Chapter V

Consolidation of Comic Mood
CHAPTER - V

THE MATURE COMEDIES - CONSOLIDATION OF COMIC MOOD.

In the plays of this period the pharmakos-outsider figures often represent the pole of disinhibition, violence and destruction. The eutrapeloi represent vital, spontaneous, intuitive perception and emotional balance. Bomolochos-eirons help in interaction and with their mockery conceptualize and distance the comic phenomena. The conjunction of these three types decide the special tone of the middle comedies. Types, grouping and patterning now not only create comic structure but also authenticate comic truth.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF CHARACTERS</th>
<th>Twenty (20)</th>
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<tr>
<td>KINDS OF TYPES</td>
<td>EIRONS - Pure, blended, ALAZON - dynamic, pure, alazon-pharmakos. BOMOLOCHOS -</td>
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<tr>
<td>GROUPS OF TYPES</td>
<td>Static</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCIAL TYPES</td>
<td>Gentles, Parson, Physician, Justice, Knight, Servants.</td>
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MWW is finely poised between the early comedies of Terentian intrigue and the middle plays of Aristophanic release and festivity, which try to interpret human experience through the clown's ironic misrule and the Wit's humourous understanding. So
far as function decides structure, we find the transfer of the comic initiative from the main eiron to the female eutrapelos effectuated both symbolically and practically in MWW.

The play employs a variety of fixed and static types, some of which are forcibly converted at the end of the play, and a single scapegoat figure, comic-alazon Falstaff, at the centre of the play. Falstaff is ridiculed, bamboozled and man-handled in a manner reminiscent of Jonson's treatment of his impostors, who are exposed and exacerbated in Everyman in His Humour, or The Alchemist or Bartholomew Fair. But the sense of play, which is never quite absent from Shakespeare's handling of comic potentials in subject or characterization, rescues this comedy from being ossified into a drama of stereotypical attitudes. The intention, in this play about the fat knight, is to assimilate, rather than reject, the bewitching compost of comic pleasures made up of fantasy and freedom that is Falstaff, through feminization of the comic impulse. The theme of the play is gulling, while romance and its celebration is only of secondary importance. The female eirons Mrs. Page, Mrs. Page and the great Mrs. Quickly are made to perform the domestication of bacchic comedy through the exposure and exhibition of the impostor. This makes it easier for the later eutrapelos heroines, Shakespeare's greatest comic protagonists - Portia, Beatrice, Rosalind-Celia and Viola to dominate a comic mode that nurtures and remedies preposterous fancies and preserves and metamorphoses these into romance. In the present play, the Merry wives effect the comic resolution with the help of a wonderful accomplice in Mrs. Quickly, whose final transformation as the Fairy Queen may lead one to believe that the dramatist was using both the changed Falstaff of the Histories and the Hostess in this play in a way that could demarcate a change in the dramatist's outlook.

As mirth-producer, Falstaff is surrounded by a host of similar dramatic types of buffoon-alazons and is contrasted
with a stage-stereo-type - the jealous husband Ford. This has the effect of integrating the assorted types, who are emblemetic of certain common human failings such as vanity, presumption, greed, lust or knavery, into a conforming group. It makes for compactness and intensification of dramatic conflict. The gentlewomen exist and function as a very close-knit community of overseeing and curative eirons. Mrs. Quickly's alazon traits are subdued in this play and can be said to lend strength to her eiron tricksiness. Such a crafty, eiron-alazon figure we are later to meet in Maria of TN. Prankish virtues are well assimilated in plays of exposure. Deception and counter-deception between antagonists of equal strength is ensured by making a total gull of Falstaff and fools of his associates. Acute presumption of the country squires, ignoramuses all, stultified further by agroi-kos traits which the dramatist adds to these characters in sound measure, diffuse alazon-bomolochos propensities in all directions. Thus, the object which all comic contrivings aim to teach in this play, the young and pretty Anne Page, is reduced to a fortune and a name.

Shallow: I know the young gentlewomen; she has good gifts.
Evana: Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts. (I. i. 55-56)

None of the elders in Windsor Park can plumb the depth of her qualities or feelings which makes her a true Shakespearean heroine, however slightly she may be sketched. It is left to her true love and betrothed Fenton to expose the error, which is all-pervasive in this predominantly Humours comedy, infecting even the pure eirons, after he has performed the remedial action:

"Th' offence is holy that she hath committed;
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her."
(V. v. 212-217)
A variation in the conventional pattern wrought by Shakespeare is achieved through the choice of certain types and remoulding of others. Nearly all the gulls are also deliberate gullers, and are often gulling and being gulled simultaneously. Falstaff appears triumphantly onstage as the fearless old Vice, in his role as the traditional bug-bear of all justices of peace, determined on the annihilation of any peace but his own. Soon, his lust (for a wealthy mistress) leads him to such stratagems as will boomerang on himself, because the wives, with the help of Mrs. Quickly, make him the target of their attack. Nym and Pistol, his alazon associates, somersault into eiron status once Falstaff discloses his designs to them. Ford, himself the deluded eiron, acts as the scourge of the mighty alazon. Mrs. Quickly, that hitherto faithful confidante of old Jack Falstaff, sells him out to the wives and becomes, in the words of Bertand Evans, "an accomplice in the wives' practice at the same time she is the foxy-foolish proprietor of her own triple game." Thus, even in a comedy so different from what he preferred to create, Shakespeare's manipulating of types for the enrichment of his comic themes, is very much in evidence, Shakespeare's sophistication in using the types of one play (Henry IV) in quite a distinct way in another (MWW's) has not been remarked upon by critics. It shows how well Shakespeare knew his audience (in this case the Queen herself, perhaps) and could depend upon them to respond to the various changes in the characters' (typological) attributes so as to enjoy to the full extent a Falstaff so mortal in folly, because he is in love, (Falstaff in love? - we can hear them exclaim!). In a similar way, they would wonderingly savour the infidelity of Nym, Pistol or the redoubtable Mrs. Quickly. As we have remarked before, one advantage of working with a type is that, once it is established, even the slightest deviation from the pattern is able to arouse audience interest. We often bewail the changed Falstaff. But, it would be helpful to remember that Shakespeare changed the other
characters in accordance with the demands of the dramatic genre. The anarchist impulses embedded in the very conception of Falstaff would never allow it to be integrated into the comic-romance 'formula' which Shakespeare had now mastered so well. Even so, the permissive format of the philosophical History play had failed to accommodate this disruptive figure of unlimited comic potentiality. If comedy was to retain a balance it was inevitable that Shakespeare should choose to portray Falstaff as the alazon-pharmakos whose defeat will put to right the equilibrium of an organised comic society. By surrounding him with other, morally sightless, alazons like the jealous Ford and dim-witted impostors like Slender, the dramatist makes his conversion an event welcomed by the spectators because Falstaff's resilience as a comedy-maker and his basic inability to hurt others are qualities which make him more acceptable even as an unyielding alazon.

However, in a very special way Shakespeare does retain a shred of the old Falstaffian invincibility. The wives, or for that matter, their husbands, are not allowed to discover that poor Jack Falstaff hungers after the latter's purses, and not really their wives' persons. To be a wencher perhaps is better than to be a mere conzener. Only Mrs. Quickly is in a position to guess at Falstaff's well-preserved secret, but she is not seen to expose it, although she is fully cognizant of the multiple ploys employed by the many suitors and exploits them to her advantage, and gains full intellectual superiority over the presuming Falstaff gradually as the wives' plot progresses. The high point in this scheming comes, of course when Mrs. Quickly can superintendent the vicious pinching of Falstaff, redolent in the Buck's head, as fit punishment for presuming the lover.

The ladies of Windsor use a little violent method of curing for the impostor who has come to disturb their peace and to destroy their characters. A similar, if less abusive
method has already cured Ford before the wives enlist the help of their husbands in exposing Falstaff. But Falstaff's obtuseness, or rather, refusal to recognize any deformity in himself (specially if it be the deformity of judgement), has been differentiated from the beginning from the native lack of perspective in several other characters. Caius and Hugh are so made that they are deceived when nobody is deceiving them. Shallow is also of this group and Slender, the first among equals. Page and Ford are ignorant of the worth of their wives and all, except Fenton, are mistaken about any worth of Anne besides that of her expectations. In this play then, Falstaff's attempted villainy and its subsequent failure secures a harmony which is not incompatible with our realization of the pharmakos and outsider in Falstaff and our complete enjoyment of the alazon's deserved fate in the culminating scene at Herne's Oak. That this should be so in a comedy that is avowedly ironical or non-idealistic (the Humours comedian refuses to see in any individual an unfalwed personality) is in accordance with generic structure. Shakespeare makes it emotionally viable through his use of transformable types and their positioning to form relationships that illuminate one another. The technical finesse of MWW in creating situational comedy, is established without a shade of doubt, while the characteristic Falstaffian wit is almost always present, if in a loser and not a winner.

In the next four plays a dynamic synthesis occurs. An exorcist and dialectical comic plot invests a male-dominated perspective into its antithetical opposite. We may say that bacchic festivity is initiated and presided over by women votaresses so as to widen the possibilities of that comedy which Shakespeare has successfully experimented with and would develop further.
Shakespeare's brave experiment with a scapegoat figure which is at once tragic and comic against a New Comedy plot and an Old Comedy spirit of revelry and celebration pays dividends of an unexpected kind. Role—shift in the function of major characters constitutes here an effective method of comic structuring. The protagonist role is shared by three persons — eiron hero Bassanio, titular hero-cum-outsider Antonio and eutrapelos Portia. In a play where the comic outcome depends upon a convincing resolution of opposites, the figure pernicious enough to resist the comic energies of an eutrapelos heroine required potentialities greater than that a Shakespearean villain-alazon had yet displayed.

Shylock's function is not limited to his role as antagonist. Persecutor and persecuted, he exposes the co-existence of guilt and innocence in himself and in the society that breeds him. Structurally he is pitted against a large group of weak eirons. The conflict makes for such enthralling and enduring dramatic interest that the play has often been judged by the trial alone and critical interest has fastened on either of the two parties who
fight in the name of justice. The eutrapelos arbitrates between the Jew and the Venetians. Her weapon is a legal quibble (which Shakespeare did not invent but only used from the sources) which some modern critics have thought to be beneath the dignity of a Portia to use (or rather, misuse). But she escapes any blame or judgment that attaches to Antonio, Bassanio and friends in their treatment of the Jew because she is paying through Shylock her debt of love to Bassanio. And J.R. Brown has shown us, in a play about merchandise, how love is the only non-tradeable commodity and thus is to be earned through travail. Portia is a wonderfully reparative figure, her bounty and munificent wit compensating for the Jew's miserliness and cruelty, and the witlessness of the Venetians. In her, Shakespeare embodies comedy's high seriousness in its concern for the grace of the community, a grace that asserts itself in the final scene when the ironies (in the themes of wealth and justice) have been dispelled with the exorcism of the scapegoat.

However, in The Merchant, the design, even if well-executed, is not all, for Shakespeare seems deliberately to undercut the play's romance by including in Shylock a critic of its practised ideals. We admire the tensile strength of a comedy that can accommodate such a portraiture and survive.

The poetical architectonics of a mature Shakespeare constructs romance on secure foundations mainly through the fabrication of a rich and self-sufficient Belmont and its splendidly bounteous and perceptive eutrapelos mistress. Portia makes the "golden fleece" analogy seem emphatically felicitous. "In Belmont is a lady richly left," says Bassanio, embarking on his overtly business proposition with Antonio. Portia illustrates that copiousness of wealth which Bassanio cannot even guess at. Shakespeare reinforces Portia's competence by taking recourse to historical mythography as well. "Her name is Portia - nothing undervalued, 'To Cato's daughter, Brutus's daughter.'" (I. i. 165-6). The fairy-tale background of the Casket story is used in two ways. It gives
an opportunity to the dramatist to show Portia as the princess locked (in the caskets, literally) by the will of her dead father. Romance propensities in the Bassanio-Portia relationship are bolstered by the Rescuer role thus accorded to Bassanio. By making Morocco and Arragon suitable outsider figures, Shakespeare invests their failure with meanings contributive to the enhancement of Portia's image of the presiding deity of the play. Portia and Belmont are not only significant for what they are but also for what they shall mean for Venice and the principal Venetians. The personality of so gracious a lady imbues Belmont with an ambience all its own. It is not only the bounty of nature alone that makes it special. The moon shines in the Wood near Athens but it is the magic of Oberon which makes it so bewitching. Arden has its own transforming virtues. The Duke and his foresters accommodated themselves within it, imbuing its gifts of nurture. But Portia makes Belmont what it is just as Prospero makes the enchanted isle what it is by his magic and his wisdom. Portia too has her magic - that of flowing and fulfilling wit in Belmont and a sagacity beyond the reach of the cleverest law-giver - in Venice. How well the dictionary meaning of eutrapelos - 'one who can turn and turn easily' fit her, who not only turns Shylock's fatal threat to hope of a prosperous life not only for the 'good' Antonio but also for unfaithful daughter Jessica and the lucky Lorenzo. This power to command the peripeteia totally and single-handed is only hers among Shakespeare's eutrapelos heroines and she is shown to wield it with such great assurance of her prerogative to do good that, at the end of the Trial scene, when our hearts go out to Shylock, we do not realize fully that Portia has not been too fair to the Jew.

If we regard The Merchant merely as 'ironic' comedy, or a 'happy' comedy, as tragi-comedy or fairy-tale, we shall be guilty of emphasizing only a secluded aspect of the
drama. Of course, the variety of interpretations the play has inspired, some of which are flatly contradictory, only shows what a rich and complex synthesis of often disparate elements Shakespeare wrought in a traditional dramatic modelling of a familiar story.

The basic pattern of the play is fairy-tale, without a doubt. That is why the principal characters conform to types prevalent in folk-lore. But Shakespeare introduces such radical changes in all of these that transmutation itself becomes an indicator of the dramatist's social consciousness. Shakespeare must have been perfectly aware of the theatrical possibilities of the Jew stereo-type as already demonstrated so ably by Marlowe in his *Jew of Malta*. Without being a racist, he used every means in his power to make a case for the Jew as a feeling, suffering, if obsessively homicidal, human being. It would be futile to say that a crafty Shakespeare used the Jew merely to get a hard laugh or a few guilty tears. Shylock's humanity is made co-extant with his monstrosity. Shakespeare establishes both aspects of Shylock's moral being with persuasive dramatic spectacle. Shylock's bitter musings on the 'good' Antonio's charity breaks out with proper theatrical force in:

"You say so
You that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold; moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats'?.."

(II. i. 111-17)

or in passionate response to the Venetians' goading jibes in Act III, sc i:

"I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, affections, passions ...

.......... The villainy you teach me I shall execute."

(45 - 61)
But it is not mere theatre. In these scenes, the audience is being asked to participate in an experience which involves all aliens and inmates, 'brothers and others' in an attempt at questioning the value of legitimacy in a class-bound society. Boundaries constantly shift and change and a comfortable insider may suddenly find himself at the other side of the fence. In Shylock's speeches we are made to feel, forcibly, the injustice of separatist norms.

Again, the self-induced petrification of an emotional life in Shylock is also displayed to the full. His greed for revenge is maniacal and never justifiable. Thus, ethically Portia is right in demolishing him with a quibble. All the time, we are kept aware that the Jew is pitted against the Venetians and Portia only removes Shylock's power to hurt - by her judgement. Venice is responsible for the untrammelled and logical progression of Shylock's hate and its consequences. Shakespeare in all fairness, shows the Venetians to be what they are and thus his choice and elaboration of types is relevant to his implicit judgement of the issues engendered in the play.

Bassanio, Gratiano, Salerio, Solanio, along with gold-digger Lorenzo are adequate representatives of a privileged indulgent, self-serving community. To make this rather clear Shakespeare makes his de facto hero non-heroic in every way, surrounding him by weak eiron types who share his attributes. Self-indulgence thus becomes the characteristic virtue of Venice. This large group of noblemen, merchants and sycophants have their usefulness as social types. Their dresses, masquerades and business talk of "argosies" and "ducats" paint the great mercantile city of Europe to insular Elizabethans. But Shakespeare is also able to suggest by the same means that the Venetians ascribe to a commercialism that sees in Portia "a lady richly left" and the Jew's salvation in the "gold and jewels" Jessica can steal away from her father. The Jew in all his galling disparagement...
of Christians, serves as an expositor of their extravagances, indicting those vices which has bred in him a monster of hate.

A different kind of tension is introduced in the drama by way of Antonio's melancholy. Titular hero Antonio is tragi-comic in a curious eiron-pharmakos combination whose placing against the figure of the Jew helps the play to achieve comic balance.

We have already remarked how Shylock and Antonio are alike in spite of the insurmountable differences between them in power and position in society. As a Christian, Antonio is accepted in Venice, while Shylock is not. But both are loners. Shylock's daughter leaves him. Antonio's overpowering love for Bassanio leading him onto self-sacrifice is enough to mark him out as a pharmakos. The emotional pull of the play is thus towards the scapegoat figures of the Jew as a man and the merchant as a friend. Shylock withholds love and Antonio dispenses it with too great a measure. But in doing so both are being unjust to themselves.

The imbalance is righted by Portia. That is why she is, for Shakespeare's characteristic comedy, a key-figure. Although irony is latent in her insistence at court that the Jew shall have the full rigours of justice while she thinks she dispenses mercy, her curative role is too important for the complex patterning of guilt and innocence in the play, to admit of much censure. The Jew is in need of tutelage. Only, Shakespeare has been bold enough to lay open through the dialogues between the Jew and the Venetians, especially Antonio, causes for the Jew's sense of outrage. Antonio, too, is seen to suffer rightly for his not-too-innocent love for Bassanio, though audience sympathy adheres to both in their helplessness. Shakespeare's grouping of types and careful juxtapositioning of like and unlike traits in the same type distributes subtly the emotional power circuits in the play. Antonio
as prime-mover and principal eiron deserves attention. His insoluble melancholy makes him a pharmakos which is primarily an alazon type. Eiron proclivities link him irrevocably to the large eiron group. But as they are all weak and static types, (one of them, Gratiano, is also a bomolochos,) their power to attract audience attention is not greater than that of eutrapelos Portia or alazon Shylock. Pharmakos-outsider traits link Antonio to Shylock whose dynamism as a complex eiron makes his dismissal an emotionally difficult one, taking the play to the verge of tragedy. And, in the last scene, Shakespeare revives the pure comic possibilities of the play by assembling the forces of music, wit and reconciling Antonio to the romance.

This is not accomplished too easily, for Antonio is an outsider to Belmont whose worth lies in renewable love. It is Portia alone, who holds out hope for his salvation. But Shakespeare leaves the play sufficiently open-ended to be interpreted as tragi-comedy or fractured comedy. It all depends on how compensatory we think the figure of Portia is and whether the spiritual bounty of her Belmont can outweigh the mercenary concerns of Venice. In making his villain a Jew Usurer who can be defeated on two legal counts, both prejudicial to aliens, Shakespeare emphasizes the inability of man to drive out the Cain in him, who will not recognize the claims of his brother. By making his titular hero who alienates himself from joyous camaraderie because of his love for one friend he underscores the pity of life's refusal, even in comedy, to resolve itself in an uniformity of happiness. The comedy is stronger for the inclusion of such possibilities.

It is remarkable that the play's journey into Belmont, the 'other' world (since we cannot properly call it a 'green' one), has been intermittent. The play, unlike MND, or AYL or even The Tempest, does not return, after a sojourn, to the rejuvenated everyday world of Venice. It settles for the
spiritually affluent Belmont. This proves that The Merchant without being a "bold and obvious sort of play" is a successful comedy-romance which has dealt adequately with the adult intellectual issues involved, to emerge as poignant human drama.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

NUMBER OF CHARACTERS: Sixteen (16)

KINDS OF TYPES:
- EIRONS - Pure, weak, deluded
- ALAZON - Pure
- BOMOLOCHOS - Dynamic, Pure
- EUTRAPELOS - Dynamic

GROUPS OF TYPES:
1. Prince, Claudio, Leonato, Antonio,
2. Friar Francis, Don John, Borachio,
3. Don John, Borachio,
4. Dogberry, Verges.
5. Beatrice, Benedick.
6. Hero, Margaret, Ursula.

SOCIAL TYPES:
- Ruler, Friar, Constable, Lords, Gentles.

As in The Shrew, it is difficult to tell at first glance which is the model attitude towards marriage - Claudio's or Benedick's - and which is parody. Beatrice and Benedick, both apparently shrewish and anti-romantic, are Shakespeare's great gift of types to romantic drama. There is courageous re-modelling of type-traits in these characters. Signior Mountanto, the deluded eiron, a ranting misogynist, is turned into the exulting, chivalrous lover. This establishes the unwilling-lover-turned-ardent-wooer type of the romantic hero in the literature to come. Lady Disdain's change from an alazon shrew to the over-seeing eiron and thence to the active good-doer eutrapelos is adequately convincing.

MÄNN has many successes. Dogberry, the much famed Constable who may have started the new type of the Law-Preserver in comic literature, is in real life what Bottom had been prevailed upon to be by Oberon's magic ass. He is the self-contained buffoon, whose vigourous asininity can yet help him to point at fools and villains alike. Of course he cannot help being of such use good use to the important citizens of Messina. He inadvertantly blunders into the villains. All his conscious efforts at fulfilling those grave responsibilities which are his by virtue of
his office, do no more than thwart the investigation of crime or execution of justice. Dogberry, with Verges, provide scintillating comic business at a time when the play is overshadowed with tragedy. But since Shakespeare boldly makes the happy ending of his comedy dependent on the sagacity of the fool, the plot as well as the theme of *MAAN* is worked upon by the malapropos application of intellectual energy which is Dogberry's field of specialization. He is fool, eiron, impostor, churl. All these type-features follow one another in quick succession within the unconvertible fixity of the bomolochos mould. The very stolidity of his foolishness affords him a resistance to ridicule. Plato's mighty weapon (ridicule), fails to penetrate the protective sheathing of obtuseness which covers his every intellectual activity.

Grouping and intergrouping of types help in the interlocking of courtly love-conventions and natural passion, affection and spontaneity, romance and realism, seeing and believing, simulation and dissimulation. Benedick enjoys the best of both worlds, witty camaraderie with fellows in arms and sympathy and constructive goodness of the ladies in love. But the most difficult trial awaits this apparently irresponsible critic of romance and it is his manful confrontation of moral choices that decide his stature as a protagonist and the play's worth as a comedy. In *MAAN*, the battle of the sexes is won to the satisfaction of both parties and for once, head and heart, style and substance are in consonance.

The dramatist keeps distinct from the beginning three conspicuous groups of characters. The eirons, which include weak eirons like Hero, Leonato, Antonio and others, deluded eirons like Don Pedro, Claudio and Benedick, have within their fold the would-be eutrapelos Beatrice. However, the nature of delusion varies from person to person. Don Pedro, Claudio and Messinian elders err in their appreciation of external reality. Benedick and Beatrice err in realizing their true selves. They
are mistaken in their initial awareness of what love can do to them, personally. Apart from the dramatic entertainment provided by the resolute shrewishness of Beatrice in confrontation with the vigorous wag Benedick, critical interest in the development of a type is amply rewarded in the spectacle of Beatrice's transformation. It is not that she becomes a different person, a different character, after the scene in the Church. But Claudio's defamation of Hero brings about a total change in her role. Earlier, she had been a negative personality, denying through the 'misuse' of her wit, her own life-giving and life-preserving femininity. When Hero swoons, Beatrice instinctively and instantaneously assumes command of the situation. In the process of righting wrongs, a self that feels and judges correctly is brought to the fore. A kinder, more caring and more judicious Beatrice (who has not lost any of her early fire, however,) can sacrifice her own love-interest to secure justice for her cousin. Her summons to Benedick - "Kill Claudio" - signifies the moment when her alazon obduracy is turned to eutrapelia - being good, doing good.

We admire the dramaturgy of the mature Shakespeare who can make it consonant with the high point of his comic romance. The eutrapelos' turning of her own personality - wit, sense, feeling, judgement - to the active transfiguration of misprision into understanding, of sightlessness into vision, effects the comic resolution of the play on an ethical plane of awareness.

The lovers, Benedick and Beatrice, thus are seen to be gradually dissociated from the main group of eirons though, on the level of plot, the ties become stronger than ever. Since in the case of Claudio and Pedro the error is optical, it is cured by another optical illusion. Hero disguises herself as her sister and the lover is ready to take her as she is, as earlier he had been ready to take a counterfeit Hero as her real self. These characters do not change in the essentials of their beings. But misprision is so pervasive in cluedo as is the error of identity in The Comedy of Errors, that Claudio as romance lead,
arouses mixed response. His 'noting' of Hero's falsity is in truth nothing, but his ungentlemanly behaviour in the Church scene is harsh enough to invite scorn. If he were not supported in his belief of Hero's infidelity by the Prince and later by Hero's own family (excepting Beatrice), his act would be unforgivable. Now, the ambivalence in the portraiture of a Valentine or a Proteus, and the rather uncertain use of eiron/alazon figures in stabilising the romance atmosphere in TGV, may help us to understand Shakespeare's use, here, of a rather unappealing romantic hero. Where Valentine had, with too great an enthusiasm, fulfilled all the requirements of a romance lover Claudio fails in realizing the true worth of his lady-love. Of course, Valentine too fails Silvia, when subordinating the claims of amour he sacrifices Silvia's self to an ideal of friendship which is only vaguely realized in the play. In MAAN, a similar choice presents itself before Benedick who has earlier acted as love's scourge, and who has only been duped into paying court to Lady Beatrice. Benedick, with deliberation and care, chooses the lady. Shakespeare has reversed the equation between romance and realism in this play. Thus, what was attempted in TGV is achieved in MAAN with complete success. Traditional, that is to say stylized romance in the Claudio - Hero relationship is explored and found to be wanting by a realism, which by its naked reasonableness achieves a grace that authenticates true romance. Beatrice demands from Benedick total commitment to an ideal. Since love, unselfish, discerning love for Hero, underlies Beatrice's command, even though it might seem idiosyncratic, Benedick must affirm his own love by answering to it, recognizing it as an absolute, the two poles of which are life and death. In denying Beatrice her wish he brings her to a spiritual death. "You kill me to deny it. Farewell!" But the strength of Beatrice's faith will give him the evidence his soul requires of Hero's innocence and Claudio's infamy.

Ben : Think you in your soul that Count Claudio hath wronged Hero -
Bea : Yea, as sure as I a thought or a soul.
This is enough for Benedick. He has passed his ordeal when, sword in hand he challenges Claudio for Hero's injured innocence. Shakespeare keeps his main alazon antagonist free from any traces of the pharmakos, and uses Don John more as a helpful stage-convention rather than a character who might usurp audience interest to a degree which can upset the balance of the play. We have seen how the figure of Shylock does, to a great extent, undermine the joyous concerns of The Merchant and infuse the play with an ironic awareness of human limitations. Rather, Shakespeare makes in this play, a structurally clever use of the villain. There are two plots in M&A, one benign the other diabolic, running parallelly from Act II onwards and culminating in the Church scene. There is no redeeming touch in Don John to make him either interesting or deserving of our sympathy. His defeat and dismissal is easily accepted by the audience. Although Don John's plot is adequately successful in disrupting the marriage of Hero and Claudio, his malignity promotes an end result that is as unexpected as it is joyful, for in empathising with Hero's sufferings at the hands of Claudio, Benedick and Beatrice discover for themselves a mutuality of passion which they had been vainly trying to imitate in their early contrived love-poses. The destruction of all that is precious in love - they witness in the fate of Hero. This brings them to a comprehension of what is of inestimable worth in their own relationship. "I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange?" says Benedick. It is a question as much directed to Beatrice as to himself. When in Act V, both playfully deny their affections, it only helps to reinforce our awareness of the distance they have travelled in mutual knowledge of each other's selves. When Benedick exclaims: "Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably", we feel that it is their critical understanding of love that gives their union resilience and durability. Thus an alazon is made an agent of comic transformation in a play in which the denouement is dependent on
the most misprising character of all - Dogberry.

But before we come to this most engaging of bunglers, Friar Francis deserves our attention. He is the only pure eiron in this play who can exercise his judgement for the good of all. Through him is Claudio's final metastasis completed. Even if he does not change much as a person, the death-shock of Hero, used so intelligently by the Friar, restores him to grace. It may be said that the Friar initiates a third plot in Much Ado, which is to present Hero as dead and buried and to offer the real Hero, disguised as her sister as a substitute for the (supposedly) deceased heroine. This ploy is highly effective as the finale proves. The Friar acts as an architectus of the comic action for a part of the play and, also absorbing in his own person the grave follies of society, resuscitates the victims by effecting a thorough reform of the misjudging delinquents. In the Church scene, he forms the still centre around which rage such conflicting passions. Such figures have a special significance in the emotional ambience of Shakespearean comedy, especially in those plays where tragedy seems inevitable but is averted just in time. Shakespeare deliberately chooses a religious figure so as to emphasize the moral confusion prevailing in the lay populace and to give a religious sanction to the social acceptance of Hero in Leonato's household as a pure and innocent maid. All Shakespeare's Friars lend their help in solving marital crises. Friar Lawrence's role in Romeo and Juliet is unforgettable. Duke Vincentio too has to assume a Friar's habit to solve the problems of his state and those of Isabella and Mariana. The power of such religious men to transform human nature is put to good use again in As You Like It where an unnamed sage reforms Duke Frederick to the immense mental and pecuniary satisfaction of the exiles in Arden.

Comic irony is superabundantly associated with Dogberry and his watch, springing from the incongruity between their appearance (which however conforms with reality - they
seem fools, they are fools,) and their role in the play. When Dogberry arrives with his armoury of malapropisms we feel that here is God's plenty in the person of one Constable. But Dogberry does more than amuse. He mirrors, in his own inimitable way, the love of the noblemen for word-play which assigns more importance to the verbal spectacle rather than to its meanings. His blusterings:

"Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were to write me down an ass: But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it may not be written down, yet forget not that I am an ass .... I am a wise fellow .... and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina .... "(IV. ii. 49-75)

smacks too much of Benedick's:

"The savage bull may (bear the yoke); But if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead, and let me be finely painted .... let them signify under my sign 'Here you may see Benedick the married man." (I. i. 227-32)

Both the Wit and the Fool are impostors. But they may be forgiven their presumptions. What links Dogberry to the criminal folly of misapprehension and inexpert professionalism is his inability to prevent the disaster when his bovine ineptness at explaining his charge leaves the busy Leonato unwarned of impending danger. Leonato's own hasty and unfair judgement of his own daughter prevents him from
performing the duty of a father as Hero lies in a swoon.

"Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes .......
Myself would .... Strike at thy life."

Dogberry's inanity is revealed in his misused and mispronounced words. But the wittiness of Prince's party is not enough to save them from disaster. Don John steals a march over them with his dumb visage and warped ethics. Dogberry and Verges thus entertain with sufficient amplitude, in a play which is so full of disguises, disguised meanings, verbal raillery and witty promises. But his misappropriation of verbal functions also acts as a pointer to the play's comic theme. And, with what sure mastery does Shakespeare ensure Dogberry's contribution to the comedic resolution? He can comprehend two "auspicious" persons as villains and he himself shall be "condemned for everlasting redemption" for this. It is sufficient for the abreaction of comic errors in the play.
### AS YOU LIKE IT

**NUMBER OF CHARACTERS**
- Twenty-one (21)

**KINDS OF TYPES**
- **EIRON** - Pure, deluded, gentle senex, faithful servant.
- **ALAZON** - malcontent, pure.
- **AGROIKOS** - Pure, flawed or fractured.
- **BOMOLOCHOS** - Bomolochos eiron.
- **EUTRAPELOS** - Pure.

**GROUPS OF TYPES**
- 1. Rosalind, Celia
- 2. Orlando
- 3. Duke Fredrick, Oliver
- 4. Orlando
- 5. Duke Senior
- 6. Touchstone, Jaques
- 6. Silvius, Phebe

**SOCIAL TYPES**
- Dukes, Noblemen, Shepherd, Priest, Servants.

_AYL_ is the play in which the eutrapelos, Shakespeare's particular comic type comes into her own, where Rosalind with sibling Celia create a comic Utopia. Yet the forest of Arden encompasses a reality which, paradoxically, comes from presenting what was sentimental extremity in the source story as impulsive extravagance, and so leaves judgement to mock freely what the heart embraces. The fool-chotic Touchstone and the malcontent Jaques define the limitations of the pastoral romance while the eiron - gentle senex Duke Senior, deluded hero Orlando and the eutrapelos heroines Rosalind and Celia re-interpret contentment within the parameters of the "green world".

Neither Touchstone nor Jaques is in any way necessary to the plot but _AYL_ is about life, and the court - fool and the malcontent help us to form by arguments and reflections, our variegated responses towards it. Touchstone mocks, under the apparent contradictions of fool-philosophy, the nature of the desires ideally resolved by pastoral life, and thus emerges...
as the play's own competent critic. Jaques is a mocker (who is mocked in his turn), and he is well-placed in a comedy which ridicules among other things, excessive and false sentiment. Both these characters make much of the folly of going to Arden, but both have made a profession out of raillery, and the fact, they have followed their masters willingly to exile shows how such folly may become totally acceptable.

In Arden, the only limits to Rosalind's festivity is her doublet and hose, but Ganymede releases in Rosalind her best powers of improvisation, intuitive action and witty repartee. Her page disguise turns into the play's great comic device. With this she can elaborate a comic scheme to explore the possibilities of romance. Celia, considered as a type, is really a part of Rosalind's persona, individual though she may be as a character. Rosalind's duality of masculine and feminine roles gratifies our desire for play and reality, for an exercise of intellectual scepticism together with enjoyment of gay abandonment. AYL shows significant deviation in the patterning and positioning of types. In no other play do we see Shakespeare employing all five comic types with variations. There are several groups, as many as six — comprising of neatly contrasted or comparable types. It makes for a structure distinctively "open" in which ideas, attitudes and stances are allowed free play and yet assessed and augmented by constant reference to each other. Arousing in us a vivid sense that love can transfigure a working-day world of briars, Rosalind engages in an Erasmian higher folly. Touchstone epitomizes the absurdity of such a belief, and Rosalind epitomizes the faith. This paradoxical, ambiguous relationship between Fool and Wit characterizes this wayward yet constant, volatile yet stable, commonsensical yet glorious comedy, which for many of us, is the quintessential Shakespeare.

One aspect of the patterning in AYL is that Shakespeare develops the types into full-fledged individuals...
and yet keeps them distinct as types so as to secure a constant as encompassive as the pastoral. Ordinarily, the pastoral was the literary mode available in Shakespeare's time which could synthesise by allowing a breadth of ideas within a distilled and ordered version of them. But since AYL is both a pastoral and a critique of it, the final appeal of the play is more comprehensive than the traditional aesthetics of this mode and as large as the title so generously asks us to believe it is.

There is open conflict in the first act between eirons and alazons in the manner of tragi-comedy, but it conclusively gives way to mutually instructive encounters once the protagonists settle down in Arden. The forest's own alazon — disillusioned courtier Jaques — is totally comic and entirely harmless. He is a character who provides much mirth as the poseur, as a genuine impostor whose philosophy is a masquerade of folly in the guise of wisdom and his melancholy a hearty enjoyment of life. However, his overt cynicism keeps alive the vein of sadness that trickles through plenteous humour and playful satire in the drama. In the kindly, robust, earthy critic of pastoral idealism — Touchstone, we are never allowed to forget the jester, the licensed fool, embodying the accumulated fool-wisdom of centuries. The type and the individual rest in wonderful conformity within the mould of dramatic character. Inconstancy (on the level of type attributes) composes a consistent characterization, as it were. We are asked to see the fool who is a sage, the sapience of whose judgement is the tongue-in-cheek politic of a Fool.

Jaques' malaise is different from the animus of a Malvolio and the determined malignancy of other Elizabethan/Jacobean malcontents. Also, Jaques' melancholy is exposed for what it is, a pose, by the contradictory nature of his actions. He cries for the fallen deer and delights in a meal of venison. His role in AYL is thus defined by his individuality (as a
likeable old bore) which is made even more distinct by the intended contrast between him and Touchstone. Rosalind, Orlando or the Duke Himself. However, Shakespeare takes care to present Jaques as a 'malcontent' - a dramatic stereo-type. The "melancholy Jaques" is how the Lords describe him even before he appears on the stage and prepares the audience to expect the (rather amiable, we must admit,) grouch when sitting among the contented exiles he can glory in the fact that he can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs. The predatory image is important because it shows how he 'feeds' on the spectacle of human folly, not knowing it to be a cannibalistic act. This makes of him a moral parasite and therefore a potential outsider. His final rejection of the court party confirms this and completes the various uses his alazon status is put to. Thus functional traits and dramatic possibilities of a traditional role are interfaced to produce a unique character. But the individual in Jaques contributes to the mood of the comedy in a way distinct from the comic alazon-malcontent type which affects the theme. Although there is no real plot-reason as to why such a character as Jaques should appear in Arden and continue to stay there playing his chosen role when all the players have departed, an inner logic of Shakespeare's comic outlook makes comic alazons such as Jaques inevitable to the dramatic structuring of the "happy" comedies.

The use of Touchstone and Jaques in their dual capacities of type and character helps us appreciate Shakespeare's acrobatics with the key figure of Rosalind in multiple dramatic functions as eiron and eutrapelos, love's celebrant and love's scourge, performer and critic, actor and spectator.

The eutrapelos figure has two specific functions which differentiate it from the pure eiron. At the level of plot it can achieve single-handedly what an eiron can hope to execute only with the help of others. This does not make the eutrapelos only a kind of a more powerful eiron, however, for in such an encompassive figure we are to find a wielder of sense, tricks
and subterfuges along with a clever manipulator of wit and a moulder of wills, who lends direction to the intellectual content of the play. On the emotional plane, the eutrapelos acts as a reparative figure, a healer and a repository of private and public virtues. Such a character is important for what it is besides what it achieves. The Shakespearean eutrapelos stands at the spiritual centre of the comedy, as the megalopsychos may be said to be at the same time paradigmatic of tragic suffering and its import. The comic eutrapelos, mediating between sagacity and imprudence, truth and semblance, worldly-wisdom and genial folly, contains in her own person the aggregate of all these attributes in a dynamic formulacy. The eutrapelos thus remains the substance and becomes the significance of Shakespeare's greatest experiments at creating comic spectacle.

Portia and Prospero appropriate the potency to turn evil into good. They are distanced from us by the magnificent displays of their power. Beatrice enjoys a long alazon status which makes her transmutation as the good-doer eutrapelos headily effective but, coming late in the play, necessarily of a short duration. Viola, a catalyst of comic emotions rather than an active reactant, has a passive grace all her own. But what makes Rosalind so endearing and the completest of Shakespeare's figures is that she is an aesthetically pleasing compound of the eiron and the eutrapelos and that, disguised as Ganymede, she can effectively play the fool. Very few characters, besides the definitive fools, can laugh at themselves. Rosalind seems specially equipped to do that. Her alter-ego, cousin Celia, augments her particular capacity to reason with circumstance and rationalize her own follies.

As characters Celia and Rosalind are highly individualized. Celia is distinguished by her finer nature as Rosalind is by her glittering intelligence which lends all her actions a sense of purpose. But the dramatist's gentle pursuance of the
audience towards a finer awareness of romance is effected through the concurrent judgments of his heroines. The picture Shakespeare presents of the two cousins, the one whose generosity is compulsive and the other drawing sustenance from it and going on from strength to strength, stands incomparable in the purity of conception and execution of design. What startles us in the relationship throughout is the veracity of psychological realism achieved in every inflection of voice, every subtle change in tone in the dialogues between sisters. When Celia (in Act i, sc. ii) prevails upon Rosalind to forget her sorrow, she has impressed upon her and the audience her sensitive understanding of Rosalind's predicament and her large bounty which provides, as it promises, recompense for greed, cruelty and injustice of others.

Ros: Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

Cel: You know my father hath no child but I, nor now is like to have; and truly, when he dies thou shalt be his heir; for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection."

(12-17) Celia's unselfish affections not only bring the sentimental Rosalind to contrition: "From henceforth I will coz (be merry) and devise sports", (1.21), but connects directly with the theme of love in its multivalent forms. Celia's other speeches in a kindred spirit, show the role she is to play in AYLI - be herself, for which the wicked Oliver will, at last, be himself, gentle, modest and all-giving - and also act as a second self for Rosalind when she grows too maudlin for reason. At the end of Act, I, she has given the comedy its goal: "Now we go in content, To liberty and not to banishment." (135-6) The forest of Arden is not Europe's cumulative Arcadia, for it is too full of rural discomforts to be totally
But it does help the fledging eutrapelos in Rosalind to spread its wings. With its powers of transformations it assumes a corporeality at par with any of Shakespeare's outstanding characters who have a simultaneity of existence both inside and outside the text. In the play it provides a pliable framework containing many explorations of vision and illusion.

Rosalind finds herself in Arden. In Act I she had functioned as the eiron victim to alazon anger and the traditional mixed eiron, who is overwhelmed by the world's greatest folly; love. With her page-boy disguise, which has lost all practical utility in the security of the forest and has become a positive hindrance once Orlando's presence is discovered ("O alack the day, what shall I do with my doublet and hose!"), Rosalind-Ganymede will elaborate a scheme to establish the validity of romance without a doubt, Touchstone's "so is all nature in love mortal in folly" notwithstanding. Indeed, it becomes foolish not to be a fool in the sense Rosalind is and Orlando, Celia, Oliver are, or for that matter, Touchstone himself is. In using the strategies of satire in the service of romance. Rosalind is actually performing a role similar to and not in opposition to Touchstone's. The Fool mocks romance from the outside, recognising it but rejecting it, in following "biology rather than beauty". Rosalind, sporting with her own emotions in order to gauge Orlando's, tests how far romance can withstand the intrusion of stark reality and provides in her relationship with Orlando an object-lesson of such analysis.

Rosalind: Now tell me how long you would have her, after you have possessed her.

Orlando: For ever and a day.

Rosalind: Say a day without the 'ever.' No, no, Orlando; men are April when they woo, December when they are maids; but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamourous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape ......

Orl.: But will my Rosalind do so?
Ros.: By my life, she will do as I do.
Orl.: O, but she is wise.
Ros.: Or else she could not have wit to do this ...(IV.1.
127-43)

Even though for such raillery, she deserves Celia's admonitions: "You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate ...", her conventional language and attitudes of love cure by humour the accepted sentimental coda of human behaviour. To Celia she unburdens her heart with the exaggerated metaphors of fantasy, which dilute the mawkishness of confession while reinforcing the serious worth of such a passion.

Rosalind plays at the dejected mistress while Celia encourages her 'folly':

Ros.: Never talk to me; I will weep.
Cel.: Do, I prithee ...
Ros.: His hair is of a dissembling colour.
Cel.: Something browner than Judas's. Marry his kisses are Judas's own children.
Rol.: I'faith his hair is of a good colour.
Cel.: An excellent colour: your chestnut was ever the only colour ...... (III. iv. 6-11)

Again, after the mock-marriage in the forest, where we feel Rosalind hard put to retain her doublet-and-hose sauciness - "Alas, dear love, I cannot lack thee two hours!" - she abandons her pose altogether:

Ros.: O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love. But it cannot be sounded; my affections hath an unknown bottom, like the Bay of Portugal.
Cel.: Or rather, bottomless; that as fast as you pour your affections in, it runs out.
Ros: No, that same wicked bastard of Venus .... let him be judge how deep I am in love .... (IV.i.184-92)

Celia's retorts, of course, are contributive to comic irony, for, one Act later, she herself and Oliver will have "looked " and as Rosalind so deliciously puts it, "no sooner look'd but the lov'd; no sooner lov'd but they sighed .... and in these degrees have made a pair of stairs to marriage ....", thus recapturing in the manner of a fast-moving reel of film the story of Rosalind and Orlando themselves.

Rosalind and Celia, together, then create for us the special aura of Shakespeare's comic romance. Comedy purges romance of its excesses and authenticated romance enriches our comic view of life, making it consonant with a qualified acceptance of the anomalies and discrepancies of reality. The dissident voices against such a view in Arden are the rancorous tones of the misanthrope Jaques and the romance-eschewing vociferance of Touchstone. Jaques' oratorical prowess is best seen in his "Seven Ages of Man" speech, which tries to reduce to absurdity any saga of man's striving. The Duke spurns his request for a Fool's licence by decrying his moralizing as the bitter aftermath of a libertine past. Orlando and Rosalind mock openly with a Wittiness which puts Jaques' rhetoric to shame.

Jaq: Rosalind is your love's name.
Orl: Yes, just.
Jaq: I do not like her name.
Orl: There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened. (III. ii. 248-52)

Rosalind dismisses him with: "I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad." (IV. i. 24-26) But the most effective counterpointing comes from Touchstone's apparently naive, apparently respectful attitude towards Monsieur Melancholy. As an attempt at philosophy Touchstone's "And so,
from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe, / And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot", is better than Jaques' picture of old age as second childishness and mere oblivion, or of the exiles as usurpers, tyrants or fools. But Touchstone baits Jaques with a subtlety that bespeaks the sophisticated programming of his fool-wit. Witness the way he greets Jaques, a gentleman who has sought him out of condescension: "Good even, good Master What-ye-call't how do you do sir?". Touchstone deliberately forgets his name or rather refers in this way to the other, not-to-be-mentioned element in Jaques' name. In the final scene, Touchstone exploits the curiosity he has aroused in Jaques by drawing all attention to himself in the outlandish joke about the Lie Direct. He has worthily acted as the whetstone of wits.

But in Arden there are no losers. Each type is indomitable. Only Silvius and Phebe take the brunt of Rosalind's brusque tutelege. These rustic lovers are very dexterously used by Shakespeare. They are made to function as eirons but behave as agroikoi. It is in teaching Phebe a rough lesson that the eutrapelos operates on the level of plot. Rosalind's 'curing' of Orlando's folly is forestalled very early in the play by Orlando himself. "I would not be cured youth". Her effort to educate Orlando in those aspects of reality which romance ordinarily ignores is inherent in the speech beginning, "No, faith, die by attorney", results in making Orlando even more determined to die by the "right" Rosalind's frown. But though she still would insist on the inability of love to kill and the waywardness of a woman's wit, she herself has been vanquished by the force of that emotion that induces Orlando to play such a desperate game of a make-believe with a boy called Ganymede, and make an utter fool of himself because he can, with some wishful thinking, believe he is his Rosalind. While with her educative experiment she turns Orlando's Petrarchianism into the discerning vision of the true lover - "I can no longer live by thinking", exclaims Orlando confronted with the very substantial proof of
conjugal bliss in his brother's impending marriage - Rosalind proves the Wit in the most competent way possible. Portia Beatrice and Rosalind have witty souls, who can perceive God's great joke in making love a "cage of rushes" in which all are willing prisoners. It is Rosalind's great wit, sparkling and light-hearted, which nevertheless does not allow us to forget that "men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love."

Rosalind's method acts as multiple exposures of a single spectacle from various angles. Shakespeare's own method in this play works in a similar way examining themes, issues and literary conventions through the exploitation of type-trait in characters and a wonderfully balanced positioning of types against one another. The Fool's exploration of folly in the sphere of romance or pastoral contentment is amply modified by the agroikos' determined sense of achievement - "Sir, I am a true labourer" I earn that I get, get that I wear; owe no man hate .... " - or by the eutrapelos' celebration of romance in reality. The malcontent hurls his invective at the world and demands as "large a charter as the wind/To blow on whom (I) please ..." Gentle senex Duke senior rejects such world-weariness in his equanamous acceptance of vissitudes. Rosalind cures in Silvius and Phebe the excesses of that romance tradition of whose essentials she herself is an emblem. Orlando performs with grace and ease the role which every romance hero is expected to perform prove his worth through ordeal of physical courage and strength.

The 'play' element is bolstered by the exuberance of spirit displayed by all the characters. This is an element in play structure which is not to be explained by the number or choice of types itself. It is a reflection of the dramatist's own joie de vivre which somehow finds its way into the text. But the choice of types is happy because it supports such an assessment of life's comedy. The alazon is not the least harmful, the eutrapelos is a resolver of anomalies and the fool can rationalize
his instincts and the world's folly without being the least bitter. Femininity of impulses and masculinity of execution, which are the twin motivations in art, are synthesised in the most active of comic arbiters - boy-girl Rosalind.
**Twelfth Night**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Characters</th>
<th>Fourteen (14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinds of Types</td>
<td>Eiron - Pure, deluded, Alazon - dynamic, pure, Bomolochos - Pure, bomolochos-eiron, Eutrapelos - Pure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Types</td>
<td>Ruler, Steward, Merchant, Gentles, Servants.</td>
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In _Twelfth Night_, the female protagonist, eutrapelos Viola gathers unto herself the advantages of being a girl-boy and some dangers of being a boy-girl. It is one of the instances which shows how Shakespeare in his last great comedy celebrates festivity and redefines its limits. Misrule in Sir Toby is not as all-conquering as it was in _Falstaff_, and the shadow of pharmakos-alazon Malvolio looms large over the scenes of Illyrian splendour.

The comic disposition in _TN_ is self-love, and the main characters - deluded eirons Orsino and Olivia, struggle to cure themselves of it. The eutrapelos in this play is not so much an arbiter -(of all the 'Wits' of Shakespeare's middle comedies she is the most vulnerable), but as a catalyst, Viola-Cesario ruffles Olivia's complacency and directs Orsino's affections to a worthy object. The Illyrian romantics are neatly set-off by the egoists - Malvolio and his Nemesis Maria, and the celebrants Toby and sycophant Andrew. Maria in the subplot, is a pure eiron with a puckish delight in exposing the fool,functions in a role similar to that of Viola in the main action.

The patterning as well as plotting of _TN_ is complex and well-executed. Illyria's two loci - Orsino's court and Lady
Olivia's household are brought in close contact with each other by the two figures who journey to and fro. They are Viola and the bomolochos - eiron Feste. This last great jester in comedy functions as critic and commentator on festivity. He is eminently musical and his last song preserves the poise of mirth achieved by accepting disillusion. He is the most detached, observant and ironic of Shakespeare's fools and may be called the tutelary spirit of a play whose marvellous fooling is as serious as it is funny. Yet he is also an outsider and unlike Touchstone, (whom he resembles so much) remains forever outside the assimilative pale of comedy. Feste and Malvolio (whose treatment at the hands of the Saturnalian quartet generates distinct unease,) affect the tone of this comedy, as Viola, with her disguise, illustrates the theme of comic illusion. The cure of souls that is effected homoeopathically at the main plot level is the peak achievement of Shakespeare's in remedying disorder, tension and deficiency by individual hazard, individual inventiveness and individual creativity.

TN is definitely the end of a comic pattern, which has been running through the first eight or nine comedies, and the final exploration of 'festivity', itself a synthesis of literary theatrical and actually festive traditions. From the earliest comedies, celebration is seen to have prescribed limits. Plays that incorporate most fully the sense of play and gamesmanship are LLL, MND, MAAN, AYL and TN. In LLL play with words, ideas and attitudes, towards life in general and love in particular, is postponed by news of sudden death. The vows of the lords to their ladies (which supercede their early vows to themselves), release them from their robotic stances of literariness and acquaint them with those aspects of reality which they had hitherto ignored. Artifice and unaffected naturalness at last make meaningful Navarre's ideal of "living art". MND may be seen (as Barber demonstrated) as a play based directly on pastimes and worked out, with "full imaginative resonance", of the experience.
of a native holiday tradition. Shakespeare's use of types to retain artistic detachment throughout has already been commented upon. In _MAAN_ the actors play games with each other's understanding. Claudio tricks Benedick into falling in love with Beatrice, who herself is tricked into believing in Benedick's passion by Hero and other ladies. All are tricked by wicked Don John. But the love between Benedick and Beatrice is not anymore love as sport, but an ideal which is translated into practice by a pair of spirited soul-mates. Play and reality coalesce in Beatrice's demand of total fidelity from her lover, and play becomes the very process by which Benedick achieves self-realization. _AYL_ can be seen to epitomize Shakespeare's maturity in effecting "release through clarification" by the eutrapelos' playfully curative counteraction with the forces of unreason and non-romance.

In these four plays, alazons are either comic like Armado and Jaques or villainous and dispensable like Don John. But _TN_, like _The Merchant_ before it, operates with an alazon who is made to seem unassimilable to the ultimate comic vision because of his proto-tragic potentialities. The celebration, too, is not undertaken, as in other plays, by the principal eirons, but by a group of robust alazons, who attain eiron status because of their baiting of the pharmakos. The jester too, seems tired with mirth; he is definitely sad.

The title of _TN_ indicates the overt festivity of theme but the sub-title "What you Will" suggest a possible different reading of the play. Because of the dichotomy inherent in the functions of the characters critics have seen as many as four different centres of dramatic interest, residing in any of the following - Viola, Malvolio, Feste or Sir Toby. The grouping of types is partly responsible for this.

The groups of types form tight bands encompassing very definite ethical qualities. Orsino and Olivia are separated in the play by plot circumstances which only bring them together on the stage at the very end. But as types they are very similar
and the eutrapelos is bound by an unbreakable bond to both of them. She is the person who mediates between the two with double awareness but in a sense she is the victim of her own disguise which stirs such conflicting passions in Olivia and Orsino. Misguided affections thwart the blossoming of her true self and keeps the relation between the three in a constant state of suspension.

This group remains neatly distinct from the group of alazons who carouse and revel aided and abetted by the tricky eiron Maria and the explorative wit of the sage-fool Feste. Set against this group sharply is the figure of the tragi-comic alazon Malvolio whose preposterous attitudes and vainglorious presumptions make the conspiracy against him inevitable and his exposure so outrageously funny. The two main plots are decided by the theme of misplaced love which results from emotional blindness. The only ones with proper vision are Viola and Feste, but in a play of revelry and misrule, the eutrapelos is most vulnerable to insensitive treatment and the bomolochos-eiron knows, when he is most merry and ingratiating, that love is only as old as Youth and life as discomforting as vain. He knows himself to be an outsider and may just last out the festivities. He stands outside the two main groups of deluded eirons and celebrating impostors, creating with his music a neat fugue of critical judgement. He directs with his fool-wit the co-ordination of intellectual concerns of the play as Viola achieves by her boy-girl role a sound Katharsis of confused emotions.

Malvolio and Sir Toby remain strong throughout in their respective roles as the Malcontent and Lord of Misrule. A compound of Misanthropy and Narcissism makes Malvolio's pharmakos role sufficiently mirth productive. A Falstaffian généality makes Sir Toby sufficiently attractive, placed as these qualities are against the apparent Puritanism of a Malvolio or even the tragic affectations of an Olivia and the
unmitigated fancies of an Orsino. All are fixed in their roles and seem nearly inconvertible when Sebatians' fortunate arrival changes the unnatural bent of fancies in Illyria.

As eutrapelos, Viola functions as the catalyser of comic emotions. She herself represents a "genuineness of feeling against which the illusory can be measured." She is responsible through her much-troubled male-page role for the destruction of Olivia's consuming self-love and the gradual emergence in her of a giving and fulfilling self. In her sensitive, national and organised persona, Duke Orsino gradually comes to find a better substitute for disdainful Olivia, though he comes to acknowledge his passion for what it is only when the page turns lady. The eiron in Viola is rather strong. Her enforced androgyny makes her supremely attractive to the lady as well as to the lord, and any modern interpretation could make out of her situation a bitterly absurd drama.

Shakespeare keeps the balance unmistakably in favour of a positive assessment of human experience although the fear of negation, a loss of values and identity, are bodily present in the play. Orsino's experiencing of love as an engulfing sea, Viola's projected self-laceration in the fable of a sister killed by love, and the tortures suffered by Malvolio, in the dark house, an exorcist ritual undertaken with luscious enjoyment by the Carnival quartet, are all proofs of Shakespeare's power of packing comic spectacle with hints of a significantly diabolic patterning of events. This co-exists with the recognition of the divine, the merciful and the miraculous.

In creating his Illyrian Saturnalia Shakespeare put in his delighted working of humorous motifs with such extravagance that it is difficult not to feel at one with the spectacle of heady folly and forget that such spontaneous revelry must come, in Shakespeare, to a convincing close. In the early plays, a stable equation was sought for where farce should reestablish and rehabilitate romance. But at the end of his middle period, Shakespeare is sufficiently master of the authentic romance spirit to
order his farce in the service of romance in a way which preserves our undulated enjoyment of both these modes in a distinct, individual way. The sadness of the outsiders, Malvolio, Feste and Antonio lend a richness of humane understanding to a totally comic experience.

Critics who see in Malvolio the play's centre probably base their observation on the response generated by Malvolio's explosive comic possibilities and the disturbing effect which his castigation and discomfiture finally creates. Shakespeare modelled this up-tight steward as a full-fledged Humours character, to be gulled, tricked, misled and manhandled by a band of wily and wild revels. The box-hedge trap brings out all the suppressed fancies of this seeming Puritan and the spectacle of Malvolio, cross-gartered lover of lady Olivia, "not black in (his) mind but yellow in (his) legs" is a sight too deliciously funny. Yet his trials in the dark house, which is black comedy of a high order, is sufficiently disturbing. Sir Toby and his fellow participants in the Feast of Fools define festivity as pure licence. All have thus to taste the bitter dregs of a carnival life drained to the lees.

Malvolio's victimization represents a pole of experience in TN which is co-extant with both revelry and a Saturnalian abuse of personal dignity. Malvolio's chastisement as a tyrant makes him a 'mock-madman madly used' and he exists in the play as the externalized symbol of the maddening impulses that leave no character in TN unscathed.

Placed in direct opposition to him is the type of Misrule. Sir Toby stands at another pole of festive experience. Falstaffian corpulence supports a near Falstaffian wit and carousive spirit. He is surrounded by a weak alazon Andrew, alazon/eiron Maria and bomolochos/eiron Feste. This gang of Four enact a rumbustious holiday revelry at every opportune moment and every possible corner of Olivia's household, thus underscoring the immoderate grief and obstinence with which the lady isolates herself...
With the exception of Viola, all principal characters are Humours figures. There are only fourteen characters in the play making for compactness. The effect is a particularly powerful one. Although as a dynamic alazon Malvolio approaches Shylock marginally, the alazon-pharmakos-outsider combination in the type-form renders it that much vulnerable to exposure and expulsion. But Malvolio is overpoweringly comic in his early presumptuous exhibitions of self-love. We are not asked by the dramatist to exercise our moral judgement or even our intellectual appraisal in favour of Malvolio. He is sick and he must be cured. But we are definitely asked to feel for the man who exclaims in impotent rage: "I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you". We are, from the beginning, also gently induced to feel for the eutrapelos heroine who makes the best of a compromising situation. But Shakespeare offers no pointers in the way we are to take a character like Feste.

Feste is so detached and yet so observant, full of mirth yet mildly but steadily cynical, mixing his pert chop-logic with music which makes nonsense of it, that he stands alone in the play, metaphorically, as he stands alone on the stage, in the epilogue.

If it is not possible to agree totally with Quiller-Couch when he says, "We must hold and insist on holding Feste, Master of the Revels, to be the master-mind and controller of TN; its comic spirit and president," we can surely approve of the modern method of theatre production which usually centres on the role of Feste as critic and chorus. He is "the knowing observer who stands somewhere between the illusory fools upon the stage and their counterparts in the audience." Even if modern productions (as interpretations of Shakespearean drama) tend to see reflected in its own problems of identity, isolation, broken dreams and disjuncted ideals, Feste does have ingrained in his character a world-weariness of Methuselian time...
proportions. He is age-less, he is old. His songs are funny; his songs are immeasurably sad. With his wealth of fool-wisdom Feste goes cleverly begging from door to door. As if his fool-guise is not enough to make him a non-man, he must don the cloak of Sir Thopas. His alternation of this role with his own Clown persona is illuminating. He proclaims himself to be Vice, in a bid to triple his dramatic imposturings. Feste laughs at his own foot image—sniggers rather. Does he feel his kind of sagacious folly being outmoded as an instrument of Katharsis? There is a definite feeling in this last of his pure comedies that Shakespeare deliberately portrays his Fool as being entrapped or confined by his role. His profession is a burden to bear but bear it he must, for lucre and for life. This alienates him from his companions in folly which he still delights in anatomizing:

(To Orsino)

"Now the melancholy god protect thee; and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable Taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal. I would have men of such constancy put to sea...."

(II.iv.72-5)

Viola appreciates his Fool polemics;

"Art not thou Olivia's fool?

Feste: No indeed, sir, the Lady Olivia has no folly; she will keep no fool, sir, till she be married...... I am indeed not her fool, but her corruptor of words......

Viola: This fellow is wise enough to play the fool

......"(III. i. 29-57)

The eutrapelos heroine and the wise-fool each in his/her own way mediate in the turbulent confusions of the play-world. Viola means most to us—her personality is an aggregate of creative, stimulative and curative faculties which reaches out to insensitive or oversensitive souls. Her fate is one with the fate of
the other characters to whom she is inextricably bound. However, she finds a miraculous change in her fortunes and is united to her beloved Orsino but it is Feste who stays back on the stage to sing his epilogue which so succinctly reminds us that such wishfulfilling reversals are only a part of the shadowy play-world but in real life the "rain it raineth everyday". Romance in AYL tries valiantly to come terms with reality. TN dispassionately states that the two must separate once revelry is ended - or - what you will! The effect is of a totally self-conscious comedy.