clink'

Twelfth Night-Feste-'O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?

Fodness for music is usually a criterion of kindliness in Shakespeare. Duke Orsino's excessive melancholy and love-sickness is well portrayed by Feste's recital of come away come away death':

Refer: Ophelia's Lyrics (Hamlet)

d) Music/songs that indicate a change of tone within the drama

e.g: The wedding masque in Act IV &

Ariel's song in Act V of the Tempest Act IV & Act V The Winter's Tale.

As far as the nature of the music is concerned Shakespeare use a wide range.

(i) Ballad-like ditties/Folk songs (Fool in King Lear-Silence

in Henry IV Othello in Hamlet)

(ii) Songs almost equal to art music. Here singing requires an instrumental accompaniment Autolycus in The Winter's Tale

-Ariel in The Tempest

-Two singing boys sing four, stanzas of 'it was a lover and his las' – As you like it.

A note on the 'scoring' of Shakespeare's vocal and instrumental resources. Composed? Chose the music & songs to suit the capabilities of the men and boy performers who played the role of female characters.

Refer: Ophelia (Hamlet) and Desdemona's (Othello) Lyrics, The songs of the fairies in A Mid-summer Nights Dream/The music of Ariel and his troupe in The Tempest. In the Last plays one can see "the perfection of the local resources in Shakespeare Studies 165)

Instrumental Music Shakespeare – used the instrumental music in a symbolic way to evpke the intended mood-Amorous, Martial, Courtly, Marital etc.

Turmpets, Bugles, Music of the spheres, the soft music of strings to give variety to strike the relevant mood. To expose/fix characters, to render an extra dimension and layer of meaning to his central aim; poetic drama.

The inimitable playwright seems to strike the note, 'If music be the food of love play on', in all his plays, of course, with purposeful and though- provoking variations

For further reading:

Waylor, Edward W (ed)

Shakespeare and Music 2nd ed. (1931)

Noble, Richmond, Shakespeare's use of Song (1923).

Seng, Peter. J. Vocal songs in the plays of Shakespeare (Cambridge Mass 1967).

Sternfeld, F.W. Music in Shakespearean Tragedy (1967)

8.SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

The sonnets of Shakespeare are noted for their high poetry complex thought patterns and rich imagery. His sonnets are quite different from those of his contemporaries. Most of them are addressed to a man, the situations and relationships behind the collection as a whole have given rise to a lot of debates and guesses. Mr. W.H. and the Dark Lady, have set in absorbing arguments and exacting scholarly discussions.

There is a rare intimacy shown by Shakespeare in these sonnets to his peers. He deals with a few general topics-beauty love, truth friendship time et., giving them universal reach and eternal validity.

The collection consists of two clerly distinct series of sonnets. The first series (1-126) is addressed to a youth, or to a very Young man of grest beauty. (in sonnet 108 he is called 'sweet boy' and in 126 not a sonnet but a poem of twelve lines in couples he is described as my lovely little boy).

The poet also insists on their great differences in age and social position. Which he pities as a barrier between them (ref. Sonnet Nos. 36, 87, 117 etc)

Sonnets – 1-17 urge the youth to marry and perpetuate his charms through offspring.

Sonnets 95 & 96 throw some light on the wantonness of the youth.

"Some say thy fault is youthsome wantonness;

Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport" (96)

With the exception of 145 an octosyllabic sonnet and 153-54 two epigrams on cupid, which have no discernible connection with the rest, the second series (127-54) consists of sonnets to or about a certain 'dark' mistress; whom the poet in some sense loves, or has loved, but whom he also despises, and despises himself for loving. (Leishman, Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's sonnets 12)

The sonnets in the first series do have a close resemblance

to Herbert's The Temple. In the first series one could see a picture of many spiritual conflicts. There is some religiousness about these sonnets.

The sonnets in the second series bear the stamp of a deep conflict

Sonnet 138 begins:

"When my love swears that she is made of truth

I do believe her, though I know she lies"

Sonnet 144 makes clear that

"Two loves I have of comfort and despair!"

The confrontation between good and evil, love and Time etc. are embedded in the sonnets of the first series too.

For Mr. W.H. there are many claimants: William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, Henry Wriothesley. William Hervey, Quite a good number of scholars argue that these sonnets were written at the request of William Hervey to persuade Southampton to wed.

(Note: The initials T.T at the end of the dedication stand for Thomas Thorpe the publisher of the volume containing the sonnets (154)

Date of composition-Approx 1593-1600

In keeping with the complex spectrum of Life & Love shown in his plays as a whole, in the sonnets too he spins a life vision laced with all the ups and downs of life and the laser beams of love.

Innocent protestations of love galore. Beaffling questions relating to beauty & Time spring. Friendship reaches new terrains. Borders melt. Boundaries vanish. Love and Beauty, perpetuation of beauty in relation to man and woman catch Shakespeare's in ward eye in these sonnets. Confounding encounters lead to poignant realizations. Shakespeare exhorts us to feel and find for ourselves.

'From fairest creatures we desire increase

That thereby beauty's rose might never die, (1)

'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'

'Thou art more lovely and more temperate (18)'

'Time, blunt thou like the lion's paws

And make the earth devour her own sweet brood (19)

"Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,

Save that to die, I leave my love alone" (66)

(Refer Sonnets 29, 30, 67, 71, 109, 116, 154 etc-only as a sample)

Shakespeare in his characteristics dramatic vein states:

"If thy unworthiness raised love in me,

More worthy I to be beloved of thee" (150)

and then asks, perhaps for the whole of humanity

"Love is too young to know what conscience is

Yet who knows conscience is not born of love?"

For further reading:

Turto, William, ed, William Shakespeare: The Sonnets

Leishman, J.B. Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets.

9. SHAKESPEARE'S DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS AS A PLAYWRIGHT

Born on 23 April 1564 at Straford-Upon_Avon. Humble origins-Not likely to have received first 'class' Education- Learned deeply, from the book of nature though he had only small Latin and less Greek' – Naturally talented-In 1582 William Shakespeare married Ann Hathaway. Records only show that Shakespeare reached in London in 1592 (first reference). He must have joined some touring company like the Leicester's Warwick's or the Queen's. He must have begun his career as an actor substitute but soom established himself as actor and playwright in the London theatrical world. Then as a playwright & partner of the theatre,

he roses like a meteor. His plays speak the rest.

He died on 23 April 1616.

(All biographical details are mere conjecture golden leaves of a living legend-Please read Walter Releigh. Dover Wilson, or Peter Alexander's Biography of Shakespeare Progress as a Playwright).

His progress as a playwright

Shakespeare's growth as a playwright cannot be seen in solation from his 'apprenticeship' – may be from 1584 to 1594 Till he joined the Lord Chamberlain's men.

During 1584-1592 itself Shakespeare came out with a variety of plays (There is sufficient evidence: external & internal to believe so).

His early comedies Comedy of Errors, Taming of the Shrew Two Gentlemen of Verona. Histories 1, 2, 3, Henry VI, Richard III, King John and the only tragedy. Titus Andronicus reveal his wide range of themes, stage sense, poetic potential and above all his dramatic genius. He shows in all types of his plays a new direction in character conception. Sewquence of scenes, thematic complexion and poetic nuances. Poetry, prose, music/songs are deftly interwoven. He kept in mind all types (classes of spectators and humanity in general).

The works written in the nest two years or so 1592-94) Loves Labour's Lost (Comedy) Venus & Adonis, "Rape of Lucrece" (poems) bring to light Shakespeare's commendable poetic genius, the feel of life and also his narrative potential.

During 1594-99 he wrote mostly comedies – Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, Merry Wives of Windsor. Much Ado about nothing & As you Like it: From a forthright, sparkling poetic depiction of simple romantic/pastrol love and set up of the early comedies Shakespeare moved on to the world of king & court & Country. Disguise motif gained strength. More resourceful women characters came to the fore. A dark comedy like Much Ado About Nothing points to his more taut problem play Measure for

Measure. His history plays of this period-Richard II, Henry IV Henry IV Part 2 and Henry V – reveal his grasp of England's history as well as his attitude to kingship and allied problems. Recent and topical revolts, fifts rebellions all become the staple of Shakespeare's histories. His treatment of history moved the spectators. These plays (at least a few) disturbed the Queen & the Privy Council. All the same they vouch for Shakespeare's ability to coalesce the real, imagined & Universal aspects of life in general Romeo & Juliet a classic in poetic nuauces throws open Shakespeare's entrance into his complex and moving tragedies.

The most productive period of his career was 1599-1608. It saw the genesis of his mature-bright & dark comedies Twelfth Night, Troilus and Cresida, Measure for Measure, All's Well and the complex and comprehensive tragedies – Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, Timon of Athens, (King) Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra & Coriolanus. Most of them are single star plays; complex, unbelievably deep psychological studies of a myriad cross section of humanity. All shades of human emotions, thoughts, beliefs, hopes, despairs find free play in these plays. Shakespeare shows us the multi layered mind of man through high poetry and dense imagery. All types of people-men and women, all kinds of problems are presented in the most moving manner possible.

The great are makes a perfect circle by his last plays Pericles, Cymbelline, the Winter's Tale. The Tempest & the last history play Henry VIII. Theme of Forgiveness and reconciliation becomes mature Shakespeare's forte.

Shakespeare's dramatic genius grew from strength to strength from the sparkling comedies through pulsating hisoties to mature comedies, problem plays, dense and deep tragedies and finally to the world of comprehensive and all forgiving love, Shakespeare always developed & progressed in his craft & career. And his plays still develop and progress in the minds of the multitude all over the world.

For Further Reading

A Shakespeare Survey. Volumes-Need refer only those

articles relevant to your topics.

Bate, John, How to find out Bout Shakespeare, Pergaman Press, 1968 Brown I vor Shakespeare, Comet Books, 1957.

Harrison G.B. Introducing Shakespeare, Penguin 1939

Muir Kenneth & S. Schaenbaum. A new Companion to Shakespeare studies Cambridge University Press. 19. . (For stage)

Gurr. Andrew The Shakespearian stage, 1574-92 Cambridge University Press 197

Question Pattern

One out of three topics for an essay of about four pages (Approx 1000 words)

You may have to answer a few objective type questions too.

Prepared by:
Dr. RAMACHANDRAN NAIR
Calicut University Centre (English)
Thalassery

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

INTRODUCTION

The Text

The earliest Surviving text of Love's Labours Lost is a Quarto edition dated 1598. The title page tells us that it was "newly" corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare and printed by William/White. It is believed that there was an earlier edition, a pirated one, and that it was to replace it that the 1598 edition was brought out. It was not entered in the Stationer's register as it was a reprint. Dover Wilson suggests that the Quarto was based on a manuscript of Shakespeare. The First Folio is believed to have been set up from the 1598 Quarto. What matters to us is that there are many inconsistencies, contradictions and errors in the text.

Date of Composition

Most critics are of the view that this was Shakespeare's first comedy. Some of them place it between Taming of the Shrew and Two Gentlemen of Verona. Since metrical tests came into vogue, Editors are inclined to place the play near 1590 owing to the large number of rimed versus. They put it down as the very first play of Shakespeare. It contains twice as many rimed lines as blank verse. Its lyrical character also point to this same conclusion. There are four sonnets, a song and doggerel in abundance within the play. Other features pointing to an early immature period are; its symmetrical arrangement of the characters, its quabbling repartees and other such word plays, its sketchy characterization, the influence of the courtly comedies of John Lyly etc. H.B. Charleton, an authority on Shakespearean comedy points out that such tests might be valid in indicating the unconscious development of the poet's style, but they cannot be applied to a single play that differs from all other plays Shakespeare. The date which Charleton himself favours is 1952.

External evidence on the date is somewhat scanty. Francis Meres Palladis Tamia (Pub, 1598) mentions the play. Robert Tofte's Alba (Also pub. 1598) mentions the play. Robert Tofte's Alba (Also pub.1598) mentions Love's Labourus Lost. Internal evidence also points to about 1593-94. Many ideas and images from Shakespeare's poems are present in this play. The other pieces of internal evidence are debatable.

The background of the Play

It is said that Shakespeare wrote this play to amuse Southampton and his friends. Certain conditions had to be observed. It was to be witty, fashionable and of topical interest and it was to tickle the fancy of those for whom it was written and at the same time pleasing to the discerning public. A comedy generally treated love as a major theme. But Southampton and his friends affected to scorn love. Shakespeare saw an opportunity to raise a laugh at the scorners of passion so dear to his heart and so universal that he would have the audience on his side. So he took a theme of a King and three of his courtiers taking a vow that they will have the audience on his side. So he took a theme of a King and three of his courtiers taking a vow that they will have nothing to do with women for three years. They would pursue serious studies. The story takes place in France. Many French names were popular in England at the time because of the French wars. He took the name Navarre for the king in the story. The real Navarre of France was a notorious ladies man. Such men as he and his courtiers vowing celibacy – the very idea was enough to cause laughter. There were certain ideas, arguments and jokes in Shakespeare's London. These were shared by Shakespeare and his audience. The theme of love was one and learning was another. Some of the learned poets championed wit and learning and scorned men without learning. Fasting, watching and burning the midnight oil were glorified by them. Shakespeare knew better. He knew that many who were supposed to be learned were actually unwise. Book learning was not real learning. Life itself was an open book containing all the lessons worth knowing for the observant. Here was an occasion for making fun of those so called

learned men, who also scoffed at love. For the rest he filed the play with many characters who were caricatures. There were also little touches which reminded the audience of Sir Walter Raleigh and his circle who had incurred the displeasure of the queen recently. G.B. Harrison gives us the above details and concludes that Shakespeare profited greatly from the experiment and learnt to draw from life and not from books.

A topical play

Several passages meant something to Shakespeare's audience, which is lost to us. These were of topical interest to the times. Richard David points out the following as examples of topical allusions:

1. Armado and Moth playing with the words "tender juvenal" (I.II.8...)
2. Armado's resentment of Moth's allusion to an eel (I.II.28)
3. Constant punning on "penny", "purse" and "pen" (V.I) and the flourish on the phrase "piercing a hogshed" (IV.II.86)
4. The doggered on the Fox, the Ape and the Humble bee" (III.1.83)
5. The reference to a "School of Night". (IV.III.252)
6. Armado's Pronounciation of "Sirrah" as "Chirrah" (V.I.33)
7. The reference to a "Charge house" on a mountain where Holofernes teaches (V.I.78)
8. The Unort odox inclusion of Hercules and Pompey among the Nine Worthies (V.I. 124-25)
9. The connection of Holofernes with Judas Iscariot (V.II.588

References to Raleigh, to Marlowe, the Marprelate controversy, to the earl of Essex, Nashe and many other persons and things have been suggested by various critics. There is very little conclusive proofs for these suggestions and the entire thing is somewhat complex and confusing. But many of the ideas suggested look possible. Therefore we can safely conclude that the play contains several topical asllusion which do not make sense to us bust must have been of interest to the playgoers of the Elizabethan times.

The Sources

There is no known written source from which Shakespeare might have borrowed the plot. The Arden editor suggests that there s some reason to think that such a source did exist but is now lost. For every other play of his, Shakespeare is known to have used some documentary original. But this is a hypothesis unsupported by any substantial evidence. But the same editor (Richard David) gives certain historical events on which the plot is based. The real King of Navarre received two embassies from France, either of which might have served as a model for the embassy in Love's Labours Lost. In one the Ambassador was a princess of France Marguerite de violas (daughter of Catherine de Medici) who came with her mother in 1578. In the second embassy it was Catherine, the queen of France herself. In both discussions an important topic was maarguerite's dowry which included Aquitaine.

The King's "Achedame" is also a reflection of history. Navarre was a patron of an academy. But Richard David himself who mentions the existence of the above, remarks also that it is unlikely that Shakespeare had any direct knowledge of Navarre's academy. Shakespeare's ides most probably came from L Academie francoise by Pierre de la Primaudaye. This book contained an account of the French movement. Other correspondences also have been suggested but they are not convincing or clinching.

Models

Suggested dramatic models are Lyly's plays. TheCommediacell Arte of Italy. The Queen's Progresses. These were only probab e sources that might have influenced the construction of Love's Labours Lost. Nothing is directly borrowed from these.

The Occasion

The Flay was an episode in a private was between court factions. It was written for private performance in court circles, probably some great household where a troupe of choristers was maintained. The professional children's companies were suppressed between 1590 and 1599. It is said that the first performance

of the play was in Southampton's house on the occasion of the Queen's visit in 1591. A more likely occasion would be an entertainment in a private house at Christmas 1593, when the theatres were closed on account of the plague.

Select criticism

"In this play, which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of our poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages, mean childish and vulgar; and some which ought not to have been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden queen.... But there are scattered, through the whole, many sparks of genius; nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of Shakespeare

Dr. Johnson

This is among the plays "which were either grounded on impossibilities, or at least so meanly written that the comedy neither caused you mirth nor the serious part your concernment ..... Dryden

"If we were to part with any of the author's comedies it would be this".

Hazlitt

It gives the idea of an excessively jocular play"

Gervinus.

"Behind it (the foppery) and around and above and interpenetrating it, swims that vision – that knowledgeable vision – that intimate understanding of his native Arden, core of rural England-by virtue of which we instantly distinguish and differentiate Shakespeare, even at his most artificial. From the ruck of the Elizanethans, Shakespeare draws upon country life for a word a comparison, an image, as easily, as naturally, as he would kiss his child: its remembered sights and sounds and scents being in – woven in the "grey matter' of his brain". Sir, Arthur Quiller – couch and Dover Wilson.

"Hence the comic matter chosen in the first instance is a

ridiculous imitaion or apery of this constant striving after logical precision and subtle opposition of thoughts, together with a making the most of every conception or image by expressing it under the least expected property belonging to it, and this again rendered specially absurd by being applied to the most current subjects and occurrences... For a young author's fist work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits, and his first observations of life are either drawn from the immediate employments of his youth and from the characters and images most deeply impressed on the mind in the situations in which these employments had placed him".S.T.Colelge.

"The merely dramatic interest of the piece is slight enough; only just sufficient, indeed, to form the vehicle of its wit and poetry...There is little character drawing in the piece..As You Like It is the only Shakespearean comedy earlier than the later romances that in total impression can match this (LLL) for imaginativeness and variety of mood or so strongly suggest that beneath the simmering surface the waters are deep...of Shakespeare's plays this is the most personal, a solution of the puzzle he has set here would not only satisfy the most rabid detective ardour but illuminate Shakespeare's own early life and the conditions that shaped his career and his first plays -an' essential background of which at present absolutely nothing is known". Richard David, Arden Editor.

"It is assuredly his least substantial; and the one, more than any other, circumscribed by the fashions of his day. But..... it is the exuberant assertion of the high claims of romance, not only of its exalted esstasies, but of the exclusive spiritual values of the romantic doctrine of love..... But though L L L is mere gay trifling, its peculiar gaiety almost frustrates itself by the formlessness and the spinelessness of the thing as a play.

"If L L L, his first comic offering, be regarded, not as a drama, but merely as an exercise in the play of words, it is palpably the diploma piece of one born for mastery. The words in it are more important than are its men and women, and all their deeds. It is

the work of a poet who is born into an age of drama, -but who as yet is only vaguely cognisant of the demands of drama as distinct from those of poetry. He is bewitched by the magic of words and revels in his dexterity to manipulate sound and symbol.....

"It is deficient in plot and characterisation. There is little story in it. Its situations do not present successive incident in an ordered plot.....

"The courtiers in the play lack personality, and are equally without typical character of the human sort. They have manners, and beyond that nothing but wit.....

"No profound apprehension of life will be expected from L L L. That a flagrantly assured vow will be broken is a proposition too self evident to call for substantiation. For anything deeper than mere observation of the surface of life there is neither room nor need.... So much and so little was Shakespeare when he began".

H:B. Charton

"Little in Shakespeare is more tedious than certain parts of Love's Labours Lost.....

"Shakespeare's debt, such as it is, to Lyly does not, however, prevent him from aiming the shafts of his wit, in Love's Labours Lost at certain literary tendencies of which Lyly stood then and stands now as the obvious representative".

E.K. Chambers

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

First step towards Romantic Comedy

Comedy means fun and laughter. But in practice it was satiric, pouring ridicule on the foibles of men and women. This was the tone of comedy from Greek drama to the Elizabethan period. It was Shakespeare who introduced a new kind of comedy incorporating the element of romance into it. There may be difference

of opinion on the exact date of composing of Love's Labours Lost. But there is no substantial disagreement on the view that this represents Shakespeare's early attempts in this direction. Charlton says that this was the very first comedy of Shakespeare. The poet does not succeed in this play in blending comedy and romance harmoniously. It ends up, on the other hand, in making romance comic. The problem is shelved in Taming of the Shrew and taken up with increasing degrees of success in the plays beginning with Two gentlemen of Verona and ending in Twelfth Night. Taken in this light Love's Labours Lost represents the first faltering steps in the experiment. The lawless might of love is the only ingredient common to this play and the rest of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Many imperfections, dramatic and otherwise, mar the play from being treated as a typical Shakespearean comedy.

Shakespeare in his workshop

Love's Labours Lost is not the products of a mature dramatist. Shakespeare does not seem to know the ropes of dramaturgy yet. The basic element of a drama is a plot, which consists of a series of incidents ordered in a pattern: an initial incident containing the germ of the story, a complication, a turning poin, a resolution and a catastrophe. The play, says Charlton, "is deficient in plot and a characterization. There is little story in it. Its situations do not present successive incidents in an ordered plot". The next requisite, really more important than the plot, is a set of characters. To the extent that the characters are lifelike and vividly drawn, to that extent is a play interesting. Whether the plot is concrete or cobweb, the characters can impart vitality to the play. Several of the characters in the play can be dropped without impairing the story. The only characters who are functional are the King and his associates and the princess and her ladies. And they do not compel attention as credible and individual individual human beings. Perhaps the Princess might muster as a forerunner of Beatrice in Much Ado, Rosalind in As Like it and Viola in Twelfth Night.

Plot and character depend on good dialogue. If this is to resemble life and be vivid and interesting, blank verse is the best

medium, Love's Labours Lost is full of artificial style. The play is full of experiments. Some of it is written in a loose, swinging couple; some in quatrains, some in blank verse, some in the choice, picked prose made the fashion by Lyly. It contains more lyrics than any other Shakespearean play. One of the lyrics, a sonnet in Alexandrine, is the fruit of a real human passion. The lyric at the end of the play is the loveliest thing ever said about England". (John Masefield).

Poetic vs. Dramatic

The above remarks show that this play has greater affinity to Shakespeare's poems than to his mature plays. It has been pointed out by many critics that this play comes closely on the heels of his poems. The occurrence of many ideas and images from Shakespeare's poems here wrought into the very fabric of the play suggests that it was written at the same time as they were. Viz. 1593 – 94. It was written "in the same heat as Shakespeare's essays in pure poetry Venus and Adonis Lucrece and perhaps the sonnets" says Richard David (Arden Editor)

"It is the work of a poet who is born into an age of drama but who as yet is only vaguely cognizant of the demands of drama as distinct from those of poetry". (Charlton)

Euphuism

Shakespeare aims the shafts of this wit at certain literary tendencies of which Lyly was the obvious representative. Lyly's euphuistic style has not been imitated or reproduced as such. What is seen is the celebration of phrase out of all proportion to the exposition of matter. It is this pretentiousness of style that is ridiculed in the play.

The main plot and the under plot

The main plot deals with a subject of permanent interest (see the next section on themes). The underplot ridicules the affections of speech of certain pedantic people of Shakespeare's time. This, as such is no defect because all literature tries to capture the eternal in the ephemeral and the universal in the particular.

Themes

Love is the central theme of all Shakespearean comedies. Shakespeare has made innumerable comments on the subject and explored many aspects of this human passion, a passion that bring out the very best in us. It is a recurring theme in his sonnets also.

"It is an ever fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken.

It is the star to every wandering bark

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool. Though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come" (CXVI)

This is Shakespeare himself speaking, not one of his characters. The passionate utterances of Viola and Rosalind, of Romeo, Juliet. Antony, Cleopatra and many others reveal to us the soft corner in Shakespeare's heart for this emotion. It is only natural that he takes up the cudgel against anyone who condemns it. The theme is as old as Plato who wanted to banish women from his ideal republic. Some of the Elizabethan poets also had derived love and glorified learning - Spenser, Daniel, Champman and others. Shakespeare, the upstart crow among them was "else – minded then". He would not allow such views to go unquestioned. In Two Gentlemen of Verona the two men pursue knowledge seriously leaving worldly attractions behind them. But soon they are caught in the web of romantic love, whose course did never run smooth but finally come to a happy ending.

On the question of learning also Shakespeare had a view point for more mature than many of his contemporary poets. Shakespeare knew that many who passed for learned knew nothing. Book learning was not really knowledge of the world. Real knowledge comes through observation of men and manners and from independent thinking. Shakespeare brings this out in this play especially through Berowne. These then are the twin themes of Love's Labours Lost – Love and learning.

Topical Interest

Most critics agree on the possibility of hidden meanings in many words and phrases and passages, on the topical interest of the play to Elizabeth playgoers. We of later times miss this topical element altogether. Richard David, the Arden editor points out nine such passages. Possibly there may be many more. In Macbeth the porter refers to the farmer who committed suicide on the expectation of a plentiful harvest, the tailor who stole cloth from what was given him for making a pair of French hose and an equivocator who could not equivocate before God. All these were references to well known jokes in Shakespeare's London. Such are the passages quoted by Richard David from this play.

(a) Armado and Moth's Play with the words "Tender Juvenal" (I. II. 8. .....)

(b) Armado's resentment of Moth's allusion to an eel (I. II. 29)

(c) The constant punning on penny and purse (III. I. 26; V. I. 70) and particularly the flourish on the phrase "piercing a hogs head") IV. II. 86)

(d) The doggerel on the Fox, the Ape and the humble bee (IV. III. 252)

(e) The reference to a School of Night (IV. III. 252)

(f) Armado's pronounciation of "Sirrah" as "Chirrah" (V.I. 33.)

(g) The reference to a "Chargehouse" on a mountain where Holofernes teaches. (V. I. 78)

(h) The unorthodox inclusion of Hercules and Ponpey among the nine worthies (V. I. 124/125)

(i) The connection of Holofernes with Judas Iscariot.

Explanation of these topical references is beyond the scope of these notes. Students are advised to refer to the introduction to Love's Labours Lost (Arden edition). It has also been pointed out that some of the allusions in the play are conflicting.

Court comedy

The play was primarily intended for an audience consisting of courtiers rather than for the common public. It was part of a battle between court factions. Shakespeare's butts are the supe-

rior persons who exalt art and learning above nature and commonsense. Shakespeare's audience could recognize many living people of the time such as Harvey, Chapman, Florio, Thomas Harriot's"Schoole" and its Patron Sir Walter Raleigh. On the other side are Essex, Bedford, Rutland and Southampton, at whose instance Shakespeare might have written the play.

Conclusion

Derek Traversi point out that the Comedy of Errors is a farcical work in the Manner of Plautus, the famous master of medieval Latin comedy. But the Two Gentlemen of Verona and Loves Labours Lost according to Traversi show the dramatist trying to give greater coherence, more agile wit and more human content to artificial comedies depicting court life. "A few episodes and certain attitudes and characters in these plays, foreshadow the capacity to evolve from artifice and convention a consistent imaginative world, thus initiating a line of growth which may be traced through Twelfth Night and As you Like It to the last comedies (the Romances). But between the two terms of this development, as in the parallel case of the tragedies, lies the complete unfolding of Shakespeare's art". The implication of this statement is that Love's Labours Lost is only the beginning of a gradual unfolding of Shakespeare's comic genius. More or less the same trend of thought is expressed by Charlton in the following words:

"No profound apprehension of life will be expected from L L L. That a flagrantly absurd vow will be broken is a proposition too selfevident to call for substantiation. Its reason is as patent as is Moth's deduction that when a man goes melancholy it is a sign that he will look sad. The story of the making and the breaking of the vow needs to be shown to the eye. For anything deeper than mere observation of the surface of life there is neither room nor need. The imagination is not called upon to reveal powers working in the deep, silently controllingthe currents on the face of the waters. Moreover, the surface here displayed is that of so remote a backwater that to reveal in it the operation of the great oceantides of life would be well-nigh impossible. Of apprehension of life

in the dramatic way, therefore, there can be very little; but of opinion promoted by the dramatist's observation of living men there may be much. The course of an action which shows that foolish men are guilty of folly that the best way to the back-gate is not over the house-top, that we cannot cross the cause why we were born, will hardly excite its author's passions to flashes of inspired insight

"So much and so little was Shakespeare when he began. Superficially, there are resemblances between L L L and the three plays Much Ado, Twelfth Night and As You Like It. The interest in all of them is in lovers, and especially in their wooing. The main characters are aristocrats, young, witty, and often either poetic or sentimental. There is also in all of these plays another stratum of dramatic personae, lower in the social scale, and cast mainly to play the part of low comedians. But while L L L is merely a verbal display and a stage spectacle, the later comedies have been forged into a vital organism which embodies a distinctive and coherent apprehension of life. They are an artist's creation, original and distinctive. Formally, they are the projection of an artist's ripe wisdom".

SCENE SUMMARIES

Act. I. Scene. I

'Ferdinand, King of Navarre and his courtiers Berowne, Longaville and Dumain are discussing their latest plan to pursue a life of high seriousness and studies. The king reminds his courtiers that they have pledged themselves to live with him for three years. He asks them to subscribe their names to the pledge. They are to give up wordily desires and spend their days and nights in studies. They are not to see any women for three years. Fasting, walking and other strict observances are to be followed. All of them agree to follow the King in this matter: But Berowne points out the futility of the whole plan. All delights are vain but those purchased with pain give only pain as reward. In searching for the light of

knowledge they will only lose their eyesight. The astronomers know no better than the common people. However he would go with them. Their only delight for the next three years will be the conversation of a Spanish traveller named Armado, who has a mint of phrases in his brain.

At this point constable Dull and a rustic, Costard come. They are sent by Armado. Costard was seen with a woman and arrested by Armado, The king sent him to be given proper punishment. Between them the two provide some low comedy. Also we get a glimpse into the fantastic and artificial style of Armado through his letter.

Act. I. Sc. II

This scene introduces Armado and Moth his page boy. It comes out that Armado, who arrested Costard for sitting with Jaquenetta and sent him on to the King, is himself in love with the same woman. This is the underplot. Armado is a poser in love. So are the King and his coutiers going to be.

Act. II. Sc. I

The Princess of France and her companions Maria, Katherine and Rosaline arrive in front of Navarre's palace. They are accompanied by Boyet and other lords and attendants. The Princess asks Boyet to go into the palace and inform the King that she is a awaiting his permission for a personal conference with him. Boyet goes in. They discuss the reports about the vow taken by the King of Navarre and his lords. Boyet comes back and is soon followed by the King and his companions. The Princes offers to show him the written receipt given by his officers. A conference is fixed for the next day. The king tells the Princess about their vow and that she will be suitably accommodated outside the palace. During the conversation the King's men are captivated by the beauty of the ladies. Each one falls a victim to the grace of each of the ladies. Boyet comments that the King is enthralled by the Princess. Their determination is shaken.

Act.III Sc.I

Armado sends his page Moth to set free Costard. He employs Costard to carry a letter from him to Jaquenetta and gives him a shilling. Moth and Armado leave the stage. Berowne, one of the three companions of the king comes in and meets Costard. He too employs the rustic to carry a message to Rosaline the Princess companion. Berowne is deeply in love with the lady.

Here begins the underplot and Armado's pedantic language. There is much amusing word-play among the three. The scene also introduces the devices of the letters which play an important part in the denouement of the plot.

Act. IV. Sc. I

The Princess and her train meet in a hunting ground. The playful, carefree mood of the play is brought out. Costard the swain brings a letter from Berowne to Roasline. The Princess ask Boyet to break the seal and read it. It turns out to be Armado's letter to Jaquenetta. Armado's high flown style praising the girl causes much mirth. The miscarriage of the letter complicates the plot and it foreshadows the denouement,.

Act. IV.Sc.II

Holofernes the schoolmaster, Sir Nathaniel a curate and Dull the constable. Their conversation brings out the pride of the book-learnt scholars. Jaquenetta and Costard come there. The former hands over the letter meant for Rosaline and misdeliverd to her, and asks Holofernes to read it. He tells her that the letter is to the King. Costard and the girl go away. The parson and the constable are invited to dinner with Holoferness at the house of one of his pupils.

Act V. Sc.I

The Princess, Maria, Katherine and Rosaline meet. They have received gifts from the King and his three courtiers. The King and his men have sent long poems declaring their love for their respective beloveds. The ladies have a hearty laugh over this, when boyet enters and informs them that the King and his men are coming to woo them. He overheard them. The princess sug-

gests that they wear masks in such a way that the men will address themselves to the wrong ladies. The ladies are not to dance with them and are to turn their faces way when they are spoken to. A trumpet sounds. The king and his men arrive, dressed as Russians. They invite the ladies to dance with them but the latter refuse to do so. SO the men ask them to converse with them. They converse apart. The ladies are not in a mood to please them and they depart in disappointment. The men have obviously, made their advances to the wrong ladies. Boyet tells them that they will come again without their masks. He asks the ladies to change their masks. He asks them to tell the men that some fools came to them in shapeless gear and their speeches were viley penned. The ladies retreat to their tents. The King and his men return in their proper dresses. The ladies describe the foolish fellows who have visited them. The men's trick is found out. They confess it and are mocked at freely by the ladies. Berowne promises to give up the "Tafetta Phrases and silken terms precise". Th emen's folly of declaring their love to the wrong girls is also revealed. Costard arrives and informs them of the approach of the nine worthies. Arnado comes and delivers a paper to the king. Then the nine worthies enter, Costard a Pompey, Sir Nathaniel as Alexander, Holoferness as Judas, Moth as Hercules and Arnado as Hector. There is a great deal of merriment and much bandying or words. Marcade, a messenger comes and informs the princess that her father has passed away. The worthies depart. The Princess gets ready to go home. The King tries to detain her and his men join him with their entreaties to the ladies. The Princess asks the king to go to hermitage and perform penance for a year. When the austerities have purged him of his sins he is to come back and she will accept him. The same is the advice of the other ladies to their respective lovers. Berowne remarks that this is no comedy because every Jack has not his Jill. Armado enters saying he was vowed to be a votary for three years for Jaquenetta's hands. Hofofenes, Nathaniel, Moth, Costard and others enter. The play ends with a song by spring and another by winter.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The line numbers refer to the New Arden Edition

Act. I. Sc.I

I.2	Brazen tombs	: tombs made of brass
I.4	Spite of	: in spite of
	Cormorant	: ravenous: hungry, Cormorant is bird of prey
I.6	bate	: abate; lessen
	his scythe	: death's scythe which cuts us off from life.
I.13	Academe	: academy
I.17	statutes	: articles; sections.
I.18	schedule	: deed; legal declaration
I.19	subscribe	: put your signatures to
I.22	armed	: prepared
I.26	paunches	: bellies
	Pates	: heads; brain. Those who are interested in filling their belly have little brains
I.28	these	: these companions of mine
I.40	beside	besides
I.41	enrolled	: recorded; written down
I.44	think no harm all night	: because I am used to sleep soundly
I.45	make...day	: sleep half of the day time
I.50	an if	: if ((an=if)
I.54	by yea and nay jest	earnestly; in all seriousness
I.55	end	aim
I.57	commonsense	. average intelligence
I.70	stops	: hindrances

II. 72-93 notice Berowne's comments to get a glimpse into Shakespeare's view on book knowledge and on avoiding women.

1.80 Study me : Study for me (This use of "me" is called the ethic dative in grammar)

1.82 heed : 1. that which one specially heeds or cares for.
2. that which takes heed of us guardian

1.87 save : except

1.88 earthly... heaven's light : astronomers

1.91 wot : know

1.92 nought : nothing

1.97 green geese : young geese

1.100 sneaping : biting; nipping; sharp

1.112 barbarism : lack of culture

1.15 bide : abide by

1.127 gentility : good manners

1.145 as towns are won by setting fire to them and destroying them.

1.146 of force : necessarily

1.147 lie : remain; stay

1.150 affects : affections; passions

1.151 these passions can't be mastered by might but by God's grace only

1.156 stands in attainder : stands condemned and disgraced; guilty of reason

1.156 suggestions : temptations

1.167 complements : 1. fulfillment 2. Coutesy (earlier form of compliment)

1. 169 Armado height : called Armado

1.170 interim : Interval (for relaxation)

1.172 tawny : brown. The people in Spain are somewhat brown because of the warmer climate.

1.176 wight : person

1.178 swain : a rustic

1.181 what would' : what do you want?

1.182 reprehend : Dull means that he represents (the King) because he is a constable keeping law in the King's name. It is this kind of wrong use of words that we see in the Gobbos in the Merchant of Venice and Dogberry and Verges in Much Ado and Sheridan's Mrs Malaprop

1.183 farborough : (or third borough) a petty constable

1.188 contempts : for contents
as touching me : concerning me

1.200 taken with the manner : caught in the act; caught redhanded

1.1215 note Armado's ephuistic style

1.234 ucleped : called

1.247 hight : named

1.256 meed : reward

1.260 apprehended : arrested

1.291 lay : lay a wager; offer a bet

1.297 affliction : again an abusage meaning the opposite

Act I Sc.II

1.12 tender juvenal : youth. It is said that juvenal was a nickname for Nashe

1.25 codign : well merited

1.27 eel : another topical allusion. There is a proverb "to get a woman by the waist or a quick eel by the tall". Moth is said to imply that Armado

is always running after women. Hence Armdo's anger. Armado is Ralegh

1.33 crosses : Coins (many old coins bore the sign of the cross)

1.39 I am ill at reckoning. : I am notgood at counting or calculaiting

it fitteth...tapster : it is a job suited to a tapster. A tapster is one who serves drinkis in a tavern and colelcts the money for it from the customers.

1.44 deuce-ace : a two and a one at dice, a low score which would lose the game

1.46 the vulgar : the common people

1.51 dancing horse : a trick-performing ghorse who was famed to beat out numbers with his hoofs.

1.52 figure : a turn of rhetoric or of logic

1.53 cipher : nothing; zero; a person who is worth nothing

1.60 carriage : 1. bearing, Moth take it to mean 2. act of carrying

1.68 he carried the towngates: Samson was represented in aplay as carrying a gate on his neck.

1.75 complexion : Colour of the skin Moth takes the word in its meaning of the four humors (phlegm, blood, choler, melancholy)

1.84 affected : loved

1.85 green wit : inexperienced or immature intelligence. Some editors suggest green withe (with which Samson was bound)

1.87 maculate : spotted

1.89 define : explain

rational : intelligent

hind : I.rustic 2. stag

1.116 light : wanton. Note the play upon the words light and heavy

1.120 suffer : allow

1.121 a : he

1.123 allowed for the day woman Passed as a dairy maid (dey)

1.162 familar : attendant spirit

Act II.Sc.I

1.1 dearest spirits : best wits

1.5 parley : hold talks with

1.6 owe : own

1.16 chapmen : merchants; dealers

1.25 to's : to us

1.29 single : select

1.29 best-moving : eloquent; able to move or persuade

fair : just

1.31 craving dispatch : requiring quick settlemet

1.32 importunes : begs for ; requests for

1.34 humble visaged suitors : petitioners with humble visages (faces)

1.37 votaries : worshippers(of learning)

1.44 becomes : suits

1.52 belike : likely; probably

1.69 : begets : creates. Whatever his eye sees it turned into a jest by his eye

1.78 garnished : adorned

1.82 competitors : associates

1.83 addressed : prepared ; made ready

1.87 dispensation : violation

1.100 it will : its will, my will shall break your will
1.98 beseems : befits : suits
1.118 quick : sharp
1.119 Tis long of you : owing to you
1.127 so you be none : if your are not one them
1.136 bound : give as security
1.141 purposeth : intends
1.149 gelded : reduced in value
1.156 unseeming ; seeming not to
1.60 arrest your word : seize your word as security
1.161 acquittances : receipts
1.165 sepecialities : paritculars; details
1.173 without : outside
1.226 were : would be
1.235 thorough : through
1.240 all sense..repair : all his senses went to his eyes and were concentrated there.
1 246 margent : marging
1.250 disposed : inclined to be merry
1.259 too hard for me : too difficutl for me to manage

Act. III.Sc.I

1.4 enlargement : freedom. set hin free
festinately : in hurry
1.7 French brawl : a French dance. The page takes the word to mean a quarrel
1.10 canary : (v) to dance
1.15 penthoue : overhanging roof
1.48 carry me.. : carry a letter for me
1.65 welkin : sky
1.68 costard : apple
1.71 planatin : plantain leaf

salve in the mail : a medicine in the bag. Dont'bring any medicine but only a plantain leaf (which was, at that time, the usual remedy for a bruised skin)
1.78 other : otherwise
1.81 precedence : preceding words (probably a quotation)
to fore : before
sain : said
1.99 sold him a bargain : made a fool of him
1.126 durance : imprisonment
1.128 significant : letrer (that which signifies)
12.129 ward : guard
1.133 incony : darling (sl)
1.141 carnation ribbon : flesh coloured ribbon
1.145 farthing : one-fourth of a penny
half penny farthing : three farthings,
1.165 guerdon : reward. Berowne gives Costard a shilling. To Costard remuneration means three farthings and guerdon is much more than a remuneration
1.168 in print : exactly very carefully
12.172 beadle : it was the duty of a beadle to whip immoral women
humours : moody; sad
1.175 magnificent : pround, arrogant
1.176 This ...wayward boy : cupid
1.181 plackets : petticoats; pockets
codpieces : appendage to men's hose.The two refer to women and men
1.182 paritors : Ecclesiastical courts
1.184 corporal of the field : a superior officer of the army in

the 16th & 17th centuries (not the present day rank)

1.185 a tumbler's hoop : tumbling was a popular feat; the tumbler used a hoop decorated with ribbons

1.187 clock : with a pun on "clock" and cloak"

1.193 whitely : pale

Wanton : woman of loose morals

1.195 do the deed : performs the sexual act

1.196 Argus : Juno has set Argus to wathc over Jupiter but Mercury closed his eyes.

enuch : eunuchs were set to guard the women in harems

1.202 Joan : an inferior woman like a kitchen maid

ACT IV.Sc.I

1.4 a' : he

1.5 dispatch : (we shall have) our business settled

1.8 play the murderer kin : shoot the deer

1.10 a stand : place where the hunter stands and sends his arrows at the animal

1.18 good my glass : the forester is a mirror that shows the princess her face truly. He says that she may make the fairest shoot. When she points out that she is fair he replies that he did not mean that. The princess comments that he doesn't consider her fair. In this he serves as a mirror and shows her unfair face to her.

1.21 saved by merit : saved by recompense

1.23 giving : liberal

1.30 out of question : certainly

1.33 bend : tunr; direct. The heart is against killing the animal. But that mercy is bent to show one's skill

1.58 break up this capon : (fig) open the letter, he was entrusted with two letters. (see previous scene)

1.69 annothanize : annotate; explain

1.87 Nemean lion : the reference is to the first of Hercule's labours. Hercules killed the lion

1.92 repasture : repast; food

1.93 indited : wrote

1.98 phantasime : a creature full of fancy

Monarcho : a fantastical character, whose pride made him a common but of ridicule

1.105 mistaken : taken to the wrong person

1.106 here sweet... : most probably addressed to Rosaline

I'will be thine another day: you will get your love letter another day. A case of dramatic irony-the audience knows more than the speaker and the listeners on the stage.

1.107 continent : the which contains; the sum total

1.47 nit : anything very small

ACT.IV. Sc. II

1.2 in the testimony .. Conscience: with the approval of a good conscience

1.3 sanguis : in blood ie., in good health and

vigor

1.4	pomewate	: a kind apple.
1.5	Coleo	: cielo; i.e., the sky
1.6	terra	: earth
1.10	bick...head	: a grown buck (male of the deer)
1.11	haud credo	: not credible
	Pricket	: a young deer buck
1.22	bis cactus	: twice baked
1.31	patch	: fool
1.32	Omme bene	: all for good
1.36	Dictynna	: Diana or the moon
1.52	perge	: continuc
1.53	abrogate scurrility	: abolish coarseness
1.55	affect the letter	: resort to alliteration
1.65	talent	: talon; claw
1.70	pia mater	: brain
1.73	Mehercle	: by Hercules (an oath)
1.79	vit... loquitur	: with few words a wise man will compass much
1.812	person	: parson
1.85	hogshead	: thick witted person
1.98	ut. re.....the seven notes of the Western musical scale	
1.102	stanze	: stanza
1.32	intellect	: meaning
1.156	undertake your ben venuto	introduce you to the host
1.164	pauca verba	: in few words, briefly

Act. IV. Sc.III

1.1	coursing	hunting
1.2	1.2 pitched t toil	set a snare
1.3	1.3 pitch	: perhaps a reference to Rosaline's dark complexion or her dark eyes

1.6	Ajax	: Ajax is said to have spent his fury on sheep and oxen and killed them
1.12	lie in my throat	: Tell a lie that comes from deep down
1.46	perjure	: perjurer
	Wearing paper	: perjurers were obliged to wear papers on their breasts describing their offence. Another form of pubishment was to brand "P" on their forcehead
1.53	triumviry	: group of three
	Corner-cap	: a cap with three (of four) corners
1.54	love's Tyburn	: the gallows was triangular in shape (tyburn tree=gallows.
	Tyburn	: a place in London where there was a gallows
	Simplicity	: folly
1.57	numbers	: verses
1.58	guards	: embroideries
1.72	liver vein	: vien or style of love. The liver was supposed to be the seat of love
1.79	more sacks to the mill	: a great deal of drudgery
1.80	woodcocks	: simpletons
1.84	she is not, corporal	: disputed passage. This is the reading of the quartos and the folios. The comma after "not" shows that the word "corporal" is addressed to Dumain. Berowne contradicts Dumain applying the word corporal to the latter, he had used it of himself earlier. Theobald reads it"she is but a corporal" (she is only corporeal, earthly)

1.85 heramber..quoted : her amber hairs have shown that real amber is foul in comparison with themselves.

quoted : noted; markd i.e. shows

1.88 with child : stooping , like apregnant woman's belly

1.95 incision : blood-letting

1.96 misprision : mistake

1.116 Ethiop : a dark person

1.120 fasting : hungry

1.35 shouded : hidden

closely : secretly

1.162 teen : grief

1.172 caudle : a warm,thin drink of gruel and ale

1.206 pickpurses : thieves

1.239 40 a hermit, one hundred years old will become fifty years old if he sets eyes on her

1.242 crutch : old man

cradle young person

1.285 quillets : subtleties

1.285 salve : remedy, something to soothe or comfort

1.295 pore : read carefully

1.297 ground : base; basis; foundation

1.301 promethean fire : creative fire; life-giving fire

Prometheus, in classical mythology, stole fire from mount Olympus: the seat of the Gods, conveyed it to men and taught them to use it. Fire is symbolic of knowledge and of life.

1.304 long during : lasting long

1.310 teaches : who teaches

1.311-313 note the metaphycical conceit in these lines

1.318 leaden : dull (the opposite of "fiery' in the next line)

1.319 numbers : verses; poetry (written by the lovers)

1.320 keep : remain (in the brain)

1.327 courses : runs, flows

1.330 seeting : power of seeing

1.331 a lover's eves ...blind : the eage is said to have very keen sight. A lover's sight is so keen tha by comparison the eagle's eyes are as good as blind

1.333 suspicious head of theft: head suspicious of theft, one who fears thieves hears the footsteps of theives everywhere

1.335 cockled : I inshelled like the cockle fish 2.folded or wrinkled

1.335 Bacchus : god of wine in Greek mythology

1.338 reference to the task of Hercules. Hesperides was the garden where the golden apples gre. These were guarded by the Hesperides, the daughters of Hesperus. Hercules entered the garden slew the dragon that kept watch and brought the apple to earth. (compare line 330-336) with Duke Threseus speech on imagination in A Midsummer Night's Dream)

1.362 sever : seperate

1.364 standard : banners (of an army marching to battle)

1.365 pell-mell : (causing) confusion

1.366 get the sun of them : have them at a discadvantage: defeat them (with the sun on their face)

1.366 Now to plain dealing : Now to business now to plain common sense

1.380 allons, allons : proceed; go on

cockle : (mitakeny considered to be) a grass

Act.V.Sc.I

1.1 statis quid sufficeit : what sufficies is sufficient
1.3 sententious : pithy; terse
1.5 opinion : self-conceit (cf.opinionated)
1.6 quondam day : the other day (quondam=former)
1.8 intituled : entitled
1.10 Novi hominent tanquem to : I know the man as well as I know you
1.13 thrasonical : beautiful
1.15 peregrinate : travelling
1.19 fanatical : extravagant
phantasime : (a coinage not found any where except in IV, 198. of this paly with a dlfferent sense) a person full of fancies.
1.19-20point devise : precise; exact
1.20 orthography : spelling
1.23 clepeth : calls
1126 it...insanie : I, it suggests insanity to me
2.it drivesme mad
1.30 Your Latin is a little mutilated (Students are advised not to bother much about the meaning of the snatches of Latin.Some of these are good Latin, some wrong,. Only note the affected scholarship)
1.33 Chirrah : Sirrah was the correct form of addressing an inferlor (Sir for a Surperior)Chirrah is probably theWestcountry pronuciation ofsir Walter Ralegh. A topical allusion is discovered in this dialectal variation
1.42-43 flapdragon a plum or raism floating and

snapped at in the game of Snap-dragon
1.51 consonant : a nonetity; that which does not exist by itself, a consonant requires a vowel sound with it
1.61 figure : figure of speech
1.65 menu cita : with ready hand
1.99 excrement : that which grows forth
1.104 all of all : sum and substance
1.113 Nine Worthies : Duke Josua, Hector, David Alexander, Judas Machabaeus, Julius Caesar, King Arthur Charlemayne and Guy of Warwick

Act.V.Sc.II

1.2 fairings : gifts (bought at a fair)
1.8 margent : margin
1.9 fain : joyful ; eager
1.10 wax :increase (with a quibble on the word)
1.11 cupid is represented usually as aboy. He is a boy for ever
1.12 shrewd : cursed, unlucky
gallows : one who is fit to be hanged
1./13 a : he
1.30 favour : I. token of love
2. face; personal appearance
1.31 J would : I wish
1.33 were : would be
1.37 fairs : fair women
1.42 text B the letter B written in the text hand, ie, the formal script
1.43 red dominical : the letter S in red denoting a Sunday in old almanacs
1.48 twain two

1.65	bootless	: usless, futile
	Hests	: commands (behests)
1.67	Pair-Taunt like	: like the pair taunt ie the winning hand in the card game called "post and pair". Pair taunt is a set of four cards of a sort. (This has been read in various ways by various critics – Pedant-like, Portent-like pagent-like etc.,etc.,
1.69	catched	: infected
1.88	breath	: voice
1.93	warily	: carefully cautiously
1.98	embassage	: message
1.109	the itching of the elbow was believed to be a sign of satisfaction	
	Fleered	: grinned
1.110-111	finger and thumb	: he snapped his fingers
1.112	via	: go on forward
1.117	spleen	: excess of mirth
1.122	parle	: parely; hold conference
1.124	several	: separate ie., respective
1.135	removes	: changes
	S.D. visored	: masked
1.206	eyne	: eyes
1.233	treys	: Threes in the game of dice
1.233	Metheglin, wort malmsey	: three drinks
1.235	cog	: cheat at dice
1.249	half	: better half; wife
1.252	horns	: the horns of a cuckold. Will you make me a cuckold?
1.269	flout	: jeer; mockery
1.272	out of countenance	: disconcerted

1.275	out of all suit	: not at all
1.279	trow	: know
1.279	qualm	: an attack pf sickness or faintness (with a pun with "came")
1.322	he had	: he would have: If he had been Adam he would have tempted Eve.
1.399	at hail	: Welcome (pun on hail-frozen rain has been suggested here)
1.349	nickname	: (verb) name by mistake
1.361	mess	: set of four
1.368	habit	: dress
1.369	talked space	: chattered
1.372	when....drink	: a way of saying "you are a fool"
1.375	heaven's fiery eye	: the sun
1.375-376	even the best of eyes lose their sight by staring at the sun SO those Russians might seem dull-witted before your sharp wit.	
1.413	kersey	: plain; homely (from the coarse home spun woolen cloth of England called Kersey)
1.417	rage	: passion, disease, vogue ie., using high-flown language
1.422	visited	: affected or attacked by plague
1.423	tokesn	: signs of the plague
1.425	states	: 1. health; condition 2. Property or estates
	Forefeit	: consfiscated
1.427	forfeit	: having given up voluntarily. So how can you request (sue) it back?
1.459	remit	: give up
	Twin	: two
1.463	carry-tale	: tale-bearer; spy

	Please-man	:	sycophant; flatterer
	zany	:	rustic servant
1.464	mumble.news	:	prattler; idle talker
	Trencher-knight	:	fellow; companion
1.465	that smiled ...years	:	who laughs till his face becomes wrinkled
1.495	she	:	the mistress; woman
1.526	fortunade laguerra	:	the fortune of war
1.527	complement	:	couple
1.538	abate...novum	:	except a crow
	Nuvum	:	a game of dice
1.542	libbard	:	leopard, the phrase means a lion's front face
1.556	my hat to a half penny	:	I bet may hat if I lose; give me half penny if I gain
1.629	clean-timbered	:	well built
1.632	small	:	small part of the leg
1.635	armipotent	:	a title of Mars
1.646	columbine	:	popular flower
1.668	infamonize	:	infamize ie., defame
1.678	Ates	:	spirits of discord
1.738	justle	:	jostle; Joust with; fight with; oppose
1.776	quote	:	take them to mean
1.779	world without end	:	everlasting; long lasting (See Sonnet I vii)
1.787-88	until...reckoning	:	for a year
1.791	weeds clothes	:	garments
1.802	intitled	:	having a claim
1.808	to till		The line means "you must be purged till your sins are racked" ie., till you are purified through suffering
	racked	:	tortured

1.809	attaint	:	convicted'
1.835	all estates	:	people of all sorts
1.860	befall	:	happen Whatever happens, let it happen

1.865-866 Note Shakespeare's idea of comedy in a nutshell is expressed here. If it is to be a comedy every Jack must have his Jill. But here "Jack hath not Jill"

1.891 "Cuckoo" I a word of fear to a married ear because it brings to mind the world "cuckold"

1.910	keel	:	cool

TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL ESSAYS

1. Love's Labours Lost in the scheme, of Shakespearean comedy or Romantic comedy

Or

Examine Love's Labours Lost with reference to the characteristic feature of Shakespeare's Romantic comedies.

Comedy as it developed and matured in Shakespeare's hands display certain characteristic feature. These make his comedies a class by themselves and have earned for them the name or Romantic comedies as distinct from other types of comedies. Put briefly, these features are as follows.

Shakespearean comedy is sympathetic, poetic, imaginative and romantic, not critical satrirc and realistic. Its setting is, world of make believe far removed from the work-a-day world of reality Ilyria the Forest of Arden etc. Into this romantic world emerges occasionally the world of reality, that is to say Shakespeare's London, From this meeting and mingling of the two worlds arise much of the humour, which constitutes comedy. Earlier to Shakespeare comedy was mainly satiric, exposing and ridiculing the foibles and fooleries of people. It was unkind and unsympathetic to the persons ridiculed. But Shakespearean comedy is generally sympathetic even when making fun of people. The characters are capable of laughing at them-

selves. These plays of Shakespeare were essentially a fusion of romance and comedy.

Another ingredient of Shakespearean comedy is the theme of love, its lawless might, its laughableness abd loveableness.. Closely allied to this is the characteristic ending of the plays in marriages, not-one but several. Women dominate the stage in Shakespeare's comedies, men in tragedies.Highly poetic passages and songs and the presence of professional fools are other typical features. Beneath the surface of riotous fun and laughter there is an undercurent of melancholy.Above all these is the pervasive humanity of 'Shakespear. Even in The Merchant of Venice which is obviously satiric the Jew's speech beg beginning "hath not Jews eyes...etc., " the sentiment expressed are those of Shakespeare, who seems to be addressing the audience the Christians exulting over the discomfiture of the Jew.

These elements gradually developed into a harmonious blend in artistically satisfying dramatic works, the best examples of which are Mush Audo about Nothing. As You Like it and Twelfth Night. Even in the early comedies, Two Gentlemen of Verona and midsummer Night's Dream, these elements are present to a greater or lesser ex-tent. In the Merchant of Venice the last act is highly romantic with the moonlit terace at Belmont.

But in Love's Labours Lost we don't come across any of these elements. Perhaps the only elements is the theme of the love of man and woman. The attraction of the sexes towards each other is as old as the world and Shakespeare is fully aware of it from his own experiences and from his observation of the world. Here and there we come across a character, a situation, a stage trick fully developed by Shakespeare are in his later plays. Such are for example the abusage of English by Dull the constable and Costard the clown which bring to our mind Dogbery and Verges in Much Ao and the Gobbos in the Merchant of Venice. Arnado and Jaquenetta anticipate Touchstone and Audrey in As You Like it. "Our wooing doth not end like an old play / Jack hath not Jill" says Berowne at the end of the paly. This shows that the idea of every Jack having his Jill and not going ill is already formed in Shakespeare's mind even at this early stage in his

career, This motto runs through the very texture of his later comedies.

These elements in embryo and the love theme, which is also not fully and satisfactorily worked out, constitute some of the obvious links between this play and typical Shakespearean comedies.There may be more if we search very closely. But the conclusion is inescapable that Love's Labours Lost is a product of Shakespeare's apprenticeship as a playwright. H.B.Charlton in his famous work Shakespearean Comedy remarks that htis play was Shakespeare's first attempt at blending comedy and romance and that he ended up in making romance comic. The attempt was a failure and he shelved it in the Taming of the Shrew. Some other critics assign the play to a little later date. But they too seem to agree that it belonged to Shakespeare's early attempts at comedy.

Another possible reason for the variation is that it was conceived as a court play for the entertainment of the Earl of Essex and others who liked to make fun of Sir Walter Ralegh and his academy. The topical allsions point to this same conclusion.

We can safely conclude that Love's Labours Lost represents in the first faltering steps in Shakespear's apprenticeship as a dramatist.

2. The major theme of Love's Laborus Lost

The central theme of Love's Labours Lost is the lawless might of love This is the theme in Shakespearean comedy in but in the mature plays it is made more plausible. here in this play it is presented in its bare form and not worked out in credible and life-like details. King Ferdinant of Navarre and three of his courties take a solemn vow that they will spend an austere life devoted to studies and will have nothing to do with women for three years. The courtiers are to stay in the king's palace and nowoman is to be admitted into the palace during this period. Berowne points out the futility of the scheme but agrees to go with them. The King makes them sign their names to the pledge. Presently there come to the court the Princess of France accompanied by three laides of her court. The King and his three friends go out to receive the

ladies and arrange for receiving them in tents outside the palace. But all the frou of them fall victims to the charm of the ladies. Each is attracted by one of the four ladies. Their vows are broken and they try to hide their plight from one another. But soon they admit their perjury. The ladies enjoy themselves with the opportunity to make fun of the men. This briefly is the story and it brings out the theme of love's might before which men and women are helpless pawns.

Closely allied to this is the theme of learning. Shakespeare knew very well that learning was not a matter of poring over books. Shakespeare's views on this are brought out through the comments of Berowne. "As, painfully to pore upon book/To seek the light of truth; While truth the while/Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look". He remarks again 'Too much to know is to nought but fame. As part of learning. The usage and abusage of affected and pretentious language is called Euphusim from Euphuis, a character in one of Lyly's plays. This forms the underplot of the play the fantastically unnatural use of language.

"Tafetta phrases, silken terms precise, Three-piled hyperboles, 'spruce affectation, Figures pedantical; these summer flies Have blown me fullof maggot ostentation'. These words of Berowne have become provertbial; they describe the affected language more beautifully than it deserves.

Thus we find two kinds of pose One is that of celibacy and devotion to learning. It turns out to be only a pose and affectation. This constittues the main theme. The affected use of language, artificial and fantastic, is the secondary theme.

3. Love's Labours Lost has greater affinity to Shakespeare's poems than to his plays - Discuss

Setting aside the question of merits or demerits of Love's Labours Lost and the question of its date of composition, we are struck by one particular aspect of the play. It has passages which are intesely Lyrical and it is full of echoes of Shakespeare's nondramatic poems such ads the Rape of Lucrece and the sonnets.

In the first place there are far more rimed lines thar es in

blankverse. One editor has pointed out that it has twice as many lines as blankverse and that in its earlier form the proportion was even greater. There are four sonnets incorporated into the dialogue of the play (one in Act I Sec. I 161-174 one in Act IV Sc. II 104-117, one in IV III 25-38 an another in IV, III. II 58-71) There is a song and much doggerrel; many alternate names end stopped lines and six lined stanzas.

These are only external formal features . Far more striking than these are the thoughts, the turns of expression and the images and symbols. The striking resemblances between the dark lady sonnets and Berowne's praise of blackness have been noted by studious critics. It is worth comparing the following sets of lines.

1. "In the old age black was not counted fair, Or if it bore note beauty's name..." (Sonnet 128)

"A whitely wanton with a velvety brow

With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes"

(II. 1.193-94)

II. "Or as the snail whose tender horns being hit,

Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain'

(Venus and Adonis)

"Love's feeling is more soft and sensible

Than are the tender horns of cockled snails"

(IV, III 334-335)

III. "But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive"

(sonnet 14)

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive..."

(IV, III.II 299-301)

Several passages in the play decrying flattery echo sonnet 21. A long list of these has been presented by Modern Language Notes (XV No. 6-1900). Rosaline is dark in complexion and her eyes are black. Berowne is mocked at constantly for his preference of the dark lady. "No face is fair that is not full so black" he says These have great affinity with the dark lady sonnets. The

excuse is ever "her eyes" and their "heavenly rhetoric", eyes shining "in every tear that I do weep", eyes that are ever stars and wisdom's academe. Women's eyes are a constantly recurring image in Love's Labours Lost and Shakespear's sonnets, especially those relating to the dark lady. Here may be a clue to the topical seems to be positive.. It is the striking similarly of image and expression and external formal features between this play and the non dramatic poems of AShakespeare.

(Students are advised to ignore the act, scene and line numbers They are meant for reference only)

4. The topical interest of the play.

Many critics agree on the view that Love's Labours Lost contains several allusions to contemporary men and events and that it must have been of a great deal more interest at the time than it is now. Its spectators must have seen a dramatic version of some events in their own life-time.

There was a real King of Navarre who possessed many of the qualitites of the King in the play. His name was Henry, not Ferdinard. Henry was a protestant who fought against the Catholic League and England helped him. He was popular in England at the time but forfeited it when he became a catholic and the English troops sent to help him were withdrawn. There was a riot in London against foreign refugees. Moth's joke about a "French brawl" is said to be a reference to this riot. There is a reference to the palgue of London. It was violent in the years 1591-4. The reference to the dancing horse also is topical. There was a horse belonging to Bank-it was named Morocco and it could perform many tricks. It has been suggested that the hunting scene owes something to an account of queen Elizabeth hunting, in Queen's Entertainment at Cowdray published in 1591. Sir Edmund Chambers dismisses this as silly.

Still another topical element in the play point to the pamphlet war between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe-the papmphlet on Pierce Penniless and the rejoinders to it. The Russian disguises of the King and his courtiers also are said to have topical relevance.

There was a remarkable revel at Grey's Inn in which some were dressed as Russians and they were accompanied by Negro Tartants (the blackamoors in the play). Sir Walter Ralegh had an affair with the Queen's maid of honor (afterwards he married her). Ralegh fell from the Queen's favour on account of this. Ralegh's circle of friends known as the "school of atheism" find a place in the play as the "school of Night". It has also been suggested that Holofernes the pedant is a caricature of Shakespeare's schoolmaster at Stratford.

It has also been pointed out that Shakespeare's dramatic models for this play were Lyly's plays such as Endymion, Euphues etc. and the Comedia dell' Arte, a form of comedy popular in Italy. Another possible model suggested is the Queen's Progresses, number of a dramatic shows presented before the Queen when she visited rich houses. the New Arden editor Ritchard David points out that neither the historical events nor the models suggested fully explain the purpose and point of the play. The reader of the play is left with an impression of an intention on the part of the dramatist. Sir Arther/Quitller Couch suggests that the reader will be teased by after thoughts of meanings missed". The Arden Editor gives nine passages which must embody some contemporary jokes now lost to us. These are:

1. Armado and Moth's play on the words "tender Juvenile"
2. Armado's resentment to the allusion of an eel.
3. The constant pun on "penny" and "purse"
4. The doggerel on the Fox, the Ape and the Humble bee,
5. The reference to a "School of Night"
6. Armado's pronounciation of Sirrah as " Chirrah" (This was the pronounciation of the word in Ralegh's place)
7. The reference to a chargehouse on a mountain where Holofernes teaches.
8. the unorthodox inclusion of Hercules and Pompey among the nine worthies.
9. the connection of Holofernes with Judas Iscariot

All the above shows that Love's Labours Lost was a battle in a

private war between court factions. It has also been suggested that it was written for private performance in court circles. hence the interest of the play for the contemporaries and none for later times.

5. Love's Labours Lost- A general Estimate

"If we were to part with any of the author's comedieds it should be this," This is Hazlitt's opinion on Love's Labours Lost. And this iponion has been shared by many critics. many passages in it are mean childish and vulgar" according to Dr. Johnson he also suggests topicalities that will be lost to posterity. Dryden says that it is grounded on impossibilities and causes neither mirth nor concern. Brandes sees tediousness in the play.

Against these condemnations there are some critical opinions praising the play., Quiller-Couch and Dover Wilson see a total impression of delicacy and charm. They say that something more remains and that something is characteristic of Shakespeare. It springs from Shakespeare's early rustic observation. Behind it is the core of rural England, Shakespeare's native Arden according to these penetrating critics.

Coleridge also Sees Shakespeare's own multiformity and imaginative genius and the school boy Shakespeare's observation of the curate, the Schoolmaster and so on. Coleridge agrees that it is a juvenile drama of Shakespeare but it bears the impress of his personality. Richard David the New Arden editor of the play says there has been a shift in attitude of the playgoers recently, a shift favourable to the play. He classes it with Shakespeare's attempts at pure poetry and sees great lyrical power. He says that there have been many successful revivals of the play on the stage recently.

Some aspects of the play cannot escape our attention whether we agree or disagree with the critics. It is deficient in plot. There is very little story in it. A king and his three courtiers taking a vow that they will abjure the company of women for three years and breaking their vows within a few days. This is the story and it is presented in bare outline, not worked out with plausible details in successive incidents. There is no complication in their fortunes, no rivalries, no obstacles. The plan is too mechanical-three men and three women and

none of life's variety and complexity.

Secondly the characterization also is deficient in comparison with the other plays of Shakespeare. The courtiers lack personality. They have wit but they lack humanity. Perhapes that is why Shakespeare the mature dramatist sent them in revising the play, to a hermitage and a hospital; only thus can wit become human. The play lacks as well in physical and social setting that is to say in their vividness.

Th style and the dialogue too are not quite upto the mark in dram[illegible]ffectiveness. Thew doggerel, the rimed lines, the regular stanza forms of some of the dialogues and the presence of full fledged Shakespearean sonents worked into the dialogue all these are defects from the point of view of the dramatic Art. Absolutely considered, with out reference to their dramatic context they may have great lyrical merit. Love's Labours Lost is more of a stage spectacle and verbal display than a good piece of drama.

So much and so little was Shakespeare when he began. The later plays reveal a distinctive and coherent apprehension of life. This shows that genius can grow and develop from such inadequate beginnings.

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Prepared By

PROF. T.C. GOVINDAN (Retd)

Palakkad.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

UNIT - 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Source and Date of Measure for Measure

In the great bandqueting chamber at Whitehall on St. Stephen's Night (December 26) 1604, a play called 'measure for Measures by 'Shaxber' was performed by His Majesty's Servants before King James I and his court, as we are informed in the 'Revels Accounts' first printed by Peter Cunningham in 1842.

Various topical; allusions (noted at i, iil-5, 73-4, 85-6 and IV iii 13-8) would suggest, however, that the play had been written at some time soon after the reopening of the theatres on April 9, 1604, and that it was performed publicly during the summer months of that year. Throughout 1603 the theatres had been closed because of the plague. Such a date for the play is further confirmed by the two passages at Li 68-73 and II. IV 26-30 in which the Duke affirms his love for his people, but his dislike of crowds and public acclaim. The allusion appears to be not so much to a general dislike of crowds by the king as to a specific event which occured on March 15, 1604. When James I enountered a turbulent and unruly crowd on what he had planned as a secret visit to the Royal Exchange following a royal progress through the city in which Shakespeare's company had taken part. A report of the incident appeared in a tract, the Time Triumphant, entered ir the Stationer's Register on March 27, 1604 and published soon after, supposedly written by pneGilbert Dugdale, but actually the work of Robert Armin, an important member of Shakerpeare's company. That Shakespeare, besides being familiar with the event in question, had read this tract before writing Measure for Measure is fairly certain.

Measure for Measure was not printed, however, before, its inclusion in the Folio of 1623, having been set up apparently from a transcript of Shakespear's own draft of the play (foul papers)

prepared by Ralph Crane, a professional scrivener in the employ of the King's Men after 12620. It is a text divided. Some what carelessly, into acts and scenes, and it is marked by some confusion of prose and verse, by mislineation, omissions and by a considerable number of printer's errors of various kind. The FI text is followed fairly closely here, all necessary departures being indicated in the notes and variations from its act and scene division being indicated by the usual square.

Nineteenth century commentators, and many later ones as well, have tended to dislike Measure of Measure. They have called it an unfinished play, a dramatic failure of which Shakespeare himself grew tired before ompletion falling back upon the 'bed trick' he had already used in All's Well That Ends Well to hastily conclude a plot he did not know how to resolve. Some have pointed to the many seeming inconsistencies in the work, not only in the plot but in the major characters, and few have failed to remark that while the play is full of magnificient verse up to the point at III-I-150, when the Duke steps forward, the remainder of the play consists largely of uninspired prose. The dramatic focus at this point has seemed also to suddenly change whereas Isabella had been the centre of attention, she now becomes a fairly passive figure, and it is the Duke who receives the difficulties of the play. But what most offended Victorian critics was the sexuality of the play's theme and the crude obscenity of much of its humor, with its constant dwelling upon such unromantic subjects as prostitution and veneral disease. Whatever we may say of Measure for Measure, its tone is not that of As You like it or Twelth Night.

In recent years, however, the play has come to be recognized not as a failure but as one of the great achievements of Shakespeare's most creative period, that which also produced Othello, upon which Measure for Measure appears to have followed closely. Few of us today are offended by the sexuality of the play, for we recognize this concern as only part of a far greater pre-occupation on Shakespeare's part, an intensive probing of the meaning of human virtue. We are able to see, moreover, that those

elements which offended Victorian sensibilities are inevitable of the story which Shakespeare adapted and transformed.

The Corrupt Magistrate

Measure for Measure is an amalgam of three traditional story motifs, all of which appear over and over again in European literature. For the most important of these, the story of Angelo and his bargain with Isabella. Shakespeare consulted a two-part play, apparently never staged, by George Whetstone, called The Right Excellent and Famous History of Promos and Cassandra, printed in 1578. Whetstone retold the story in prose in his Heptameron of Civil Discourse, printed in 1582, and he republished it as Aurelia in 1592. That Shakespeare had read the prose version as well as the play is more than likely.

The story as Whetstone tells it is one of a large group of tales about corrupt magistrates, current throughout Europe, of which probably the most infleuntial is that of Apius and Virginia, first told by the Roman hisorian Livy. Whetstone;s particular complex of events seems to hav ebeen based upon an actual episode which is describe in a letter written in Latin from Vienna in 1547 by a Hungarian student named Joseph Macarius. The Heroine was the wife of a soldier condemned for murder; she actually submitted to teh magistrate who promised that her husband would be freed if she did so, and she complained to the Duke when the magistrate broke his promise and had her husband executed. The letter of Macarius appears to have been the basis for many later versions, including a Senecan tragedy by Claude Ruillet called Philanira, published in Latin in 1556 and in French in 1563. In different versions the locale and the circumstances underwent changes. Whetstone had gone for his play to Giraldi Cinthio's Hecatommithi, published in 1565, where a version of the story is told as the fifth novella of the eighth decade of part two. Cinthio later dramatized the story in his play Epitia, published posthumously in 1583. Cinthio made the heroine the condemned man's sister rather than his wife.

That Shakespeare had read Cilthio's prose version as well

as Whetstone's play we can be fairly certain, and there is some likelihood that he knew the play Epifia as well. The Hecatornmmithi had served as the source for Othello, and both plays give evidence that at this period of his career Shakespeare was deeply concerned with the ethical issues which the highly moralistic Cinthio had used both his prose novelle and his plays to explore. While it is impossible to establish any clear dependence of Measure of Measure upon Epitia, in this Italian tragicomdedy we may find a high intellectual tone and a probing of moral issues which is present also in Shakespeare's play but is entirely absent from Whestone's.

In Cinthio's novel the magistrate promises to release the condemned man and to marry the heroine if she submits to him, and on these terms she yields. He betrays her, however by having her brother beheaded, and he sends the body to her with the head at its feet. In the Epitia the Keeper of the prison substitutes a condemned criminal for the heroine's brother, and this is carried over into Whetsone's account. She is shown a mangled head which is not that of her brother, and she goes to present her case before the ruler, believing that she has been betrayed. In both Cinthio and Whetstone the ruler order that the magistrate marry the heroine and then be executed, and in both accounts he is spared when she pleads for his life. It should be no end that in no version of the story earlier than Shakespeare's does the heroine faile to submit to the magistrate in order to redeem her brother, and in no version is this submission treated as improper or sinful. This drastic alteration of the story, and the other elements which Shakespeare fused with it, serve to give his play a direction quite different from that of any of the earlier accounts.

THE DISGUISED DUKE

Shakespeare's Duke Vincentio is in part inspired by the magnanimous and judicious Emperor Macimilian of Cinthio's account, but it owes more to a long folk tradition which goes back to the Arabian Nights, for the disguised ruler is a familiar motif in

the literature of Western Europe. By 1604 it had long been a popular feature of English plays, and Shakespear had a dramatic as well as a folk tradition upon which to draw. In Shakespeare's own day the historical figure of the Roman emperor Alexander Severus was widely celebrated as a model ruler, and to him the folk motif inevitably came to be attached. Sir. Thomas Elyot in the image of Governanse (1511) tells of this ruler's wanderings. King James 1 was flattered as comparable to Alexander Severus, and it has been held with some palusibility that Shakespeare's Duke us influenced by some of the King's own political ideas as they are expressed in his BasilicaonDoron a poloitical tratise outlining the qualities of the ideal ruler which the king had written for the qualities of the ideal ruler which the king had written for the edification of his young son. It was first printed in Edinburgh in 1599 and later widely disseminated both in England and on the continent. To see Vincentio as an allegorical portrait of James I, however is quite unwarranted.

Shakespeare's duke is an idealized figure who by his wisdom and virtue is able to reconcile the conflicting forces in the play. The very notion of a ruler wandering among the peopkle unknown to them, setting their affairs and dispensing justice through his own grate virtue and wisdom, has its analog in the ministry of Jesus Christ, and since Measure for Measure is concerned with religious issues, some critics have tended to see in Shakespeare's Duke a symbol of Christ Himself. While analogy have made that story their central concern for two thousand years should occasion little surprise, there is no reason to see in the play any elaborate Christian Allegory, as has been argued by some recent writers.

The 'Bed Trick'

There can be little doubt that Shakespeare had in mind the model of his own All's well that Ends Well when he added to the play the 'bed trick' or substituted bride element a time honoured device, deeply rooted in folk legendary. It is Shakespeare's own way of resolving a plot in which the heroine's chastity must not be

yielded to the seucer. Isabella has been much censured by critics for her role in the bed substitution; she has even been said to have abandoned her own principles in this act and have become a procuress in order to preserve a mere appearance of virtue on her own part. While there are many ambiguities in the situation, it must be remembered that Angelo and Mariana, having executed a valid marriage contract, were by Elizabethan law and custom actually married and that in substituting Mariana for herself Isabella is not causing her to commit the very sinful act which she herself has been so anxious to avoid. She is restoring an errant husband to his lawful wife.

I.B. SETTING OF MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Intellectual comedy

The realistic setting of Measure for Measure, its deep concern with moral issues, and a supposed cynicism and disillusion which Victorian critics detect in the play caused it to be characterized along with All's Well That Ends Well and Triolus and Cressida as one of Shakespeares dark comedies, a group of plays arising, it was conjectured from some deep personal disillusionment in Shakespeare's life which gave rise also to the sombre mood of Hamalet and Othello, the term is an unfortunate one, and the biographical assumptions to which it is linked are entirely untenable. In more recent years the tendency has been to place Measure for Measure among Shakespear's problem plays although there has been much controversy over which other plays would be included with it in this group. The problem play has been perhaps best defined by Ernest Schanzer in the Problem Plays of Shakespears (New York; Schocken Books 1963) Briefly state, it is a play which explores a complex moral issue in such a way that the audience is made to question its own moral certitudes and to respon sympathetically to contradictory aspects of the issue at the same time. In this manner while no final resolution is ever reached, the play extends the moral horizons of the audience,

and enables it to perceive the complexity of moral problems.

Whether or not Measure for Measure is such a play, we must grant that it is a comedy of a highly intellectual kind. It is a powerful exploration of the human condition, the relation of human nature to divine grace and of justice to mercy in the administration of law. In this latter concern it is linked to the mainstream of Shakespearean comedy, whose theme is always love, for mercy is the love of God for humankind which must be manifested on earth in the lives of human beings for one another. It is a mark of Shakespeare's genius that the great issues with which he is concerned in this play are revealed in all their ambiguity.

I.C. POSSIBLE THEMES IN MEASURE OF MEASURE

Justice Versus Mercy

The Theological principle stated by Isabella, most notably at Act.II. Sc.ii is 72-9 is the fundamental Christian notion, stated also by portia in The Merchant of Venice, that if man were to rely upon justice alone for salvation he must inevitably be damned, for ofiginal sin makes all men guilty in the eyes of God. only by divine mercy can a man hope to be saved, and this being so, he must reflect the mercy of God for which he hopes by showing mercy in his dealing with what measure he met, it shall be measured to you again (mathew vii 2) But these words had often been used out of their context as justification for while it refers to the principle supported by isabella, it applied also to that afirmed by Angelo.

Angelo's rule asserts a principle of justice erroneoulsy equated by Shakespeare's contemporaries with the Mosaic code and asserted also by Shylock in The Merchant of Venice, in essence it holds that mankind must be judged by the letter of the law. It is the principle by which Claudo must be condemned. Shakespeare makes clear that his fault is an entirely human one and that if he is guilty at all it is in the letter rather than in the spirit of the law. When Angelo after his own exposure asks for death he is demanding measure for measure in the strictly legalistic sense.

When Isabella pleads for his life, she is asking measure for measure in the Christian terms implicit in Christ's sermon. His principle is affirmed in the granting of mercy rather than death to Angelo, but not before many ambiguities have been explored.

Isabella and Angelo

Isabella has been censured by many critics for the seeming inhumanity of her refusal to yield her chastity of save her brother's life. Those who have defended her have argued that this is merely evidence of the consistency of her Christian faith, for to surrender her chastity would be to damn her own soul as well as that of her brother who had urged her to sin, and christianity affirms as its most basic principle that the soul is more important than the body. This may perhaps silence those critics who hold that in valuing her own virtue above her brother's life she is practising a selfish virtue which asks for divine love while it refuses to acknowledge human frailty and the demands of purely human devotion. But it must be noted that in this very argument Isbella adopts the position of Angelo in opposition to the very principle of mercy which she herself has argued, for she assumes that God will judge her in precisely the same strict legalistic terms by which Angelo has condemend her honour. Isabella after pleading for human mercy to be extended by Angelo will not allow the possibility of a divine mercy which might excuse a sin in terms of the law, but one committed without sinful intent and under the compelling force of human love.

Isabella, the votary of St. Clare who finds the rules of the nunnery insufficiently strict may thus be said at the begining of the play to be exactly like Angelo. He, in turn is not to be regarded as a stock villian or hypocrite. There seems little reason to doubt in spite of Mariana, who is not introduced into the play until Angelo has been carefully delineated and the nature of his spiritual conflic exposed that he has been the utterly virtous man who has himselt lived entirely by the letter of the law. It has been a legalistic virtue, never tested by the reality of human passion and never confronted with the fact of human frailty. It is the very virtue of Isabella, so much like his own, which causes him to fall. Both Angelo and

Isabella must, in fact, be educated at the hands of the Duke in the relation of abstract moral principles to the facts of human life. At the end of the play, when the education of both has been completed, Angelo will accept the responsibilities of life by marrying Mariana, and Isabella by her marriage to the duke will execise a truly tested virtue in the real world of Vienna rather than in the sterile confines of the sisterhoodof St. Clare. To portray this real world of men and women, Shakespeare took over from suggestions in Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra the characters of the comic under plot. Behind the principal actors of this play lies always the real world, with all of its sin and squalor, but not with out redeeming virtue.

UNIT-2

THE PLOT

It is a play written by William Shakespeare formally a comedy but so dark in tone that it is more often neutrally classed among the problem plays! It was performed in 1604 and published in the First Folio of 1623. The main sources is George Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra, a translation of a play by Clinthio.

2. A The play in brief

Disturbed by the unruliness of Vienna, Duke Vincentio resolves to absent himself from the role and entrust law enforcement to his puritanical deputy, Angelo. Disguised as a Friar, the duke remains in Vienna to observe the consequences of the decision. Angelo orders the destruction of the brothels and, invoking a law against lechery, imprisons Claudio for impregnating he woman to whom he is betrothed. Knowing that the penalty is death, Claudio asks his sister, Isabella a novice in a nunnery, to intercede. Confronted by Isabella, the unyielding Angelo experiences his own lust. He offers Claudio's life as an exchange for Isabella's body. Outraged when Clausio begs her to accept the offer, Isbella abandons him, but is persuaded by the disguised duke to play a trick on Angelo. The duke reveals that Angelo had broken a marriage

contract with a certain Mariana when marian's dowry was lost. Mourning her lost love, Mariana now takes Isabellas' place in Angelo's bed. The substituion is arranged, but the duke's scheme is ruined by Angelo's decision to have Claudio killed despite his promise to Isabella. The fortunate death in prison of a pirate with some physical resemblance to Claudio gives the duke another opportunity to thwart Angelo, whose villainy is unmasked when the duke makes his unexpected return to Vienna. Claudio can now marry the pregnant Juliet. Angelo's punishment it to marry Mariana, and the duke declares his love for the chaste Isabella.

2. B. Plot - Analysis of Acts and Scenes

"The exposition in Act I is followed by Angelo's proposal in Act II, the Duke's proposal to double- crossing Isabella, Angelo actually double - crossing Isabella in Act IV and the resolution in the Act V. When we look closer into the plot we find the same scene of propriety and adequacy in the details as there is in the general description. In Act I the Duke announces his decision to withdraw from Vienna for a time and he appoints Angelo in his place with Escauless to advise him. Act I Sc.II splits up into 4 subscenes; 1-42 Lucio and two other gentlemen gaily talking about sin; 43-80 mistress overdone giving intimation of Claudio's wages for sinning with Juliet, 81-108 Overdone bemoaning the decay of custom to people like her and 108-186 Lucio (the sinner) appearing and requestion Lucio to meet Isbella (the redeemer) and ask her to plead with the strict deputy.

".....When youth

There is a prone and speechless dialet

Such as move men; besides, she hath prosperous act

When she will pay reason and discourse

And well she can persuade."

In the course of one scene all is projected vividly; the sin, the wages, the promoter of sin, the beneficiaries, the prosecutor, the redeemer. In act II Sc.II Isabella has her first interview with Angelo, and he feels tempted, although she is blissfully unaware

of the insurrection she has caused in his bosom.

In Act II. Sc iv he explicitly comes out with his bargain and she more or less runs out in a panic of helplessness. But there is no inner struggle; she is quite clear in her mind that she cannot purchase her brother's reprieve on these terms. Is it because scared souls are small souls; as she leaves Angelo, Isabella's soul is scared - to a tiny rod of iron principle which is all she can think. Not the Isabella who could spell out ther words boldly to the Deputy only the previous day. (Act II. Sc ii L. 110)

"Could great men thunder
As love himself does, Love would never be quite
.....
Than the soft myrtle, butman, proud man
Dress'd in a little brief authority
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd
His glassy essence, like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep....."

And again, more bold still:

"Go to your bosom
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
That's like my mother's fault. If it confess
A natural guiltiness such as his
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life."

Quite possibly Angelo was scared then; not only scared but felt almost doomed. Even during her second interview even after he has made clear his meaning. She speak coolly enough finding the right words for the occasion. She will willingly bear the impression of keen whips and strip myself to death as to a bed before yielding up her bpdy to shame.

"Better it were a brother died at once

Then that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever...
Ognominy is ransom and free pardon
Are of two houses; lawful mercy
Is nothing kin to foul redemption."

It is not just the scared physical cry of the reluctant flesh but something fundamental a spiritual abhorrence that is like a total categorical Nay. There is in Isabella's whole aspect a radiant purity before which Angelo-although he has been aptly described by Lucio as "a man whose blood is very snow-broth one who never feels the wanton stings and emotions of the sense-" quails somewhat, and instead of rejecting her outright asks her to meet him the next day and it is with some difficulty that he tells her what he wants even on this occasion. What can he say? She tries first to make him understand what sort of person she is; then she gently asks him to speak the "former language" and finally she comes down on him 9 Act II Sc.v.l. 145)

"I know your virtue hath a incense in't
Which seems a little fouler than it is
To pluck on others."

But Angelo is hardly himself, being blinded by lust and as if driven by a feeling of fatality he determines to take advantage of her helplessness. There is no need to feel chastely shocked when she says, "more than our brother is our chastity". (Act II. Sc. iv.l 185), she is Christian enough to view the failing of others with charity but she cannot, with eyes open, do something that she knows will stain her immortal soul.

In Act III Sc. I Isabella receives a second shock when her brother behaves a though he would like her to accept Angelo's bargain. he is abjectly afraid of death and although he makes magnificent poetry out of his fear (Act. IIISc. ii.119) his words inflict a deep wound on the already wounded Isabella. She is against; she lashes at him as if without mercy, though the words really rise from the depths of her compunction.

O fie fie fie!

Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade

Mercy to thee would prove itself a

'Tis best that thou diest quickly.

An exasperated parent sometimes tells his son;

"I wish you were dead rather than that you should live thus"; he does not of course mean it and Isabella doesn's mean it too. The parents words are meant to show his anger, nor mean what they seem to mean, this is true of Isabella's outburst as well, unlike many critics who fall foul of Isabella. From here onwards, the Duke takes control of the action. He comes out with his "advisings;" suggests plausible obedience and presently proposes to Isabella the substitution of the one time rejected Mariana for herself.

In Act IV. Sc. I the interview with Mariana of the mooted grange proves satisfactory. There is in Isabella a streak of the 'do-good-er' and it is when she finds that she can do a good turn to Mariana too, even as she can a good turn to Claudio that the image of the plan gains her sonsent. On his part Angelo decides both to eat the cake and still have it; to satisfy his lust and still go ahead with Claudio's execution lest the unflamed young man should avenge the dishonor to his sister. This development is a third shock to Isabella and after the first foolish outburst about plucking out Angelo's eyes she is ready enough to be guided by her betters. It is resolved that both she and Mariana should appeal to the returning Duke near the city gate.

"Act V with its single scene of 335 lines has been described as a piece of manipulation and also as consummately right and satisfying fulfilment of the essential design, marvelously adroit with an adroitness that impresses and derives from the poet's sure human insight and fineness of ethical and poetic sensibility. This scene informs us about the Duke, Isabella's complaint, Lucio's evidence, Mariana's complaint, the Duke, Isabella's complaint, Lucio's evidence, Mariana's complaint, the Duke's evidence as Friar Lodowick. Angelo's collapse and the drama progresses from the

many seemings towards the one truth.

Isabella impeaches Angelo as the devil, and adulterous thief, an hypocrite, and virgin violator and asks of the Duke, who however prolongs her agony, by seeming to take Angelo's side; Mariana, when she prefers her complaint fares no better.Of course it all comes out in the end. The Duke leaves the scene for a while to return almost immediately afterwards as Fair Lodowick and when Lucio pulls off the Friar's hood, Angelo knows he can not further brazen out his misdeeds. 'O my dread Lord' he says addressing the Duke

"I should be guiltier than my guiltiness'

.....

Is all the grace I beg."

The Duke has Angelo married off, on the spot as it were to Mariana - but only to condemn him to death the next instant. Now Mariana supplicates to the Duke in her husband's favour and begsonce-a second time and a third time. Isabella also joins her in her prayers to the Duke. At last her Christian ethic is sternly put to rest. But then her novitiate ship with her votaries of Saint Clare has'nt been in vain, and even though she is still under the impression that Angelo had brutally condemned her brother to death, isbella says slowly and firmly.

"Look, if it please you, on this man condemned

As if my brother Liv'd I partly think

A due sincerity governed his deed

Till he did look on me; Since it is so

Let him not die. My brother had but justice,

In that he did the thing for which he died."

It is Isabella's last speech. Her forgiveness is all the bobler because as yet she is the blessed feminine at its purest, the most unselfish, the holiest, snapped at the point where the human meets the divine (adapted from Shakespeare's Art: K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar)

Of the fifth acts of Measure for Measure and All's well that End's well, W.W. Lawrence observes "Psychologically the fifth acts are weak, dramatically they are effective."

UNIT - 3

CHARACTERIZATION IN MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Duke and Isabella

The Duke, lord of this play in the exact sense that Prospero is lord of the Tempest, is the prophet of an enlightened ethic. He controls the actions from start to finish, allots as it were, praise and blame; he is lit at moments with divine suggestion comparable with his almost divine power of force-knowledge and control and wisdom. For F.R. Leavis, the Duke is 'the more than Prospero of the play, who initiates and controls the experimental demonstration the controlled experiment that forms the action'. The Duke is verily the incarnate Lord in this stupendous allegory of the atonement. The Duke's role in the play is less clear than Isabella's. Hers is the radiant flame of feminine pity and Christian chastity; she comes out of her cloister to the ways of everyday life, not to destroy and deny but to affirm and fulfil. 'The Duke on the contrary symbolizes masked providence is always masked. And although masked, providence is present always, and like Providence the Duke is seemingly whimsical not easily understandable, playful ina heavy way, cruel too sometimes, loving a practical joke, yet settling all things right in the end. The Duke divests himself of power to see how power can corrupt the wrong man. His ways are strange and appear to us to be cruel or tortuously dilatory. It is Isabella's glorious destiny to remind the Duke of the auspicious aspect of his power - the power of Providence.

Isbella, in the play is a symbol of chastity and her character is better adapted to the cool walks of the cloister. When she is about to enter the nunnery, she becomes embroilled in her brother Claudio's misdemeanors. Her function is both to make her brother

recognize his cowardice and to be the instrument of reconciliation between Angelo and Mariana by exposing. Angelo's hypocrisy. She has no self interest in her actions.

"The Duke hardly seems to be a personage to delight in. It is not merely in didactic platitudes and his somewhat oversone pompanos that get upon one's nerves but his inner character. We first meet him too timid or too irresolute to enforce his own laws. The Duke was invented by Shakespeae. In Promos and Cassandra, there is no equivalent. He, his delegation of authority and his disguise are the means by which Shakespeare transforms a romantic comedy into a completely and proudly serious criticism of life". (Tillyard)

There is much thought and much orthodox poetry in Measure for Measure and during the time when Shakespeare was writing the problem plays he had the Morality form rather prominently in his mind.

The Duke's part derives both from the old folk-motive of the sovereign in disguise mixing with his people and from the conventional stage character of the plot - promoting priest. He combines the functions of church and state. In his disguise he represents the wisdom and adroitness of the church in directing courses of action and advising stratagems so that good may come out of evil. He is also the supreme ruler of Vienna who at the end straightens out the tangles of the action and dispenses justice to all. He is also a stage figure, highly important, for manipulating the action and contrasted with the realistic characters. Admitting most truly that "Shakespeare's art oscillates between extreme psychological truth, in the acceptance of stock narrative consequences', the Duke does succeed in writing these extremes.

There is no more independent character in Shakespeare than the isabella of the first half of the play. She is independent in two senses. The essence of her dispositions the acute sense of her own independent and inviolate personality. At the begining of the third act when she has learn't Angelo's full villainy, her nature is working at the very height of its accustomed freedom. She enters

almost choked with bitter fury at Angelo, in the mood for martyrdom and feeling that Claudio's mere life is a trifle before the mighty issues of right and wrong. Her scorn of Claudio's weakness is dramatically definitive and perfect. To his pathetic pleas, "sweet sister, let me live" etc. comes her spontaneous retort from the depth of her being.

"O you beast
O faithless Coward, O dishonest wretch!
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?
Isn't not a kind of incest to take life
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death."

That is the true Isabella, and whether or not we like that kind of women is beside the point. But immediately after her speech, the duke takes charge and she proceeds to exchange her native ferocity for the hushed and submissive tones of a well-trained confidential secretary. To the Duke's inquiry of how she will contain Angelo and save her brother she replies in coolly rhetorical prose.

"I am now going to resolve him. I had rather my brother die by the law than my son should be unlawfully born. But, how much is the good duke deceived in Angelo! if ever he return and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain or discovder his government".

But such coolness is warm compared with her tame acquiescence in the Duke's plan for her to pretent to yield to Angelo and then to substitute Mariana.

"The image of it gives me content already and I
trust it will grow a most prosperous perfection"

A close leading of the play is required to understand the subtlety with which the movements of Isabella's mind are presented. At first Shakespeare risks failure by asserting psychological truth almost at the expense of dramatic probability. Isabella begins her attack on Angelo with a crudity and a lack of strategy

which on a first impact are staggering.

"There is a vice that most I do abhor
And most desire should meet the blow of justice
For which I would not plead but that I must
For which I must plead but that I am
At war twixt will and will not".

Yet this crudity is absolutely natural. Claudio's arrest could not from Isabella's point of view have been timed worse. Young, ardent, neophytic she has bent all her strength to embracement she is called on to plead in mitigation of that which is most abhorrent to her. her crude self-explanation is psychologically inevitable.

And what is so brilliant in the rest of the scene is the way in which she gradually discards the drawing in of herself into cloistral concentration and reaches out again to a worldly observation she has newly renounced. And that observation includes a bitter anger that this mere, this Angelo, this precision, should be able to decide her brother's fate.

At first she is helpless and is for giving over at the first rebuff.

".....O just but severe law!
I had a brother then. Heavens keep your honor!"

But Lucio intervenes and urges her to a fresh attack. the best she can do now is to recall and utter some current common places about mercy and about the judge being no better than the accused. But her accent is, surely still formal and cool.

"Well, believe this
Not No ceremony that to great ones long the king's crown, nor the deputed sword.
The marshal's truncheon, not the judge's role
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does."

But something, Whether an unconscious clash of wills or a

secret sense of Angelo's being stirred by her own self, prompts Isabella to be personal and she goes on:

"If he had been as you and you as he
You would have split like him; but he like you
Would not have been so stern."

And when Angelo tells her to be gone, at once her personal opposition stiffens, and no longer, the awesome wielder of the law and God's deputy, he becomes in her eyes mere man and as deeply in need of God's mercy as any sinner. Her renewed plea for mercy is now impassion and when he tells her that Claudio must die tomorrow he arouses the whole stretch of her mind. Her concern for Claudio is cruelly sharpened and prompts her to the kind of humour that lies next to the tragic.

"He's not repared for death. Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season. Shall we serve heaven
With less respect than we do sinister
To our fross selves?"

Angelo still resists but feels called on to defend his action at greater length. His cold pompousness infuriates her and calls forth her culminating and classic denunciation of human pride. But first by her bitter emphasis on the personal pronouns she makes it plain that her attack on pride is far from being on an abstract and impersonal sin.

"So you must be the first that gives this sentence
And he, that suffers."

UNIT - 4

MEASURE FOR MEASURE AS A PROBLEM PLAY

The Problem plays of Shakespeare

A problem play is the name given to a play which deals with a social and political problem, both sides are presented; there are

long arguments on either side and at the end, possibly the play might present a solution to the problem. In Shakespeare, a problem play is a play which poses problems of interpretation.

Classifying All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida and Hamlet as problem plays of Shakespeare, F.S. Boas observes that they deal with highly artificial societies in which civilization is ripe unto rottenness, in which an abnormal condition of brain and emotion is generated and intricate cases of conscience are presented, which demand a solution by un prevented methods. At the end of the play we have lost our bearings and are perplexed. Even when here is some kind of compromise as in the first two plays, we are not happy. The plays are so singular in theme and temper that they cannot be called either comedies or tragedies. Boas proposed to call them problem plays. Among these plays All's Well that Ends Well and Measure for Measure have some defects in them. They are schizophrenic. The other two deal with and display interesting problems. In these two plays we have moral problems leading to perplexing moral entanglements. Hamlet's is a psychological problem. Troilus and Cressida is a problem of interpretation, it is neither a moral nor a psychological problem. They may not be rightly called proble· ı plays. A problem play is a play dealing with problem confronting not a single unique individual but contemporary society as a whole.

W.W. Lawrence groups All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure and ATroilus and Cressida together as problem comedies. He says these plays clearly do not fall into the category of tragedy and yet are too serious and analytic to fit the commonly accepted conception of comedy. He defines the problem play as a play in which a perplesing and distressing complication in human life is presented in a spirit of high seriousness. It probs the complicated inter-relation of character and situation admitting of different ethical interpretations. The problems has no single time solution like a mathematical problem. It is one of conduct which has not fixed and immutable laws. Human life is too complex to

admit a simple formula. The mood of the problem plays is not pesimistic it is serious. For instance, there is an element of satire in roilus and Cressida; All'sd Well that Ends Well is a little melansholy. Measure for Measure deals with the themes of mercy and forgiveness and in it there is an aswareness of evil, but no note of pessimism.

Tillyard in his Shakespeare's Problem Plays, observes that in all his plays, Shakespeare is concerned throughout with either religious dogma or abstract speculation or both. It may be retorted that so he was also when he wrote his later tragedies. Yet three is a difference in that dogma and speculation are less completely absorbed into the general substance of the problem plays; they are felt rather more for their own and rather less for the drama's ske. As if in this form at least, they were new and urgent in Shakespeare's mind, demanding at this point statement and articulation rather than solution and absorption into other material. Hamlet is powerfully aware of the baffling human predicament, between the angels and beasts, between the glory of having been made in God's image and the incrimination of being descended from fallen Adam. Gertrude in remarrying in haste appeared to him worse than a beast wanting discourse of reason.

These plays are powerfully united by a serious tone amounting a time to somperness; they show a strong awareness of evil, with being predominantly pessimistic", observes Tilliyard.

Schneider has a definition which seems to be more satisfactory. He defines a problem play as a play in which we find a scorn with a moral problem presented in such a manner that we are unsure of our moral bearings so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible or even probable. Schneider finds that Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra and Measure for Measure are the only problem plays.

However all the critics agree that Measure for Measure is a problem comedy. The play has evoked contradicting responses from critics. Coleridge calls it the most painful, say rather the only painful part of Shakeapeare's genuine works. Hazlitt also calls it a

hateful work and says that Shakespeare's feelings of justice are greatly wounded in Angelo's escape. He finds Isabella unnameable and Claudio detestable. Raleigh finds in the play cynicism rampant and the deepest roots of meanness, self regard and hypocrisy. Chambers says a Christian spirit informs the play. Wilson Kinght explains the title by quoting the Bible. "Judge not....what measure Ye make, it shall be measured to you again."

The moral problem in Measure for Measure is how to check adultery. The law condemning adultery has been in abeyance in the country for fifteen years, and the Duke wants to enforce the law now. He appoints the reputedly viruous Angelo as his deputy, to carry out the task. Angelo is chaste but the duke seems to have reservations about his virtue. Angelo sentences to death Claudio for having sexual relationshio with Juliet before their marriage is ratified. Claudio's sister Isabella, angelic by nature who is about to enter a nunnery and dedicate her life to the service of God, appears before Angelo to plead on her brother's behalf. The cold Angelo, secure in his virtue is at last tempted by the very virtue of Isabella and offers to save Claudio's life if Isabella will consent to be his mistress. Duke who is now disguised as a frair advised her constant to Angelo's demand and arranges for Mariana whose bethrothat to him Angelo had broken because she could not produce the dowry he demanded, to take her place at the place of assignation in darkness and secrecy. The perfidious Angelo having and his will of Isabella orders the death of Claudio so that his own good name should never be jeopardized. Again the Duke sees to it that not Claudio, but someone else in his place is beheaded and Angelo is exposed, he is pardoned due to the intercession of Isabella and made to marry, Mariana. Claudio and Juliet marry, as also the Duke and Isabella.

Sexual sin is the least of the sins in Dante. So also to Shakespeare, it is allied to love, it is a natural force incident to youth as April is incident to the year. But who while the heart beats can call himself safe from the temptation to this sin? The cold Angelo, secure in his virtue, is at last tempted by the very virtue of

Isabella. So it would appear that Shakespeare means to say that this sin is not to be punished too severely and that it can never be completely suppressed. If Claudio does not deserve to be executed for this sin, does Angelo deserve our praise for his pseudo chastity? Masefield says Shakespeare considers that the common prudential virtues are sometimes due not to virtue, but some starvation of the nature. Chastity may proceed upon a meanness in the mind from the coldness of the emotions or from cowardice, at least ad often as from manly and clean thinking.

Masefied points out that two kinds of chastity are at clash in the play. One is a fire in the personality that causes Isabella to think death better than contamination and the other comes from the niggardliness that makes Angelo Jilt Mariana rather than take her without a dower. Both are obsessions; both exalt a part of life itself. Like other obsession they come to grief in the presence of something real.

Adultery is wrong, but human nature being what it is it cannot be altogether suppressed. How then shall we deal with it? The Duke's method of ignoring it for fifteen years has made Vienna a black pit of seething wickedness. Angelo, punishing Claudio to death is exposed to the same temptation and succumbs. The best of men fall, and so who shall judge how we should tackle the problem. There is no answer to this question.

The play has been judged by many critics morally shocking horrible in its tragedy, disgusting in its comedy and scandalous in its conclusion. It falls squarely in Shakespear's tragic period. "It lies deep in the Depths" (Dover Wilson). The turbid sexual anguish the manifold treacheries, the squalor and injustice of the play can be explained only in terms of Shakespeare's own life.

In this play Shakespeare seems to have a contempt for all the characters and depicts them as despicable, even the best them. The Duke, in whom critics seek to find a picture of Christ himself is described by other critics who quote Shakespeare's own words as an unctuous fraud who abdicates his duty, plays the part of a snooper and in the disguise of a friar sneaks from the dark corner to another. Angelo seems to be the image of Puritanism. lubricity, blackmail, treachery, hypocrisy and injustice. Isabella shows frigidity and sex- nauses, Mariana a lush but spinsterly uxoriousness and Claudio a plain cowardice. The dark mood of the play must surely represent Shakespeare's own dark desoair at the time he wrote the play.

Chambers remarks that in Measure for Measure "the evidence of Shakespeare's profound disillusionment and discouragement of spirit is plain enough" that the search light of irony is thrown up the paths of providence itself" it is a play of forgiveness. Isabella frogives even in the moment of direct loss. Shakespear's audience expected a marriage at the end the marriage of Isabella and the Duke makes a good ending to the play.

Una Eilis- Fermor on Isabella; "Hard as an icicle she visits Claudio in person and lays before him the terms and her decision her pitilessness only growing with her pleading". Creation and death are the two issues which form the core of the play. there is equal emphasis on the forces of harmony and discord.

UNIT - 5

IMAGERY IN MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Measure for Measure in respects stands alone among Shakespeare's plays. There are two points which strike one at once on examining its images. The first is that we find among them, chefly in the speech of the duke, some of the most beautiful and most thoughtful similes in the whole of Shakespeare such as the two in is exhortation to Angelo at the beginning, his description of life, his comparison of the rich man to the heavily laden as unloaded by death as well as many of the most brilliant and unusual of Shakespeare's pictures and personifications.

Backwounding calumny

The whitest virtue strikes (Act 3, Sc.2.l.197)

.....

It was the swift celertity to his death

Which I did think with slower foot came on

That brain'd my purpose (Act 5, Sc.1.I.138)

.....

O' place and greatness, millions of false eyes

Are struck upon thee! (Act 4, Sc.I.160)

.....

he, a marble to he tears, is washed

with the, but relents not (Act 3, Sc.1.I 236)

"The second remarkable point is that out of the hundred and thirty six images in the play only eighteen can be classified as poetical because by far the largest group (twenty seven in number) seem to fall under another category which are vivid, quaint, or grotesque". (Spurgeon) it is this which is the most noticeable feature about the quality of images as a whole. Many of these are personifications and are semi comic and very arresting such as 'liberty plucks justice by the nose' (Act 1, Sc.3 1.20). "bidding the law make courtesy to their will' (Act 2. Sc.1. 109). Other imagery are marked by what is even and adjectives applied to abstractions.

"Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite

To follow as it draws" (Act 2, Sc. 4. 176)

"Lent him our terror, dressed him with our love" (Act 1, Sc. 1.1.120)

"A purpose

More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends of burning youth. Some are litle pictures with a slightly comic touch such as; the baby beats the burse, and quite athwart

Goes all decorum" (Act 1, Sc. 3, 1.30)

The forfeits in the barber's shop death's fold, the scarecrow, and the fathers with birch rods and there is only one which though frankly grotesque, is still amazingly vivid- Lucio's summary of

Claudio's unfortunate position 'thy head stands so likely on thy shoulders, that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may sigh it off' (Act.1 Sc. 2.1.171)

"Shakespeare seems to be torn in this play between deeply stirred idealistic thought and reflection, and a tendency to cynical bitterness and grim realism which delights in a certain violence and even distortion of speech and figure and sometimes of incident".

When Shakespeare was writing Measure for Measure the experience he had perhaps led him to ponder much on a certain range of thoughts - the amazing contradictions in man, the strange and often horrible transmutations of physical matter, the meaning and nature of death, and what possibly may constitute the chief value in life; while going along with these grave reflections, three is ample evidence of a shocked, disillusioned, and suffering spirit, taking refuge in mocks and jeers and bitterness.

"So these two qualitites, of which the images as a whole in Measure for Measure are remarkable, thoughtful poetry and strange brilliance, with a touch of the bizarre are curiously expressive of the peculiar character and mental atmosphere of the play, and help towards the impressions left on us of majesty and squalor, of thoughtful gravity and jeering cynicism of strange contradictions in life and still stranger contradictions in human nature with its unexpected flaws and weaknesses strengths and heroisms" (Spurgeon)

5. B A Look at the play: what others say of the play

Measure for Measure is at once the most interesting and the most challenging. The plot found both as a tragedy and as a prose tale in the work of the Italian writer Cinthio and thence used by the English George Whetstone also is both a play and prose tale, in a version somewhat nearer to Shakespeare's contains a multiplicity of overtones which inpart account for the disturbing nature of the play as Shakespeare wrote it.

In Measure for Measure, everybody is in some degree guilty

and it is only after the much injured heroine has pleaded for mercy for the man who has injured her that it is revealed that injury was in intention only. All are guilty and mercy rather than justice saves the day.

The play puzzles largely because of the different and sometimes mutually conflicting themes bound upon the story as Shakespeare develope it.

The gulling of the hypocrite is one way of treating Angelo, but he is at the same time presented as a genuinely puritanical character who suddenly discovers to his dismay and even horror, that he is as much subjcet to sensual temptation as ordinary men he might even be said to be a man who has sublimated his tendencies towards sadistic sensuality in the practice of stern justice,but who, on being faced with a beautiful woman pleading for mercy for a brother condemned to death, regresses into asensualist and sadist. Similarly Isabella is both a sterm, other-wordly character who fiercely abuses her brother for a momentary lapse in hisdesire to have death rather than his siter lose her chastity and who at the same time cheerfully plays the procures with Mariana, and a symbol of radiant purity, who at the end of the play, embodies its Christian moral or mercy before strict justice. The gulling of the hypocrite, the testing of the puritan, the judge discovers to be the criminal, the discovery that all are guilty and none has the right to judge, and that mercy rather than justice is the proper "measure for measure"-here is indeed an intermingling of tragicand comic themes.

No wonder that Measure for Measure has elements of Jonsonian comedy, Sophoclane irony and Christan morality. That Shakespeare should have chosen such a theme is doubtless some evidence of his state of mind at the time he wrote it; but it is worth noting that Measure for Measure is not a bitter comedy simply because he was asked to write a comedy when he was in the middle of a tragic period but serious play between tragedy and comedy whose complication and difficulties arose from the implications of its plot.

Shakespeare looked on the dark side of life during the years 1600-1608 when he wrote Hamlet, Lear, Otherllo, Macbeth, and Timon of Althens. It has been held that the note of personal disillusion sex nausea and bitterness which some have seen in these plays. During the same period Shakespeare wrote Troilus and Cressida (1602) All's Well that Ends Well (1602-04) and Measure for Measure (1604). These plays have been called probelm plays or bitter comedies because though not technically tragedies and in the case of the last two,have a happy ending, they have nothing of the golden cheerfulness of the middle comedies and show human behaviour gross and unedifying. Of these Troilus and Cressida and Measure for Measure have both been hailed as master pieces of the very highest order by modern scholar critics

Prepared by

Dr. S. VENKATESWARAN

KING LEAR

UNIT -1

INTRODUCTION TO KING LEAR

King Lear that has been generally agreed to be Shakespeare's greatest play, a play in which everything is at full stretch; extremes of cruelty and suffering face extremes of loyalty and sacrifice. "The play as a whole gives an impression of a monolithic and rough - hewn grandeur,a s it were some stone image of the mind" (Spencer 1972). Inthis unir and in the following units you will read more about this play.1. 1.A. Date and text of the play

King Lear was first printed in 1608. In the same year it appeared in the first Quarto (QI) called the pied Bull Quarto. The second Quarto was printed in 1619 with a few incorporations of corrections carried out in Q1. The third appearance of the play was in the FIrst Folio of Shakespeare's plays (1623) where it occupies pages 283-309 of the section devoted to tragedies.

The date of s Shakespearean play can be established only with the help of the entries in the stationer's register. On 16 March 1603 Samuel Harsnett's Declaration on Egregious Popish Impostures was entered in the Stationer's Register, and as Shakespeare makes considerable use of this book throughout the play we can be certain that it was not written untill after that date. From the stationer's Refister and the title page of Q1 we know that the play was performed on 26 December 1606.

The title page runs as follows:

"M. William Shakespeare: (His/True Cheonicle of Histories of the Life and /death of King Kear and his Three/ Daughters. With the unfortunate life Edger, soone and heir to the Earle of Gloster and his sullen and assumed humor of / Tom of Bedlam. As it wasplayed before the King's Majestie at While HIl upon / S. Stephen's night in Christian Holidays/ By his Majesties servants playing Visual at the Globel/on the banckeside".

Although this Quarto was dated 1608, we know that the Court

performance was in 1606 and not 1607 because the entry in the Sationer's Register on 26 November 1607 reads as follows:

"Na Butter. Lo Busky Entered for their copies under thanks of Sir Geo. Buch Knight and Thwardens A Booke called. Mr. William Shakespeare his history of Kynge Lear as it was played before the kings majesty ar Whitewall upon St. Stephens night at Christmas Last by his majesties sevants playing usually at the globe on the Bank side".

The play ws therefore written between March 1603 and Christmas 1606.

It is usually assumed that these late eclipses in the sun and moon (Act. I Sc, ii 1, 107) must have been suggested by the eclipse of the moon in the previous month. Professor Gaerison quotes from a pamphlet entitled Strange fearful and true news which happened at Carlstdt, in the kingdom of Crotia, which was published in February 1606, and argues that there is a similarly of phrase, sentiment and rhythm between this passage and the remarks of Gloucester and Edmund.

I.B.Dates of the publication and composition of the play

King Lear was entered on the Register of the stationers Company 26 November 1606 and published in 1608.

It was probably written late in 1605 or really in 1606.

The points of evidence , external and internal, that bear on the date are as follows.

1)The entry in the Stationer's Register 1607 state that the tragedy was "Played before the King's Majesty at Whitewall upon Saint Stephan's night at Christmas last that is on 26 December".

2) The names of the "friends mentioned by Edgar are taken from Harshett's Declaration in the play. Harsnett's book was published in 1603. King Lear therefore cannot have been written earlier thatn 1603 or later than 1606. Inside this period of three years we are led by certain indications to narrow the issue down to the late autumn of 1605 or the early spring of 1606. The indications are these.

3) The second scene of the play contains marked reference to 'late eclipses' and 'the prediction' as to their "sequent effects". Now there was a great eclipse of the sun in October 1695, and it had been preceded in September by an eclipse of the moon. This great eclipse had been anticipated with apprehension and the public mind was much stirred by was written while these impressions were vivid in the mind of the people, those passages in the second scene would have the significance of a current sllusion. The emphasis laid on the subject implied that some allusion was intended.

4) A similar significance would attach to Gloucester's words in the same scene, "Machinations, hollowness, trachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquiety to our graves", If written after the discovery of the Gunpower Plot, 5 November 1605.

5) An indication of the date which in the absence of the more striking evidence that we have quoted would be valuable occurs in II.a. 174, where the old line, 'I smell the blood of an English man" quoted thus in one of nash's pamphets, 1569, and in other works, is changed to "a British man". The change must, one would think, have been deliberate. It was probably made in allusion to James's accession to the crown of Great Britain in1603.

Another Theory as to the Date

It must be added that some critics assign the composition of Lear to the end of 1604 or the early part of 1605, on these grounds. There was an old play of King Lear and his three Daughters. It was entered on the stationers Register in 1594 as a "Chronicle history". It was re-entered on the Register on 8 May 1605 and described there as a "Tragical history" "lately acted" and was published that year.

Some scholars regard the description in the Register as indication that Shakespeare's King Lear had been recently produced (ie before May 1905) and that the publisher of the old "Chronicle" play, which had been acted as far back as 1588, meant to pass it off as Shakespeare's "Tragedy" But this theory (which requires us, be it noted, to abandon the highly probable allusions to the great eclipse and the Gunpowder Plot)

seems far fetched "Tragical' is an accurate rescription of a great deal of the old play, though it has a comic celement and the last scene does witness the king's restoration to his throne, and three is no reason why should not have been "lately acted" at the time when the publisher said so (1605). Indeed it has been plausibly argued that, instead of the publication of the old play being due to the success of King Lear it may have been the revival on the stage of the old play and it was publication that suggested the subject to Shakespeare. On the whole,then I do not think that we can do better than to accept the late autumn of 1605 or early spring of 1606 as the true date of King Lear (Adapted from Verity).

1.C. The date 1605 - 1606 suitable in other ways

This date suits the general style, metrical characteristics, and tone of the play.

The style is at once some wat removed from the evenness and "equality between the thought and its expression" which characterize a play like Julius Caesar,bel;onging to the middle period of Shakespeare's dramatic career; yet not so difficult and involved as the style of the latest Plays like the Tempest,in which the manner or expression is often overweighted by the matter.

Again, the large quantity of "run-on" verse, "double" or "feminine" endings, short lines and prose, indicates a comparatively late period, though it is not that lost period in which "light" and "weak" endings prevail. As regards rhyme - a part,of course, from the quotations from old ballads and the doggerel scraps improvised bythe Fool, which have bearing upon the point - King Lear was rather less than Othello, which several good critics assign to 1604.

The tone is that of the third period 1603 (or 1601) to 1608 of Shakespeare's dramatic career, the period of gloom, "during, which,under the pressure of personal suffering, he sounded the awful spectable of the guilty and the guiltness involved in a common doom, and of Nemesis following as relentlessly upon error as upon crime'.

UNIT-2

KING LEAR

This tragedy written by William Shakespeare ws first prerformed in 1605. In writing this play Shakespeare turned to various sources including Hilished's Chronicle and Sir Philip Sidmey's Arcadia.

A The play in brief

The aged British King decides to divide his Kingdom among his three daughters a dspend his remaining years as a regular guest at their courts. The plan goes awry when his youngest and favourite daughter refuses to ears her share by joining her sisters inexaggerated public declaration of love for their father. The angry King divides the Kingdom between Goneril and Regan. His elder daughters, and Cordelia, the youngest is accepted without dowry as wife to the king of France. She leaves the country.

Lear finds Goneril's grudging hospitality an outrage and leaves for Regan's castle. But Regan puts even great restrictions on his entertainment. The incredulous king first rants against his cruel daughters and then runs out accompanie by his Fool and guided by the loyal Duke of Kent to risk the hardships of the health rather than accept terms from his daughters. Tired beyond his strength he goes mad and his madness encpounters his own unprotected humanity. When Goneril and Regan and Regan's husband the Duke of Cornwall hear that a French army has landed, and that Leat is going to Dover to be reunited with Cordelia, they torture and blind the Duke of Gloucester, whose pity for the King has led him to assist his escape to Dover. Lear finds Cordelia at Dover and is restored to sanity, but the French lose the battle and Coedelia and Lear are captured.

The Duke of Gloucester's bastard son, Edmund,powerful because he is the lover of both Regan and Goneril, gives orders that they should be put to death.Edmund is defeated in single combat by his legitimate

brother, Edgar. His dying confession comes too late to save Cordelia, and Lear brings on stage the dead cordelia. He dies asserting that Cordelia is still alive.

1. B.A. note on the plot

The formal achievement of the play is extraordinary.Lear's tragedy is paralleled by that of the Duke of Gloucester who trusts the wrong son. Edmund and rejects the right one, Edgar. It is Edgar who guides his blinded father towards the release of death and who agenges him by killing Edmund. The two tragedies touch each other throughout the play, most memorably in the grotesque meeting near Dover, of he mad Lear and blind Gloucester. It is Edgar who, with Gonerils husband the Duke of Albany, carries the hopes of a better future at the end of the play.

"King Lear can be read in various ways - as a theological drama as a philosophical play, as a supreme example of Shakespeare's intuitive egalitarianism or evenas melodrama lifted towards tragedy only by its superb poetry. It is the most titanic of Shakespeare's great tragedies.

THE PLOT OF THE PLAY

Act wise, Scene wise Summary

I. i Lear King of Britain,now ageing,has decided on a three fold division of his kingdom; but first asks for an expression of lofe from his three daughters. The youngest, Cordelia,fails to come up to the expectations which his preferences for her aroused, and in anger, Lear divided her share between Goneril and Regan with their husbands, ALbany and Cornwall. The Earl of Kent, the King's faithful follower, protests at the injustice, but is banished for his pains. The King of France accepts Cordelia as his without her dowry.

I. ii Edmund the illewgitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester, causes his father to suspect his true son, Edgar, of plotting against his life.

I iii. Goneril complains toOswal, her steward, about Lear's conduct and encourages him to allow the servants to be negli-

gent in their service to him.

I. Iv. The disguised kent gets himself engaged in Lear's service, and attacks Oswald. The Fool mingles with his jests shrewd comments on his master's folly. Goneril reproaches her father to his face, receives his solemn curse, and sends Oswald, with a letter to her sister, Regan.

I.iv. Amid the Fool's patter Lear prepares for departure to Gloucester, sending Kent ahead with a letter to Reagan.

II. II.i Edmund pretends to Gloucester that he has been attacked and wounded by Edgar for refusing to join a plot against his father. Regan has received letters from her father and sister, and preferring not to be at home when her father arrived, has come with her husband to Gloucester's castle.

II. Ii. Kent renews the quarrel he had picked with Oswald is punished by Cornwall, and receives the sympathy of Gloucester.

II. Iii. Edgar, in danger of his life, decides to disguise himself as a mad beggar.

II.iv. Lear indignant at finding Kent in the stocks, receives no more contribution from Regan than from Goneril. The latter arrives, and two sisters support on the another in refusing to receive any of Lear's followers into their houses. Lear goes out into the storm.

III.i Kent searching the heath for Lear, meets a gentleman who informs him of the growing split between Albany and Cornwall, and of the landing of an army from France.

III.ii. Kent finds Lear and his fool out in the storm, and guides them to the shelter of a hovel.

III. Ii. Gloucester, who has heard what Kent was told, betrays to Edmund where his sympathies lie.

III. Iv. Lear, outside the hovel, displays the pity he has now learnt to feel for others. He meets the disguised Edgar feigning madness and they are joined by Gloucester.

III. v. Edmund betrays his father to Cornwall, and receives

the promise of his earldom.

III. vi. Gloucester has got the victims of the storm into shelter, where the mad king stages a mock trial. Gloucester arranges to send Lear to Dover for safety.

IV. vii Gloucester has been captured and brought before Cornwall, who as punishment for his services to Lear, Puts out his eyes; but himself receives a fatal wound from an outraged servant.

IV. I. Edgar in disguise meets his father, now humble and offers to lead him to Dover.

IV.ii Goneril reveals to Edmund her partiality for him, and openly quarrels with her husband.

IV. iii. Kent hears from a Gentleman how Cordelia received the news of her father's state.

IV .iv. Cordelia causes search to be made for Lear

IV.v. Regan reveals to Oswald her design to marry Edmund, and solicit his help to persuade his mistress to relinquish him.

IV.VI. Gloucester is saved from suicide by Edgar and becomes witness of Lear's reason in madness. Edgar retrieves his father from Oswald and finds on the dead body of the latter evidence of Goneril's intrigue with Edmund.

IV. vii. Cordelia, Kent and a Doctor witness the awakening of Lear and his partial recovery of his wits.

V. i. Regan and Goneril become more open rivals for the love of Edmund, who himself is cynically impartial. Edgar leaves a letter with Albany.

V.ii. Edgar leaves his father in shelter while he goes to the battle, and returns to report the defeat of Lear and Cordelia.

VI.iii Edmund orders the murder of Lear and Cordelia. Edgar appears to support his challenge to Edmund and gives him a fatal wound. Goneril poisons Regan, but her intrigue with Edmund having been exposed by Albnany, kills herself. Lear brings in the strangle Cordelia and thinking for the moment that she still lives,

dies. Kent will follow his master and Albany and Edgar are left to carry on the state.

A note on the opening scene of King Lear

The opening scenes of Shakespeare's plays are very artistic. They are usually made to perform three functions.

(i) giving an idea of the background of the drama

(ii) Introducing the main characters of the play directly or indirectly.

(iii) Striking the keynot of the drama.

Form the opening scene of King Lear, we understand the following 1) Lear has three daughters the first two being cunning and clever and the third simple and honest.

2) One of the dukes of the Kingdom the duke of Gloucester has two sons, Edmund essentially wicked and Edgar virtuous.

3) The king wants to divide his land among his three daughters and live peacefully in the palace of his third and most loved daughter Cordelia. But before dividing the kingdom, he wants a public profession of his daughters' love for him and when he is disappointed with Cordelia's matter of fact expression, he disinherits her and divides the kingdom between the first two insincere, flattering daughters. These daughters once in possession of power determine not to allow their father to continue as rash and wayward as he has been till then. The scene is thus set for the conflict to begin.

The scene introduces to us almost all the characters of the play " Edgar and Oswald alone do not make appearance but even out of these two, the former is introduced as the legitimate son of Gloucester. Some light is thrown on these characters also.

Glouster is morally weak. Goneril and Regan are false and pretending. Cordelia is simple and sincere but firm. Kent is tactless but devoted to his master. The King of France is a gentleman whereas Burgundy is selfish and ambitious.

The opening scene also strikes the keynote of the drama.

By the time we come to the end of the scene, we begin to feel that the play is going to be either a tragedy or comedy or something between the two The words of Kent in the opening scene of the play, for example, are filled with a note of warning and make us feel along with him that Lear is mad at least rash in dividing his kingdom between his first two daughters and banishing the third. We expect Lear to fall into evil ways and this expectation is only strengthened by the tearful words of Cordelia.

"What shall Cordelia do?

Love and be silent."

And those uttered towards her sisters

Stood I within his daughter

I would prefer him to a better place'

The conversation between Goneril and Regan at the end of the scene deciding to do something promptly to prevent their father from continuing this "unruly waywardness" only confirms the expectation of a tragedy still further.

2. D.2 the atmosphere in King Lear

3. The atmosphere in King Lear is constituted by the spirit of primitiveness and untutored, almost savage simplicity of character and custom, which should be realized from the outset.

4. In King Lear, Shakespeare spells out a different characteristic of the race- its uncontrollable and wayward passion , which links it not with the spirit world but with the untamed, ravening forces of purely animal or natural life. We find throughout the play that we are in the midst of primeval society whose "gods" sit very far remove from it in the iron heavens and which still feel the "instinct of" the ape and tiger stirring in its, blood. We see "unaccommodated man stripped of his lendings" a poor, bare, forked scarcely distinguishable from his environment, save for the presence of a few radiant types to bear witness that he is.

"for aye removed

from the developed brute; a god though in the germ"

It is therefore not until we have become steeped inthe peculiar atmosphere of the whole play that we can do justice to the apparently preposterous incidents of the opening scene.

And it should be noted how entirely this opening scene is the basis of the action of the main plot. The whole tragedy of Lear's fate springs from the fundamental mistake which he makes in his scene an dof which the consequences develop to the very end.

UNIT -3

ANOTE TRAGEDY AND "SHAKESPEAREA TRAGEDY"

King Lear as a Shakespearean Tragedy

The term tragedy canmean some strikingly unhappy accident or a merc9iless, arbitrarycestiny, a moral "exemplum" of just retribution or an unfathomable catatrophe, suggesting an essentially malevolent fate. As a rule to be properly alled tragedy the disaster has to have ab element of heroic pathos or some sensationa;l and astounding quality. In the context of literature tragic suffering implies an ieda of dignity and of inevitability of more than average stature. Eventhough this may not be true of every single stage tragedy. And great tragedy touches on the fundamental questions of the ultimate cause of human suffering, the origin and nature of evil in man and the eixstence of a destructive or bevolent fate. It is an expression of a universal desire to come to terms with those disturbing uncertainties.

In English, the word tragedy firstyappeared inChaucer's translation of Beothius' Consolation Philosphiate a work in I which the experience of suffering and the feeling of utter helplessness produce by it are discussed with particular intensity. For Boethiud and Chaucer tragedy is an experience as universal as i tis incomprehensible, and experience that makes the sufferer feel very much in need of explanation and consolation.

"Tragedy is to seen a dite prosperite for

a time, that endeth in wretchedness"

By his fall from a state o fhappiness and prosperity intomisery,man is forced to face the problems of guilt, distinctly and divine Providence.

Shakespear's tragedies, though shaped of up very different literary conventions,have to be seen within this tradition. King Lear's agonized question, "is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" Is repeated in some form or other, in nearly all his tragedies.man's bewildered attempt tosome to terms with suffering loss, or disillusionment is at the heart of almost every tragedy of his age. The problems of tragedy, that have been debated time and again in Shakespeate criticiam, are all aspects of this impact. It is much more difficult,however to find a less general common denominator for Shakespeare's tragedies. Most critics are agreed that these plays do not follow a fixed pattern, though not all would go as far as Kenneth Muir who observed.

"There is no such thing as Shakespearean Tragedy"; There are only Shakespearean gradegies. This implies that it is difficult togeneralize about his tragedies without over simplification or over statement. However A.C. Bradley's observation is one famous attempt to formulate Shakespeare's conception of tragedy and the tragic heroes.

"In almost all we observe a marked one-sidedness, a predisposition in some particular direction; to total incapacity in certain circumstances of resisting the force which draws in this direction,a fatal tendency to identity the whole being with one interest, object, passion or habit of mind. This it would seem, is for Shakespeare, the fundamental tragic trait".

It is indeed hazardous to a devise a single pattern of Shakespearean tradegy.

The twelve plays gathered under the heading tragedies in the first Folio are so different from each other - leaving aside the problem that they include - Troilus and Cressida and Cymbeline - that so far there has been no successful and convincing attempt to formulate a definition applicable to all of them. Either a group is singled out such as the great tragedies, while others are ranked

below them as deviations from the ideal type, or else the common features listed are so general that they could just as well apply to many other plays, either by contemporaries of Shakespeare or even from very different periods. This difficulty is to be attributed above all to the undogmatic dramastists who unworried by any fixed poetic precepts or narrowing conventions, produced a multiplicity of forms that resists any neat systematisation.

In Shakespearean tragedy few readers will perceive an untroubled affirmation of a justly and reasonably ordered world in Shakespeare's tragic endings and if they do, it must be their own assurance, not the plays Kenneth Muir's comment on King Lear can be applied though with differing emphasis, to nearly every tragedy by Shakespeare or one of his more interesting contemporaries.

"The play could not have been written in the age of faith, but neither could it have been written in an age of unbelief or an age of reason. At the beginning of the 17th century the right conditions existed: a universal Christian society, but with some of its basic tenets called in question by intellectuals, a realization that the qualities which make for success are not the basic Christian virtues; and the beginnings of a conflict between science and faith.

The unmistakable dynamic quality of Elizabethan tragedy comes from the discovery of the individual human character, from a burning interest in tits potentialities for good or evil, its corruptibility as well as its exhilarating power to inspire and impress.

"What piece of work is a Man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, inaction low like an angel, in apprehension how like a god; the beauty of the world, the paragon of animal'

(Hamlet 11.2. 303-7)

Hamlet here describes one of the fundamental discoveries of the Renaissance, but his own attitude mirrors the dilemma on which this tragedy- and not just this one - is based.

".....an yet, to me , what is this questions of dust?"

(Hamlet 11.2.308)

All these help us to understand and explain that the protagonist's character, and problems of character, have been at the centre of most discussions of Shakespearean tragedy.

Shakespeare's plays and particularly his tragedies offer an experience that can only be lived into and understood to the best of our individual understanding, there are no answers that the beginner can, as it were, look up at end of the book.

King Lear, presents the fate of no particular individual and is clearly universal. Its dramatic technique is determined by the need to present certain permanent aspects of the human situation, with a maximum of the imaginative realization and minimum regard for the convolutions of naturalism. In the scenes on the heath for example, although we retain our sense of the dramatic identity of each person speaking, there is also a sense of being caught up in a great and almost impersonal poem in which we hear-certain voices that echo and counterpoint each other and all that they say is part of the tormented consciousness of humankind. There is the same density of effect throughout. One character echoes another; the blinding of Gloucester parallels the cruelty done to Lear, Gloucester loses his eyes, and Lear's mind is darkened. Gloucester learns his "see' better in his blindness, and Lear reaches the recognition of his supreme need through madness. In the play there is also the felt presence or range of experience far wider than could be attributed to any of the persons regarded simply as persons. This is achieved partly by the use of simple but effective symbols" The bare heath, the hovel, the nakedness of poor Tom, the cliff from which Gloucester thinks to cast himself down partly by the use made of certain organizing ideas such as the Elizabethan conception of a necessary interrelation between man the social body and the cosmos, but above all by the poetry. The poetry of Lear is not only vivid, close packed and wide ranging involving in the immediate actions a world of experience, also it has a peculiar resonance that would leave us in no doubt of the universalising effect. It is what we hear when blind Gloucester declared.

" I have no way, and therefore want no eyes

I stumbles when I saw"

Or when Lear, crossed by Goneril, exclaims

" Who is it that can tell me who I am?" and the Fool replies "Lear's shadow".

The Lear and Gloucester families, even without the presence of a mother exhibit an enormous range of familial emotions and attitudes, reaching from earliest childhood into adult life; authoritarian demands, rebellious submission, revelries, the need for love and attempts to force it or to avoid it and so on. But the very intensity of the emotions and their results in action, force us to explore as far as we can the psychological and philosophic reaches of the play.

This does indeed compel the kind of imaginative thought that leads towards inclusive view of life. But if we start with predisposition towards an inclusive view of life. But if we start with predisposition towards an inclusive view generally we inevitably miss the basic action of the play in all its multifarious detail, shaped though it is by a master-plotter. It is that and its direct appeal to our imagination, from which individual exploration must start.

A.C. Bradley's observation is one famous attempt to formulate Shakespeare's conception of tragedy and the tragic heroes.

"In almost all we observe a marked one-sideness, a predisposition in some particular direction ; a total incapacity, in certain circumstances of resisting the force which draws in this direction; a fatal tendency to identify the whole being with one interest, object, passion or habit of mind. This it would seem, is for Shakespeare, the fundamental tragic trait."

It is indeed hazardous to devise a single pattern of Shakespearean tragedy. In the appreciation of great literature, to describe anything too narrowly is impossible. The tragic hero of Shakespeare, is a great man, not necessarily a good man who has to face a crisis The crisis is brought about by conflict between good and evil. The world depicted in a Shakespearean tragedy, is

a world of moral order unlike in Greek Tragedy. The hero, in a Greek Tragedy remains a victim from the beginning to the end, but is never radically transformed as a Shakespearean hero is. His is a lesson learnt by imposition where as the Shakespearean hero learn from his own experience, by participating in the process of suffering for which he himself, is the chief contributor. In Shakesperean tragedies, man enthralls the attention more than does his universe; humanism and humanities attract more attention than theology and religion; men more than angels, earth more than heaven. Shakespearean tragedy has for its motto "Character is destiny".

Litly Campbell in her "Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes', describes 'King lear; as a tragedy of wrath in old age. The plan has been hailed as one of moral value, regard, power, justice and pity by various critics. William Rosen contrasts the rehabilitation of Lear with the decline of Macbeth towards bestiality. It is very important to recognize in this play (King Lear) the passage from the darkness of the world of Goneril and Regan to the light that is Cordelia's love.

Each Shakespearean play is thus " a new beginning for although there is development, there is no repetition. Each is a category by itself, unique in its complexity of the plot carving a riche for itself, among his collection of innumerable plays.

2. B. King Lear as a tragic Hero

The first impression we get of King Lear Is that of a proud, arrogant, self - willed and Self - entered person who is utterly deficient in his judgement. He is a man aged eighty but his ripe age does not seem to have mellowed him in any way. Surrounded by flatterers and knowing no opposition, he has lived in the world of do-as-you- please. Suddenly an idea strikes him that he must renounce his powers in favor of his three daughters and rid himself of all the worries that kingship carries with it. So he gives away his kingdom to his daughters and wishes to have a public declaration of the love each daughter has for him.

The play opens with a bout of severe linguistic inflation, as

Goneril and Regan rival each other in lying rhetoric. Goneril pitches her love for Lear beyond all language and value and gives Lear an intoxicating does of flattery. She says.

"Sir I love you more than word can wield the matter;

Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty

Beyond that can be valued, rich or rare;

A love that makes breath poor and speech unable;

Beyond all manner of so much I love you"

Goneril's love for Lear is indeed beyond value, Since it does not exist at all; it is beyond expression not because it transcends meaning, but because, it has none . It is then up to Regan to negate her sister's negativity to imply an even mor grandiose"all"

Within this stage - managed charade, where 'all' has been so radically devalued, Coredelia's murmur "nothing' is the only sound currency. Lear warns her that nothing will come of her bluntness.

"Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again"

Lear misunderstands all his daughters. Believing the insicere words of his elder daughters, he gives them all his property and banishes his affectionate child Cordelia.

"Time shall unfold what cunning hides....." Thus from a study of the earlier scenes of the play one is led to the impression that Lear is a man of terrific, passion but with a childish intellect. He is a Titan in passion but mentally a child.

But as the play progresses, and as the old King realizes the treachery and ingratitude of his first two daughters. His character undergoes a thorough transformation. A proud self centered man who cannot tolerate even the slightest opposition to his authority receives the first real blow of his Life from Goneril which destroys most of his arrogance.

'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child"

Thus by the time he goes to Regan, he becomes a much

humbler man. He goes to the extent of kneeling and begging her to shelter him. As his suffering intensifies the old king further sheds all his pride and ego, and learns life's noblest lessons.

The position of the hero in this tragedy is in one respect peculiar. King Lear has to be regarded not only as "a man more sinned against than sinning" but also wholly as a sufferer. The fool reflect only the feelings of the readers or the audience when he says;

"Thou should not have been old

Till thou had'st been wise"

The storms scenes touch our heart and erase our impression of his proud and intolerant nature. The later scenes bring out his generosity. His heroic efforts to be patient bringout the depth of his shame and repentence. Finally the ecstasy of his reunion with Cordelia melt our hearts. Naturally therefore, at the close we nearly forget, that his suffering in the storm as the natural consequences of his own conduct.

It is in the storm scenes that we really see the first signs of noble change coming upon him. Exposed to the wild elements of nature he grows humble and human.

"Lear: Blow winds and crack your cheeks, rage Lear: blow!

You cataracts and hurricanes, spout

Till you have drenched our steeples, drowns the cocks.!

The old "King Lear' dies in the storm and a 'New Lear' is born

Lear; "Here I stand your slave

A poor, infirm, weak and despaired old man"

Then as he is seized by madness, we find Lear reaching a still higher stage in the evolution of his soul. As it has been said "Insane Lear is greater than sane Lear". He unlearns hatred and learns love and humanity. From a proud, stupid, arrogant old man, he grows into a purifies and a peritnent soul.

There is nothing more noble and beautiful in literature than

Shakespeare's "exposition" of the effect in suffering, in reviving the greatness and eliciting the sweetness of Lear's nature. The occasional recurrence, during his madness, of autocratic impatience or of desire for revenge serves only to heighten this effect and the moments when his insanity becomes infinitely pitiable do not weaken it. The old king in pleading with his daughters feels intensely his own humiliations and their horrible ingratitude.

Despite his advanced age he is constrained to practice a self control and patience. He tolerates the incessant and cutting reminders of his own folly out of his old affection for the Fool and in repentance for his injustice and a poetic grandeur which surpasses even that for his injustice and a poetic grandeur which surpasses even that of Othello's anguish. In spite of his affection he thinks of others first; and seeks in tender solicitude for his poor boy, the shelter he scorns for his bare head; he learns to feel and pray for the miserable poor, to discern falseness of flattery and brutality of authority beneath. His sight is not purged by scalding tears that it sees at last how power and place and all things in this world are vanity, except love. He tastes in his last hours the extremes both of love's rapture and of its agony. So the figure of King Lear is at once grand, pathetic and beautiful.

It is only when all left of humanity seems to be a madman, a beggar and jester surrounded by the storm, the peak of tragedy is reached. Lear says, 'why thou wert better in a grave than to answer with the uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow' st the worm no silk, the beast no hide the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume, Ha ! here's three of us are sophisticated ! Thou are the thing itself ! Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare-footed animal as thou art. Come off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here'

Finally in one passage Lear's whole situation is summed up as;

"My own knights have forsaken me and my best acquainted have forgotten me. The servants and maids of mine own house look me for a stranger, and I have become as an alien in their

sight, I called my servant and he gave me no answer....All my most familiars abhorred me and they whom I loved best are turned against me".

The last thoughts or words of King Lear are romantic in their strangeness. Lear's five times repeated "Never" in which the simplest and most unanswerable cry of anguish rises note by note till the heart breaks, is romantic in its naturalism. But the inspiration, boldness and familiarity of this line is surpassed by the next line, which shows bodily expression pleading for bodily relief. The theme of "King Lear" is the decay and fall of the world. The "King Lear" there will have no coronation. Everybody has died or been murdered, Gloucester was right when he said,.

"This great world shall so wear out to naught"

3.C.A. Note on action and imagery in King Lear

In King Lear, action and imagery appear to be particularly illumination. The first scene shows us Lear still a member of society. He makes deicions, gives orders and makes plans, addresses the other characters of this scene, his daughters, Kent France, etc. But the very first scene gives us a hint of how Lear is going to destrange himself from his environment. The dialogue which he carries on with his daughters is at the bottom no true dialogue that is not dialogue based of mutual understanding. Lear determines in advance the answers he will receive; he fails to adopt himself to the person with whom he is speaking. Hence his complete and almost incomprehensible misunderstanding of Cordelia. Lear takes no pains to understand what Codelia is really trying to say. He does not consider whether her words could not have quite another meaning. He is misled by only their superficial form and because he has expected another answer, different from this, so he repels the one person who in reality is dearest to him. He passes on to a more remote phase with every scene. His utterances even when addressed to other persons take on increasingly, the character of a monologue and become less and less part of the dramatic dialogue. It appears as though he is speaking to himself most of the time than to the others even when he is talking to

them.

The wealth of images in his speech results from this process and gives it vivid expression,being an utterance richest in imagery. Lear gazes with in himself. He no longer sees people nor what goes on about him. In madness a man is alone with himself. He speaks more to hi sown person than to others; where he does not speak to himself, he creates for himself a new and imaginary partner. Leaser speaks to people not present, he speaks to the elements, to nature, to the heavens (in the storm scene). The important thing is not what Lear does, but what he suffers, feels nd envisions with his inner eye. Much of what Lear utters in the central scene points beyond the limits of personal tragedy

The characters around Lear, too, The Fool, Edgar and Kent speak a language rich in imagery. If we glance, however at the other group of characters; Edmund,Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, we note how seldom they employ images, how different their whole language is in contrast to Lear and his followers. We never find that peculiar form of "monologue dialogue" and covers in a deliberate an dconscious manner. They have a goal which they seek to attain and everything they have a goal which they seek to attain and everything they have to say is bent upon this. Their language does not betray to us what is taking place within them. In the form of imaginative visions; it reveals to us soley their aims and attitudes, and how they intend tp put these into practice. Thus their language scarcely changes throughout the course of the play. Whereas Lear's, Edgar's and Kent's way of speaking is constantly varied. Goneril, Regan and Edmund are the calculating, cool and un9imaginative people who are incapable of "creative imagery" They have not relationship wiht nature, with the elemental powers. Their world is the world of reason the moment of the action a while Lear's language continually points beyond the limits. Thus the distribution of images among the characters also gives us a hint as to their position within the play.

The middle acts of the tragedy are the richest in imagery. The other action is less important here and is related to the background. Ther main emphasis doe snot fall upon the outer course of

events, upon what Regan or Goneril are planning, or what Edmund is abou, but rather upon what is passing in Lear himself. The outer drama has become an inner experience. Lear's inner development is portrayed in mages more than that of any other characters in Shakespeare.

"I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a m an aworm:.....
.....
As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport...."

Lear becomes the judge of all creatures in the fourth act. The imagery thus helps intensity and sharpen the poignancy of the spiritual experience through which Lear has to pass. The above image is the last link in a chain which runs through the whole drama.

Imagery in King Lear.

Every word in Shakespeare is a picture. Shakespeare has a passion for spinning out an image or accumulating diverse image to illustrate a single idea and this passion is very dominant in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's images play a part in raising, developing, substaining and repeating emotion in his plays which is somewhat analogous to the action or recurrent theme of noting in a musical composition. The dominant images are a characteristics of Shakespeare's work throughout but whereas in the early plays they are of the rather obvious kind taken over in some cases with the story itself from a hint in the original narrative, in the later plays especially in the great tragedies, they are born of the emotions of the theme and as in macbeth are subtle, complex veried but intensely vivid and revealing, as, in Lear constant and all prev ding as to be reiterated, not only inthe word pictures, but also in the single words themsleves

In King Lear we have the image of animals and of action as in Othello. The literative image of the play the most frequent in occurance and probably the most and significant is that of the human body in anguished, tagged, wrenched, beaten,

pierce, stung, scourged, dislocated, flayed, gashed, scaled, tortured, and finally broken on the rack. The image of the tortured body expresses the suffering is more important than causes. That is the significahce of the continual reference to patience and endurance.

As said earlier, equally important, is the animal imagery. There are references to sixty- four different animals in the course of the play and they provide us with a measuring - rod for humanity. Man is sometimes "a poor bare forked animal", sometimes a kite, a wolf, or a nameless monster. Man, no less than nature, is red in tooth and claw and the thin veneer of civilization over the ruthless struggle for survival expressed above allied Albany's words to Goneril after the blinding of Gloucester:

"If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offenses
It will come
Humanity must perforce prey in itself
Like monsters of the deep."

The animal imagery links up with clothing imagery because unaccomodated man - without the things he borrows from the animals - is merely a poor Tom and clothes makes all the difference between the criminal and his judge.

The animal imagery in Lear fills our imagination with the accumulated picture of active ferocity of wolf, tiger, wild bear, vulture, serpent, and sea - monster, all animals of a certain dignity and grandeur. Though seen here only when.

" Their desires.
Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous."

This represents the terrific scale of suffering in Lear which makes us feel that the evil of humanity is so great so unchecked and universal; that if the gods do not intervene the end of such horrors must come and

" Humanity must perforce prey on itself

Like monsters of the deep."

The intensity of feeling and emotions in Lear and the sharpness of its focus is revealed by the fact that in Shakespeare's imagination there runs throughout only one overpowering and dominating continuous image. So compelling is this that even well - marked different and subsidiary images are passed into service and used to augument and emphasise it.

In King Lear we are conscious all through of the atmosphere of buffeting, strain, and strife and at moments of bodily tension to the point of agony. So naturally does this flow from the circumstances of the drama and the mental suffering of Lear, that we scarcely realize how greatly this sensation in us is increased by the general floating image. Kept constantly before us chiefly by means of the verbs of used but also metaphor as mentioned earlier.

One can scarcely open a page of the play without being struck by these images and verbs, for every kind of bodily movement general involving pain is used to express mental and abstract as well as physical facts. To name only a few of them, Lear in his agonized remorse, pictures himself as a man wrenched and tortured by an "engine" beating at the gate and let his a folly to shake his manhood; he complains that she has struck him with her tongue, the hot tears break from him; his heart; he says will break into a hundred thousands flaws".

Shakespeare's use of prose, for comic, ironic, mad or simple realistic scenes and the different uses to which he puts prose in different phases of his carreer, are also worth attention. Most of all one must realize what Shakespeare did to the vocabulary at his disposal. He inherited a language that was in the process of expansion by translation and borrowing, a language flexible enough to enable him to cast his own stamp on it, to manipulate it, enlarge it and wrest it to his purpose with remarkable freedom. Spescer was behind him and Marlowe and Lyly and the Elizabathan song writers and Petrarchan sonneteers and Ovid and Mantwan, and Italian poets and short story writers and translations from the writ-

ers of his time and later were, of the advantages to be derived from combining and counterpointing the Anglo Saxon and Latin elements in English. Above all, as for all truly great poets language was for him not only expressive but cognitive and exploratory; for him, the nature of reality could be probed by the very fact of rendering it in poetic speech, This great poetic gift was put at the service of an equally great dramatic gift. He had true objectivity of the artist, the supreme craftsmanship of the man of the theatre., a humane curiosity about man and his nature, an extraordinary ability to conceive and create character, and an unrivalled mastery of the English Language. No other writer, so far as I know, certainly no other dramatist makes such continual use of the running and recurrent symbols as does Shakespeare... This method of working by way of suggestion, spiring from a succession of vivid pictures and concrete details is of course, of the very essence of romantic art and in the case of Shakespeare, the poet's mind, unlike under the dyer's hand, subdues to itself what it works in and comes his way, colors it so subtly and so delicately that for the most party we are conscious of what is happening, and know only the total result of the effect on our imaginative sensibility" observes David Daiches.

UNIT -4

A NOTE ON THE PLOT OF KING LEAR

As mentioned in one of the earlier units , Shakespeare's source for writing King Lear was the anonymous play "The true Chronicle History of King Lear and his three Daughters", printed in 1605 but written presumably in the early nineties. What Shakespeare has added to this story, is more interesting than what he has kept: the parts of Kent and the Fool, as well as lear's madness are his own contributions to the plot, Most of Shakespeare's alternations have to be seen in relation to his basic decision not to adopt the optimistic solution found in all previous versions of Lear's story. Shakespeare's most striking contribution is the insertion of a second plot lifted bodily from an entirely different source. In Sir

Philip Sidney's pastoral novel Arcadia he founds an episode that bore anunmistakable resemblance to King Lear's story, not only in plot outline, but above all in its moral implication. It is in fact, much closer to the spirit of Shakespeare's tragedy than the chronicle play. In it,a blind King dies after putting the crown on the head of the son he has found faithjful at last. His heart, broken with unkindness and affliction stretched so far beyond his limits with this excess of comfort as it was able no longer to keep safe his royal spirits. Like King Lear,, he discovers that the child he has disinherited and cast off has stood by him in the hour of extreme physical and mental desolation and has requited the father's fatal error with filial affecton and loving care. The addition of a second plot was obviously meant to enrich the moral implications of the play. Just as the numerous digressions and side - episodes woven into the structure of Sidney's novel do. No other Shakespearean tragedy has a sub plot of comparable importance.

The thematic parallels as well as the differences between the two plots are easy enough to recognize. Their chief effect is to direct our attention to the universal moral laws common to both plots and to the exemplary relevance of the tragic event rather than to the fate of the individual actors. This does not by any means turn the play into a morality, but it certainly explores a wider range of general, social and philosophical issues than Othello. Not Lear and Gloucester only, but several of the other characters are forced by their experience to reconsider their traditional ideas of human nature and divine providence. This tragedy inquires into the ultimate roots of human behaviour and of society, bypassing anything that seems merely ephemeral, arbitrary or conventional. It is also remarkable that in contrast to the earlier tragedies, there is a consistent avoidance of Christian terminology. The play is set in a pagan world and its characters are excluded from the possible solace of Christian answers to their tragic dilemma, though this does not mean that the tragedy can be understood without the context of an intense theological debate such as it is conducted in Sidney's Arcadia as well as in many other fictional and discursive texts of the period.

Both plots describe a process of suffering and painful experience; the protagonist is reduced to a state of complete isolation by his moral blindness, but this cruel disillusion brings him to an awareness of his folly. The echo with the blowing of a nose or the squeaking of a boot is parodied. Shakespeare starts by assuming that to make yourself powerless is to invite an attack. This does not mean that every one will turn against you (Kent and the Fool stand by fear from first to last) but in all probability someone will, If you throw away your weapons, some less scrupulous person will pick them up. If you turn the other cheek, you will get a harder blow on it than you got on the first one. This does not always happen but it is to be expected, and you ought not to complain if it does happen. The second blow, is, so to speak, part of the act of turning the other cheek. First of all, therefore there is the vulgar common - sense moral drawn by the Fool. Don't relinquish power, don't give away your lands. There is also another moral, and it does not very much matter whether he was fully aware of it. It is contained in the story which after all he made up, or altered to suit his purpose. It is: 'Give away your lands if you want to, but don't expect to gain happiness by doing so. Probably you won't gain happiness. If you live for others, you must live for others and not as a round about way of getting an advantage for yourself.

4. B. The Catharsis of King Lear

The over - riding critical problem in King Lear is that of its ending. The deaths of Lear and Cordelia confronts us like a raw fresh wound where our every instinct calls for healing and reconciliation. What justifies their death? Can death follow suffering and torture? These questions may not have a direct answer. But, it is rather implicit in Lear's own image, when he calls for tongues and eyes to howl. "That heaven's vault should crack' (Act V, Sc, 3,259) and in his despairing question.

"Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life.
And thou no breath at all?"
(Act V.Sc. 3,1. 306)

This problem becomes overwhelming when we consider that unlike the problems Shakespeare may have inherited with the plot of Hamlet, this tragic ending was imposed by Shakespeare on a story which, in its source, allowed Cordelia's forces to win the war. Moreover, the massive intrusion into King Lear, of Christian elements of providence, depravity and spiritual regeneration make it impossible to shunt aside the ending as a coincidence of its pre-Christian setting. The constant references to retributive justice perhaps, greater here than in any other of Shakespeare's tragedies make it an issue in a way that it is not such pagan lays as Timon of Athens, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus. Indeed part of the poignance of King Lear, lies in the fact that its issues, and the varieties of evil that it faces, are so central to Christianity while it is denied any of the mitigation offered by a well-defined heaven and hell, and a formal doctrine of supernatural salvation. The impression of unreconciled savagery and violence in the ending has been mitigated by a critical reading that would interpret Lear's last emotion as one of Job, even ecstay, rather than one of unbearable agony.

'And finally, though he is killed by an agony of pain, the agony in which he actually dies is not one of pain but of ecstasy. Suddenly with a cry represented in the oldest text by a four times repeated 'O;, he exclaims:

"Do you see this? Look on her? Look, her lips
Look there, look there...."
(Act V. Sc. 3 l310)

These are the last words of Lear. He is sure at last that she lives and what had he said when he was still in doubt?

"She lives, if it be so.
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt. (Act. V.Sc 3 l.265)

To us, perhaps the knowledge that he is deceived may bring a culmination of pain: but if it brings only that then we are false to Shakespeare.

There are few critics who believe that Lear's emotional outburst makes the play's ending a trafigured version of attained salvation.

4.C. The moral of King Lear

The subject of Lear is renunciation and it is only by being wilfully blind that one can fail to understand what Shakespeare is saying.

Lear renounces his throne but expects everyone to continue treating him as King, he does not see that if he surrenders power, other people will take advantage of his weakness, also that those who flatter him the most ghostly (ie) Regan and Goneril are exactly the ones who will turn against him. The moment he finds that he can no longer make people obey him as he did before he falls into a rage. In his madness and despair he passes through two moods which again are natural enough in his circumstances though in one of them it is probable that he is being used partly as a mouthpiece for Shakespeare's opinions - one is the mood of disgust in which Lear repents, as it were, for having been a king, and grasps for the first time the rottenness of formal justice and vulgar morality. The other is a mood of impotent fury in which he wreaks imaginary revenge upon those who have wronged him. 'To have a thousand wild red burning spirits come hissing in upon em!' and

"It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
A troop of horse with felt; I'll put't in proof,
And when I have stol'n upon these son-in-laws
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill." (IV-6 - l.185).

Only at the end does he realize as a sane man that power, revenge and victory are not worthwhile.

"No, no, no, come let's away to prison
and we'll wear out
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
that ebb and flow by th'moon."

(Act V. Sc. 3 1.8)

But by the time he makes this discovery it is too late for his death and Corellia's are already decided on.

These are the two morals in the story of Lear.

4. D. Is the blinding of Gloucester necessary?

While referring to the special difficulties with the play, prof. Iyengar asks this question. He continues saying "King Lear is conceived quite obviously as a play that transcends time and locality. A Palace; a castle, the open country; A heath; a hovel; an out house; the country near Dover! The state is the whole world and it is also the human heart; and Lear is simply Every man". Now the hands of the clock move fast, now time seems to stand still. Just when we feel exhausted having withnessed Lear's tribulations on the heath and a little relieved that he is being conveyed on a litter to Dover, a mere stage direction Regan's Gloucester which closely follows is one of the peaks of infamy jutting out along with so many others and had our blood not frozen before, it ought to do so now. When Gloucester cries.

'He that will think to live till he be old
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

Regan merely prods her husband to put out the other eye too. The horrible thing about this scene is that this blinding comes immediately after Gloucester telling Regan the reasons for conveying Lear to Dover. (Act III, Sc. vii 1, 55)

Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his, anointed flash rash boarish fangs...."

And his imagination is translated into lurid reality on himself and so the blinding of Gloucester represents a sort of crystalline of this element of physical outrage which the imagery hold so massively in suspension throughout the play. But from somewhere in the obscene bowels of the universe starts simultaneously the murmur of positive response to Gloucester's despairing cry to the

gods; an unavailing response, it is true, yet a response all the same. It is Cornwall's Servant (like Iago's wife) that turns unexpectedly against the criminal like Emila, the servant dies too but he has struck a gallant blow and Cornwall is a dead man. Like crime, compassion is contagious too for the 2nd and 3rd servants determine to continue the 1st servants good work. While one of them follows the blinded Earl to entrust him to bedlam Beggar/ (Edgar himself), the other says.

"I'll fetch some flax and white of eggs

To apply to his bleeding face, Now heaven help him!"

(Act III. Sc. Vii l. 105)Isn't the blinding of Gloucester too painful?

Shakespeare's artistic sense is almost always so infallible that it is wise to look for a reason that castigates the scenes as.... There is an obvious crudity and moral insensitiveness in Gloucester's speech when he discusses Edmund. Yet his loyalty to Lear is a noble and fearless trait and he pays for it heavily and this loyalty and consequent suffering pave the way for his spiritual rehabilitation. Although unseeing, he now sees the truth, though unaware, he feels Edgar's healing touch, when the news of the blinding of Gloucester and of Conwall's retributive death reaches Albany, he speaks words that echo more than his own thoughts.

"This shows you are above

You justiciers that these our nether crimes

So speedily can verge".

4.E Other characters in King Lear

The Fool in King Lear

In all Shakespeare's plays the clown or the fool plays quite an important part. He makes his appearance even in his serious tragedies. There is the drunken porter in Macbeth. The best known fools in Shakespeare are Touchstone and Feste. The Fool in King Lear is a tragic character and little more than a boy, tries to out-jest his master's injuries and dies in his service. The two

extremes of clowning were the rustic fool and the court jester. All the varieties are mixtures of these two. The task was, of course, the general one of making the company of the audience laugh and more particularly of keeping the dialogue going in the intervals of action. They supplied also when necessary both song and dance. The fools in Shakespeare's plays are more than incidental characters; they are closely woven into the plot and they deliberately take sides.

Writing on the grotesque elements in the play, Wilson Knight points out that the fool in King Lear, "sees the potentialities of comedy in Lear's behavior. Most critics have tended to sentimentalize the Fool. Barker remarks justly that the producer today is faced with the difficulty that the fool is all etherealized by the higher Criticism. We are usually told that by his jests the Fool tries to take Lear's mind off his obsession with his daughter's in gratitude. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nearly every one of his jests reminds Lear of the sorrow that is gnawing at his heart. He may "labour to outjest his master's hear-struck injuries; but it might almost be said the these jests, coming on top of Lear's affections, and concerned as they are with affections, help to drive him mad. He stands, perhaps, perhaps, for worldly common sense, he is not without malice and he can never forgive Lear's treatment of Cordelia. He began to pine away on Cordelia's banishment and his bitter jokes continually remind the king of his injustice. He is not merely a touching figure who might easily have been drawn from life, he is also the sage-fool who sees the truth. His dramatic function is of great importance. He provides not so much relief as a safety valve for the emotions of the audience. Lear's conduct is absurd if judged critically and the representation of madness is apt to arouse more laughter than sympathy. The Fool was there fore inserted to draw the laughs of the audience and so preserve Lear's sublimity

The Fool is a remarkable transformation of a stock Elizabethan dramatic character into a species of chorus, whose wry commentary on Lear's actions between jis "giving alto his

daughters" and his succumbing to madness help to add a new dimension to the play. The king is foolish, the Fool is wise. Lear's Fool explores the paradoxes of pretention and reality, but he is also a dramatic character himself whose destiny is pathetic rather than tragic. In Act I Sc. 4, the banished Kent (returned in disguise to serve his ungrateful master), the Fool, and Lear, engage in a conversation that is both realistic and stylized and ritualistic,. Lear, now first, beginning to realize faintly the consequences of his folly; the Fool heartbroken and reckless, flashing bitter home truths at his brooding master, Kent listening and waiting to see how he can be of service to the doomed old man. When the truth about his daughter's intentions is finally apprehended by Lear; incredibility gives way to epic anger and anger to a desperate attempt to come to terms with this unthinkable new knowledge; and he finally goes out in to the storm to face nature at its most uncompromising to realize elementary facts about life from which he had hitherto been completely shut away and at last to lose his reason under this roughs schooling.

The Fool's character and function are both ambiguus and all through the play Shakespeare is conininually inventing he orthodox view of wisdom and foolishness. In the storm scenes there is a wild quarter of madness - Lear, Poor Tom, the Fool and the elements themselves in which the Fool seems almost to stand for sanity, he fades from the picture when he is no longer needed since Lear can act as his own fool It can be said in the worlds of Welsford,

'Lear's tragedy is the tragedy of the King with

motely; it is also the crowning and apotheosis of the Fool'.

Crodelia

King Lear, which is a play full of moral ambiguities, says more about man than any other of Shakespeare's plays. The ambiguity of the moral world is never so effectively illustrated as by the rapid and apparently efforless way in which Shakespeare can turn out fierce disapproval of Lear into profound sympathy for him. In this teeming tragedy, with its cunning alternation of prose

and verse, its paradoxical play with reason and madness and innumerable other pain of apparent contraries, Shakespeare challenges all the categories with which men comfort themselves into a delusion that they know the moral universe they live in. Perhaps the ultimate statement made by tragedy is that the moral universe is more complicated and more self contradictory than we can allow ourselves to think in our daily lives. In this world of moral ambiguities is Cordelia, the victim of ruthless destiny and a lady of high virtues. "Everything here seems to lie beyond our view and affects us in a manner which we feel rather than perceive" (Mrs. Jameson). She appears only in a few scenes, yet the beauty and pathos that cling round her are a haunting memory. Partly the impression is due to indirect causes external to herself. Chief of these is the contrast between her and Goneril and Regan, whose enormities not only act as a direct foil which throws into relief Cordelia's filial devotion, but are so repellent that the imagination reverts continually, and even unconsciously to this figure which stands for all that is normal in humanity and agreeable to its moral sense. Another cause is the mere pity of her fate and of her father's sufferings, for their intensity naturally quickens our sympathy with those who make his cause theirs. And then we cannot but be affected by her presence when we see how those around her are affected more especially Lear and France and Kent - what devotion and admiration follow her steps. All these considerations count for something, but above all is the grace of her character

Like lear's, it is simply drawn. In order, may be to harmonize the dramatist personae with the rude period of the events, Shakespeare ha s not endowed them with those subleties and contradiction of character which are the outcome of a civilized environment and its more complex conditions of life. The characterization is ideal. The persons each embody some speci.' quality. "Goneril and Regan, the destructive force, the ravening egoisms in humanity which is at war with all goodness; Kent, a clear unmingle fidelity; Cordelia, unmingled tenderness and love". Those qualities, tenderness and strength - when united, the heaven - sent complement of each other - are the essentials of Codelia's

nature. Here is the power of loving with the strongest, purest devotion and of inspiring love. And as those who feel most deeply are least demonstrative her bearing is marked by a reserve behind which her force of character and affection makes itself perceptible, like some unseen spiritual presence.

Her strength is shown at the outset . There may be an "indiscreet simplicity" in her reluctance to gratify Lear's request, but it argues a strong will and nerve. There is the note of self-possession and insight into character in her curt dismissal of Burgundy. She reads her sisters aright and acts accordingly, with foresight and practical sense. She exercises over others the influence of a strong nature. France does her desires; Kent relies on her completely. There is queenly dignity in all her movements which does not desert her in the hour of defeat. She does not expend her energy in restless speech like the somewhat hysterical Regan, but what she dos say - in that "soft, low voice" - is ever to the point, and the rare rebuke falls with grave, crushing force from her lips. Everything about Cordelia shows that she has what one calls strength of character and capacity. And this quiet strength is penetrated with an infinite tenderness, " too sacred for words, and almost too deep for tears". Though Lear has misunderstood her so, yet he best expressed the inexpressible effect of her beauty of character when he called her "a soul in bliss. a spirit". there is in truth a something not of this world in her ethereal purity of love and self-sacrifice.

Whenever Coneril and Regan are introduced "pure horror" reigns, as from the presence of "Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimaeras dire". This horror tends to obscure the distinction between them. Yet the twin monsters are differentiated in appearance and character. Regan is of a more feminine bearing; her eyes have not the fierce burning light of Goneril's - indeed their expression seems kind; probably it is to her alone that Lear applies the epithet "well-favoured". Goneril looks the more formidable and is. She has originality of mind and a scheming brain; sees quickly the bearing of events, forms rapid decisions without asking advice.

and translates them into rapid, unflinching action without heeding any one's opposition; and she is never hampered by a scruple. Regan, on the other hand, does not originate, but catches up ideas quickly and echoes what others have said; she looks for support and "needful counsel" seems to shrink from taking decisive action on her own responsibility, and does not feel quite comfortable in the enormities to which her sister leads her. For a character such as Goneril's naturally takes the lead, and we find that she dominates all, save Edmund, with whom she comes in contact - not least Regan, to whom at each crisis she write instructions and who refers to her with something like awe. It is she who foresees the difficulties that will arise from Lear's abdication, and whereas Regan would put them aside for the moment ("we shall think further of it") Goneril faces them ("we must do something and I' the heat"): and we soon see that she means what she says. But Regan, though forewarned and though her sister has taken the first, the difficult step, weakly hurries from home instead of grappling with the situation there and then, and when Lear overtakes them at Gloucester's house still seeks to put off the interview. Afterwards, having between them driven the old man to the verge of madness, Regan falls to uneasy explanations, self-excusings and moralising, but Goneril preserves an unruffled indifference. Regan, in fact gives one the impression of being just as evil-hearted as her sister and even more" willing to wound", but intellectually inferior and without the conscienceless callousness and iron will which makes Goneril as terrible as some destructive force of nature.

Yet, though Goneril is the prime mover of crusade of cruelty against their father and draws her sister into it, she does not seem to me so cruel naturally as Regan. Cruelty acts wantonly and argues a certain pettiness of nature. Now there is always method in Goneril's monstrosities, a purpose in them. She regards the king's whims and complaints and his train of knights as a real grievance, as they probably are; and when she has an object the removal of a grievance -or a husband-she lets nothing stand in the way, she merely tramples it under foot. But she does not got out of her way will fully to inflict pain; it is simply nothing at all to her

whether or not others suffe To Regan, however, the purposeless infliction of pain is a positive joy. She has the pretty lust of cruelty, the persecutor's satisfaction is seeing others suffer. Look how she eggs on Cornwall to punish Kent and torture Gloucester. There is a sort of viciousness about her as of some ill conditioned animal, One sees it too in her biting taunts. Ignorant of the characters of all three daughters, Lear is most ignorant of Regan's believing that it is not in her "to bandy hasty words" but this is just what she can do, and does. Resless with much of her father's hysterical temperament and voluble, Regan speaks more (and even more bitterly) than Goneril,, who keeps a cool head and acts.

The struggle for Edmund proves decisively the superior strength of the elder, Regan is free (and so not guilty in the matter like her sister); she knows Gonerils's partially for Edmund; yet she merely "talks" with him. Goneril in the same position would have brought things to a crisis; just as, when foiled through circumstances, she determines that their rival shall not succeed and sticks at nothing to compass her object. Similarly situated, Regan, one feels, would not have had the nerve to Poison her sister, still less herself. The manner of their several ends is a measure of the difference between them. Finally it may be noted that Goneril has acted all along against her husband's wish whereas Regan has had the encouragement of her worthy mate Cornwall. There can be no doubt therefore that the elder is by far the more dangerous and guiltier, yet the weaker seems somehow the more odious perhaps because weaker.

The two Dukes are contrasted no less than their wives. Albany seems in some ways like what Gloucester must have been. He is naturally kind, merciful, just. He is at first as "guiltless... as ignorant" of his wife's treatment of Lear, and afterwards when he perceives her drift protests, though feebly: nor is he present, we must remember, when the king is maddened into leaving Gloucester's castle. He intends, as Edmund foresees, to treat his prisoners generously. He would resign to Lear the throne of which his victory has made him undisputed master. He has not that moral

callousness which makes some of the other characters altogether indifferent to the "judgement of the heavens", or the sufferings of others. But Albany's good qualities are of the passive type. He hesitates and vacillates, effaces himself and suffers his better instincts to be over ruled. He shows at his weakest in the scene where, though disapproving of Goneril's action, he has not resolution enough to press his resistence. His wife treats him contemptuously underrating his spirit and capacity, until he is "changed" and goaded into rebuking her. Then, as is often the case with long suffering, he astonishes by his vigour, and henceforth, as the drift of events makes in his favour, he rises more to the height of his responsibility and in our esteem. But had he asserted himself sooner the course of events might have been very different, and one can scarcely apply to him the epithet 'noble', though he almost appeals so in contrast to those about him, more especially to his hateful colleague Cornwall. The latter will be ever associated with the most horrible incident in Shakespeare. But independently of the impression left by his savagery in that scene, his character, though slightly developed, excites extreme disgust. He is a good illustration of how vivid and actual one of the minor dramatic personae can be made through a few strokes. For instance, his vile habit of heartless jesting is in itself a revelation of meanness and merit, unlike even the "smiling rogue" Oswald, who is at least a loyal servant.

Gloucester is kindly but easy-going and weak, and such people are apt to be inconsistent. He does not venture to plead on Cordelia's behalf, but shows some spirit in interceding for Kent with Cornwall, and afterwards stays behind to say a kind word) though he does not know that the messenger is his old friend). He tries, kindly enough, to smooth matters between Lear and his daughter and Cornwall; and 'would have all well' between them. He sympathizes with Lear when he is driven out of Glouscester's own castle, yet only raises a hesitating protest. Later, he assists Lear, but not till he has heard of the arrival of French troops; one feels that he does commiserate with the king but cannot help doubting whether his commiseration would have taken this practical

Shape had it not been stimulated by fear lest the king should be revenged home. When his great affliction comes upon him he gives in altogether and seeks release in self – destruction. It is characteristic of the man who spoke so lightly in earlier Scenes that Gloucester regards his sufferings as a piece of cruel sport on the part of 'the gods' and does not perceive any justification of them in his own conduct. His best quality is love of his sons. True, he misunderstands them as Lear does his children (an illustration of the parallelism of the tow stories), accepting Edgar's guilt on slender evidence, and proving himself lamentably 'credulous' and easy to deceive, as might indeed be expected in a man so superstitious. Still, he is a devoted father, according to his lights; suffering, in the end exercises on him as on his master its sovereign efficacy; and the beauty of his death might reconcile us to worse things than want of strenuousness. Indeed, nothing in his life becomes him so well as the leaving of it. He and Albany should have been born in 'better year', when there is more scope for the milder virtues. In an 'iron age; it is the weakness of such men that becomes prominent, and overshadows their good qualities.

Edmund's villainy has a kind of abstract interest as illustrating the consequences of the violation of moral law. The fact that he comes, of a great house gives him to borrow Coleridges phrase, the 'germ of pride'. He bears on him the marks of 'villiant strain'; has a keen intellect and great resources and self – reliance, fostered by his peculiar life; is an able soldier and brave; an attractive person, as might be inferred from the partiality of Goneril and Regan, apart from Kent's complimentary description; and, in spite of all his evil-doing, not without some instincts for good. But these instincts have been repressed, and these possibilities of a worthy career marred, by onre fatal flaw, his illegitimacy. A homeless out-cast, he has never known the good influences and associations among which Edgar has grown up; all the evil in him must have been fostered by his exiled upbringing; he hears his own father lightly confess that he has often 'blushed to acknowledge him'. 'Custom' and the curiosity of nations; are against him, and the thought that he cannot break his 'birth's invidious bar' is ever

present. Thus his natural gifts prove no blessing, for they inspire the pride which is ever being mortified, the ambition which can never be realized. Shame therefore (and shame 'will naturally generate guilt) and pride make up the corroding poison, the 'dram of evil' that turns whatever of good there may be in him 'to his own scandal'. He has come to regard himself as the natural enemy of society and all its ties and obligations, and his hand is against every man. There is in fact something impersonal about his wickedness. It is the 'wild revenge' taken by the spirit of revolt against injustice. With Edgar's position and advantages he would not have been an Edgar, for he had not Edgar's natural goodness and nobility of character, but he would surely have been different from the Edmund we know. And in judging him we should remember the cause which partially accounts for what he is.

Kent (the type of loyal devotion) reminds us somewhat of Gonzalo in The tempest, less polished than the old Italian courtier, but stronger in character and equally philosophic and composed in endurance of adversity. He and Edgar represent the triumph of capable goodness over the intriguing super-subtlety (in Edmund) which over-reaches itself. The scheme of the play makes Edgar the counterpart of Cordelia, and he is 'worthy of his position. What higher praise could be given? There is something very affecting in the tenderness with which his strong nature deals with his father's weakness. He is generous in his peculiar relation to Edmund and the lattrers' taunt, is the very last that Edgar would use. His only practical mistakes are that like Gloucester, he accepts too implicitly Edmund's story and afterwards takes to flight instead of seeking some explanation with his father. But he has no special reason to distrust Edmund, of whom he can know but little, and his own nature 'is so far from doing harms' that he instinctively trusts other. Unsuspecting, undeserved confidence in others is the natural error of such men, and humanity is the richer therefore. After his flight Edgar manifests a nerve and versatility which carry him through many great difficulties and enable him to play many parts successfully. There is about him a 'royal nobleness' of bearing and character to which none can be insensible.

Had he too fallen a victim at the last it would have been exceeding hard to dispute the alleged pessimism of King Lear

Source : A.W. Verity.

UNIT - 5

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF KING LEAR

King Lear was too huge for the stage and it has been stated that by the verdict of the criticism and theatrical experience alike, King Lear is a poor stage play. Shakespeare through exhaustion or haste had failed to think out the scheme and possibilities of King Lear as he had thought out and considered the scheme and possibilities of Othello.

Murray complains that the play is lacking in poetic spontaneity. Shakespeare, he believes, was working against his natural bent. He was spurring his imagination, which in consequence was something less than imagination. Murray calls the play "an exploitation of partial despair, an enforced attendance made at a time when silence would have been more wholesome and more natural."

Coleridge called the play the most tremendous effort of Shakespeare as a poet. Shelley described it as the most perfect specimen of dramatic poetry existing in world. The excellence of every art is in its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with 'Beauty and Truth'.

One theme of the play, expressed in plot and underplot is the parent - child relationship. To a child, the father may be both loved protector and unjustly obstructing tyrant and to a parent the child may be both loving supporter of age and ruthless usurper and rival. This ambivalent attitude is distributed between the good and evil children of Lear and Gloucester. Lear has reached the age when he should renounce love, choose death and make friends with the necessity of dying. The play opens with his decision to abdicate, so that he may crawl unburthened towards death. But

the love test he imposes shows that he still retains the desire for love, and his actions in the first scene reveal only too plainly that he wishes to retain the authority, he is ostensibly renouncing. This is a universal theme: For though, since a King has more to renounce than a subject, Lear's royalty is important. However, in King Lear, common feelings are magnified. The selfishness and ingratitude of children, no longer trammelled by the restraints of morality nor modified by filial affection are projected into the monstrous figures of Goneril and Regan and family bickering is enlarged into an internecime struggle, destroying the peace of Britain and accompanied by a storm in the cosmos itself.

The play is not only a tragedy of parents and children , of pride and ingratitude: ti is also a tragedy of kingship. Power corrupts not only the possessor's capacity for loving, but the sponta neity of others' love. He can never ensure that the professed love of friends and relations is disinterested, since it may easily be purposeful flattery. What is more, the appetite for flattery grows by what it feeds on; those who refuses to flatter are hated and banished, while the flatteries are rewarded. In the first scene of the play, Lear is a foolish old man who has been described with pardonable exaggeration as an "arrogant old idiot, destitute of any decent human quality and incapable of any reasonable act," who is led in the vanity of dotage to stage a scene to gratify his craving for affection. When Cordelia refuses to barter her love for material profit, Lear banishes both her and the one man who dares to take her part. This violation of the duties of kingship is the initial deed from which the tragedy springs. As the play progresses, Lear's subconscious realization that he has committed a sinful mistake gradually rises into his conscious. The cruelty of Goneril and Regan makes him admit that he has banished the one daughter who loved him disinterestedly; but it is not until near the end of the second act that he experiences an emotion not purely egotistical when he argues the difference between the bare animal necessities and human needs. In the storm, more sinned against than sinning, Lear learns "art of our necessities," and so becomes aware of the -common humanity he shares with the poor

naked wretches. He exhorts pomp to 'shake the superflux to them." As Glucester was later to pray that distribution should

"undo excess,
And each man have enough."

The repetition is significant, and it completely disproves Schukling's argument that as Shakespeare elsewhere displays little social sense we should not assume that Lear in acquiring this compassion was being purified. Shakespeare, after al, was, not cut off from the Christian tradition, With its insistence on the duty of charity; and though he doubtless believed in an hierarchal rather than in an egalitarian society, there is no reason to think that he would have looked on the wish of Lear and Gloucester to shake the superflux to the less fortunate as a symptom of madness.

Yet Lear', on the appearance of Poor Tom, does go mad. Obsessed as he is with the thought of filial ingratitude, it needs only a little shock to drive him over the frontier of sanity. The Bedlam beggar provides him with a glaring example of the poverty he has been pitying, and by tearing off his clothes he identifies himself with unaccommodated man, the "poor, bare, forked animal." In one sense this is the central moment of the play - a dramatic answer to the Psalmist's question: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Stripped of his proud array, stripped of everything except the basic necessities man's life is as cheap as beast's. But this is only an interim report on the human condition: it is not the answer provided by the play as a whole.

In the trial scene, Lear is concerned with justice -"a kind of wild justice" - and with the cause of hardness of heart. When he next appears, in the fourth act, we see him in a new stage of self-knowledge. He realizes that he has been flattered like a dog, and that a king is merely a man. He inveighs against sex, partly because sexual desire has led to the birth of unnatural children, if indeed their unnaturalness does not prove that their mother's tomb sepulchres and adulteress. Lear returns to the subject of justice and authority in his next long speech. "A dog's obeyed in office." All men are sinners, and successful men cloak their crimes and

vices by the power of gold. Justice is merely an instrument of the rich and powerful to oppress the poor and weak. But since all are equally guilty, none does offend. Since all are miserable sinners, all have an equal right to be fogiven. This speech continues the analysis of authority begun in Measure for Measure; and, as I have suggested elsewhere, the praise of order and the analysis of Authority may be regarded as thesis and antithesis of the Shakespearian dialectic. It has often been observed that Lear's diatribes on sex and gold resemble the invective of the disillusioned Timon.

The old Lear died in the storm. The new Lear is born in the scene in which he is reunited with Cordelia. His madness marked the end of the wilful, egotistical monarch. He is resurrected as a fully human being. We can tell from his protest.

"You do me wrong to take me out of the grave" that the awakening into life is a painful process. After the reconciliation, Lear makes only two more appearances. In the scene in which he is being led off to prison he, has apparently overcome the desire for vengeance: he has left behind him all those attributes of kingship which had prevented him from attaining his full stature as a man; he has even passed beyond his own pride. At the beginning of the play, he is incapable of disinterested love, for he uses the love of others to minister to his own egotism. His prolonged agony and his utter loss of everything free his heart from the bondage of the selfhood. He unlearns hatred, and learns love and humility. He loses the world and gains his soul.

"We two along will sing like birds in the cage;
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness."

The play is not pessimistic and pagan; it is rather an attempt to provide an answer to the undermining of traditional ideas by the new philosophy that called all in doubt. Shakespeare goes back to a preChristian world and builds up from the nature of man himself, and not from revealed religion, those same moral and reli-

gious ideas that were being undermined. In a world of lust, cruelty and greed, with extremes of wealth and poverty, man reduced to his essential needs not wealth, not power, nor even physical freedom, but rather patience, social fortitude and love; needs, perhaps above all, mutual forgiveness, the exchange of charity, and those sacrifices on which the gods, if there are any gods, throw incense. "A life of sins forgiven, of reciprocated charity, of clear vision, and of joyous song – what is this but the traditional heaven transferred to earth?" asks Bkckersteth. J.C.Maxwell is right when he says that "King Lear is a Christian play about a pagan world.... The fact that Shakespeare can assume in his audience a different religious standpoint from that of any of his characters gives him a peculiar freedom, and makes possible an unusual complexity and richness".

Some have thought that Shakespeare, as well as Glouscester, believed that

'As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods:

They kill us for their sport".

Others have supposed that he would have subscribed to Kent's exclamation that stars governed our condition; or, more plausibly, that he would have agreed with Edgar's stern summing up

'The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices Makes instruments to plague us'.

But all these, and other statements about the gods are appropriate to the characters who speak them, and to the immediate situation, in which they are spoken. Shakespeare remains in the background; but he shows us his pagan characters groping their way towards a recognition of the values traditional in his society.

In spite of Swinburne's eloquent pages on King Lear, Shakespeare's vision of the world was not essentially pessimistic. The tragic writer is necessarily selective; and it would be as foolish to regard the author of the Romances as optimistic as to suppose that the author of the tragedies was necessarily a pessimist. Heroes of the Romances survive; heroes of Tragedies usually die.

Nor is the world of the tragedies, the world of Lear in particular, exclusively evil. In the other scale we have to put the loyalty of Kent and the Fool, the fortitude and forgiveness of Edgar and Cordelia, the humanity of Corwall's servant. Nor does evil finally triumph, for the will to power is selfdestructive. Heilman shows that the reason in madness theme is balanced by that of a 'madness in reason'. The three wicked children are all destroyed by their superficially sane pursuit of self-interest. They all believe in looking after themselves; they all implicity deny that we are members one of another; they all assume that man is a competitive rather than a co-operative animal.

But the paradox is that these free minds, unburdened by any conventional or traditional allegiances, becomes slaves to the uncontrolled animal desire, mechanisms for the attainments of irrational objective.

Goneral and Regan becomes centaurs, their rational minds instruments of the animal body. Their moral code apparently so efficient and utilitarian,

'ruins the basis of human order.... Destroys the soul of its practitioner'.

And yet, in spite of the dreadful cost, it cannot even ensure success in this world. Edmund, who believes only in his own will, and seems at first to be as ruthless as Iago, is moved by the story of his father's death to do some good 'in spite of his own nature'; and he is constrained to admit that there is a moral order in the universe.

Yet Shakespeare was certainly in a ruthless mood when he wrote King Lear, and his religious attitude provides no easy comfort, and makes no concessions to sentimentality. But we see Cordelia and Kent, uncontaminated by the evil around them, we see Lear and Gloucester painfully learning wisdom; we see Albany increase in moral stature as he frees himself from his infatuation; and we see Edgar change from a credulous fool to a brave and saintly champion. "Pessimism does not consist in seeing evil injure good, 'says Heilman justly: it is rather the inab ''ty to see

good, "or to discover total depravity, but no grace". It is not pessimism but realism to recognize that without Edmunds there could be no Cordelias.

But Cordelia dies. To some critics-and even Bradley seems to be undecided on the question – it would have been better if Shakespeare had allowed the miseries of Lear to be concluded in the reconciliation scene. Such critics, if mistaken, are at least not so far astray as others who have pretended that Cordelia's death is a punishment for her original obstinacy. Her death is even less a fitting punishment for her "fault" than Lear's own agony is an appropriate punishment for this foolishness. It is right that the final scenes of the play should make us shrink, but wrong that we should wish them altered. When Lear banished Cordelia and when Gloucester committed adultery they unleashed horrors – treachery, blindness, madness, murder, suicide and war – and the innocent are at least as vulnerable as the guilty. Indeed, it may be said, it is because of her very virtues that Cordelia is chosen to be a victim of the ruthless destiny that broods over the tragic scene, just as in the old legends it was always the pure and innocent who were chosen to propitiate the dragon, and just as in ancient Mexico it was always the most beautiful of the captives who were slain on the bloody attar of Tazcatlipoca. Cordelia's honesty is not the best policy; and her virtue is literally its own reward. There is, of course, something gratuitous and superogatory about her death, since it could have been averted if Edmund had spoken a few minutes earlier; and Shakespeare seems to underline the futility of Albany's prayer for the safety of Lear and of Cordelia. This does not mean that the gods kill for their sport: it means simply that they do not intervene to prevent us from killing each other.

But we are mainly concerned with the effect of Cordelia's death on Lear himself. It destroys his dream of a happy life in prison, and it hastens his final dissolution; though his actual deathblow is no his bereavement but his joy when he imagines that Cordelia is not dead after all. That joy was based on illusion. The earlier joy of reconciliation, however short-lived, was not an illusion.

It was the goal for Lear's pilgrimage. His actual death was comparatively unimportant: and a happy ending (in the conventional sense) was unthinkable for one who 'had learnt too much too late".

It was Bradley who suggested that the play might be called "The Redemption of King Lear': and the account given above of the development of his character is partly based on his analysis. Schucking , however, argues that it is not 'really consistent with Shakespeare's philosophy to see in this sequence of events no ascent of the character to a higher plane, a process of purification and perfection.

Lear in his madness

"does little more than follow the beaten track of the melancholy type".

His attacks on society, however profound they may seem, are the result of his mental derangement; and at the end of the play he is not purified by suffering, but rather " a nature completely transformed, whose extraordinary vital forces are extinguished, or about to be extinguished "Schucking concludes, therefore, that it shows a complete misunderstanding of the play "to regard Lear as greater at the close than at the beginning". It is true, of course, that some of Lear's most impressive criticisms of society are spoken in his madness; that he becomes progressively more feeble; and that in the last scene there are signs of his approaching dissolution: yet the three moments in the play crucial to Bradley's theory of Lear's development – his recognition of error, his compassion for the poor, and his kneeling to Cordelia – occur either before or after his madness. His resemblance to the melancholic type is superficial, though other dramatists had criticized society through the mouth of a malcontent as Shakespeare did through the mouth of a madman. Schucking seems to be only partially aware of the paradox that Lear when ostensibly sane cannot distinguish between Cordelia and her wicked sisters: he acquires wisdom by going mad, and his wildest speeches are a mixture of matter and impertinency "reason in madness". In the same way,

Glucester before he lost his eyes was spiritually blind, and could not tell the difference between a good son and a bad. He confesses this in the line.

"I stumbled when I saw. Full oft' tis seen,

Our means secure us, and our mere defects

Prove our commodities."

The whole play is built on this double paradox, which could be overlooked only by a critic who was determined to regard Shakespeare's technique as 'primitive."

A good deal of attention has been paid in recent years to the imagery of King Lear. As early as 1879, one industrious critic pointed out the prevalence of animal imagery - 133 spare mentions of sixty four different animals - several later critics have commented on the significance of these figures. The imagery is partly designed to show man's place in the chain of Being, and to bring out the sub-human nature of the evil character, partly to show man's weakness compared with the animals, and partly to compare human existence to the life of the jungle. It has been said that a scene by Racine is 'the explanation which closes for the time a series of negotiations between wild beasts.' There are scenes in King Lear to which the description might more aptly be applied. Yet Shakespeare knew, as well as a later poet, that humanity is bound to assert itself;

'the striped and vigorous tiger can move

With style through the borough of murder; the ape

Is really at home in the parish

Of grimacing and licking; but we have

Failed as their pupils.'

According to Miss Spurgeon, the interactive image of the play is that "of a human body in anguished movement, tugged, wrenched, beaten, pierced, stung, scourged, dislocated, flayed, gashed scalded, tortured, and finally broken on the rack."

The image expresses the suffering not only of Lear, but of

man; and the suffering itself is perhaps more important than its causes. At times Lear's voice seems to blend with that of job in demanding of the gods why the righteous man is smitten. Lear is suffering man, homo patients; and throughout the play we hear words that the express suffering by recalling and derivation of Patience, and the fortitude needed to bear it.

'You heavens, give me that patience, I need !"

'I will be the pattern of all patience'

'I will endure.'

'Thou must endure.....'

'The wonder is he hath endur'd so long.'

We have already referred to the significance of the images relating to the blinding of Gloucester, and to the double paradox of reason in madness and madness in reason. Another recurrent theme is that of clothes, civilized man being contrasted with essential man. This cluster of ideas shows how wealth can pervert justice, and it reminds us that the lady clad in proud array ought to consider the plight of the poor naked wretches. The rights of the poor, the weak, and the aged are contrasted in the play with the doctrine of the survival of the fittest; and if we are to believe Danby, Shakespeare presented two constrasting views of nature - the traditional view of Hooker and Bacon, which assumes that nature is benignant, rational and divinely ordered; and the view of the rationalist that man is governed by appetite and self-interest. There is nothing impossible in the assumption that Shakespeare was conscious, in a wider sense, of the two conceptions of nature; for he would have found them im Montaigne, in Sidney, and in Holland's preface to his translation of Pliny. H.F there contrasts the pagan and the Christian views of nature - 'And though Pliny and the rest were not able by nature's light to search so far as to find out the God of Nature, who sitteth in the glories of light which one attaineth, but contrariwise in the vanities of their imagination betrayed the ignorance of foolish heats, some doting upon nature herself, and others upon special creatures as their God.

Something has been said of the under plot in the section of the introduction dealing with sources. Schelegel explained that its function was to unviersalize the tragedy.

'Were Lear alone to suffer from his daughters the impression would be limited to the powerful compassion felt by us for his private misfortune. But two such unheard - examples taking place at the same time have the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world; the picture becomes gigantic, and fills us with such alarms as we should entertain at the idea that the heavenly bodies might one day fall from their appointed orbits.

Poetic Justice in King Lear

Chambers in his Twentieth Century Dictionary defines poetic justice as the 'ideal administration of reward and punishment' There is poetic justice when prosperity and adversity are experienced in strict proportion to virtue and vice, when the virtuous always succeed and the vicious alwasy fail. Except in the ideal world of facile and sentimental dreamers this state of things nowhere exists. The problem of evil and sin, of good travailing and evil prospering, is one of God's unsolved mysteries and we know from bitter and repeated experience that life contradicts poetic justice. And tragedy, whose object is to show up life as a painful mystery, can hardly afford to observe poetic justice. In King Lear, therefore, poetic justice is contradicted and belied at every turn. The morally blameless suffer and die or at least suffer; the morally blameworthy prosper and enjoy (though they too ultimately die).

'Nevertheless it will be wrong to hold that the tragic world of Lear is presided over by a Power, indifferent to the moral values. Evil does not pass unopposed and unchecked. Goneril and Regan challenge Nemesis by their impudent violation of the moral law. Their treatment of Lear stirs up the indignation of Gloucester and Albany and incites the war with Cordelia. The blinding of Gloucester immediately provokes swift retribution for Cornwal. And the mutual jealousy between Goneril and Regan over Edmund leads them to their violent deaths. Edmund's nonchalant pursuit of selfishness ends in premature death at the moment when his

ambitions seemed nearest fulfillment. The wicked though prospering for a time, find that their innings do not last long. The outraged majesty of the moral order of the universe asserts itself and engulfs evil-doers in calamity and ruin.

But yet this process of assertion of the good involves lamentable waste. The evil is not overthrown except at enormous expense of the good. Goneril and Regan and Edmund die in the end, but what harm have they not wrought before th'ey die! The madness and death of Lear, the blindness and death of Gloucester, the execution of Cordelia, the ultimate futility of Kent's tireless devotion and fidelity, Edgar's unnerved suffering all these and more are achieved by the forces of evil.

It is clear then that King Lear presents us a world whose presiding genius is neither a mechanical administrator of poetic justice nor a deliberate upholder' of injustice and immorality. It is a world overcast by the forces of evil, but labouring strenuously for their overthrow. The moral effort succeeds in the end, but there are casualties and delay. In this delay and the destruction of good and what it involves, lies the tragic nexus.

We may therefore conclude that there is little in the play of 'poetic' justice, of the conventional kind. But the impression left on us is not of a scheme of things which ignores ethical values. Rather it is one of a ceaseless fight against evil, waged at whatever cost until victory is won. Only the price of victory has to be paid, and why the righteous Lord exacts such a forfeit from us for upholding His own case is part of the riddle of existence.

What is gained by the violation of the Unities of Time and place in the Play?

Three 'unities' are required of a play, according to classical critical principles (though it may be noted that the Unities as known were drafted by a medieval classical savant). For a play to have unity of time, the action must be completed within twenty four hours. To ensure unity of place, the scene of action must not alter in the course of the play. Unity of action, of course, is to be provided by

a well knit plot with a consecutive chain of cause and effect connecting a clearly defined beginning and end.

Now, there can be no play without unity of action. For coherent plot is the sine qua non of any play good, bad or indifferent 'But the other two unities are undoubtedly artificial restrictions on the scope of drama. If we can so far suspend disbelief as tobelieve in the illusion of the stage, surely we can accept without any undue strain any shifts in space and time. Shakespeare, at any rate, never believed in such mechanical laws. King Lear is only one of the many examples of his successful violation of the unities of time and place.

Such violation, it is obvious', vastly extends the scope of drama. Without these paralyzing restrictions, a dramatist can allow his action to range from place and to march down the corridors of time. In King Lear, especially, Shakespeare's freedom from such artificial limitations helped him in creating the peculiar effects he seemed to have aimed at. The scene of action in the play merely changes many times; but almost always it is indistinctly defined. If anyone were to try to prepare the scenes from the indications in the play, there would be many difficulties. Edgar's hollow tree, for instance, appears to be situated in a district where for many miles about there's scarce a bush'. The Duke of Cornwall again appears to live at Glouscester while the Earl Gloucester lives a night's journey away from Cornwall's house in the midst of an uninhabited health.

This deliberate suggestion of vagueness tends, in the words of Bradley, to give the feeling of vastness, the feeling not of a scene or particular place, but of a world: Dr Bradley continuous: "This world, we are told, is called Britain: but we should no more look for it in an atlas than for the place called Caucuses where Prometheus was chained by Strength and Force and comforted by the daughters of Ocean. There is an equal haziness about the passage of time and this also tends to reinforce the impression of a dim, vast universe where the forces of light and darkness meet in a commercial battle.

By violating the unities of times and place, Shakespeare has thus increased immensely the scope of King Lear, deepened, its tragic significance, and made it a moving symbol of the inexplicable tragedy of human life.

Prepared by
Dr. S. VENKATESWARAN
Bangalore

AS YOU LIKE IT

INTRODUCTION

1. Shakespearean Comedy or The Romantic Comedy

The Early Comedies

Shakespeare began his dramatic career following the foot-steps of his predecessors usually named the University Wits. The Comedy of Errors was an imitation of the medieval Latin Playwright Plautus. Love's Labours Lost was imitative of Lyly and Plautus and is more poetic than dramatic. These two and the Taming of the Shrew, almost a farce and a satire, were the productions of Shakespeare's nonage, the first faltering steps of a beginner. They are irrelevant for a study of Shakespeare's concept of comedy or his comic genius as revealed in the Romantic Comedies, this comic idea or comic concept was not yet crystallized in the poet's mind.

Shakespeare was familiar with the metrical romances of the middle ages dealing with love and adventure and knight errantry in a world of imagination, far removed from the world of reality, the work-a-day world of our daily experience. He was also familiar with the comedies of his contemporaries and the earlier dramatists especially Plautus and Torence. The Greek and Latin comedies were available in translation in Shakespeare's London.

Comedy so far was satiric and therefore unsympathetic. Shakespeare seems to have set out with the aim of fusing together the elements of romance and comedy, the world of love and adventure of the romances and the world of fun and laughter of the comedies.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona was Shakespeare's first essay at originality' where he makes a play of his very own. Though a tentative experiment, here we see the poet fashioning for himself the outlines of the formula in which many of his later plays were cast. The men are not drawn well but the portrayal of the women is fairly successful. Sylvia and Julia are sufficiently individualized to remain in our memory as credible human beings. They are the prime movers of the action. They are the first sketches of the great portrait gallery of Shakespeare's woman characters. Their disguise, their reckless venture into the forest and almost every situation that they meet with are later developed by Shakespeare in other plays. Even some of the names are repeated in later plays. When can say here is the bare formula of the Romantic Comedy. That is why it is described as more of a promise than a success.

The Midsummer Night's Dream was a truly romantic comedy and masterpiece of poetry. It was a big success on the stage and continuous to captivate the audience. It romanticizes life and blends imaginative beauty with court revelry, without any sarcasm. In The Merchant of Venice we find the mingling of the tragic spirit with that of comedy. After tragedy is averted we come back to the terrace of Belmont where the moon shines bright and the wind gently kisses the trees. The play is satiric but the fifth act is truly romantic.

Falstaff and the Dark Comedies

Duke Thesseus in the Midsummer Night's Dream had referred to the Power of imagination to create what is not. In the famous passage he had said, "Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, such shaping fantasies that apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends". In this play the Duke himself

represents cool reason. Shakespeare connects comedy with cool reason and for a time looks for an ideal comic hero for his romantic comedies. H.B. Charleton, an authority on Shakespearean Comedy points out that Shakespeare discovered such a figure in Faistaff in Henry IV part, I. But his cool reason evaporated in the self same play. He had a weakness for Mistress Quickly whose person and purse were used by him often. Also he had been forswearing the company of Poins, his companion in his misdeed, for two and twenty years but he had been bewitched by his company. His cool reason proves to be a myth and Shakespeare rejects him as a typical comic hero in Henry IV Part II. Prince Hal's rejection of Faistaff is symbolic of Shakespeare's rejection: "old man, I do not know you".

The Dark Comedies

Students will be well advised to be extremely cautious about the chronology of Shakespeare's plays; there is great divergence of opinion among the critics. Some of them would place the dark comedies before the Great Tragedies. These comedies, according to them, indicate the shadows of the gathering clouds of tragedy in Shakespeare's mind: Prof. Charlton places them between the rejection of Falstaft and the Mature Comedies. These comedies, "All's well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida and Measure for Measure reflect the seamy side of life, its sordidness and shamelessness. It is Charleton's opinion that Shakespeare was groping in he dark in these plays in his search for the ideal comic hero and hence the darkness. This he attributes to Shakespeare's use of 'cool reason' to solve his problem. Finally he is able to succeed with the aid of his imagination. He discovers that the ideal is not a hero but a heroine and he comes out with the Mature Comedies which are dominated by the enchanting heroines.

The Mature Comedies

These are Romantic Comedies proper. They are Much Ado about Nothing. As you Like it and Twelfth Night. They captivated the audiences with fun and laughter, the theme of triumphant love and the fascinating characters who come alive in all their vivid-

ness and charm. Here we see the mingling of romance and comedy in proper measure nearer to our hearts desire' and at the same time true to life, a happy mixture of the ideal and the actual. They express Shakespeare's comic idea or comic vision.

Their characteristic features are

(a) They are sympathetic, romantic and poetic, not satiric and realistic.

(b) Their setting is romantic-a world far removed from the world of reality. The inhabitants of this world seem to have no other preoccupation than making love; making songs; making quibbles (Gordon) It is a world of make-belief where there are no clocks and nobody seems to be bothered about time. (It should be remembered however that the England of those days outside the city of London was not as time - conscious as now) This is the case with the forest of Arden, (As you like it) of Illyria (Twelfth Night) and Mantua (Much Ado) which has a definite location. This world is a mixture of Utopia and England. Sir Toby and Company, Dogberry and Verges, keep us in the world of reality, which surfaces now and then in this fantastic world of far away and long ago.

(c) Love is the predominant theme in Shakespearean comedy. It is treated as a fever of the brain. Its lawlessness and laughableness, no less than its lovableness, are brought out in a spirit of good humor touched with imagination and sympathy. "Love is merely a madness, and , I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too" says Rosalind in As you like it. It is again in the same play that Rosalind remark "men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love", Puck the mischievous fairly in A mid-summer Night's Dram tells his master Oberon "Lord, What fools these mortals be!" Wooing is the chief preoccupation of almost everyone in the world of Shakespeare's Comedies and the motto seems to be "Every Jack shall have his Jill/And not go ill." The characteristic ending in Shakespearean

comedy is wedding, as many as the story will allow.

(d) Closely related to the theme of love is the charm of music and poetry that captivates every human heart and keeps it spell bound. Duke Orsino in Twelfth Night describes music as the 'food of love' Lorenzo in the Merchant of Venice says. "The Man that hath no music in himself/Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sound/Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils/Let not such man be trusted." These plays also abound in snatches of heart-ravishing poetry. Viola tells Olivia what she would do if she were in her master's position.

"Make me a willow cabin at your gate
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
And sing them, even in the dead of night;
Holla your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air cry out Olivia"

Later she tells Orsino about her 'fathers daughter' who

".....never told her love
But let concealment, like a worm in the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek; She pined in thought
And with a green an yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument
Smiling at grief"

(e) The women in these plays are unique and glorious. They dominate the stage and the men whom they love pale into insignificance before their captivating presence. This is true of Viola, Rosalind and Beatrice. Portia is no less captivating. 'There are no heroes, only heroines in Shakespeare's comedies' says Ruskin. Gordon calls these Plays a riot of feminist revels. They are Shakespeare's representation of the office of love to light mankind to a richer life, to make us finer and richer men and women'. Every Shakespearean tragedy, on the other hand, (except Romeo and Juliet and Antony and Cleopatra) is a one-man show domi-

nated by one titanic character and the feminine part of the dramatic personae almost fades into insignificance.

(f) The presence of fools or professional jesters is another characteristic feature of Shakespearean Comedy. "The motley fool is as wise as the melancholy lord whom he parodies." Viola in Twelfth Night sums up the qualities of the ideal fool

"The fellow is wise enough to play the 'fool
and to do that well craves a kind of wit;
.....
.....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"

(g) Beneath the riotous fun and laguhter there is an undercurrent of melancholy. The very situations in which Viola and Rosalind find themselves are conducive to this pathos. The maligning of Hero provokes an upsurge of sympathy and sorrow in the lively, boisterous, Beatrice. In the Merchant of Vencice this tone is pervasive. On their very first appearance on the stage Antonio and Portia tell of their sadness. 'In smooth, I know not why I am so sad'- these words of Antonio are from the opening lines of the play. Portia enters in the second scene saying 'By my troth Nerissa, my little body is a weary of this world.' In As you like It there is much reason for sadness for most of them but if finds no significant expression in any one, probably because of the soothing effect of the idyllic setting. Jaques, of course, is the exception but his melancholy is that of the weeping philosopher.

All these characteristics make the romantic comedies of Shakespeare a class by themselves never equalled by anything of its kind in English literature.

2. ASPECTS OF THE PLAY

The Sources

As you Like it is based on a work entitled kosalynde by Thomas Lodge published in 1590. It is a primitive or novel. The story is kind of borrowed from this book, But Jaques Touchstone and Audrey do not figure in this work. They are Shakespeare's additions. He gives new names to the other characters. The bare outlines of the story the main characters and the title seems to have been suggested by this book. It has been pointed out that the tittle seem to have been suggested by Lodge's word's "If you like it, go" This story itself might have come from an earlier work, Tale of Gamelyn of the mid fourteenth century. The word "source" should not be mistunderstood. It merely gave Shakespeare the bare idea on which he could build a play. As for the characters he owes nothing more to Lodge than the names of some of them. For the rest they are Shakespeare's creation, living men and women, credible characters vividly drawn. The poetry, the songs, the ineffable atmosphere os the forest of Arden, these are the efflux of the precious lifeblood of the master spirit that Shakespeare was.

The forest of Arden

The scene of Lodge's Rosalynde is set in "the forest of 'Arden" that is the wooded country about Luxembourg. The name and the district were known to Englishmen. There are other forests in Europe but to Shakespeare the forest of Arden has special significance and happy associations. His mother was Mary Arden and the wooded country of Warwickshire was the home of Shakespeare's family. To the dramatist and his audience the Forest of Arden was no forest in far away France but the enhanced ground of their own home. Most critics have expressed the same opinion. In Shakespeare's hands the forest becomes another Arcadia. The atmosphere is pastoral. It is no mere senic background but a vital presence that chastens the minds of men an women no matter whether they belong to the court or the country side. It brings balm to their hurt souls. The inhabitants have left behind them not only time in the towns and cities but the thousand and one ills of city life such as ambition, envy and enmity. Its influence is pervasive and it has a part in converting the murderous Oliver.

E.K.Chambers makes an interesting point in this connection. Shakespeare's judgement of life is indeed too sane to let him even maintain the pretence that the perfection which is lacking at court will be found in the forest. Here is in the significance of the episode of the /shepherdess Phebe, for Phebe is as vain and disdainful and wanton and as remorseless in the prosecution of her selfish intrigues, as the finest lady of them all. She, satire of the play is, Oliver and Frederick, must against as for the romantic ideals that the play sets out of expound. In other words satire is converted into pure harmless humour.

Date of Composition

Critics generally look for two kinds of evidence to ascertain the probable date of composition of Shakespeare's plays. One is external evidence, the other internal. External evidence in the present cases is limited to two source, the Stationer's Register and Francis Mere's Palladis Tamia or Wit's Treasury, a sort of contemporary survey of literature and art. Internal evidence consists of references in the text of the play to events whose dates are known to us. There are other types of internal evidence such as metrical tests. The first mention of As You like it is a note on the Stationer's Register dated 4th August 1600 directing the publication of four plays to be staged till the ownership of their copyright was established satisfactorily. As you like it was one of the four. The stay indicates that some publisher had sought permission to publish the play. It is surmised that this practical publication was sought to be prevented by the Lord Chamberlain's men o perhaps Shakespeare's men. Three of the plays mentioned- Henry the Fifth, Much ado about Nothing and Ben Johnson's Every Man in his Humour – were printed later in the same year probably with the consent of Shakespeare's company who owned them. So far as is known As You Like it was not printed earlier than the First Folio of 1623, where it is mentioned as not printed hitherto. Its composition was certainly earlier. It is not mentioned by Frances Mere in his Palladis Tamia published in 1598. It contains a quotation from

Marlowe's Hero and Leander (Published 1598) "who ever loved that loved not at first sight?" The play is believed to have been written between 1598 & 60. Some critics place it in 1599 or early 1600.

The title

Though the title was suggested by Ledge's words cited above from his preface to Rosalynde, It must have appealed to Shakespeare as specially meaningful. Some critics think that the happy drift of the play is nearer to our hearts desire and we are likely to exclaim 'it is indeed as you like it'. Others see the title as a glance at the careless ease of the forest life, unfettered by the artificial restraints of society. Another suggestion is that it is part of Shakespeare's plea to the audience to accept it, especially to the unappreciative critics. The poet seems to tell them, "Well here is the piece, interpret I in any spirit you like". This is in much the same spirit of genial indifference to criticism as in twelfth Night or What you will.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Romance

It has been said that 'drama's laws, dramas patrons give' The patrons of Elizabethan drama were the common people. The impact of the renaissance came to the sores of English around 1500 AD. The next fifty years saw a spate of new boks, especially translations of ancient and medieval literature. The playgoers of the time were familiar with he metrical romances of the middle ages. These were long stories dealing with men and matters of a world of fantasy, stories of love, adventure and knight errantry. It was a worlds of the imagination far removed from the world of reality. Both the poet and the playgoers liked such stories. Shakespeare was a consummate master of audience psychology and he desired to cater to the demand. Thus it was that he struck out a new path for himself when he started writ9ing plays. Before him comedy was satiric. It dealt with the foibles of men and women of courtly society.

Shakespeare introduced the element of romance and set the course of comedy in a new direction Comedy provides fun and laughter. Within the limits of this requirement there was nothing that ruled out romance from drama except that no one had tried it before. So Shakespeare's aim in his comedies was a suffusion of the two elements, romance and comedy. This comic idea evolved in Shakespeare's mind and art over a period of about a decade 1591 (Love's Labours Lost) to 1501 (Twelfth Night). Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Midsummer Night's Dream the three Mature Comedies and the last act of The Merchant of Venice bear witness to the development of Shakespeare's comic art.

E.K. Chambers in his work Shakespeare, A survey comments on As you like it: "Here you have a Shakespeare, the conscious lord of his art, launched trumphantly once for all upon the high tide or if romance. He has come to the plenitude of his powers. He has found his characteristic formula; and we have nothing to do but to listen to the bugles blow as he hands the guarry of his theme through the intricate glades and tangles of his bosky imagination. As you Like it is romance incarnate. The romance of friendship in Rosalind and Celia, the romance of Adam's loyalty, the romance of love at first sight, the typical lover of Romance Oriando hanging his odes upon the branches and carving Rosalino's name on the barks of trees-all these are the very stuff of romance. The whole play is permeated with the spirit of adventure, 'never more highspirited and picturesque company of kingth errant and squire and dwarf... than Rosalind with curtleaxe upon her thigh an Celia smirched with umber and the roynish clown".

Comedy

Another aspect of As You like it is the element of comedy. The term is applied usually only to dramas thought the comic element may be present in other literary forms as well. The essence of commedy is fun and laughter. The materials are selected and managed primarily to amuse, to provide delight. The tone is light hearted and the story ends happily. The happy ending by itself does not make a comedy. That is why Dr. Johnson coined the

name-the dramatic romances for Shakespeare's last plays. Humour is the essence of comedy. To produce light hearted laughter is its aim. This arises from comic characters and situations, repartees, innuendo and such other weapons in the armory of wit. the professional fool or clown was an accessory to the humour inherent in the situation or character. In Twelfth Night and As You Like it the fool is present. Humour is more often produced by foolish persons such as Bottom in The Midsummer Night's Dream Sir Andrew Aguesheek in Twelfth Night Dogberry and Verges in Much Ado and Launcelot Gobbo and his father in The Merchant of Venice.

Various types of comedy have been evolved over the years such as the comedy of manners, the comedy of humours, the sentimental comedy and the anti sentimantal comedy besides Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Within this broad spectrum we get such variations as the dark comedies tragi-comedies etc. G.B. Shaw calls his Arms and the Man an antiromantic comedy but such a class has not come into being (See also S.D.E notes to Ben Johnson and restoration comedy-Wycherly and Congreve).

A distinction is often made between 'high comedy', 'and low comedy'. High comedy evokes intellectual laughter such as found in the wit combats between Benedict and Beatrice in Much Ado and in the Comedy of manners. Low Comedy makes no intellectual appeal. It arises from the stupid behaviour of foolish persons such as Sir Andrew, Dogberry and Verges, Launcelot Gobbo, Bully Bottom and so on.

Moulton says in his book Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist "I distinguish the healthy humour of Rosalind, the professional humour of Touchstone and the morbid humour of Jaques".

Rosalind is sad but her mirth is wholesome. Lovers are like madmen according to her and they ought to be whipped; the reason why they are not whipped is that the whippers too are in love. On another occasion she says "men have died form time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love" The tone of Touchstone's humour is different; for his professional duties may make his wit less spontaneous; but it is not mere clownage.

Everyone in this play is merry except Jaques. But his mirth is sprightly an graceful. There is none of the rollicking fun Sir Toby and very little of low comedy. Humour in As You Like it arises largely form the situations.

The Pastoral seeing

"Pastor" is Latin for shephered. Theocritus, a Greek poet of the third century B.C wrote many poems representing the life of Sicilian shepherds. Vergil the Latin poet imitated Theocritus. From these two models arose the pastoral tradition, ie writing poems on shepherds and their life. "The Idyl", "The Eclogue" and "bucolic poetry" these are other words used to indicate postoral poetry. To the classical poets pastoral life represented the lost golden age Later the Christian poets combined the idea of a golden age that was lost with the idea of the garden of Eden and accepted the symbolism of "shephered" to give it a Christian range of reference. The poets of the English Renaissance incorporated the pastoral element into various literary forms. Sidney's Arcadia, Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar, Marlowe's the Passionate Shepherd to His Love, Floecher's the Faithful shepherdess' and Shakespeare's As You Like it show the range and variety of the uses to which the postoral idea has been adapted.

The process has continued to the present day.

Into Shakespeare's twofold formula of romance and comedy he brings in one more delightful element in this play the Pastoral life of the Forest of Arden. E.K. Chambers (Shakespears: A Survey) Comments" "Here you have a Shakespeare, the conscious lord of his art, launched triumphantly once for all upon the high tide of romance. He has come to the Plenitude of his powers. He has found the characteristic formula..." The Forest of Arden is no more a scenic background. In the Duke's words these woods are "more free from peril than the envious court' It is a spiritual force bringing balm to the hurt soul of men. The fresh air of the forest humanizes everything. There are no clocks, no toil and trouble but unfettered idling. Ambition, avance, envy, falsehood and a hundred and one torments of social life are left behind in he ciry. The

woods rebound with songs and jests. The past troubles are only a memory beside which the present pleasure stands out prominently. There was a pastoral impulse in England at the end of the sixteenth century. This must have been produced by the oppressiveness of city life, which was yet to prove oppressive in later years. Perhaps it was Shakespeare's private impulse that drove him to his own Forest of Arden in Warwickshire. He had written his history plays and not yet commenced his great tragedies. His mind and soul needed repose and he must have sent out his imagination to the woodland scene. This is the sweetest and happiest of all the comedies of Shakespeare. There is no suffering and no tragic interest. In this context it must be remembered that even earlier Shakespeare has tried a forest setting in A Midsummer, Night's Dream and Two Gentlemen of Verona. He is most successful in capturing the idyllic spirit in As you Like it. Perhaps the conversion of Oliver and the younger duke spring from the idyllic atmosphere to the Forest of Arden.

The love theme

Love is the eternal theme in Shakespeare's comedies and even in two of his tragedies, Romeo and Juliet and Antony and Cleopatra. It is treated in his comedies as a fever of the brain. Its alwless might, its laughableness and lovableness - this is the central theme of the romantic comedies. We thus have three ingredients in the typical; Shakespearean comedy, romance, the comic spirit and the perennial theme of love and in As You like it the fourth one of Pastoral setting and atmosphere. Phebe in Act III, Sc. V exclaims:

"Dead shephered, now I find thy saw of might;

Whoever loved that loved not at first sight"

The dead shephered is Marlowe and the saw is from his poem Hero and Leader. It seems this line from marlowe contains the central theme of the play. Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Phebe and Ganymede all the three cases are of love at first sight. But the mighty Mariowe's saying is brought out in the love of

Rosalind and Orlando

Love is seen in many forms in this play. In the first place is the love of Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Silvius and Pheba, Touchstone and Audrey. Another form of love but love all the same, is that between Celia and Rosalind. A still noble sort of emotion is that of Adam for his master. Same is the case of Touchstone for Celia and Rosalind. Phebe falling in love with Ganymede is still another instance, a vain illusion bound to be thwarted at its very birth. A daughter's affection for her father is also gently touched upon.

For all that Rosalynd, Touchstone and others say flippantly about love, all of them are under its spell. And it is chaste true and faithful, full of joy and vitality. It is this the noblest of emotions as much as the vital presence of the Forest of Arden that is at the roof of the gay abandon of the whole lot of them. The ubiquitous presence of this theme in most of the plays of Shakespeare gives us a key to his attitude to life. A person who had not been affected deeply and ennobled by this emotion could not have written A midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet and As You Like it.

Melancholy

Still another element common to all Shakespearean comedies is an under-current of melancholy, beneath the fun and frolic. Often it comes to the surface.

"In sooth, I know not why I am so sad"

This is Antonio speaking and it is the very first line of The Merchant of Venice. And when Portia appears for the first time in the Play, her very first words are: "By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world". The gay and vivacious Beatrice in Much Ado declares she will die a woman with grieving. The standering of Hero her cousin throws a pall of gloom over her and over the whole play. In Twelfth Night Olivia is lamenting her brother's death so deeply that she hath abjured the company and sight of men? Viola pined in thought: and with a green and yellow

melancholy she sat like Patience on a monument/smiling at grief.

But in As You Like it the sadness is almost forgotten, Though there is much greater cause for sadness; It seems to be shifted from centre stage to the sidelines. Jacques, almost a detached, chorus-like spectator of the main action represents this humour melancholy. He is a morbid humour. But for a few remarks of his and on him, pathos too is left in the city and peace reigns in the forest.

Other aspects

'It is not what is done, but what is said, that claims our attention' says Hazlitt about As You Like It. Never was thee such beautiful moralizing equally free from pedantry or peturlance:

And this their lifew, exempt from Public haunts,

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in everything...

'There is hardly any of Shakespeare's Plays that contains a greater number of passages that have been quoted in books of extracts, or a greater number of phrases that have become in a manner proverbial. If we were to give all the striking passages, we should give half the play (William Hazlitt: Characters of Shakespeare's Plays)

hee are just a few samples:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity".

"All the worlds a stage

.....

.....

.....sans everything"

"neither rime nor reason can express how much"

"Love is merely a madness.... whippers too are in love'

'the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster: they are both the confirmers of false reckonings'.

'Whosoever loved that loved not at first sight?'

Yet another point is Rosalind's role. She dominates the stage as is usual in Shakespearean comedy; the heroine captivates us and the others lose their lustre in her presence. Ruskin once remarked "There are no heroes in Shakespeare's comedies, only heroines".

George Gordon in his work 'Shakespearean Comedy remarks that there are only three industries in the world of Shakespeare's comedies making love, making songs and making quibbles. This is very much true of As You like it (See the play and the explanatory notes.. the pervasive wit and humour have already been touched upon earlier in this section)'

The Duke's detachment and Touchstone's wit were noteworthy. The latter's loyalty to the girl is something rare. Rarer still is that of Adam to Orlando his former master's son.

A young woman in boy's costume is a recurring feature in Shakespearean comedy. It is seen in Two Gentlemen of Verona, in the Merchant of Venice, and in Twelfth Night. It is taken up again in Cymbeline, It has been pointed out that this device was meant to give realism to the acting of boys who played the roled of women.

Another point to bear in mind is the fact that the Elizabethan stage had np drop curtain or scenic setting. A change of scene was very easy, the spectator being conversant with the stage conventions. An awkward point comes when Orlando leaves Adam in one spot, goes to the Duke in another spot, comes back and takes the old man to the Duke (II. IV) All this has to be managed on the same stage without a drop curtain.

SCENE SUMMARIES

Act.I Scene I

Orlando and Oliver are sons of Sir Rowland de Boys, who had stipulated in his will that Oliver the eldest son was to bring his brother Orlando as befitted his genteel birth. Orlando in this scene complains to Adam an old man and old servant of his father about Olivder breaking the terms of the will. After a violent quarrel between the brothers Oliver arranges with a professional wrestler to

kill Orlando in the course of a wrestling match, which was to take place the next day. A brother's cruelty to his own brother to repeated in the banishment of the Duke by his younger brother. This theme is pushed into the background as the romantic theme develops.

I.II

Rosalind the daughter of the banished Duke and Celia his brother's daughter appear before us in this scene. They are deeply attached to each other. Touchstone the court jester also is introduced.. A nobleman tells them of the wrestling match between Oriando and the professional wrestler. The match takes place and Orlando defeates the wrestler. Rosalind falls in love with Orlando at first sight and ties her gold chain on his neck. The nobleman Le Beun warns Orlando about the dangers lurking in the court and advises him to leave the place. To Orlando's query he tells him that the smaller girl is the present Duke's daughter and the other is the banished Duk's daughter We see from his remarks that Orlando has fallen in love with Rosalind.

I.III

A Room in the palace. the duke is angry with Rosalind for encouraging and congratulating Orlando on his victory. He dismisses her from his court and threatens death if she is seen within twenty miles from the court. Celia tries to intercede with him on Rosalind's behalf but is of no avail. After the Duke's exit Celia tells Rosalind that she will follow her. Rosalind decides to wear man's dress, "a gallant curtle - axe upon my thigh, a boarspear in my hand". Celia is to be dressed as a woman. Rosalind assumes the name Ganymede and Celia that of Aliena, they also decide to take Touchstone with them.

II.I

We now come to the true setting of the play, The Forest of Arden. We see the banished Duke and his loyal friends in a state of contentment in the sylvan scene. To the Duke sweet are the uses of adversity. They speak of the melancholy Jacques, who is

not present. from their talk we get a glimpse into his character. Arden has laid a spell on them. They are all in a holiday mood.

II.II

A very brief scene. A room in the palace of the usurping Duke. The Duke discovers that his Daughter Celia has left with her cousin. A courtier tells him that Touchstone also is gone and that Orlando might be with them. The Duke sends for Orlando and if he is missing his brother Oliver is to be brought before him.

II.III

Adam the old servant warns Orlando to leave the palace. His brother is going to burn down the house that night. Adam offers five hundred crowns his life's saving to Orlando and also to go with him. He is eighty years old. There isn';t much that Adam does in the play after this, but he serves to bring out Orlando's concern for him and his sense of responsibility and his dignity.

II.IV

Rosalind Celia and touchstone reach the Forest of Arden, tired out Celia is weary and can go no further. They overhear the conversation of two shepherds Corin and Silvus. the later confesses to the older man his love for Phoebe. After a while he leaves the place. Corlin meets the three travellers and they propose to buy his floek and pasture. Corlin agrees and takes them to his cottage. We get to know more about the characters of Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone. They learn that the rustics have their own troubles and their love affairs.

II.V

Another part of the forest. We see jacques for the first time. Amiense a courtier of the banished Duke sings a song on the sweet content of forest life and Jacques parodies it. Amiens then goes in search of the Duke; his hanquet is prepared. Jacque's septicism and melancholy do not mar the gaiety of the forest dewllers. They do not take him seriously.

II.VI

Orlando and Adam reach the forest of Arden. The latter is weak with hunger and fatigue. Orlando, kind and considerate goes to search for some food for the old man.

II.VII

Another part of the forest. The Duke and his followers are at dinner. More of Jaque's cynicism. He reports to the Duke that he saw a motley fool who is very witty. Orlando enters the scene with drawn sword and demands food. At the Duke's words he calms down and tells them that his old friend Adam is starving. The duke asks him to go and bring the old man. Orlando goes and the Duke remarks that they are not the only unhappy people in this wide and universal theatre ie, this world. At this Jacques comes out with his famous speech on the seven ages of man. "All the world is a stage.." etc. The Duke an Orlando reveal their identity to each other. Adam is taken to the Duke's cave.

III.I

A short scene. the court of the usurper Duke. He orders Oliver to find out Orlando within a year. He suspects that Orlando has accompanie Celia and Roaslind. The Duke also orders that Oliver's possessions are to be seized by his (Duke's) officials.

III.I

This is a long scene, the central one of the play. Orlando hangs a love poem on a tgree, Touchstone is jesting with Corin on a shepherd's life. Corin gives out his philosophy simple but wise. Rosalind joins them. She is reading Orlando's poem. Touchstone parodies it. Celia comes reading another poem (by Orlando). All these poems were gathered form the trees. Corlin and Touchstone go out and the two girls discuss the poems. Who might have written these? Adams Celia, "A man" replies Rosalind Celia replies that it is a man about whose neck Rosalind once be her own chain, meaning Orlando. Rosalind blushes at this. Rosalind pretends ignorance but ones in and shows her eagerness to know more

about him. Celia has seen him lying under a tree. Their conversation is interrupted by Orlando's arrival along with Jaques. The later leaves after a while. Oriando's question brings out a spate of Roslind's sharp wit and ready repartee. She gives out that she is a shepherd named Ganymede and lives with his sister on the outskirts of the forest. There is a man hereabout who carves the name of Rosalind on the brak of trees. Ganymede the Shephered offers to cure his love if he treated him (Rosalind) as his love. Orlando agrees to go to Ganymede's cottage.

III.III.

Another part of the forest. Touchstone woos a country girl Audrey. Jaques looks on as an amused witness. On the point of being married to the plain and stupid girl, he puts it off. This is a comic counterpart to the romance of Orlando and Rosalind.

III.IV

Orlando had promised to call on Ganymede to continue their game of love but he is very late. Celia gibes at Rosalind and tells her that her lover is faithless. Corin invites them to see the fun of Silvius courting the disdainful Phebe, both rustics of the forest. In this scene Rosalind's flippant mood has disappeared. She bares her bosom to Celia. She is earnestly and deeply in love.

III.V.

This scene too is in the forest of Arden. Silvius and Phoebe. The latter is scornful of Silvius declaration of love. This is yet another study of love. Celia, Rosalind and Corin come to the place. Rosalind chastises Phebe for rejecting Silvius. And she counsels Silvius not to flatter the ugly woman. Phoebe on he part falls in love with Rosalind (as Ganymede) As rosalind and party leave the stage phebe cries out "Dead shephered now I find thy saw of might/ 'Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?' "she pretends to Silvius that she does not care for the peevish boy. She asks Silvius to carry a letter from her to Ganymede in which she will answer Ganymede's scorn with scorn.

IV.I

The Forest of Arden. Rosalind, Cella and Jaques. Rosalind is discussing Jaques' Melancholy with him. Orlando comes. She scolds him at first for being late. But soon they start their game of love. Rosalind is in earnest but Orlando takes a kind of vicarious delight in making love to an imaginary Rosalind. he departs promising to come back in two hours. After Orlando's departure Rosalind passionately tells Celia how deeply she is in love.

IV.II

A very brief scene of eighteen lines. Jaques meets the Duke's lords on their way back from hunting and they sing together. Note the stage time and the imagined time of two hours or dramatic time.

IV.III.

Rosalind and Celia are waiting for Orlando, who is late again Silvius comes with Phebe's letter to Ganymede. Rosalind reads the letter aloud to Silvius. It is Phebe's declaration of love to the shephered Ganymede. Silvius is dumfounded to learn that it is not a letter of scorn. Yet he is infatuated with Phebe and he goes back to her. Orlando's brother Oliver arrives with a handkerchief stained with blood. He explains to them what happened to him. He was tired and fast asleep under a tree. A snake had wreathed itself round his neck. Seeing Orlando approaching it slipped away but a lioness was crouching in a bush ready to pounce on him. Orlando recognized his brother and had half a mind to leave him to his fate. But kindness cobler ever than revenge made him fight and kill the beast'. He Oliver, is ashamed to own that he was Orlando's unnatural and unkind brother. But he is a changed man now. The lioness had torn some flesh from Orlando's arm. Oliver took him to the Duke at his request. Orlando fainted in the Duke's cave crying 'Rosalind'. But now he is recovered and had sent Oliver to Ganymede. At this Rosalind swoons but soon recovers. She asks Oliver to report to Orlando how well Ganymede counterfeited fainting. Oliver takes them to their cottage.

V.I

A some what brief scene. Touchstone woos Audrey! William and old flame of Audrey approaches Touchstone and sends him away with his witty remarks and with a bit of a threat that he will kill him if he continued to lay claim on her. Now Touchstone is sent for by the Duke and he hastens to him.

V.II

Oliver tells Orlando that he has fallen in love with Celia and that, she is equally in love with him. Rosalind comes. She knows of Celia's love. Orlando assures her that they are going to be married the next day. The Duke will be present. Rosalind asks Orlando if he will marry his Rosalind at the same time as his brother's wedding if she comes to him. She proposes to produce her the next day. Silvius and Phebe arrive at this moment and Rosalind asks him if she will marry Phebe. Silvius declared he is for Phebe and Phebe says she is for Ganymede. Orlando is for Rosalind and she (Ganymed) is for no woman. These decalrations are again repeated Rosalind promises to marry them all satisfactorily and asks them to meet her the mext day. they agree to do so.

V.III

Touchstone and Audrey also plan to be married the next day. Two pages of the Duke come and sing a song. There is no dramatic justification for this scene except to bring in all the couples together. The song merely fills the space.

The Duke Senior, Amiens, Jaques, Orlando, Oliver and Celia are assembled in another part of the forest. Rosalind, Silvius and phebe arrive. Rosalind asks the Duke if he would give his daughter in marriage to Orlando. He replies that the would very willingly do so. Orlando agrees to take her. Then she asks Phebe if she would marry her (Ganymede) if she were willing Phebe agrees. But if she refuses to marry hers she will have to marry Silvius, Phebe agrees. Rosalind and Celia go out reminding each of them of their words or promise. the Duke remarks that the shepherd boy resembles his daughter. Touchstone and Audrey come in. There is more fooling by the jester (to take up the time till the girl comes back) Hymen the god of wedding enters leading the two girls in woman's clothing. there is still music and song sung by Hymen. Rosalind gives herself to he Duke and then to Orlando. Hymen and Orlando come converted into a good life by asholy man. He gives back his crown to his banished brother and the lands of his lords confiscated by him are restored to them. the Duke suggests that they return to their rustic revelry. jaques decides to follow Frederick and his religions life. the play ends with an epilogue spoken by Rosalind.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

(The line numbers below refer to those of the New Clarendon edition of the Play)

Act.I.Sc.I

I.37		
I.6	his profit	: the progress in his studies
I.8	stays me... unkempt	: detains me not properly supported
I.5	bound	: beholden : indebted
I.17	countenance	: authority
I.36	prodigal portion	: extravagant spending of my share (as in the parabel of the prodigal son in the Bible)
I.70	allotery	: portion : Share
I.82	begin you to grow upon me?	Do you begin to grow up and give me troubel? Do you be come unmanageable? I will physic your rankness: I will cure your insolence.
I.100	leave	: permission
I.120	Fall	: about of wrestling
I.124	foil	: overthrow: defeat

l.131 requite : reward : repay

l.138 I had as lief : it would pleaseme as well

l.148 anatomize : describe in detail literally, dissect and therefore expose or lay bare

I must blush and weep : I must be ashamed and sorry to have such a brother

l.155 gamester : athlete wrestler

l.166 misprised : desplayed

Act.I.Sc.2

l.1 coz : cousin

l.2 I show.....mistress of : I show more mirth than I really have

l.5 learn : teach

l.10 so : provided

l.11 righteously tempered : Properly blended (as my love to you)

l.14 estate : position : fortune

l.16 like : likely, nor none

Note: Shakespeare's use of double negative for emphasis. They do not cancel out each other.

l.29 Frotune...wheel; in the middle ages humar tragedy was attributed to the turning of the wheel of destroy: good for tune is inexorably followed by misfortune.

l.39 Fortune...lineament of nature: Frotune gives wealth etc., not good looks. This is the gift of nature

l.46 natural : (in Elizabethan English the word meant a born fool)

l.51 Whetstone : grinding stone for sharpening knives etc.

l.60 Of a certain knight : from a certain knight

l.66 unmuzzle your wisdom: open you mouth and give out your wisdom

l.78 texation : censure : satire : sarcasm

l.97 laid on with trowel : cleverly done

l.146 odds : Superiority

(see line 169-178 they reveal Orlandos Character)

l.181 eke out : Supplement (O.E & M.E) eke= also

l.194 Hercules thy speed : may Hercules bring you fortue (of. godspeed)

l.236 quinfain : a wooden figure at which to till for training

l.245 or....or : either.....or

l.250 misconsters : misconstrues

l.251 humorous : obdurate: capricious; having a pecularity or temper

Act.I.Sc.III

l.65 ranged : wandered

l.72 like Junos swans : In classical mythology the swan was sacred to Venus not to Juno Venus' chariot is drawn by two swans (Ovid: Metamorphosis) in matters of mythology Shakespeare is not impeccable remarks A.W. Verity (Pitt Press Shakespeare)

l.80 doom : judgement: decision or sentence

l.95 sundered : separated

l.99 change : reversal of fortune (Some editors give a different reading - change= burden)

l.101 sorrows pale : some editors explain the word as fence ie. limit or extemity. The Clarendon editor says that it means the heavens (Sky) are pale in sympathy with their sorrows.

l.109 umber : brown earth used as pigment

I.111 Stir : provoke or incite (men to asail us)

I.114 1999 (mark for Annotation)

Act.II. Sc.I

I.12-17mark for annotation

I.22 desert city : the forest, uninhabited place

I.23 dappled fools : many colored animals

I.51 52 misery...company : mitery (people inmisery) leave the company of crowds

I.56 60T's just the fasion... of this our life : mark for annotation. Jaques com ments on life and our lack of sen sibility. Such comments bring out his character, see below for the simile on Shakespeare's father

I.57 broken bankrupt : Striken deer

broken : become bankrupt. An oblique ref erence to the bankruptcyu of Sh's father

I.58 invectively : harshly

I.66 cope : meet

Act.II Sc.II

I.3 are of consent and sufferance : have connived with them

Act II Sc. III

I.7 fond : foolish

I.8 bonny prizer : strong prize-fighter or professional wrestler. Why are you foolish enough to defeat the wrestler. Some editions read bony

humorous : capricious

I.23 lie : stay: reside, use to liebabitually staty

1.37 diverted blood : perverted blood relationship

bloody brother : bloodthirsty brother

I.38 do not so : do not do so. do not subject your self to malice of your brother : go away from here

I.39 thrifty hire : thrifty savings from my wages

I.41 Whenservice lame : when I am not fit to work as aservant

I.43 He that doth the ravens feed : He who feeds the ravens (cruel birds) ie. God. He looks after the sparrows also

I.50 51 nor did I (indulge in wild pleasures that causes ill health

I.58 meed : reward " recompense (Fl. need)

I.58 6.1 mark for annotation:

I.60 promotion : advancement

I.63 thou prun'st a rotten tree: You are trying to help aman who is doomed

I.67 youthful wages : wages earned in youth and saved up

Act. II Sc. IV

I.46 peascod : pod of the pea

I.73 I am not the owner of the sheep that I graze

I.74 Churlish : surly (rude; uncivil) or miserly

I.75 cote : same as cot i.e. cottage

I.81 in my voice : as far as I have a say in it.

Act. II. Sc.V

I.16 stanza (It was a recently imported word into English and Shakespeare makes fun of if in Love's Labours Lost) (IV, II, 103)

I.44 indespite of my invention : in my dull imagination

Act.II.Sc.VI

I.8 thy conciet... thy powers : you magine that you are more dead than you are : conceit idea

l.17 desert : uninhabited place

Act. II. Sc.VI

l.5 Compact of Jars : composed of discords. If Jaques (made of discords) grows fond of music there will be discord in the music of the spheres. It was be lieved that in every clestial sphere an angel sits and sings sweetly.

l.20 dial : a watch

poke : pouch; pocket

l.29 moral : philosophical (another possible meaning is moralise)

When I did hear.... chanticleer:when I heard ht ejester grow philosophical I began to laugh loud like the crowing of a cock.

l.31 Sans : without

i ntermission : break

I went on laughing without a break or pause

l.34 Motley is the only wear:fool's dress is the only proper one, i.e the jester's profession is the right one.

l.40 Places : Passages from books; topics

l.41 vents : gives expression to

l.55 bob : jest; taunt; a smart blow

l.65 libertine : One who leads a loose life

l.66 brutish sting : animal passion

l.137 this wide and universal theatre : the world. It has been sug gested that there is a reference in this passage to the globe Theatre built in 1599

l.139 1766 All the world's stage...etc. One of the most quoted passages from Shakespeare. the quality of mercy..... in the trial scene of the Mechant of Venice, Hamlet's to be or

not to be....' Neither a borrower nor a lender be' (Hamlet), Mark Antony's friends, Romans, Countrymen....' these are some other similar passages.

l.156 Wise saws : wise sayings,

modern instances very common place examples (by way Illustrating the wise saws) Note the change of meaning undergone by the word 'modern'

Act. III. Sc.I

l.24 were I not... thou Present : If I were not for the most part a merciful man I would not seek to work my revenge on your absent brother while you are here to undergo it - Clarendon Ed.

l.3 argument : object on which to influict my re venge

l.6 seek him with candle : search him out thoroughly

l.10 seize : (law) take possession of

l.11 quit : acquit

l.16 of such a nature : appointed for the purpose

l.17 make an extent : assess the value of

l.18 expediently : quickly with expedition

Act. III.Sc.II

l.2 thrice - crowned queen of night : moon

'thrice crowned; because the goodness was supposed to rule in three capacities - as Lune the (moon goddess) Or Cynthia in heaven, as Diana on earth and as Proserpina or Hecate in hell.

l.2-4 mark for annotation. the moon or Diana was the Greek goddess of chastity. She was conceived of as a huntress. The poets of Elizabeth's time often praised their virgin queen obliquely- as in this passage.

l.6 character : Write : engrave in letters

l.21 Stomach : taste : Inclination

l.31 natural philo ;opher : born Philosopher one who is a

philosopher by natute or instinct, See also a pun on the word natural= a fool

I.50 instance : give an example : Give me a proof

I.52 still : constantly

fells : skin : fleece

I.64 perpend : consider,

civet : pefume from the civet cat

I.73 Content with my harm : finding contentment even in my suferings

I.78 Copulation : Pairing

bawd : procurer (now applied to a female)

one who procures a woman for another man

bell-wether : leading sheep of a flock (with a bell tied to his neck)

Wether-sheep. "Iam the tainted wether of the flock meetest for sacrifice" Antonio-Merchant of Venice

I.96 rank : jog-trot; a slow jogging trot; such rhythm

I.115 graff : graft

I.116 medlar : a tree with fruit shaped like an apple

I.145 Atlanta's better part : her symmetry of form. (see notes to 1.270)

I.160 Script : Wallet; bag

I.175 trow : know (do you know who has done this?)

I.220 Gargantua=a voracious giant

I.227 atomies : motes in a sunbeam

resolve the propositions : find the answer to the questions

I.231 Jove's tree : oak tree that is sacred to Jove

(Jupiter)

I.239 holla : stop

I.249 I had as lief...alone : I would prefer to be alone

I.252 God buy you : God be with you: goodbye

I.266 Conn'd : learned, mottoes or rimes used to be inscribed in rings in the 16th and 17th centuries

I.268 I answer you right painted cloth : I answer you in the style of the painted cloths, right painte cloths, i.e., pithily or tersely. It was customary in shakespeare's time to use painted cloths with brief mottoes as hangins for rooms.

I.270 You have a nimble wit... heels: mark for annotation Atlanta was a maiden of Arcadia, the daughter of Jasus. She was extremely swift-footed. She demanded that her suitors should run a race with her and conquer her. If they failed she killed them. She did this because the Delphic oracle had warned her against marriage. At last she was beaten by suitor who dropped three golden apples one by one in the face. She stopped to pick them up. Atlanta was noted for her chastity, beauty, Cruelty and swiftness of foot.

I.288 lackey : footman

I.289 under the habit : in the guise (habit-dress)

I.302 who...withal whom

I.327 cony : rabbit

kindled : born

I.333 inland : in or near centres of civilization

courtship : (1) life of courts (2) wooing

I.345 Physic : medicine

I.350 fancy-monger : dealer in love, fancy meant love in Elizabethan English

I.352 quotation : a kind of fever that visits the patient everyday

l.368 point-device : extermely particular fastidius faultless

Accourtremets : dress

l.373 Apter : more likely

l.375 give the lie to : belie:be false to

l.382 moonish : changeable; fickle

l.363-386 : mark for annotation. These words reveal the lovable character of Rosalind as a typical heroine of Shakespearean comedies, her sense of humour allied with passionate love. She speaks in a serious tone but she is really as mad as he. Madmen used to be confined in a darkroom and whipped in order to cure them or their madness. There are references to this practice in the comedy of Errors. In Twelfth Night Malvolio is actually put in a dark room.

l.396 cattle of this colour : beings of this nature

l.398 orswear : refuse

l.399 drave : drove

Act III. Sc.III

l.6 Ovid...among the Goths: Ovid the Latin poet was banished to Tomi, a town on the coast of the Black Sea. the inhabitants of this place (later identified as the Goths) were uncivilized

l.7 ill-inhabited : Ill-lodged; such knowledge in such foolish fellows

l.10 a man's good wit...understanding : When a man's good wit cannot be grasped by a forward (precocious) shild; when the

child's understanding cannot equal the man's wit

l.11 a great reckoning...room: a huge hotel bill in a small raven room

l.12 I would : I wish

l.25 hard-favoured : ugly-faced

l.26 have honey...sugar : to have sugar sweetened with hanoey: honesty and beauty is too good to be true

l.37/38 Sir : this title was formerly applied to clergymen (Sir Topas in, Twelfth Night)

l.46 as horns are obious : a man whose wife was faithless to him was belifeved to get horns on his forehead. It was a public sign of shame. Touchstone implies that all married men wear this badge in contrast to the bare brow of a bachelor

odious : hateful, necessary: unavoidable

l.68 god'ild you : may god reward you

l.72 bow : Yoke

l.73 curb : rein, bells:a bell was tied to the leg of a falcon to trace her. Desires serve as controls over men

l.81 but : except that

Act III Sc.IV

l.9 dissembling colour :deceitful colour. The colour of a person's hair was supposed to indicate his character. Judas is said to have had red hair

l.14 cast : cast off; shed

l/15/16 inter's sisterhood : a cold unfruitful sisterhood (because nuns are chaste)

l.21 eoncave : hollow (as the inside of a goblet)

l.34 The word of a tapster : a waiter or a barman who gives a false reckoning; the young galants will not care to verify the bill.

l.35 what talk we of fathers...etc. this sums up the attitude of the heroines of Shakespearean comedy

l.37 brave : beautiful

l.39 traverse : crosswise, not staright

l.40 puisny-junior; young and inexperienced

Act.III.Sc.V

l.2 sya not so : don't say that thou scorn me

l.5 falls : lets fall. the executioner does not let his axe fall on the victim before begging pardon. Will you be sterner than the executioner?

l.29 fancey : love

l.35 who might be your mother? who are you to insult the wretche thus?

l.42/434 the ordinary of nature's sale work : the usual readymade goods of nature

l.50 foggy south : south/wind bringing fog

l.53 ill-favoured : ugly faced

l.54 it is not her mirror that flaters her but you that is to say. She is not becutiful

l.60 give yourself up to this man who loves your so much. Others may not care for you

l.61 cry the man mercy : beg forgiveness of him

l.65 I had rather...woo : I prefer your scolding to this man's wooing (she has fallen inlove with Ganymede)

l.72 I am more false than the vows made when a man is drunk

l.77/78 (though all the world... as he : though all mankind could look on you, none could be so deceived as to think you beautiful but he (Dr. Johnson)

l.80/81 Dead Shephered... at first sight : Mark for annotation. this sums up the major theme of the play love

It is applicable to all the lovers in the play (give details) The dead shephered is Christopher Marlowe, fellow poet of Shakespeare. It is believed that they collaborated in writing Henry VI parts I, II and III. the line is from marlowe's poem Hero and Leander. Dead Shephered is an expression that brings out Shakespere's regret for his friend's untimely death. The words are appropriate in the mouth of Phebe the Shepherdess and the word shepherd is a hallowed name for poets popularised by the pastoral tradition.

l.88 extermin'd : exterminated

were : would be. It you give me love both your sorrow for me and my grief would be destroyed in one stroke

l.99-103 : Since you have given me so little favour that I will consider it good harvest to pick up a few ears of corn left over by the man who is fortunate enough to reap your love. Give me a scattered love now and then. i will be satisfied with that.

l.107 carlot : peasant

l.24 parcels : It doesn't matter

Omittance is no quittance. Omitting to do something does not mean that you have done with it. One can take it up later. the reference is to her failing (omitting) to chide Ganymede for his impertinence

l.139 passing : very; surpassingly (adv)

Act IV Sc.I

I.7 Modern : common place

I.10 emulation : rivalry

I.12 fantastical : fanciful

I.14 political : tactful; a matter of policy

I.19 humorous : arising from the predominant humour or inborn temperanment

I.44 cupid...shoulder : (1) given him a friendly slap
(2) arrested settlement

I.51 jointure : marriage settlement

I.55 horns : horns of a cuckold

I.55-57 : the snail comes with his horns, which is his destiny if he is a man who gets married. You people owe your horns to your wives. The snail brings it with him.

beholding beholden : indebted

I.61 leet : complexion; face

I.70 God warn us : Mercy on us (warn=warrant) an exclamation

I.71 shift:trick

I.78 ranker : of proufse growth; stronger

I.89-91 Trolius...pattern of love: mark for annotation. Troilus and Leander mentioned in the next sentence are considered patterns of faithful love. But they did not of love. Troilus was killed by the spear of Archilels, Rosalind invents the Grecian club. Cressida was faithless to Troilus and chose Diomedes. Shakespeare's drama Troilus and Cressida and Chaucer's poem of the same title celebrate the story. Jessica referse to this story in the famouis moonlit scene in the Merchant of Venice.

V.I.II 1-6

I.91-99 Leander died of a cramp not because of his love of

Hero (Ref Marlowe's Poem Hero and Leander)

I.97-99 mark for annotation. Note Rosalind's flippant remarks while she is dying with her passion and grief.

I.133 like Diana in the fountain : The figure of Diana was often used for a fountain the water flowing through its eyes. Thus diana appeared to weep

I.135 hyen : hyena

I.185 sounded : measured

I.189 that wicked bastered of Venus : cupid

Act.IV Sc.III

I.35 Ethiop : black

I.39 she Phebes me : she is cruel and harsh to me

I.50 eyne : eyes

I.68 Instrument : (1) Tool (2) Musical Instrumental

I.76 purlieus : Tracts of land beside the forest

I.78 bottom : valley

I.83 If that an eye...tougue : If I can recognize you from your form described to me

I.87 Of female...sister : female in Appearance (favour=face) and behaving like an elder sister to Celia.

I.123 indented : Zigzag

I.127 purposed : intended (to leave him to his fate)

I.129 nature...occasion : there was a just (justifiable) excuse for him to leave Oliver to his fate. But his good nature prevailed over the idea of revenge

I.131 hurtling : tumult

I.145 recountments : narration when we had shed tears over the narration

I.150 I recovered him : I brought him back to consciousness

(recovered used as a transitive verb)

l.165 a body : a person

l.166 counterfeited : pretended; imitated

l.169 a passion of earnest : a genuine grief

Act.V.Sc.III

l.51 to wit : that is to say

l.53 bastinado : beating with a cudgel

l.54 bandy with three faction : beat you : fight

l.55 overrun=defeat policy : tricks

Act.V.Sc.II

l.5 giddiness : haste; rashness

l.26 swound : swoon

l.30 thrasonical : boastful

l.37 incontinent : forth with (without delay)

be incontinent before marriage: become unchaste before proper marriage

l.59 yet not damnable : because he did not practise black magic

l.83 And I for no woman : an instance of dramatic irony (where the audience knows the meaning of the words better than the speaker or the listner or both)

Act.V.Sc.II

l.4 a woman of the world : a married woman

Act.V.Sc.IV

l.27 favour : face : appearance

l.31 rudinents : elements; basic idea

l.43 purgation : test; trial

l.56 blood break : passion breaks (The marriage vow)

l.104 Hymen : god of wedding

l.169 shrewd : grievous; extremely difficult

l.180 convertites : converts (Frederick and Oliver)

TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL ESSAYS

1. Consider As You Like It as a Shakespearean Comedy

Much Ado, As You Like It and Twelfth Night are called the mature comedies of Shakespeare. They are the culmination of Shakespeare's endeavour to create a new kind of comedy, a deviation from the ancient and medieval satric comedy. Shakespeare's contribution to the comic art consisted in blending romance with comedy. Romance implies primarily a world of imagination far removed form the world of reality. Secondly it deals with love and Advdenture. These elements were brought out in Two Gentlemen of Verona and more successfully in a Midsummer NIght's Dream. Perhaps the height of Shakespeare's success in this aspect was reached in As You Like it. But whereever he is, Shakespeare carries the work-s-day-world of London with him. Often comedy arrises from the meeting and mingling of these two worlds. The forest of Arden provides this world of far away and long ago and also introduces the pastoral element, the life of shepherds, symbolising the lost world, a golden age free of malice, envy ambition etc,. The inhabitants of this forest have left all this and even their sense of time in the courts from which they are banished.

Another aspect of romantic comedy is that it is sympathetic and poetic, not satiric. Shakespeare's pervasive humanity and broad sympathy come to the forefront everywhere in his plays, especially in the mature comedies. Humour is tempered by this view of life. Lovers are like madmen, says Rosalind and they ought to be whipped. The reason why they are not whipped is that the whippers too are in love. And when she says this she is herself mad with love.

Yet another feature is the love theme. Love is treated as a fever of the brain. It is lawless and laughable but at the same time lovable too. Allied to this is Shakespeare's practice of closing the plays with several marriages. Almost everyone in this play is under the spell of the passion.

The essence of comedy is fun and laughter, in other words humour. There is none of the noisy midnight revels of the Twelfth Night or the stupidity of Dogberry and Verges or Launcelott Gobbo or his father in As you like it. But the humour of the situation and the irony arising from it is pervasive throughout. The lively wit of Rosalind and of the jester take the play nearer to the wordy duels of Much Ado. The contagion of wit seems to affect everyone including the melansholy Jaques.

There are no heroes but only heroines in Shakespearean comedy said Ruskin once. It is very much true of this play. While Shakespeare's tragedies are dominated by men, his comedies are notable for their heroines. Gordon went to the extent of describing these comedies as feminist revels. Their sweetness of temper and sanity of outlook endear them to all of us. If a poll were taken, comments E.K Chambers. He himself would prefer Portia but a very vast majority would vote for Rosalind.

An undercurrent of melancholy beneath the riot of fun and laughter is a characteristic feature of Shakespearean comedy. But here in As You Like It though sadness is present in the very situation in which the men and women find themselves, it is subdues partly by the light-hearted good humour and possibly mainly by the idyllic atmosphere of the Forest of Arden. Melancholy is not banished altogether but subdued. In a sense it is transferred to the choric representative of the poet, Jaques who of his own accord renounces worldly life at the close of the play.

The presence of professional fools is another feature of Shakespeare's comedies. Touchstone passes muster and

earns the praise of Jaques himself. the hightly poetic passages in Twelfth Night are not equalled by anything in this play. But the songs are fine and plentiful. Making songs, making love and making quibbles-these are the only industries in the world of Shakespearean comedy says Gordon in his book Shakespearean Comedy. Thus we find all the characteristic features of Shakespearean or Romantic comedy in As You Like it.

2. The love theme in the play

Love is a ubiquitous theme in Shakespear's comedies. It is doubtful if anyone else has explored such varied ramifications of the theme as the bard of Avon. Even in his tragedies it is not absent. It is a consuming fire in Romeo and Juliet the star-crossed lovers and in Antony and Cleopatra, powerful monarchs who threw away their empires for tit. In the comedies love is treated as a fever of the brain. Its lawless might, its lovableness and laughableness constitute the central theme of all Shakespearean comedies.

Love is the pivot of the whole play As You Like It. "In this play love lives in many forms" says Stopford Brooke (On Ten Plays of Shakespeare) Love of man and woman is the foremost of these, of Orlando and Rosaline, Celia and Oliver, Silvius and Phoebe, Touchstone and Audrey and the ironic but innocent travesty of it in Phebe's love for Gannymede. The love os Celia and Rosalind for each other is another form of this boblest of emotions. Old Adam's love for his master and of the court jester for the two young girls is still another form of love though we may call it bey another name, Loyalty. A daughter's affection for her father is also glanced at. But these are side issues. the core being the man-woman relationship and its ideal example, Rosalind and Orlando.

An idea very dear to Shakeapeare's heart finds expression in Phebe's cry:

"Dead shephered, now I find thy saw of might.

Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?"

The dead shephered is Marlowe, dear departed friend of Shakespeare and the quotation is from Marlowe 'Hero and Leander. Thde cry seems to come from the innermost score of Shakespeare's own heart. But it refers to all the lovers in the play. Rosalind Orlando, Oliver, Celia, Phebe when she takes Rosalind for amsn, all of them love at first sight. We see other glimpse of this theme in Romeo and Juliet and The Tempest. The quality of love in Shakespearean comedy is modest, chaste, true, faithful and full of joy.

Rosalind's love is on of the gayest things in Shakespeare. The wit and humour are natural, spontaneous and joyous. Rosalind enjoys the humour of the situation as much as we do in her game of love. Her intellect, her common sense, is the least impaired by her passion. All the time she exposes the masks of others she is deeply in love, many fathoms deep that it cannot be sounded. She is not only able to laugh at the folly of others but also at her own folly. Her famous cure for the madness of love is applicable to herself. Orlando's love equally gay and delightful but with a touch of sadness for not having the real Rosalind near him. Certainly this is not a case of disappointed love. Rosalind had shown him enough of her mind at the wrestling match. He is witty enough to cross swords with Rosalind's sharp wit. His love kindles all his powers as it does with Rosalind.

The love of Celia and Oliver is a swift mutual passion. From Rosalind's description of it, it appears it jars on her dignity and on her sense of humour. Some critics have even remarked that it is sensual. It is as sudden as Oliver's conversion and lacks credibility and naturalness. All the same it is genuine.

The love of Silvius and Phebe is the conventional love of Elizabethan pastrol poetry. It may be a satire on the literary love of the pastrol convension. Part of Shakespeate's intention may be to contrast it with the natural love of Rosalind and

Orlando. But the love od literary convention is gently led into the natural. In the original from where Shakespeare took the story these rustics are treated sysmpathetically. Shakespeare gives a gentle touch of caricature to them. So is the love of Touchstone and Audrey a buriesque. This variations on the theme of love provides comedy with its own ironic commentary. It also helps to hold the mirror up to the same theme from manu angles of vision.

3. The Forest of Arden

The story of As You Like It was taken from a primitive type of novel named Rosalinde by Thomas Lodge. The scene of the story is the Ardennes, a forest in France near Luxembourg. The name was familiar to Englishmen: Spenser mentions it. The setting and some of the names of persons were evidently taken by Shakespeare from the novel. But we know that the name was otherwise dear to Shakespeare. It was his mother's surname. The Arden family belonged to the forest country of Warwickshire. Arden was near to the heart of Shakespeare and his audience. to them it was no forest in far away France but the enchanted ground of their own home. There is also an allusion to Robib Hood and his forest which can summon up pleasant associations in the English mind. Some of the names in the play such as Jaques and Roland de Boys are typical Warwickshire names.

But what matters in the Forest of Arden in the play is not its geographical location. It is no more scenic background in the play but a living presence, a benign force that transmutes even sorrow into a peace that passeth comprehension. Time does not move here hectically as in the cities. Its inhabitants have left their envy and malice in the city. They make the woods resound with songs. Love alone of all human passions have found an entrance into this garden of Eden. A spiritual force seems to pervade the forest and bring balm to the hurt souls of men and women.

It serves as an appropriate setting for the incorporation

of the pastrol element into Romantic comedy. Pastrol poetry has a long tradition from Theocritus and Virgil to Shakespeare's time and beyond. Spenser and Sidney, Lodge, Greene, Browne, Drayton, have popularized the mode in English Literature. The pastrol elegy is a specialized form in which a shepherd nourns the death of a brother shepherd (a poet mourning the death of a brother poet in the guise of a shepherd) It has conventional features and calls for great poetical skill. Mitlton, Shelley and Arnold havde produced three great pastrol elegies in English. Pastrol poetry deals with the life of shepherds. the mode suited the romantic setting of a world far away from humdrum world of reality. And it gave Shakespeare a literary advantage to make his play appeal to the city audience. This audience of the sixteenth century was getting fed up and restless with the overcrowding in the city of London. Milton refers to it in an epic simile just before the tempting of Eve in Paradise Lst Book IX. This Pastoral impulse was probably at the back of Spenser's Shephered's Calender and Sidney's Arcadia and other pastrol poems of the period. But it is more a matter of convention rather than the vitality of real life.

But the Forest of Arden in As You like it is more than a matter of convention, more than an artificial poetic mode. It is a vital and vitalizing presence. It not only brings relief to the hurt minds but becomes a spiritual force that overcomes the force, becomes almost a tangible quality at the touch of the wizard of Avon

4. The Character of Rosalind

"If one polled the company of readers for their choice of a heroine... the majority of suffrages would be Rosalind's E.K. Chambers in his book Shakespeare, a Survey.

Rosalind's vivacity is the first thing that strikes us. Her liveliness reminds us of Beatrice in Much Ado about Nothing. Bur she is not as aggressive as Beatrice. She has her supremacy among all the characters of the play but she does not dominate the stage and make it top-heavy On the other

hand her liveness is contagious. It spreads to the other characters. Her wit and humour are bright and gay but not too sharp and sparkluing to eclipse Orlando.

She is gentle and kind to every one around her. This is due to her fine sensibility. Even to Phebe she is not cruel. She has the grave dignity and ourage befitting her unbringing. The courage and the bravado are on the verge of breaking down and the woman in her comes to the surface more than once hearing that Orlando is wounded. But recovering soon she pretends that she was only sounterfeiting.

Her solid common sense, her intellect, makes her mistress of every situation. She is able to see through jaques and almost all others including herself. It is this that enables her to keep her balance, her aquableness of temper. Her famous comments on lovers are expressions of this sanity. She says that lovers are like madmen and they ought to be whipped but the whippers tooare in love. On another occasion she remarks "men have died form time and worms have eaten their bodies but not for love". This sound common sense is characteristic of all the heroines of Shakespeare's comedies except the early plays.

Rosalind is sad no doubt and for good reason too. Her father is banished and she is allowed to live on in the duke's palace as companion to the usurper's daughter. She is half a prisoner in the palace where till lately she was the princess. Now that too is a thing of the past and she is left to fend for herself. It required great courage to risk going out into the wide world. We can imagine the misery of one used to the comforts of the palace suddenly finding herself in the forest and having to keep up the pretense of being a man. Her liveliness and her sense of humour save her from drowing in grief. Her poise, her self-control, is marvellous. "Witty and brave, audacious and tender with a grace that her doublet and hose cannot pervert, and a womanhood that they cannot conceal, it is indeed she that gives the piece its special charm, its note of sane and

joyous vitality". (E.K. Chambers)

One thing in her and done thing alone is beyond her control-her love. "Do you know that I am a woman? When I think I mustr speak" she says to Celia when Orlando's presence in the Forest is reported to her. When Orlando is late at his tryst she exclaims "never talk to me; I will weep. Her sweetness of temper, sanity of outlook and strength of character show her a truly cultured lady.

Other suggested questions

Sketch the character of Jaques

Character of Orlando

Character of Touchstone

Character of Cella

Dramatic irony on As You Like It.

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CORIOLANUS

Introduction

Shakespeare's *Coriolianus* is a Roman tragedy. This is the third play for which Shakespeare had relied on North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of Noble Grecians abd Romans*. While *Coriolanus* is one of the late tragedies of Shakespeare a specific date as to the genesis of the play is lacking.

In the absence of an authentic date as to when the play was written, critics and scholars have arrived at a plausible time from the use of certain phrases or allusions in the play and from the language employed particularly for Menenius Agrippa's narration of the famous fable of the belly.

It has been observed that the phrase in the opening scene, line 172 "the coal of fire upon the ice" is possibly a reference to the great frost of 1608 during which the Thames river was found frozen and there were smoke on its sueface as people were found with pans of burning embers to warm the hands of passers by. Shakespeare's alluding to that thus could havde had immediate recognition from his audience. However, this seems doubtful, if not quite far-fetched, since there is nothing particularly in the phrase "the coal of fire upin the ice" hinting at theThames. The phrase can be simply seen in the context of the play, to illustrate the contempt of Coriolanus for the common people who have no single-mindedness of purpose or strong conviction. The image is, perhaps, simply to signify the weak-willed public. If it is granted that Shakespeare deliberately alluded to the great frost on the Thames thus, then it implies that the play must have been witten after 1608.

Secondly it has been noted that Ben Jonson has parodied the language of *Coriolanus* specifically in his line "you have lurch'd your friends of the better half of the garland" in Epicoene. This line is an echo of Cominius": words inAct II, Scene II, "He lurch'd all swords of the garland". Jonson's part was performed for the first time in 1609 or 1610. Even if Coriolanus has not been staged by then it is surmiced, Jonson might have had access to the manu

script of Coriolanus.

Though it has been found that the fable of the belly figures in several works apart from the original source for Shakespeare's play, namely Plutarch's, it seems more convincing that Shakespeare could have read the fable in Camden's Remaines of a Greater Work Concerning Britain. For, Shakespeare's use of the word "gull" with reference to the stomach seems to have been borrowed from Camden. Sir Philip Sidney's - reference to the same fable in his "Apologie for Poetrie" and William Averell's in A Marvellous Combat of Contratieties and Holland's translation of Livy's Roman history should have been available for Shakespeare while he wrote the play.

Conceptual issues

Shakespeare has followed Plutarch's "The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus" as primary source - text for his tragedy Coriolanus. Necessitated by his dramatic art, Shakespeare has made some alterations in his version of the life of Coriolanus.

Coriolanus is a descendant of the house of the Martius. Caius Matius has for his forefathers such renowed names like king Numas daughter's son, Ancus Matius and Publius, Quintus and Censorinus and Caius Martius himself is equally famous for his valour and has fought very courageously in many battles and won. The name Martius being a derivative of Mars (the Roman god of war), Caius Martius has been worthy of his name.

Caius Martius was orphaned by his father, and was, hence, brought up under the sole care of his mother. Volumina, his mother, is a woman of high values and good reputation. She has brought up her son in such a way that he was none the worse for the lack of a father. His mother has instilled in him the virtues of courage and valour.

While Shakespeare has enlarged the roles of Menenius Agrippa and Volumnia and Tullus Aufidius in the life of Coriolanus,, the most important modification he makes on the account given by Pluarch involves the perception of the character of Martius himself. What has been a piece of historical document is transformed

by his dramatic art; the rather innocent recording of a string of events in the life of Cauis Martius Coriolanus becomes a subtle design of cause and effect in the hands of Shakespeare.

That Caius Martius has two children in Plutarch while Shakespeare has portrayed him to have one only or that the original has no suggestion even of a link between Menenius Agrippa and Martius while the play mentions filial - bone to exist between the two is only a change which the playwright has effected for convenience. The greater role of the creator manifests itself in the play in the characterization of Martius. The perceptiveness and insight involved in the portrayal of Martius the noble warrior are overwhelmingly true to life.

It has been variously commented that Coriolanus is antisocial and that he is obsessed with honour won in the battlefield and so on. But such critical observations overlook the essential nobility and highmindedness of Coriolanus. His impaience and short sightedness are certainly to be excused in view of his high ideals.

The speeches that were made by Martius against the plebeians are in no way directed at a particular person or any "representative" as such recognised. Therefore hisspeeches cannot have incensed the people against him but for the jealously and wickedness of a few (most notably here the Tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius) who cash-in on this limitation of Coriolanus by combining their rabble-rousing tactics to this weakness in Coriolanus.

For Coriolanus those individuals, specific persons, with whom he comes into contact alone have a concrete existence. Their presence alone is real for him. The "people in general" or the "public" can have no unitary feeling or emotion because society or community is only a loose baseless word and is completely incomprehensible for him. A community or a society consists of individuals who are inherently quite different from one another. He believes in the differences between persons and that it is why he speaks with such unrestrained contempt against any reference to the people. He is born aristocrat. He cannot succumb to the idea of 'a commonality' which superficially. if not spuriously, amasses all men to

be equal. Democratic ideas are not rooted in the reality of life. Coriolanus is intensely personal and cannot believe in democracy for the same reason that a D.H. Lawrence or a Bernard Shaw would attack democracy vehemently.

And it is because he has not done any injury to anyone in particular on personal grounds that his death evokes pity and Coriolanus becomes a tragic hero. When he has done nothing criminal to deserve his banishment or death, the cunningness of a fe individuals who precipitate his fall only intensifies the pity that the audience would feel for Coriolanus.

Thus what appears to be a dispassionate account in Plutarch's "The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus" becomes an intensely personalised drama of tragedy by Shakespeare.

Brief Critical summary of Scenes / Acts

This fice-act play Coriolanus is about the fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus, a Roman Warrior. The play is one of the late tragedies of Shakespeare.

The first Act of the play consists of ten scenes. These scenes on the whole serve to introduce the main characters and also to expose the dramatic situation wherein the tragic hero's life is in extricably caught.

Scene I presents a group of mutinous citizens dangerously incited against the nobility. These citizens, the plebeians, are armed with clubs and bats against the patricians whom they consider selfish. According to them, the patricians are oppressing them by denying the food grains of which Rome has a good store. If the particians spare what is surplus for them, that alone will suffice for the people who are poor. There is famine and the plebians lack money to buy food and hence they have risen against the nobility.

As they condemn the exploitation of the noble men of Rome they express a vehement hatred against Caius Martius. They consider him their chief enemy. For Caius Martius seems to believe that a great warrior has little concern for the public. He has been brought up to believe in honour won in the battlefield to be the

supreme virtue. Himself born in a noble family, Martius has little understanding and sympathy for the needs of the poor. Hence the exhibits a certain contempt for the cravings of the poor, the plebians, as if they are greedy and materialistic. Naturally, at the time of the famine, the anger of the frustrated citizens turns against the patricians in general and Caius Martius in particular.

Having learnt about the imminent danger of an uprising among the Romans, the Senators send Menenius Agrippa, a wiese old man, to mediate and assuage their anger. In answer to the charge that the participants have greedily deprived the plebeians of corn, Meneius Aprippa cleverly brins in the fable of the belly. The story goes like this: once all the parts of the body rebelled against the belly and accused of swqallowing all the food without any toil. The stomach lying idle does not deserve the intake. Where upon, the belly answered that it sends the due share to each part through the arteries after digesting whatsoever is eaten.

Meneius Agrippa with this tale draws a subtle parallel between the body and the State. he Senate and the nobility are equated to the stomach while the plebeians, the rabble, become "the great toe" and other parts of the body.

As the discussions is going on, Caius Marius enters the scene and enquired of Menenius the occasion of their gathering. And on hearing their charge against the nobility, Martius scolds them for their fickle-mindedness. He upbraids them for their easily swayed minds and he becomes impatient that they neither want war nor peace. He goes further harsh on them by expressing a wish that the nobility should lay aside their sympathy and should allow him to cut them to pieces. For, Martius feels that the common people are fir only for such treatment as they are highly irrational and give no heed for any clear reasoning.

However, the mob disperses and a messanger enters with news of the Volsce's advancing army for war. Caius Martius is called forth to serve his country. Martius is to attend and support Cominius in this regard. And he is eager to fight against the Volscian, Tullus Aufidius.

The excitement of preparing for the war carries all of them away, except the tribunes, Sicinius Velutus and Junius Brutus. And these two discuss the proud bearing of Coriolanus with contempt and displeasure. More success in wars have only heightened the pride of Coriolanus and he has "grown/Too proud to be so valiant". Shakespeare gives a glimpse of the "dissensious" nature of Sicinius and Brutus with regard to the uncompromising self of Martius.

Scene II is located in Corioles, a Volscian city. This scene presents the archenemy of Caius Martius namely Aufidius, and also gives a hint about the superior military intelligence of the Romans. While Aufidius learns that the Roman military force is a foot, he does not have any clue as to their strategies. On another level, the scene may suggest the Volscian use of spies to gather information regarding Roman army's direction and movement. Aufidius gets information about Rome's affairs through the spies like Nicanor who carries, later, the news of Coriolanus' banishment to the Volsces.

Scene III is domestic one. It is the house of Caius Maritus, Volumina, his mother and Virgilia, his wife are present. Volumina persuades her daughter-in-law to be cheerful, that her husband is out to win more honours in the battlefield. The scene reveals that virgilia is more reticent than Volumina. Volumina is made of an iron-mettle. Meanwhile Valeria is ushered in and she brings news of Martius heading towards the city Corioles jointly with Titus Lartius while cominius the general is heading to meet the Volumina army. Virgilia seems more enxious for Martius while Volscean is only too confident of her son's triumph and return.

Scene IV presents Caius Martius and Titus Lartius with soldiers in front of the gates of the city Corioles. Initially, the Romans are driven back to their trenches by the Volsces. Martius becomes inflamed by this shameful retreat.And he curses them for their cowardliness. When the gates of Corioles open again Martius rushes in to attack for the second time while the other soldiers, they being small in number compared to the Volsces, withhold.

themselves. Matrius alone enters Corioles, and the gates are closed after them.

Titus Lartius eneter and finds Martius emerging bleeding. Seeing Martius alive after he entered fool-hardly alone through the gates of Corioles, Lartius and all the other soldiers enter thew city and they win and takeover Corioles.

Scene V presents Roman soldiers emerging victoriously with the spoils of the war and Martius is angry with and contemptuous towards them for their greed and haste. Even when the war is not over fully, the soldiers bent upon looting the city enrages Martius. He, however, entrusts the charge of the city with Titus Lartius and hastens to help General Cominius and hopes to encounter and defeat his "soul's hate" Aufidius.

Scene VI has Cominius with some soldiers receiving the message of the early retreat of the Romans beaten by the Corioles. Cominius is disheartened by this news just then Martius enters and gives the information of their capturing Cotioles and their positive triumph over them.

Martius seeks from Cominius the position of the battle and urges him to set himself against Aufidius and hi men. Martius expresses impatience and he is presently allowed by Cominius to choose the best of his soldiers and proceed toward Aufidius.

Titus Lartius after assuring that everything is settled, sets a guard upon Corioles and hastens to the Roman camp. For he knows if they lose the battle with Aufidus they cannot keep Corioles then.

Scene VIII brings Aufidius and Martius face to face in their combat. They vow to fight each other till one of them gives in. Martiuys fights bravely even when certain Volsces come to the aid of Aufidius. He drives all of them away gasping for breath.

Scene IX reveals Aufidius evil intent what he could not achieve in the battle against Maritus, he thirsts to accomplish by craft. However, having been vanquished, for the moment he decides to hide himself till an opportune time comes. He chooses a

"cypress grove" to hide himself

Act II Scene I begins with an argument between Menenius Agrippa and the tribunes. Sicinius and Brutus. While Menenius is ruthless in his sarcasam against the tribunes, he defends, on the other hand, Martius from their charges against him. They accuse Martius of pride and boasting. For which Menenius answers them by asking them to consider their own reputation among people. However as the three ladies Volumina, Virgilia amd Valeria approach on hearing the news of Martius' return from the war, Brutus and Sicinius with draw. Menenius learns from Volumnia that Martius had sent them all letters and that there is one for him too at home. Menenius feels touched by this show of affection on the part of Maritus. And the warriors arrive and Martius has an oaken garland. There is a general feeling of joy and celebration for Rome's victory. There is a suggestion by Volumina that Rome will bestow on him the honour of Consulship to which Martius replies that he would rather be the Romans "servant in my way/ than sway with them in theirs".

However, Brutus and Sicinius do not cherish the idea of Maritius becoming a consul. That will be the end of their authority they feel. And hence, they hope that Martius will not wear that coarse gown and stand in the market place and plead for votes. Theyh are confident that the period of Martius will never let him stop to the common people. In any event they decide to incite the people against him by emphasizing how Martius is against the lower classes, the public and how he is contemptuous towards them.

Scene II advances further in the direction of Martius becoming consul. Much to his dislike and embrassment he is persuaded to wear that gown of humility and beg for voices in the market place Though Martius pleads "let me o' erleap that custom" he is compelled to do it. Martius feels ashamed of exhibiting his wounds and scars received in battles and pleading for votes on the basis of his service to the country thus. Meanwhile, the more he shies away and speaks about the awkwardness involved in begging for

votes, the more opportune it gets for the tribunes to turn the people against him on account of his haughtiness.

Scene III shows how Coriolanus wins the votes/voices at last. However, Brutus and Sicinius cunningly turn the voters against Coriolanus by their insinuations. Thereby, the voters are "goaded" on to withdraw the voices they had given in favour of Coriolanus.

Act III Scene I finds Caius Martius Coriolanus unaware of the reversal that is afoot with regard to his consulship. He eagerly seeks knowledge of Aufidius', whereabouts from other senators. the news is that Tullus Aufidius is again mustering up the Volscian forces against Rome. However, for a fresh attack on Rome, they need more time and, in the meanwhile Aufidius has retired tohis house in Antium.

Dishonoured by the news of people turning against him and withdrawing their support for him to be consul, Coriolanus gets provoked. Unaware of the dirty trick played by the cunning tribunes, Coriolanus flies into a temper and speaks of the citizens far more damagingly. He, thus, falls into the trap set by Brutus and Sicinius, and unwittingly confirms their charge against him of pride and choleric temperament. However, Coriolanus' speech has been repeated with emphasis to fan the plebeians' general dislike for him on account of his haughtiness by the plebeians' general dislike for him on account of his haughtiness by the tribunes. And as it was expected the plebeians are moved to attack Coriolanus. And Menenius Agrippa pacifies them, and promises that he will talk sense to Coriolaus and will bring him to answer lawful proceedings. The tribunes have incensed the rabble against Coriolanus by their insinuations. And the mob is angry to kill Coriolanus rightaway and Menenius seeing this, tries to pacify them and save Coriolanus from certain death. Hence Menenius offers to bring Coriolanus if only he will be given judicious hearing on legal grounds. The tribunes agree to wait for Menenius' return with Coriolanus. The senators accompany Menenius.

Scene II begins with Coriolanus' avowal not to retract and the patricians plead with him to be towards the tribunes and the commodity. As his mother enters, Coriolanus asks her why she

wanted him to compromise. At this, Coriolans feels that she, who had exhibited such contempt for the dishonourable and fit for nothing plebeians and had taught him hence to be different from them and be most valiant, now expects him to surrender his pride and honour.

Menenius enters with the Senators and jouns Volumnia in coaxing Coriolanus to be civil to the people so that he will have greater power won which he so richly deserves. They, however, are unable to convince him that the administrative power, the ability to govern, is as respectable as bravery in the battlefield. For, Coriolanus has an unchangeable sense of contempt for administrative skills. He cannot but be condescending towards the policy - making body. However, his mother's wish prevails at last and he agrees to do as the Senators and meneius direct him. Even as they are ready to leave Cominius enters to forewarn them of the angry mob that is waiting for Coriolanus. He has the foreboding that it might be better for Coriolanus to absent himself. However, with the support of Menenius and Cominius and their confidence in promoting him to speak positively there and win the people's hearts, they all proceed to the market place.

Scene III starts with the glimpse of the evil - minded Sicinius and Brutus plotting to cornor and defeat Coriolanus, if he appears. Brutus cues in Sicinius as to how Coriolanus ought to be provoked. And further, he reminds him that Coriolanus did not share the spoils taken from the Antiates with the people and that this particular point should be used as a bait to finish off Coriolanus. They seem to know very well that Coriolanus,

"Being once chaf'd cannot

Be rein'd again to temperance; then he speaks

What's in his heart, and that is there which looks

with us to break his neck."

As they had planned, Coriolanus gets provoked by their charge against him as a traitor and he loses all self - control. Further, more, neither Menenius nor Cominius can speak sense to

him for he becomes so possessed with fury. The scene concludes with Coriolanus being banished from Rome.

Scene I of Act IV begins with Coriolanus preparing to leave and ends with his family and the paternal Menenius Agrippa seeing him off at the gates of Rome.

Scene II reveals how deliberate the tribuned, Brutus and Sicinius were in seeing the end of Coriolanus thus. Brutus is found to be advising Sicinius that they both should appear humble now after having established/displayed their power. However volumnia, ZVirgilia and Menenius enter and Volumnia is grieved and angry because her son was banished. She scolds the tribunes and charges them with ungratefulness. For they had not given much consideration for the brave deeds that her son had performed to defend Rome.

Scene III gives a glimpse of the existence of the Spies. The scene discloses a Roman informing a Volsce of Coriolanus banishment from Rome. The news is received with happiness. Now that Coriolanus is not there to fight for Rome, Aufidius can attack freshly and the time is most suitable for it. They both leave together to disclose the news to Aufidius himself.

Scene IV opens with Coriolanus in Antium, enquiring the way to Aufidius' house. He is disguised and muffled and generally in a cheap, shabby clothing as becomes a man banished from his own country. Coriolanus is shown the house of Aufidius. And he hopes to face Aufidius in his own house. If he slays him, Corilanus feels it will be only fair. To that much despair he has been driven by Rome. But on the other hand, if Aufidius turns friendly, he decides to serve his country. Exiled by his own people coriolanus is ready now to join hands with his bitterest enemy. the ingratitude of Rome has made him thus broken and desparate.

Scdene V shows the house of Aufidius. He is entertaining the nobles with a feast. Coriolanus enters and is questioned by the men who serve wine for the guests. The poorly dressed Coriolanus hardly passes for a guest and, hence, attracts attention. However, by doggedly insisting on seeing Aufidius. Coriolanus gets to meet

him.

Coriolanus discloses his identify and elaborately tells Aufidius of the thankless act of Rome. Though taken by surprise at this, Aufidius, all the same, trusts Coriolanus and takes him into his confidence. He introduces him to the senatora who are about to take leave of Aufidius.

With this unexpected union of two fell foes, Coriolanus and Aufidius, all the Volsces, and Anitates prepare for the declaration of war against Rome.

Scene VI begins with the Tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius, in Rome congratulating themselves for thus prevailing upon Coriolanus "in good time" and banishing him. Though they wonder as to the whereabouts of Coriolanus they are generally at ease that nothing untoward is likely to happen. However, they ask Menenius if he has heard from Coriolanus. For which, Menenius replies in the negative and adds that nor has his family heard anything from him.

Meanwhile news reaches of how Caius Martius Coriolanus, joining with Aufidius, has vowed to revenge upon Rome and has started the attack on the Roman territories.

Another messenger brings the news that the tribunes are wanted at the Senate. And he adds that Caius Martius, in the company of Aufidius, is advancing with an army after setting afire some of the Roman territories.

Cominius enters and blames the tribunes for banishing Coriolanus and inturiating him thus.

Brutus and Sicinius espeically do not like the news because the citizens would turn against them now.

Scene VII presents a converstion between Aufidius and his Lieutenant in private. Aufidius, in the previous scene, pledging allegiance/friendship with Coriolanus, said that each word that Coriolanus spoke had weeded a "root of ancient envy" from his heart. But now, the seeds of jealously are sown again by his Lieutenent. The sight of Coriolanus proudly leading the army of Volsces

against Rome and the way in which this has sidelined Aufidius himself become the sore point that rankles Aufidius. And Aufidius foresees the fickle-mindedness of Rome to repeal Coriolanus banishment. And he resolves to have Coriolanus as his prey, if and when Rome makes its peace with him.

Act V consists of six scenes. As it was anticipated in the previous act, Rome pleads with Coriolanus to forgive. And moved especially by his mother. Coriolanus gives in.

Scene I begins with Menenius, cominius and the Tribunes with others discussing the way in which Coriolanus might be appeased. Everyone has been urging Menenius to go to Coriolanus and mediate with him. Menenius after hearing the response Cominius had, of Coriolanus, when he undertook the task, is reluctanbt. If Coriolanus had not respond the least favourable to Cominius appeal, then what respect he would have for Menenius an old man? Cominius was his general and they have fought together in many battles. But Coriolanus had exhibited a total indifference to Cominius' pleadings. Though Coriolanus had once fondly called Menenius his father, it is not certain that he would hold him in such respect and warmth now.

However, Menenius finally agrees to try approaching Coriolanus and beg mercy for Rome and proceeds for that purpose. Meanwhile, Cominius is quite sure that only his mother and his wife will be able to pacify Coriolanus, and they all prepare to go and visit Coriolanus, mother and his wife.

Scene II presents the unsuccessful attempt of Menenius who tries to appeal to the filial affection of Coriolanus towards him. In much the same manner as he did in the case of Cominius, Coriolanus dismisses Menenius without even allowing him to speak for a second time. In answer to their appeals, both Menenius and Cominius get letters individually written by Coriolanus. Other than that, Coriolanus does not show any sign of remission from his vengefulness to punish Rome for its ingratitude. Coriolanus has become dis[assionate and he says actually that.

"Wife, Mother, child, I know not, my affairs

Are servants to others (lines 80-1)"

While Coriolanus does not expect Rome to send more petitioners, and while he is about to vow that he would not lend ear to fresh moderators, Volumnia his mother, Virgilia his wife, his son young Martius and Valeria enter the camp to appeal to his mercy on Rome's behalf. Thus scene III shows how much Coriolanus respects his mother and how it is Volumnia who makes and unmakes the heroic Coriolanus. However, more than his mother's tender words it is her displeasure at his obstinacy that brings down Coriolanus.

Coriolanus, his anger against Rome assuaged by the pitiful sight of his family, tells Aufidius tha he will not be able to fight Rome truly.

Scene IV presents the anxiety in Rome as to whether Martius Coriolanus will listen to the appeal of his family. The fear of the impending war and the lack of an able army to confront Coriolanus are reiterated. Menenius heightens the fear of Sicinius with his report on the ruthless dispositions of Coriolanus. Meanwhile a messenger enters to warn Sicinius of the people's wrath against the tribunes. He reports that Brutus is manhandled, and that the plebeians have pledged to kill the Tribunes if Volumnia and her party do not bring news of peace and comfort. At this another messenger enters with the news of Volumnia's success in prevailing upon the essential goodness of Coriolanus. Sicinius, Menenius and all the others prepare to welcome the Roman women with thankfulness.

Scene V presents the overjoyed Senators welcoming the ladies, Volumnia and her companion-petitioners, and all the others joining in welcoming her and the banishment of Coriolanus is repealed.

Scene VI, the last and the climax of the play, begins with Aufidius clueing in a group of conspirators to finish off Coriolanus at an opportune moment. He sends a letter to the lords of Antium listing out charges against Coriolanus.

Unable to bear the newly won fame of Coriolanus among the soldiers, Aufidius becomes jealous, and he is also displeased with the second position into which the arrival of Coriolanus had pushed him. He loses his warrior image and is reduced to an inactive role of a counsellor.

Thus when Coriolanus appears in the marker-palce, he is accused of having turned traitorous in his signing a treaty, with Rome, of peace when Rome was abou to yield to the conditions of the Volscian force. Once again Coiolanus is provoked quite craftily by Aufidius. Unable to bear being called a "boy" and, mocked at for giving in to the sentiments of women, Coriolanus becomes tactless and refers to his winning the battle against Coriole. Now that his patrons being the Volsees and the Antiates, the reference to their former disgraceful defeat to the Romans is a sour point, that and Aufidius using this context turns the people against Coriolanus. And the conspirators already waiting, take the moment in their hands and kill coriolanus. It is a pity that Coriolanus is denied, a second time, a patient lawful hearing.

Major Questions And Answers

1) Is Coriolanus the incarnation of violent snobbery?

or

Sketch the character of Coriolanus

Most of the critical output on Shakespeare's Coriolanus agrees that the Roman warrior, and no politics, is the central focus of the play. The eponymous title of the play is an evidence for such a view. Though the play can be studied as an argument between authoritarianism and democracy or the individual and the society, it has geneally been agreed that the play dramatizes an individual's fall. Coriolanus, the tragic hero, takes the centre-stage, in keeping with the title of the play, in any constructive, meaningful reading of the play.

The foremost charge levelled against Coriolanus, in the play, by the tribunes is his pride or arrogance. He is contemptuous to-

wards the people. the commonality. He is the enemy of their welfare. But such an accusation against Coriolanus only reflects their own sense of insecurity aroused by the Roman hero's honesty and lovableness. For, Coriolanus is true to what he believes and what his mother has taught; his courage is a totally objectfied one and he is unsparing, in his boldness, even to his own self.

To strive consciously and win the hearts of the people is to prostitute himself; Coriolanus finds it unholy to be other than what he is.

When his mother pleads with him to publicity beg for votes and contest for the consulship, Coriolanus finds the process to fulfil her wish distasteful. The canvassing for votes, for Coriolanus, seems highly pretentious and makes himself self-conscious. Hence, he requests the senators and the tribunes for permission to "o'erleap that custom;" of begging for votes in the market place by shamelessly bragging about his bravery in the battlefield. For him, it is a part or a role embarrassing to play, exhibiting the scars/ wounds that he received for the sake of Rome (II.ii.135-150)

However, out of consideration for his mother and his wellwishers, he agrees to solicit for votes and does so by donning on the humble attire specially meant for that purpose.

But when the tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, turn the tables against him afterwards by making the voters withdraw their votes cast in favour of him, he loses his control. He reacts with a strong contempt and the crisis that ensues puts him in danger of losing his life. The tribunes, who are jealous of Coriolanus, utilise the situation and sentence him to death.

While Menenius Agrippa is frantic to patch up the conflict between Coriolanus and the tribunes and also to pacify the people who are enraged against Coriolanus, Cominius takes the fuming Coriolanus home so that he can be talked to patiently.

Coriolanus is advised by Menenius, Cominius and Volumnia (his mother) to remain quiet and unperturbed. They emphasize the need for him to be calm and unprovoked.

But to be sweet and civil to people who cannot see reason seems pointless for Coriolanus. Being too emotional to stand even the slightest provocation, Coriolanus loses his temper when charged with baseless accusation. He cannot pretend what he does not really feetl. And, for him, to be deliberately kindly towards his persecutors seems like hypocrisy, leaving alone his bewilderment at their venom and antagonism.

Coriolanus is a man of action. Hence he has little use for words. He is incapable of praising anyone with words and moreover, he himself cannot bear to be praised for his valour. Thus, it is not mere modesty when he says the following:

"When blows have made me stay, I field from words" (II.ii.70)

He is too simple and direct to have any subtlety of expression. This does not necessarily mean that Coriolanus is a boor. And perhaps his disinclination initiality to be a consul was due to his own awareness of that position and its involving the requirement of a certain felicity of language. If he has to please people with his words he becomes uncomfortable. He feels self-conscious then, as if he is playing a part in some drama. He is too manly to be tender.

Coriolanus feels embarrassed to please the commonality for the sake of their votes. Hence it is no wonder that he is provoked to utter such vituperative remarks when confronted with ungrounded accusations against him.

When he is persuaded to use some tact so that the death sentence given to him can be repealed, he consents to do with an ironic invocation;

"Away, my disposition, and possess me

Some harlot's spirit: my throst of war be turned,

Which choired with my drum, into a pipe

Small as an-eunuch or the virgin voice

That babies lulls asleep! (III.ii.111-115)

Thus valour, considered by the Romans then to be the greatest

virtue for a man, becomes an obsession for Coriolanus. The use of the word 'harlot' in the above quotation gives away the aversion that Coriolanus has for pleasing someone with words. The effort to please somebody to gain something - even when it is not intended for personal gain but only for the general welfare of the society - can be appropriate in a woman. Coriolanus cannot stoop to conquer and hence he meets the tragic end.

2) Write a critical essay on *Coriolanus* as a political play.

One of the main themes of the play *Coriolanus* is the conflict between an individual and the society. As a politicall play, it dramatizes the role of an individual and the consequences of his ability or inability to conform. Coriolanus being a strong individual with high values and ideals finds himself against the Roman tribunes who are elected by the people. Coriolanus is considered anti-social and arrogant.

At the very outset, the play presents an angry mob of plebians who are up in arms against the nobility. There has been a famine and he common people suffer due to the scarcity of food grains. They are of the opinion that the patricians and the nobles of Rome have a surplus of food grains and are not ready to spare what is superfluous for them. The plebians feel that they are oppressed and have been treated with contempt. Hence they seek justice through violence. The resultant uprising sees the irate mob heading to attack the nobility.

At this juncture, Menenius Agrippa, a wise old m an sent by the senators to appease the mutinous plebians, meets the rabble and tells them a clever fable. Menenius' story is about the rebellion of all the parts of the body against the belly. The stomach being the receiver of food, does not toil in any way to deserve the intake. While the other parts of the body are active in order to produce, the belly swallows greedily all the fruits of their labour.

To this charge, the belly's reply is that it does send, being in the middle of the body the due share to each part through the arteries and veins in the form of blood. If the stomach is not given

anything, the damage will be felt, equally if not more, by the other parts of the body too.

This story of Menenius relates shrewdly the organic structure of the Roman state. The nobility being the belly of the state, they should be permitted to distribute and administer at their own discretion.

The physical body as a metaphor for the body politic quite effectively conveys the hierarchical positions assumed by the various ranks of a political set up. Menenius, with heavy irony, calls the rabble, the plebians, the "great tor" of the Roman body politic.

However taking the cue from this body-metaphor, the problems faced by the common people cannot ne solved. If the heads of the state go wrong, who is to correct them? Thus, the play seriously questions when and why the subjects of a state should be obedient. Though the question seems to be simple, it is difficult to find a definite answer. As varied as the human beings are the answer to this question can also be.

While Coriolanus represents honesty and directness, the tribunes exhibit a trace of cunningness and the people show, irremediably, a certain fickle-mindedness. Shakespeare, hence, seems to suggestt, perhaps indirectly, the need for the common man to be rational and committed. Through the tragic death of Coriolanus, Shakespeare seems to lament the impossibility of such an ideal state. For, democracy ingerently has the impediments to the attainment of such a state. Such a reading of the play as this one, on the other hand, can lead toa fascist stance and the reader may over-sympathize with Coriolanus and may unwittingly, thereby, promote authoritarianism.

It is difficult for a reader not to admire the fairness with which Coriolanus abides by codes of military behaviour. But at the same time, the civic code of conduct that he seems to display is less than a satsifactory one. Though he does not speak ill of any one individual on any personal ground, he lacks a certain restrant in his expressions. While this seems to be the only limitation in Coriolanus, it is difficult, however, to predict if he would have turned

a tyrant once he became a consul. His respect for Menenius Agrippa and affection for his mother reveal a strong sense of his humanness. In the light of that, it might be unfair and baseless to presume that he would have turned traitorous and tyrannical with the consulship.

Prepared by

Dr. N. POOVALINGAM

M.S. University, Thirunelvely

TIMON OF ATHENS

Introduction

Timon of Athens is a strange and unusual tragedy by Shakespeare. It is not like *Othello or Hamlet or Macbeth*. What is more, it is an anamoly even among the late tragedies under which heading it is often brought, to accompany the two Roman tragedies *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. The oddity of *Timon of Athens* can be perceived with regard to its structure, its lack of a sound woman character, and its somewhat incomplete status.

Timon the tragic hero of the play moves from an unthinking, and almost fodly, generosity to an irremediable hatred of humanity. Timon's fall is heralded by a financial crunch. The uncurbed spending spree eventually lands Timon in increasing debt and when he cannot borrow amy more he feels the noose around his neck to be tightening. His free spending nature and a certain nobility manifest in that, feels baffled when he is denied loans that he seeks. The plot of the play is simple. It has a two-part structure: Timon when he is rich and when he is broke or bankrupt.

The play follows a narrow course of action so rigidly that the feeling an audience gets is, more often than not that Shakespeare is more concerned here with the execution of a preset idea of construction than with the human aspect of Timon. The reader or audience is left untouched by the calamity that befalls Timon because the playwright has to some extent, stood outside the creation (or characterization of Timon. The nobleman of Athens is portrayed perfunctorily). Timon is not personalized by his creator sufficiently. This is exactly where *Timon of Athens* differs from all other tragedies of Shakespeare. While all his other tragic heroes are the result of a vision, Shakespeare's Timon stands alone as the product of an idea.

It has been observed by scholars and critics that an earlier version of Timon's tragedy contains a female character, Calimela, who is engaged to Timon during his hay-day, but deserts him when he becomes bankrupt. Calimels, in this version, again comes back

to Timon when she learns that he has found a treasure of gold in the woods. But she is repelled by Timon with contempt. However, Shakespeare's version is devoid even of such a female part. As a result, the play allows for no disgression and the action is followed to the end in a rigid fashion. This, no doubt, leaves the audience/reader totally uninvolved and detached. While it has been argued by some critics that the play is complete (and, for example, Wilson Knight holds *Timon* to be "Shakespeare's greatest and most comprehensive tragic achievemen"), there is contrary opinion that the play is incomplete in the sense that Shakespeare apparently had not worked on it but abandoned after writing it since he found the plot inaccessible to do anything more with. John Bayley in his essay on *Timon* writes that it is impossible to say that if Shakespeare had gone back to the play it would have been better or that he abandoned the play since he found the idea and the construction of the play to be at logger-heads with variety. Bayley adds further that the words spoken by Timon after he goes to the woods, on his self-imposed exile from Athens, seem to be the author's and not Timon's.

That Shakespeare possibly had abandoned the play after writing it and had not tried to rework on it is the implication that underlines the statement that *Timon of Athens* is incomplete.

Conceptual Issues

Timon of Athens is one of the three late tragedies of Shakespeare (the other two being the Roman ones, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*). Shakespeare might have used, apart from Plutarch, Lucian's "Dialogues of the Dead". *Timon the Misanthrope* in the latter could have inspired Shakespeare to write his own. What had been acted out previously by schoolboys and hadbeen confined to a certain academicism, could have intrigued Shakespeare to try his own hand at and, thereby *Timon of Athens* might have taken shape.

However, Timon of Athens has a strong affinity with Coriolanus is that, the plot, broadly speaking, has a two-part structure in both the plays. These two plays have the central, transi-

tional point, in the lives of the tragic heroes as the banishment from their home own. Coriolanus is banished from Rome, while Timon is, although in this case, it appears more as a self-wrought exile, from Athens. Both the heroes enjoy an enviable fame before their exiles, their fall.

The difference between the two-that Coriolanus joins hands with his arch-enemy to revenge upon Rome whereas Timon becomes too bitter and distracted, by the reversal, to dynamically retaliate - is the result of the difference between their renown. Coriolanus fame springs from his valour, from his near-inhuman militancy; and the honour he wins in battles are so alarmingly his own that it kindles jealousy. On the other hand, the fame that Timon achieves is by an indiscriminating philanthropy or generosity; as such, his purposeless munificence invites people to exploit him.

These affinities, to some extent, evidence that *Timon of Athens* must have been written in the same phase Coriolanus. But, unlike Coriolanus, this play seems to have been left incomplete. Timon of Athens, despite its poetry, does not engage the audience as any other tragedy of Shakespeare would. The disillusionment with friends or desertion by people on whom one depended with trust is a commonplace theme. But the lack of sufficient personalisation of the theme and the resul tant overgeneralisation leages the audience untouched. Timon's fate is not wrought by any interpersonal dealing but by his own blind, and hence, all encompassing altruism/love.

Perhaps this explains why *Timon of Athens* is considered by many as flat or perfunctory and suggests why the tragedy is less popular than Shakespeare's others. And the lack of "female interest" adds to the flatness of the play. It is true that the play contains no female character of any substance.

A Brief Act/Scene-Wise Summary Of The Play

Timon of Athens is one of the three late tragedies of Shakespeare, while the other two being the Roman ones Coriolanus and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Timon of Athens is less complex in its plot and characterisation than any of Shakespeare's other tragedies. This five-act play presents a nobleman of Athens moving from an indiscriminating generosity to a bitter misanthropism. Timon's bountiful nature encourages unwittingly the flatterers and parasites of the society in the main, and not the needy poor.

Act I presents the state of affairs at Timon's household. He keeps an open house and entertains painters, jewellers, poets, senatora and other guests. There is feasting and music. The painter comes in expectation of being rewarded for a painting that he has to offer Timon. The jeweller brings a precious stone; the poet comes to receive gifts for his writing.

The first scene, thus begins with all these people gathered at Timon's and having a conversation among themselves. The poet and the painter discuss their subjects which converge on the unpredictability of fortune's favour. How Lady Luch can suddenly disown or neglect a man and how he, thus forsaken takes a lonely descent are discussed by these men quite significantly. For, this forebodes how Timon who is now the most sought-after lord of Athens becomes shunned and avoided when he is bankrupt, when he is deserted by Lady Luck.

However, the first scene proceeds further to present Timon himself to the audience. He is seen to enter the stage talking to the servant of Ventidius. The topic of their conversation is the critical situation in which Ventidius has landed himself because of his debts. He has borrowed five talents and is unable to pay the amout back and, as a result, is imprisoned. Timon graciously pays his debt and releases him and provides for his well-being thereafter.

The next specific gesture of generosity performed by Timon in his promise to endow his servant Lucilius with dowry that would be on par with the girl he wants to marry. Lucilius is in love with a maid, but the girl's father is unwilling to give her in marriage to somebody who is of meagre income and is below his status.

Apemantus, a churlish philosopher like the fool in King Lear comments of Timon's errors mercilessly. Timon who "loves to be

flattered is worthy o' the flatterer according to Apemantus.

Scene II begins with ventidius offering to return the money, to Timon,, who had paid for his release from debts. Ventidius father had died leaving him some wealth. But Timon refuses to accept the offer since he feels that a giver is not supposed to recdeive. Thus, Timon keeps giving away without the thought that material welath is after all limited and that his giving, which is never to be refilled with income, will land him, sooner or later, in bankruptcy. In this scene also Apemantus appears to warm Timon of the danger. But Timon ignores him.

There is feasting and music in Timon's bouse. It becomes a house for the entertainment of the five senses. And some ladies too enter and there is dancing and merry making.

Lord Lucius gifts Timon with four milk-white horses with silver trappings. Lord Lucullus sends two brace of grey hounds and invited Timon to hunt with him the next day. These are received and accepted by Timon with commands to his servant to return the honour amply.

Timon's honest servant Flavius attempts to warm Timon of his near-bankruptcy. But since his lord is not in a mood to listen, he contains his restlessness. For Flavius knows that there "is no crossing him (Timon) in's humour".

Act II consists of two scenes. The first shows a Senator of Athens awakened to Timon's excess and he prepares to send Caphis to goad Timon to repay the monyd he owes. The Senator realizes that Timon's unrestrained spending of money and his lavishness will soon land him penniless. Therefore he presses Caphis to go and prevail upon Timon until he pays his dues.

Scene II presents Caphis, in addition to the servants of Varro and Isidore, disclosing the urgency of their visit to Timon. They all insist that the debts incurred by Timon be paid at once since their masters are in dire need of repayment. Timon, through his faithful Flavius, manages to buy some time till after dinner that day and learns of his own critical position from Flavius in the meantime.

Timon is genuisely baffled to know that all his wealth has drained away and that he is in a tight corner himself. He orders Flavius to sell all his lands so that the debts can be paid back. But to his shock, he learns that most of his lands have already been either sold or mortgaged. And what remains will hardly fetch enough money to pay the present debts. Timon is alarmed. He, however, consoles himself that he has "Unwisely, not ignobly...given".

And while Flavius tries to drive home the point that his friends and guests were only "Feast - won (and hence) fast lost" Timon still hopes to free himself of the growing crisis by sending messenger-servants to borrow more money from Lord Lucius, Lord Lucullus and Sempronius.

As Timon orders his servants to go and borrow money from the Lords and Senators, Flavius reveals the futility of such an attempt. Timon is chagrined by the ungratefulness of the Lords and the Senators and falls upon the name of Ventidius with hope. He still advises Flavius to be cheerful and be positive about his unfailing friends.

Act III contains six scenes. Scene I shows how Flavius who is sent by Timon to seek the financial help of Lord Lucullus is thwarted in his errand. Ungenerous and mean is the response of Lord Lucullus. He tries to bride Flavius in order to take to Timon a lie that he did not meet Lord Lucullus. At this flavius becomes disgusted and chides Lucullus for his ingratitude and dishonesty.

Scene II depicts how Sercilus is turned down by Lord Lucius. The former meets him at a public place and discloses the financial crisis that Timon is facing and requests Lucius to lend some money.

Much like Lord Lucullus in the previous Scene, Lucius also is eager first to know what Timon has sent, by way of gift, for him. He is disappointed to learn that he has sent nothing and becomes distant and polite the moment he learns that Timon is asking for a loan. Lucius, who has vaguely known of Timon's bad times from some strangers gets the news confirmed by Servilus. Hence it becomes easy for him to deny the help that Timon sought from him. The stranger comments on the unkindly act of Lucius; what

sympathetic men would do for beggars could have been the same if Lucius had obliged to do for Timon now. But even such charity was denied by Lucius.

Scene III, very much like the earlier two, presents the netrayal of Timon by Sempronius as well. Sempronius very cleverly presents that he is abgry with Timon for choosing him only as the last resort. When he comes to know that Lucius, Lucullus and Ventidius have denied any offer to relieve Timon from his critical position, Sempronius poses that he is disheartened at Timon's thinking "so backwardly" of him.

The faithful servant realizes the futility of having such friends as Timons:

"Now his friends are dead

Doors, that were ne'er acquainted with their wards

Many a bounteous year, must be employ'd

Now to guard sure their master;

And this is all a liberal course allows,

Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house."

Scene IV dramatizes how Timon is cornered by debts and unpaid bills. His house which had a crowd of guests and friends ever invited for feasts and dinners, now is thronging with people demanding payment of money owed. At the sight of Timon those who were lying in wait clamour for the dues. Timon loses his Timon has gone mad and it is pointless to expect any repayment from him.

Left alone with Flavius, Timon now insists that all lords be invited for feast again. At this Flavius reminds him that there is nothing left to host another feast. Timon asks him not to worry about that and orders him to invite stating that he and his cook will provide for the dinner somehow.

Scene V unfolds in the Senate - House. the Senate hears Alcibiades and passes the verdict that he is banished, for his sin,

from Athens forever. Alcibades is a warrior and he pleads with the Senate, apparently, to forgive a man, who has killed someone, in the light of his other virtues. But the Senate is stubborn and it insists on punishment for murder and is enraged at Alcibiades speech in support of him. At the end. They banish Alcibiades and are bent upon executing the murderer after two days.

Scene VI is set in a Banquet- Hall in Timon's house. He receives guests and other lords to teach a lesson. He has prepared a feast of plain luke-warm water for them.

When the flattering, parasitic guests are gathered he upbraids them for the ingratitude and opportunism and pours the dishes of water on their faces. Taken unawares thus, the guests flee from him in great hurry and confusion. Timon's last feast thus ends and he himself turns a misanthtope hereafter and loathes all humanity. His utter distaste for humanity turns him out of doors into the woods

Act IV consists of three scenes. The first one presents Timon outside the walls of Athens cursing the world of humanity in a long soliloquy .

Scene II presents Flavius and two or three other servants of Timon at Timon's house. The servants are all unable to believe the misfortune that has struck their master. The house is broke and they all realize that they have to leave soon, left with no money but their own faithfulness to their master. And Flavius shares whatever money he is left with the other servants at last and they all disperse in sorrow and Flavius alone intends to seek Timon out and serve him still as his steward.

Scene III is set in the woods. This seems to be the longest scene in the play and has more than 530 lines. The scene presents Timon alone in the woods digging for roots and living a non-human, if not a beastly, life.

While he digs the earth for roots to eat, he hits by chance a quantity of buried gold. But Timon is not moved to joy by the sight of the precious, yellow metal.

Alcibiades, who is banished from Athens, is mustering up forces to attack Athens and he comes across Timon on his way. He is accompanied by his mistresses Phrynia and Timandra. He pities Timon but cannot do anything for him. Finally Timon spares some of the gold to them and they leave him at his will.

Then Apemantus enters the scene and finds Trimon in his wretched state. Apemantus is even now merciless towards Timon and tells him that earlier he was mad and now he is a fool to wear the look of "unmanly melancholy." While Apemantus also is distressful of mankind, Timon's hatred of humanity is slightly different. For, as Timon himself points out, Apemantus had never been favoured by fortune and, hence, had never seen life and human fellowship as Timon had. Thus, Apemantus' dislike is perverse and unnatural. It has no serious cause. There is an argument between Timon and Apemantus over who is right and they end up swearing at each other. Apemantus leaves Timon on seeing a painter and a poet approach.

However, some thieves only approach Timon and ask for gold since they are in want. And Timon in his distracted spirit, talks of thievery in Nature itself and justifies their profession of thieving. The thieves are confused and are almost won over by Timon. They leave him finally.

At last, Flavius coming in search of his master, finds him in front of a cave and begs him to take him again as his steward and accept his honest love. Timon is moved by this and he finds a single honest human being in Flavius. He gives away whatever gold is left with him to Flavius on condition not to be generous or trusting towards all mankind. Flavius still offers to stay with Timon but the latter warns him of curses if he attempted to do so. Flavius finally has to leave Timon so that he can retain his blessings.

Act V has five scenes and the first one unfolds in front of Timon's cave. The poet and painter enter, looking for Timon as they have learnt from Alcibiades and certain others that Timon has a great supply of gold.

But Timon tells them, through inuendoes, of their dissem-

bling and their villainous opportunism. When they do not understand that he is talking so indirectly, about them only Timon drives them away with beating.

Scene II begins with Flavius directing the Senators to Timon's cave. The Senators have the urgent need of Timon's captaincy to battle against Alcibiades. Despite the advice of Flavius that Timon is not himself any more, the Senators, having no better alternative, come to talk to Timon. They intend to take back Timon to Athens so that the banished Alcibiades might be defeated in his attempt to conquer Athens.

Timon answers them that he does not care what happens to the people of Athens. He tells them that it is their business to fight Alcibiades and his to plague them with revenge. Thus, he turns away all of them.

Scene III shows how the other Senators of Athens await the mediators who have gone to bring back Timon. The tension mounts as Alcibiades is approaching in a triumphant manner and there is imminent danger of his attack on Athens.

Scene IV is set in the woods where a soldier is seeking Timon but finds only a Tomb-stone. Unable to read the inscription on it, he uses a wax to take the characters in that epitaph in order to show it to Alcibiades.

Scene V shows how the Senators negotiate with Alcibiades who is ready to attack Athens with his army. The scene is set in front of the walls of Athens. The Senators who appear on the walls reason with Alcibiades that it is not fair, after all, to kill all the Athenians at random for the crime committed by a few. And they offer to arrange for a legal hearing and assure that they will help him in punishing the wrong-doers who had brought such grief and calamity to Timon.

Alcibiades finally gives in to their pleadings and enters Athens friendly.

At this juncture, the soldier who went in search of Timon, enters announcing the sad death of Timon. Alcibiades reads the

words on the Tomb-stone of Timon and freshly decides to

"Use the olive with my sword:
Make war breed peace; make peace stint war; make each
Prescribe to other, as each other's leech."

Major Questions and Answers

I. Write a critical appreciation of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*

Belonging to the same phase of Shakespeare's writing career as *Coriolanus, Timon of Athens* is one of his late tragedies. As such it becomes inescapable to perceive a strong affinity between this play and *Coriolanus* in their plots.

The denouement or reversal in both the plays seem to be banishment. Timon is a noble Athenian with an unlimited spirit of generosity. His bounteous nature is blind to human follies. He does not discriminate among his recipients and his munificence is all encompassing.

Timon's almost non-human generosity has an inherent incompatibility with the society and his fall, hence, becomes inevitable. A Senator sums up the foolish generosity as follows:

"If I want gold, steal but a beggar's dog,
And give it Timon, why, the dog coins gold;
If I would sell my horse, and buy twenty more
Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon,
Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me, straight,
And able horses. (II.i.5-10)"

Such is Timon's unthinking bountifulness that he must return anyone's gift with something of greater worth; he cannot rest unless he has outdone the other with his gift.

As a result, Timon runs into heavy debts. The open-handedness with money and the lavish feasting come to an end. He is pestered by those who had lent him money to repay the debts. All at once they clamour for their dues. Timon who had lands stretch-

ing up to Lacedeamon, becomes bankrupt all of sudden. Deserted by lords and Senators and all those whom he relied upon, Timon becomes furious and his bitterness makes him a misanthrope. He shuns all humanity and retreats into the woods.

Timon's calamity is chiefly of his own making. His short-sightedness to earthly humanity and his idealism that carries a certain gullibility are the cause of his misfortune. The parasites of society and the greedy exploiters have not been identified by Timon to be what they are. He did not give only where there is need. The crucial role played by money in one's interpersonal relations with society is not recognized by Timon. It is either all or nothing for him. Thus Timon moves from one extreme to another.

The play forebodes that Timon will fall from grace, that he will meet fortune's disfavour. In the first scene the Poet and the Painter discuss their works and the former's happen to be a portrayal of Timon climbing above all the others, the mount on which Fortune is throned. The Painter in response to such a portrayal of the Poet says that

"T is common:
A thousand moral paintings I can show,
That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's
More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well,
To show Lord Timon, that mean eyes have seen
The foot above the head." (I.i 92-97)

And the poet's own explanation of his work comes even closer to Shakespeare's dramatization of Timon's life. The poet points out, with regard to his work, that the man who ascends close to Fortune's throne has a lonely descent when Lady Luck shifts her favour. Those who help the favoured climb the mount to Fortune's summit do not accompany him in his fall. This becomes quite true in the case of Timon. He is deserted by all those lords and noble men who surrounded him when he was rich.

Coming to the play, there is a certain lack of intensity despite the pitiable fall that Timon has at the end. Neither the reader

nor the spectator would feel moved by the tragedy of Timon because the play is devoid of that creative intensity which is encountered in Shakespeare's great tragedies. The playwright here seems to have followed the construction of the plot too dutifully to allow for the necessary identification with Timon, on the part of the audience. Consequently, the spectator/reader is left untouched.

The lack of a certain humanness in the characterization of Timon is partially explained by the absence of a female character in the play. If Timon gives away his wealth, in his manhood, so stupidly now the question remains: What are his experiences in his childhood that shaped-up his present gullibility? There is nothing in the play that explains convincingly his present fallibility. Has Timon never been deceived by anyone before? Has he never encountered the evil and dark-side of man earlier? How is it that Timon comes to be so unschooled in the fraudulent possibility and the opportunistic nature of men in the materialistic world?

Prepared by
DR. N. POOVALINGAM
M.S. Univeristy, Thirunelveli