

**CHARACTERIZATION
IN SHAKESPEAREAN
COMEDIES
& ITS APPLICATION**

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By PLANNING TEAM

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0 – INTRODUCTION

The purpose of developing this paper is to witness different aspects of Shakespearean comedies. This paper is divided into three main parts: 1) Shakespearean Comedy (general definition, conventions and characteristics), 2) Stereotypes in Shakespearean comedies, and 3) Characterization (costumes, hairstyle, make-up and voices). As most of the attention has been focused on the last part, it can be said that this essay deals with the subject matter of how characters are described in Shakespearean comedies.

First of all, after the first collective paper, each member of the group wrote an individual paper on one specific character from three different Shakespearean comedies: “Comedy of Errors”, “The Taming of the Shrew” and “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”. Therefore, another purpose of this second collective paper is to use the descriptions of those characters that have been analyzed in the first individual paper in order to enrich the first collective paper. This task will be carried out in the following way: a deeper analysis of the characters will be performed looking at aspects such as comicity of the character, which stereotype s/he is, the clothes, hairstyle and make-up that s/he wears and the voice that s/he normally uses when the character is performed. As it can be seen, those aspects were dealt with in the first collective paper, and what it is being done is introducing this new information into this second collective essay.

As far as the structure is concerned, nearly the same pattern will be used apart from including eight different examples in a section called “Application”, which will be a compendium of those specific character descriptions mentioned before. This section will close each of the three main parts which make up the whole essay.

Moreover, it has been added some of the aspects that are only present during the oral presentation in order to explain their function and connection with the written material. It must be said that our group contemplates the oral material different to the written material, but without forgetting their connection. In addition to this, a great effort will be made to present an original and dynamic oral presentation.

Finally, one of the most decisive factors that have been taken into account for this second essay is the importance of the homogeneity and the avoidance of repetition throughout all the paper. Great effort will be made to achieve this goal, just to avoid writing an essay formed by different individual parts but writing one that functions as a whole.

1 - SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY

1.1 - Defining the terms “comedy” and “humour”.

First of all, in order to develop this paper taking a close look at the concepts of comedy and humour is required and therefore searching the dictionaries to see what the definitions for these terms are will be very useful.

According to the Wikipedia, *comedy has a classical meaning (comical theatre) and a popular one (the use of humour with an intent to provoke laughter in general). In the theater, its Western origins are in ancient Greece. Tragedy is a genre characterized by a grave fall from grace by a protagonist having high social standing. Comedy, in contrast, portrays a conflict or agon (Classical Greek ἄγων) between a young hero and an older authority, a confrontation described by Northrop Frye as a struggle between a "society of youth" and a "society of the old".*⁽¹⁾

The word "comedy" is derived from the Greek κωμοιδια, which is a compound either of κωμος (Classical Greek κῶμος) (revel) and ωιδος (singer), or of κωμη (village) and ωιδος: it is possible that κωμος itself is derived from κωμη, and originally meant a village revel.⁽¹⁾

Amongst its styles, the Black comedy, the Satire, the Parody, the Political Satire, the Adage, Irony or the Alternative Comedy can be found.⁽¹⁾

For the Oxford English Dictionary, comedy should be *a stage-play of a light and amusing character, with a happy conclusion to its plot. Such are the comedies of the ancient Greek and Latin writers, and of the modern stage. But in the Middle Ages the term was applied to other than dramatic compositions, the 'happy ending' being the essential part of the notion.*⁽²⁾

(1) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedy>

(2) <http://dictionary.oed.com/>

As it can be seen, the use of humour or, at least the attempt to achieve it is an essential part of the comedy. Therefore, it is necessary to define the term humour.

Trying to find a clear explanation, it has been found the wikipedia saying that *Humour (also spelled humor) is the ability or quality of people, objects, or situations to evoke feelings of amusement in other people. The term encompasses a form of entertainment or human communication which evokes such feelings, or which makes people laugh or feel happy.*

The origin of the term derives from the humoral medicine of the ancient Greeks, which stated that a mix of fluids known as humours controlled human health and emotion.

A sense of humour is the ability to experience humour, a quality which all people share, although the extent to which an individual will personally find something humorous depends on a host of absolute and relative variables, including, but not limited to geographical location, culture, maturity, level of education and context. For example, young children (of any background) particularly favour slapstick, while satire tends to appeal to more mature audiences.⁽³⁾

Some claim that humour cannot or should not be explained. Author E. B. White once said that *"Humour can be dissected as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind."* Another explanation is that *humour frequently contains an unexpected, often sudden, shift in perspective. Nearly anything can be the object of this perspective twist. This, however, does not explain why people being humiliated and verbally abused, without it being unexpected or a shift in perspective, is considered funny.* Another explanation is that *the essence of humour lies in two ingredients; the relevance factor and the surprise factor. First, something familiar (or relevant) to the audience is presented. (However, the*

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humor>

relevant situation may be so familiar to the audience that it doesn't always have to be presented, as occurs in absurd humour, for example). From there, they may think they know the natural follow-through thoughts or conclusion. The next main ingredient is the presentation of something different from what the audience expected, or else the natural result of interpreting the original situation in a different, less common way. ⁽³⁾

When looking at the Oxford English Dictionary, the matter turns out to be not that clear. Therefore, it can be found many different meanings for the term, going from *Any fluid or juice of an animal or plant, either natural or morbid. (Chiefly in medieval physiology; now rare)* ⁽⁴⁾, the greek concept of body fluids (*In ancient and medieval physiology, one of the four chief fluids (cardinal humours) of the body (blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy or black choler), by the relative proportions of which a person's physical and mental qualities and disposition were held to be determined*)⁽⁴⁾, and finally getting to the one of major interest which is *That quality of action, speech, or writing, which excites amusement; oddity, jocularly, facetiousness, comicality, fun. Also the faculty of perceiving what is ludicrous or amusing, or of expressing it in speech, writing, or other composition; jocosely imagination or treatment of a subject.* ⁽⁴⁾

1.2 - Comedy conventions.

Along this part, the main goal is to comment the comedy conventions and, specially, Shakespearean comedy conventions. There will be also an analysis of what differentiates comedy from other genres such tragedy, Historical plays... The intention is to demonstrate that a comedy, usually, has a set of rules that are important to follow in order to create the atmosphere and emotional landscapes necessary to make people laugh. Because that is the main goal of a comedy: to make people laugh so much, that they forget their real problems for a while. However, there are other aims such as social criticism, and comedies can also be used for didactic purposes since each comedy can be seen as a lesson to be applied in human lives.

(3) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humor>

(4) <http://dictionary.oed.com/>

When an author is writing a comedy, he must know that there are a set of rules that he must follow, because, indeed, those conventions/rules are what the audience is waiting for in order to start laughing. However, some authors prefer to break down those rules and shock the audience. Nevertheless, comedy itself has a set of conventions, which are less strict, than other genres. According to John Morreall⁽⁵⁾, these are the main differences between tragedy and comedy: He claims and defends the high tolerance that comedy has with chaos, different endings, different types of heroes... He states that tragedies are, somehow, less interesting than comedies, because there is no point for ambiguity: everything is good or bad; all the events are solved with violence and death and characters tend to be more psychologically flat.⁽⁶⁾

1.3 - Features of the Shakespearean comedy.

Traditionally, the plays of William Shakespeare have been grouped into three categories: tragedies, comedies, and histories. Some critics have argued for a fourth category, the romance.⁽⁷⁾

Shakespeare did not invent himself the comedy conventions. He maybe gave them a new breath, but he adapted these conventions from the Greek-Latin theatre. These conventions have been used by authors since then, and they have been repeated again and again in order to make people laugh.

Main Shakespearean comedies' conventions⁽⁸⁾ are:

(5) "Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion", Albany: State U of New York P, 1999.

(6) "Characteristics of Tragedy & Comedy", Philip Mitchell.

(7) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespearean_comedies

(8) "Types of Drama / Plays: Comedy", Dr. Eric W. Trumbull.

- A struggle of young lovers to overcome difficulty that is often presented by elders.
- Separation and unification (reconciliation and forgiveness).
- A clever servant.
- Mistaken identities.
- Heightened tensions, often within a family.
- Multiple, intertwining plots.
- Frequent use of puns.
- Suspension of natural laws.
- Contrast between social order and individual.
- Turning the basis of things upside down.
- The element of marriage.
- A “happy ending”.

It is also important to mention that it is assumed that Shakespeare learned how to organize a comedy plot from the readings of the Latin comedies of Terence and Plautus (they were much studied in Elizabethan schools). This five-act structure moves from: 1- Exposition: A situation with tension or implicit conflict; 2- Rising Action: Implicit conflict is developed; 3- Turning point: Conflict reaches height; frequently an impasse; 4- Falling Action: Things begin to clear up; 5- Conclusion: Problem is resolved, knots untied. As it can be observed, although the plots, the characters, the events... may change, the basis and the structure of a comedy play are always repeated. For example, most of Shakespearean comedies end with the concept of “Marriage” (which is a symbol of union). Marriage is also a symbol of the upcoming and the future; it is the total union of the purely personal element, sexual attraction and romantic love. Whereas tragedy’s focus on the individual makes death the central fact of life, comedy insists in the process of love, sex and birth as a metaphor of life continuity and procreation. Life goes on after the play ends, characters do not die and they share their lives together.⁽⁹⁾

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“Shakespeare’s Plays: Comedy/ English 339: Introduction to Shakespeare”, Debora B. Schwartz.

The plot is very important in Shakespeare's comedies. They are often very convoluted, twisted and confusing, and extremely hard to follow. Another characteristic of Shakespearean comedy is the themes of love and friendship, played within a courtly society. Songs often sung by a jester or a fool parallel the events of the plot. Also, foil and stock characters are often inserted into the plot. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Furthermore, the major genre that Shakespeare developed throughout comedies is the romantic comedy; all Shakespeare's comedies are driven by love. Love is the most important thing in all his comedies; all the obstacles presented to love are overcome, conflicts are resolved and errors are forgiven, in a typical end of reconciliation and marital bliss at the play's close. As one of the most important characteristics of comedies is the concept of forgiveness, there is no matter how wrong the events were going along a play, because at the end, there must be a happy ending, in where reconciliation and union are the basic points.

Maybe, all those assumptions seem to be contradictory: On the one hand, comedies must be a progression of chaos, disorder, exaggeration... and, on the other hand, a comedy must follow a certain structure that is totally necessary to develop the play. Somehow, the important aspect, and the most interesting, one of a comedy is not the ending which is merely the same along all the plays, but the development of the play itself.

1.4 - Application.

This section tries to demonstrate whether some Shakespearean comic characters follow the conventions that have been mentioned before. In this way, comicity in the characters and its reasons will be analyzed.

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<http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/Springfield/eliz/Shakcomedies.html>

1. ANGELO (Err)

The comicity in this character comes from the confusion he is involved in. The mistake is produced when a gold chain ordered by the Ephesian Antipholus is given to Antipholus of Syracuse by the goldsmith Angelo. The comic situation comes when this character asks for the money the gold chain costs to the wrong twin brother. This contributes to raise the dramatic tension of the story since the identity mistake is at the beginning a funny matter but with the inclusion of the gold chain and the money it becomes a legal matter. So, at this point the local authorities get involved in the case and Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus escape to the Abbey where the mother of the twins and wife to Egeon unties the knot.

2. BALTHAZAR (Err)

The main feature that Shakespeare uses to create comicity through Balthazar is the introduction of a situation with tension or implicit conflict. When Antipholus of Ephesus arrives home he encounters with the contradiction of not being allowed to enter his own house. The use of the illogical, a great amount of confusion, and the contradiction in the story are the main techniques used to create comicity. This feeling of confusion used to create comicity is amplified by the appearance of other characters such as an officer, other merchants, a goldsmith, the Duke of Ephesus and a jailer among others who are also in error.

The exaggeration also plays an important role in the scene. Antipholus of Ephesus wants to break the door or even pull it down but it is Balthazar who convinces him for not to do so. The audience of the play knows what is really happening in the story, why Antipholus is not allowed to enter his house and the role of Balthazar as the character who calm the tense situation and avoid the possibility of discovering the error. By discovering the error the comedy would have an anticipate ending, so that is also one of the key facts that makes Balthazar so important.

The audience understand which the real situation of each one of the characters is while the characters in the story do not. This is what makes the story a comedy, what makes it so funny, the confusion and the complicity with the spectators.

Balthazar functions as one of the characters who introduce the main conflict which will be developed until it reaches a turning point and finally things become to clear up.

3. SLY (Shr)

Christopher Sly is poor tinker and a drunken man. People always laugh at drunken people because they always say ridiculous things and they are not aware what is going on around themselves. As a drunkard, the language he uses and the actions he does create a comic atmosphere in the play. His use of comic words towards other people and his use of wrong references for the events and people also make the audience laugh. He is the main character of a joke practiced by a nobleman and his servants. While the lord, the servants, the players are tricking him, the audience also enjoys this comic situation. Actually he is a tragicomic character. The audience laugh at him because when he sees the luxury conditions and the servants saying that he is a rich lord he can easily believe that he is really a lord. At the beginning he is a little bit confused and he starts to question his situation, but later on he adapts himself into his new life as a lord, and when he is said that he has a wife, he is so surprised that he wants to make sexual relation with her. However, the audience can also feel pity for him because he is being ridiculised and exploited by the others.

4. GREMIO (Shr)

One of the main aspects that make Gremio a comic character is his natural foolishness. People tend to laugh at other people who are intellectually inferior and do not behave in a logical way; that is the reason why characters such as Lucentio or Grumio make fun of this old foolish man, for instance. The audience can find Gremio funny because they do not understand that comradeship with Hortensio when they are supposed to be rivals; or it is also a comical aspect that he does not realise that Lucentio is in love with Bianca. It can be said that he is involved in a game of mistaking identities in some way, since Lucentio pretends to be Cambio (a Latin teacher) and Gremio believes all this sham making Lucentio's way to get Bianca easier and showing his foolishness openly at the same time.

On the other hand, other aspects such as Gremio's rude way of criticizing Katharina's volatile temper, his desperate attempt to marry Bianca, his flattering attitude towards her father Baptista, or even that ridiculous jealousy of anyone who could be a threat for him in getting Bianca's love could be seen as comic qualities in the character of Gremio.

5. HORTENSIO (Shr)

Hortensio is not the most comic character of "The taming of the shrew". Anyway, the main comic moment concerning Hortensio occurs when Kate smashes the lute to Hortensio's head while he tries to teach music to her, as it can be seen in the following pictures:



<http://www.deptfordplayers.org/mstage/ts04/prodstills/Hortensio.jpg>



<http://www.kimcarrell.com/production/hortensio.jpg>

He appears in two of the most comic parts of the play: the first one in Petruccio's house, where Kate gets confused due to Petruccio's strange behaviour; and second, at the wedding, when Lucentio, Petruccio and Hortensio try to show how they tame their wives. In this respect, Petruccio is the only one who gets it.

6. PUCK (MND)

Puck freely admits to be "a shrewd and knavish sprite" who for the sake of enjoyment mocks at humans. His mischievous spirit pervades the atmosphere. What is more important is that Puck's capricious spirit, magical fancy, fun-loving humour, and lovely, evocative language permeate the comic atmosphere of the play.

He seems to illustrate many of these contrasts between the earthy craftsmen and the delicate fairies. Puck sees himself as a naughty “master” that plays with mortal people as if they were puppets. He takes advantage of one of humankind’s weakness: love. For Puck, love is just a funny thing in which only stupid humans and other beings fall into. For this reason, they provide him with a laughing good time.

7. THESEUS (MND)

Shakespeare’s favourite love triangle is related to the constellation of father, daughter and prospective son-in-law. In many plays, women are forced to make a choice between the father and the lover. In “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, Hermia’s father wanted his daughter Hermia to get married to Demetrius who comes from the Athenian Royal family, instead of Lysander. Moreover, according to Athens’ law, in all families, fathers decide who is going to be their daughters’ husband and daughters must obey what their fathers decide. In this play, Hermia rejects this, but Theseus is such a wise man that he gives four days to Hermia to think about the situation. Although there are laws, he can make these laws flexible.

At the end of the act IV, the chaotic situation of lovers is solved by Puck and Theseus invites all young lovers to his wedding. For Theseus and Hippolyta’s wedding, Bottom and his friends perform a play in front of all lovers. Shakespeare constructs these stereotypes such as Theseus in order to draw a picture of optimistic kings; even in Comedy of Errors he does this with the character of Duke Sollinus. Both characters have the power and right to do what they want. They could kill Hermia and Aegon if they wanted, but they decided to give them a chance. If they had not had that chance, they would have died in the first scenes of the plays and it would have been a tragedy instead of a comedy. So, it can be observed that a little decision can change the whole sense of a play, but one must remember that those chances are always related to time. This can be seen in the period of 4 days which Hermia has been given to take a decision on obeying his father or becoming a nun all her life.

In addition to this, Theseus is also a good model for the young lovers. He can refine from this illusion with a little logic. Hence, Theseus and Hippolyta draw a picture of more mature love.

8. SNUG (MND)

It is obvious that Snug is presented as a typical comic character. His function during the play is just to make people start laughing. Shakespeare creates a character that is not intelligent at all. He does not use sarcasm, irony or funny sentences to make the audience laugh. However, the audience must find the humour of this character within the absurdity of the situation in which he is involved.

It must be taken into account that Snug is a minor character and almost all the comicity of the play relies in other characters or events. Nevertheless, he is involved in one of the three sub-stories of play and the function of this sub-story is really important. He is one of the actors who is going to perform in front of the Dukes of Athens: "The death of Pyramus and Thisby". He is the one who is going to perform the lion's role. One may consider all the preparation of the play and the play itself as something funny, absurd... Moreover, it can be also considered as unbelievable. Shakespeare presents a situation in which the actors discuss about how to present the play taking into account stupid worries: the lion's "roar", the presence of a wall between the two lovers... One of the most important aspects of a comedy is the constant presentation of conflicts and how characters must overcome these difficulties and conflicts. In addition to this, these conflicts are always exaggerated. It is obvious that they must be worried about the consequences that their performance must have, but Shakespeare exaggerates the mood and attitude of Snug and the rest of the actors who are going to perform the play, driving them into a state of collective madness. This fact is very funny because their own worries during their performance in front of Athens' authorities are the reason of almost their failure as actors, instead of being their quality as actors the reason of their failure. This state of collective psychosis is very funny because it can be appreciated how the human being acts being under pressure. Shakespeare message should be: relax and enjoy what you are doing, that is the only way of doing things well.

2 – SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY STEREOTYPES

2.1 – Stock Characters.

In Shakespearean comedies many characters are repeated through different plays. This is especially easy to see in the case of “fools”, “clowns”, “buffoons”, or “vices”, for instance. These repeated characters are usually called stereotypes or stock characters.

A tradition in British comedy dating back to Shakespeare is to laugh at lack of intellect of a character. Shakespeare always uses fools who are considered to be lacking of intellect by the other characters but are actually wiser. Fools and clowns who have important roles (at least two can be seen in each play) in early plays of Shakespeare share certain characteristics. They are clumsy, ridiculous and slow witted. The function of the clowns and fools is to keep the comic action going throughout the play. However the function of clowns and fools is not only to get the audience or reader started laughing but also to show the important truths often ignored by the others: the deepest secrets hidden from the wise may be revealed by a child or a fool. Actually they don't appeal to the intellect but to the emotions.

Some characters in Shakespearean comedies show us that there are two kinds of fools: the conscious fool and the unconscious one. The most interesting example of a fool can be that of Feste from “Twelfth Night”. There is an ironic situation since the licensed fool (Feste) is not actually a fool but a wise character who contributes to the meaning of the play, and the actual fool (Sir Andrews or Molvolio) is the most entertaining character with his foolish actions. By acting as a fool, Feste becomes privileged in telling the truth of the people around him.

The clown is used as a free observer that mocks the faults of the other characters. Feste (clown in “Twelfth Night”) with his intelligence is aware of what others do and criticizes the actual fools, the characters who are not seen as witty at all. Lack of self-knowledge makes the characters fools as Molvolio or Sir Andrews in ‘Twelfth Night’.

Also the clown Touchstone in 'As You Like It' can be considered as wise as Feste. Shakespeare explains the importance of such characters in his plays with these words: "It is meat and drink for me to see a clown"⁽¹¹⁾.

When we have a look at the roles of the clowns and fools in the comedies of Shakespeare, almost all of them are the servants of heroes or heroins. This can be seen in the clowns Touchstone and Feste, the servants Dromios (servants of Antipholus in "The Comedy of Errors"), in the character of Tranio (servant of Lucentio in "The Taming of the Shrew"), in Grumio (servant of Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew"), or in Maria (servant of Olivia in "Twelfth Night"). On the other hand, Ariel (the spirit helper of Prospero in "The Tempest") and Puck (the servant fairy of Oberon in "A Midsummer Night's Dream") are the vices whose role is to cause a great deal of disguising. In two plays they cause the misunderstandings and make the play more complex.

Shakespeare gives place to buffoons and vices in his comedies. His aim in creating buffoons is to increase the mood of festivity rather than contribute to the plot. A few examples can be seen in some Shakespearean comedies: Nell, who is the fat maid of Adriana and Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus' wife ("The Comedy of Errors"), Snug ("A Midsummer Night's Dream") or Tinculo and Stefano ("The Tempest").

The other stereotypes in Shakespearean comedies can be considered the "blocking characters" which are seen in most of the comedies. They always put boundaries or some rules that can cause a chaos in the play. Generally these blocking characters are seen in the beginning of the play and the comedy starts with the problem caused by them. If they were not in the comedies, the events would not be like what can be read in the plays. If Egeus were not in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", the lovers Hermia and Lysander would not have escaped to the forest and there would not be a chaotic situation that makes us laugh, or if Minola Baptista, the father in "The Taming of the Shrew", had not decided that Kate would have to marry before Bianca, all those events would not have taken place.

(11) "As You Like It" - V, 1, 2198 (Touchstone)

Duke Frederic who banishes his brother and his niece in “As You Like It” or Solinus, the duke of Ephesus, in “The Comedy of Errors” can be considered as “blocking characters” as well.

Shakespeare sometimes uses disguises and mistaken identity that makes the play more complex and funny. Viola in ‘Twelfth Night’ and Rosalind in ‘As You Like It’ can be the best examples of stereotypes of women living in Elizabethan times. Adriana and Luciana in “The Comedy of Errors” are the contrast female stereotypes of that time, and also Bianca, who is admired by gentlemen and her father, in “The Taming of the Shrew” is the stereotype of a “young modest girl”, but after marrying she reveals her true face. By creating Bianca, Shakespeare criticizes the social roles of people, especially the role of women in marriage. However, Kate is far from being the stereotype of the modest maiden, and by creating Kate, Shakespeare also shows that he rejects the social roles of people at that time.

2.2 – Application.

The main goal in this section is to approach to the different stereotypes that Shakespeare used when he created these characters.

1. ANGELO (Err)

The character of the merchant was used by William Shakespeare as a stock character in many plays apart from “The Comedy of Errors”. Therefore, other merchants such as Shylock and Antonio from “The Merchant of Venice” can be found throughout Shakespeare’s plays. It probably has something to do with the historical context of that time: *“The reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) saw England emerge as the leading naval and commercial power of the Western world. England consolidated its position with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and Elizabeth firmly established the Church of England begun by her father, King Henry VIII.”* ⁽¹²⁾

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<http://www.bardweb.net/england.html>

“A rising merchant middle class carved out a productive livelihood, and the economy boomed. This atmosphere made London a leading centre of culture as well as commerce.” (13)

2. BALTHAZAR (Err)

The Elizabethan period is clearly reflected on Shakespeare's plays. Stereotypes function as a mirror of the Elizabethan society. The character of Balthazar represents the stereotype of the merchant. Balthazar, together with other secondary characters, plays an important role as a whole. The main function of characters such as the jailer, the goldsmith, the Duke of Ephesus, the officer or other merchants is to create a great amount of confusion to the play. Moreover, they try to increase the error gaining in that way the so important comicity. The stereotype of the merchant is present in nearly all the comedies by Shakespeare.

3. SLY (Shr)

Actually, it is very hard to categorize Sly as a stereotype because he is a unique stock character in Shakespeare's comedies. He can be considered as a fool and a mistaken identity because he lacks of self knowledge and he believes everything that is said by the others. In real life, it is impossible to change the social situation of a normal person or his character by changing the costumes and the living conditions; but he is so drunk and so fancy that he can easily accept the change after little questioning. As it has been mentioned previously, fools are clumsy, ridiculous and slow witted, and the function of fools is to keep the comic action going throughout the play. If one considers him as a fool, he carries out his function. He initiates the comic action with his comic dialogues at the beginning of the play and he prepares us to the next acts, which are full of comic situations. Also, his mistaken identity makes him become astonished and it causes his fool situation. Sly is very surprised and stunned by all the people around him, and he has been forced to leave his real identity and has been transformed into another man. This transformation and his drunkenness make him much more foolish than he is.

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<http://www.bardweb.net/england.html>

4. GREMIO (Shr)

The character of Gremio can be seen as the stereotype of the “wacky neighbour” which is repeatedly used in situation comedies but it can also be used in drama. *“The wacky neighbour is a stock character in popular fiction. This character is usually (but not always) male, lives close to the main character, and is highly eccentric, or just not very bright. The wacky neighbour generally works as a gag character, performing functions that would usually be uncharacteristic or too incredulous for main characters. The explanation that the character lives nearby allows him or her to easily drop in and out of situations to add comical dialogue or sight gags, without the storyline getting too deep into the character”*⁽¹⁴⁾. The fact that Gremio lives next to Baptista’s house, his foolish behaviour and the comic situations in which he is involved are the main elements which describe him as the stock character of the “wacky neighbour”.

5. HORTENSIO (Shr)

Hortensio is a man who lives in the city, and he probably has an important status or reputation. So, it cannot be said that he is a fool (that is the impression he gives because of his dressing) because he does not appear to make people laugh, and he cannot be given a particular label.

6. PUCK (MND)

Puck is a representative of the “trickster” figure, which appears in most folklores. The story of the trickster being tricked is a common motif. Shakespeare used this to create his Puck, since the character gets confused in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and gives the love potion to the wrong couple of lovers. Fantasy is as important as reality, and Shakespeare showed that by giving so much importance to Puck in the play.⁽¹⁵⁾

(14) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wacky_neighbor

(15) <http://quarles.unbc.ca/midsummer/myth.html>

7. THESEUS (MND)

Theseus is the Duke of Athens in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”. He is a stereotype of a noble man, of a king, and he represents authority, rationality and power. Not only is his position royal, but also his personality. His principles depend on humanistic values and he lives his love deeply but not irrationally. While he loves Hippolyta so much, he never loses his mind. He never forgets his responsibilities as the Duke of Athens. Moreover, he always tries to be fair and that aspect is very important for a comic authoritarian character. However, this is not a typical comic character because he is not as serious as a king may be. His sense of humour can be seen when the artisans are performing the play “Pyramus and Thisbe” in front of him. He comments on that players and the play they are performing using sarcasm, humour and irony.

8. SNUG (MND)

It is hard to include Snug in one of the typical stereotypes because he is a mixture of some of them. He can be considered as a fool, as a buffoon... It is clear that his attitude and behaviour towards the lion’s play he has to perform is burlesque. His obsession of performing the lines correctly and the fact that his lines are just a repetition of “roars” is totally unrealistic.

As it has been said, the function of clowns, fools... is to reveal the truth to the audience and the rest of the characters. It is obvious that Snug is not going to reveal the truth just roaring. Nevertheless, the function of plays within the plays is similar to the role of clowns or fools. Plays within the plays are portions of meaningful truth addressed to the audience and the rest of characters. Obviously, this is not an exception. This play (“Pyramus and Thisby”) can be useful to teach different aspects of life such as the relationship between lovers, how the actors must perform a play, the actors’ inner fears... There is no play within a play that is meaningless. All the company of amateur actors in MND may be considered as a “Company of Fools”. All the performers and actions are unbelievable and exaggerated, but despite this fact, somehow, they all can be considered as teachers.

3 – CHARACTERIZATION

3.1 – Costumes in Shakespearean plays.

3.1.1 – Elizabethan clothing.

Clothes in the Elizabethan era were dazzlingly beautiful and elaborate. It was a time when sumptuous fabrics, new dyes and exuberant dress prevailed. In the 16th century there was an improvement in the economy and the richness of the country so there was a greater elaboration in dress.

Clothing functioned as a mirror of that wealthy period, of the prosperity and energy of the age, so the more dramatic, opulent and luxurious the costume, the better. Through this clothing the vitality and the high points of the period could be observed. There were a lot of clothes of foreign origins such as the French hose, the French hood, Venetians or the Spanish bonnet.

Dressing functioned more for display than for comfort. Such was the level of extravagant exaggeration that “The Sumptuary law” against the excess of apparel was passed to regulate how people could dress. The Church of England supported the restrictions in clothing in 1563.

3.1.2 – Men and women dress in Shakespearean plays.

There is not too much accurate information about the clothes worn in the early productions of Shakespeare. However, it is known that whatever geographical setting or chronological period were, the whole time and geographical canon for Shakespeare was the Elizabethan England. There was little attempt to present historical accuracy. So even in a play set in the ancient Rome, for example, the actors wore contemporary clothes.

The fashion's central tendency at that time, above all in the upper classes, emphasized gallantry and beauty.

The prototypical women's figure could be described as a structure in which shoulders must be wide, the waist must get narrower, and finally opened up to a flared skirt. The bosom was lifted at the neckline. The perfect women's appearance would be the image of an hourglass.

The garments used by women were:

- A smock, which was an ankle-length shirt worn next to the skin used to protect clothing from body oils.
- A bodice. (Part of a dress above the waist)
- A skirt. (known as kirtle or petticoat)
- A triangular piece known as "stomacher" which formed the front section and was joined to the bodice proper at the sides by ties, hooks, or pins. (Garment consisting of a V-shaped panel of stiff material worn over the chest and stomach in the 16th century)

The silhouette of men was characterised by its squared form reinforced by the abundant padding. It was very common to find vents and slashes as they made reference to sword battles that had taken place previously.

The typical garments used by men were:

- A smock, which was an ankle-length shirt worn next to the skin used to protect clothing from sweating.
- Drawers called "trousers"
- Boots
- Breeches
- A jerkin vest (tight sleeveless and collarless jacket often made of leather), a doublet (close-fitting jacket worn during the Renaissance) and an adorned hat made for a smart outfit.

3.1.2.1 – Men’s garments.

“How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour elsewhere.”

The Merchant of Venice (Lii.68-70),

W.Shakespeare

This male model which is going to be described is French in design and it is influenced by clothes from several countries, but it makes reference to the typical English Elizabethan garments.



In this picture, the Duke of Alencon (Henry of Navarre’s younger brother) wears a peascod doublet, venetians, hose, shoes without heels, and a band (ruff). The sleeves are usually detachable and interchangeable with other outfits. The venetians are brocade and he also wears hose made of silk held up by fringed ribbons (handwoven silk hose became the rage during the Elizabethan period in England). Over this basic model, he was dressed in a jerkin and his slops.

- Peascod doublet

The characteristic shape of the peascod-bellied doublet was that of a pot belly and to achieve this effect, three things were needed: a stiff tight under-lining, buckram to make prominent shape, and “bombast” (padding) to hold it out. The doublet had a peplum (skirt) and small wings surrounded the armhole and hide the points which were used to tie on the sleeves.

- *Jerkin*

A jerkin was often worn over a doublet. It was usually tight and had buttons to close the front. However, because of the peascod doublet, the jerkin cannot be closed.

- *Venetians*

The upper thigh was covered by the venetians, which were originally called “upper stocks” or “canions” when they started to be used by 1570. They are called “Venetians” because of its place of origin: Venice. Venetians were hose which could be padded.

- *Pansid Slops*

The Pansid Slops consist of a series of panes of one colour which are padded with padding in another colour. This garment usually goes over the venetians.

- *Hose*

Handwoven silk hose became the rage during the Elizabethan period in England. On the sides of the hose silk scarves act as a garter for each leg.

- *Band (ruff)*

The ruff was a long strip of material which was attached on one edge to a band which would be tied around the neck and under clothing. The ruff was heavily starched and then an iron poking stick or setting iron was used to create the characteristic flutes.

- *Shoes without heels*

3.1.2.2 – Women’s garments.

This female model which is going to be described is based on a French tapestry in which a portrayal of Marguerite of Valois can be seen (1575), but it makes reference to the typical English Elizabethan garments.

In this Picture, Marguerite of Valois wears a square neckline which was typical at that time. The shoulder roll is added to the upper sleeve. The girdle pendant includes a pomander. Her skirt rests on a bum-roll farthingale. The sleeves and bodice are made of brocades, while the underskirt matches the band around the skirt.



- Farthingale

This undergarment was used to control the shape of the skirt. The farthingale was as long as the petticoat and there were three different kinds of farthingale during the Elizabethan era. One of them was the *wheel* or *drum farthingale*. The second one was the *bell* or *Spanish farthingale*. This bell shape was achieved by sewing stays onto a skirt. Finally, the third type was called bum-roll farthingale and consisted of a padded sausage-like hoop that tied in front and rest on the hipbone. The bum-roll was placed over petticoats and a petticoat and the skirt would rest over it. It is curious that women had to use cushions to sit down on them instead of using chairs because of the voluminous farthingales.

- Corset

It was an elaborate steel corset which was worn under the dress. The front bands of steel (lined and covered with thin silk or other material and often decorated with flat embroidery) extended downwards in a long tapering point as far as the pit of the stomach and the sides converged as low down as the hip bone would permit. It was the line from this to the lowest point of the corset that deceived the eye and made the figure look longer and the waist smaller than they really were. These steel bands were fastened by tight-lacing the back.

3.1.3 – Decoration / Materials.

Colours and decoration in clothing functioned as a whole to create a greater impact on the audience in the Elizabethan era. Both, men and women costumes were ostentatious and varied in colours, materials and ornamentation. Women wore rich and gorgeous dress as men did but men attire was even more complex as it has been expounded before.

The garments were highly decorated with braid, embroidery, pinking (pricking in patterns), slashing or puffing and sometimes encrusted with pearls, jewels, or spangles or trimmed with lace or artificial flowers.

Hats also played an important role in clothing. For example, craftsmen and London citizens usually wore a small cap similar to a beret. Feathers were a very common ornament used to embellish hats.

3.2 – Hairstyle and make-up in Shakespearean times and comedies.

3.2.1 - Hairstyle in Shakespearean times and comic characters.

Queen Elizabeth was a referent in fashion that created a very personal trend during her period of reign. Both men and women were very hair-conscious; they spent a lot of time and money getting their hair dyed red or blond, the most fashionable colours. Men would trim and style their beards, and women wore their hair in combs, nets, or jewelled pins.⁽¹⁶⁾ The make-up would also become important in a very radicalised, even bizarre way. The model of the Elizabethan woman's fair hair, snow-white skin and red cheeks and lips would be emphasized or achieved through a wide variety of cosmetics.

3.2.1.1 - Men's hairstyle.

Upper class fashion, which included hairstyles, was highly elaborate, and necessary to achieve attention and success at court. It was referred to as *the Peacock age*, as the Upper class Elizabethan men were often more elaborately dressed than the women, and their hair and beards received a similar amount of attention.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is for granted that Shakespeare took Elizabethan fashions to create his characters, but while hairstyles remained more or less the same for "serious" characters, deformations or exaggerations of those hairstyles were present in comic characters. Men's hair styles varied greatly. Sometimes the hair was cut closely at the sides, but it could be brushed up and held with gum, or perhaps curled over the head. The length of hair varied during the Elizabethan era. It started as short closely cropped hairstyles and increased in length during the period.⁽¹⁸⁾



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- (16) <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/randi/england/england.html>
- (17) <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-hair-styles.htm>
- (18) <http://www.erasofelegance.com/fashion/hairstyles.html>

It was fashionable for men to sport beards during the Elizabethan era. The styles and cut of beards changed with the fashion of the day. The beards could be cut in various styles including pointed, square, round or oblong, and starch was applied to keep them in place. Beards were also kept long.⁽¹⁹⁾



More remarkable and probably used by Shakespeare were the wigs. When the men of this time went bald, they depended upon wigs to help them keep up the latest fashion. The wigs worn at his time were usually a fashionable white or yellow colour.⁽²⁰⁾ Wigs, symbol of richness and power in the Elizabethan society, were used as they were by a lot of characters, but in comic characters the shape was exaggerated, or the colour was artificial. Comic effects could also be obtained by combing the natural hair in a messy way or with hats. Beards and moustaches were also extended or given an eccentric shape, as in these Shakespearean characters.



3.2.1.2 - Women's hairstyle.

The style of Queen Elizabeth was obviously more influential in women. The Queen had red hair, so this colour became a real vogue.



(19) <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-hair-styles.htm>

(20) <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/hairstyles.html>

Women emulated this colour or the yellow as the ideals of beauty with a mixture of saffron, cumin seed, celandine and oil. Another tendency was the idea that a high forehead was considered very attractive, so women shaved the hair from their front hairlines.⁽²¹⁾

Two main styles were predominant in hair: the “padded” style and the “frizzed” style, both worn by the Queen. The first one had to be done with two pieces called “rats” -by its resemblance with those animals-, and framed the face with a heart-shape form. The second one was a curly and rather casual hairdo. Most of the hairdos wore accessories like hairnets (“cauls”) or hats called “coifs”. Many of the hats were adorned with feathers, pearls, glass jewels, spangles, gold thread, embroidery and lace.⁽²²⁾



In these characters we see the padded style, the frizzed style and one of the many different types of hat in Elizabethan times. In order to achieve the desired hair, women also resorted to wigs and false hair. In Shakespeare comedies, female characters usually follow these patterns, although we should think that just the fact that a woman was represented by a man was a reason for laughing. Women characters, however, could be represented dishevelled or with weird hairdos depending on their social condition or mental state.⁽²³⁾



(21) <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-hair-styles.htm>

(22) <http://www.extremecostuming.com/articles/twoelizabethanhairstyles.html>

(23) <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/hairstyles.html>

3.2.2 - *The importance of make-up in theatre.*

Pale skin, sought after by many, was a sign of nobility, wealth and, for women, delicacy. This pale skin could be achieved by a number of means, many of them poisonous. The most popular was “ceruse”, a mixture of white lead and vinegar applied to the face, the neck and bosom. By the time of Elizabeth's reign it was well-established as an essential item for the fashionable woman. Once an ideal whiteness was achieved, colouring was applied in a variety of reds upon the cheeks and lips, being vermilion (mercuric sulfide) the most popular choice of the court lady. Kohl was also used to darken the eyelashes.⁽²⁴⁾



One of Shakespeare's most popular sonnets pokes fun at the common metaphors used to describe the ideal beauty of those days:⁽²⁴⁾

“My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun
Coral is far more fair than her lips fair
If snow be white, why then, her breast is dun,
If hair be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks...”

This sonnet could be one example of how Shakespeare saw that tendency of Elizabethan women to “hide” their real identity. And one way to show it to the audience was in part by dressing men as women, where everybody knew that behind that make-up was hidden a totally different person. We can find that “ideal” of beauty in the gentle, pure and virginal female characters, whereas the wretched women could be depicted as the contrary. Mad women wore their hair loose and mad people of both sexes had disordered clothing and make-up.⁽²⁵⁾

(24) http://www.rencentral.com/jul_aug_voll/makeup101.shtml

(25) <http://shakespearean.org.uk/elizthea1.htm>



Another aspect dealing with make-up was to characterise the actors (and later, actresses). For example, to represent the “clown” or “joker”, the “old man” or a “blackamoors” or “Turks” some painting was required.



This way, physic stereotypes were reinforced, thus creating a bigger sense of identification and empathy in the audience. At the same time, some face features such as noses, wrinkles or eyes were highlighted with a good effect. The make-up was combined with false noses, beards, wigs and other props, and its effect could go even further with the use of prosthetic parts of the face or the body.⁽²⁶⁾ Finally, actors could also wear partial or total masks to produce a greater effect and emphasize funny or comic traits.



As it has been explained, what appears to be simple, easy or left to the imagination has behind a whole set of conventions and rules. Shakespeare’s magnificence also was present in this field, since he observed those models and stereotypes and decided among them to create his characters. Just by

preserving or deforming those models -with the use of hairstyle and make-up- he made people feel and laugh, without the need of words, which would be the culmination of his talent and his wit.

(26)

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/home/235.aspx>

3.3 – Voice in Shakespearean comedies.

3.3.1 - Importance of voice in Shakespearean performances.

The actors performing Shakespeare's comedies did not only have to pay attention to the way they made physical a role, that is "to create a believable character for the audience and to use the stage suitably", but they also had to use their voices "to communicate character's lines and express emotion".⁽²⁷⁾ That is to say, the tone of voice may sometimes reflect a character's psychology, emotion, mood, sexual excitement and so on. In the case of, for example, sarcasm or irony, it may also carry social information or may entail criticism.

Therefore, such a process of information may be achieved having in mind pronunciation and projection of words through correct breathing and articulation as well as through the tone and emphasis that an actor puts on words. However, although not all comedies rely on voice, the level of comicalness depends on developing either a unique voice or a subtle tone.

Shakespeare established a balance between ridicule and sympathy materialised on the tone or the pitch of the voice of the characters, so sometimes one does not know how to react towards these characters because there is no in-between (e.g.: the character of Caliban in "The Tempest"; the two Dromios in "The Comedy of Errors"). Such a reaction could be laugh.

3.3.2 – Voice and Gender.

Voice and costume have been said, in the case of Shakespearean drama, to become a lively register of gender. During the Elizabethan period the first professional companies were developed. The so-called 'Boys Companies' were acting groups associated to schools or churches.

(27)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actor>

However, women were not allowed to perform, so boys performed their roles. That is the reason for the controversy about whether they acted in a realistic way or if these boys performing feminine roles were actually being burlesque.

Moreover, if a person can identify oneself with another human being, the use of humour may have an effect; and also, if the audience is, somehow, tested throughout the use of cross-gendered characters and situations to achieve that empathy between the actors/characters and the audience, then the play should succeed in terms of comicity. So, the fact that male actors with deep voices played female characters (having high-pitched voices) and the increasing appearance of actresses in some of Shakespearean plays would become a source of laughter.

Despite the fact that in Elizabethan period women should be silent, chaste, and obedient, and silence was considered to be the best eloquence for women, Shakespearean comedies are remarkable, among other things, for their frequent representations or fantasies of women's language as competent, eloquent, fluent, witty, or powerful. Shakespearean female characters among others are all permitted to speak abundantly, to be listened to and responded to, to be appreciated for their words, and allowed to do things with words such as changing minds, transforming situations, harming others or helping them, etc.⁽²⁸⁾

3.3.3 – Talking to the audience.

Shakespeare used soliloquies in order to address the audience. A character sometimes addressed the audience rather than speaking for himself in order to show important information for the development of the play such as his or her intentions. Notwithstanding, for some scholars, these soliloquies seemed artificial and unrealistic but it could be argued that they had dramatic purposes and they increased the funniness of a comedy.

The tone of voice and the pitch used by the actors in the performances might have allowed Shakespeare to criticize society at that time or at least to make the audience laugh. In fact, it has been suggested that the casting of a performance of a Shakespearean play “was the means rather than the end” in each case “to engage active audience involvement”.⁽²⁹⁾

3.4 – Application.

In this section, a description of the characters’ physical appearance is going to be provided. The attention will be focused on how the characters are usually disguised in modern performances or film versions, the hairstyle and make-up they wear and how they use their voice. One may appreciate different representations of the same character according to different cultures or countries as well. This is not going to be a deep analysis of Shakespearean characters’ characterization, but an illustration to witness how the same character can be visualized differently with the same director notes that Shakespeare introduced in his plays.

1. ANGELO (Err)

Elizabethan Clothing & Fashion for men varied according to whether they were a member of the Nobility, Upper Class or one of the poor, working class. But whether a man was wealthy or poor he was not allowed to wear whatever he liked. He could be richer than a Duke but if he did not have an equivalent title he was not allowed to wear clothes made of the same fabric or even of the same colour. Elizabethan clothing was governed by Sumptuary Laws which were designed to maintain the strict class structure which had started in the early medieval era with the Feudal System.⁽³⁰⁾

Elizabethan Hair Styles for men were just as important as they were for women. The length of hair varied during the Elizabethan era. It started as short closely cropped hairstyles and increased in length during the period. Considerable time was spent grooming the hair, especially when it was fashionable to sport a longer length. Long hair was required to be curly! Men had their hair curled with hot irons. To keep the hair in place wax or gum was applied to the hair.⁽³¹⁾

(29) Carson (2003)

(30) <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-clothing-fashion-men.htm>

(31) <http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-hair-styles.htm>

2. BALTHAZAR (Err)

As it has been said before, Shakespeare reflected on his plays the society of his age through the stereotypes. Each stereotype has a particular way of dressing. Although in the Elizabethan period nearly all the characters have a very similar costume based on the way of dressing of that age, Balthazar as a merchant can be seen with two main different costumes depending on the director who performs the play.

On the one hand, Balthazar can be seen as a thriving merchant with opulent and luxurious clothes as a mirror of the wealthy period, and of the prosperity and the richness of his business. On the other hand, it can be also seen as a not so wealthy person with worse costumes.

Shakespeare does not give any details about how the characters must dress so there is a freedom for the directors to perform them as they want depending on what they want to transmit with their performance. The costumes will also vary depending on the director's attempt to present historical accuracy.

These are two different examples of two different performances of the same character. In this first photograph, Balthazar is represented as a drunken man who accompanies Antipholus of Ephesus. The clothes are not specially characteristics of the age of Shakespeare but more modern ones.



<http://www.hants.gov.uk/villagers/jpg/coe/coe23.jpg>



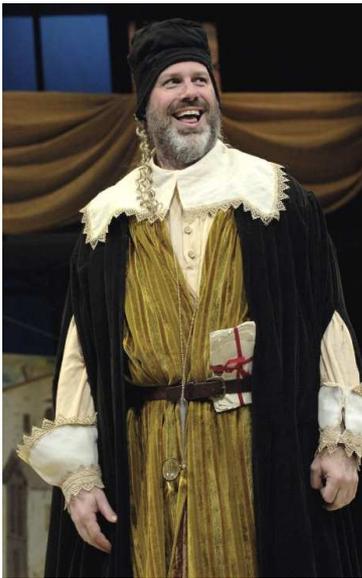
In this second photograph, Balthazar appears as a wealthier man with prosperity on his business and as using a stick not to help him to walk but just as a symbol of his richness.

<http://www.proofsheets.com/guthrie/errors/source/2518.htm>

It is really difficult to know how the actors in the Shakespeare age performed the voice of the characters. However, it can be supposed what the tone of the voice should be depending on the difficulty and complexity of vocabulary used in the Shakespearean text. Taking into account that Balthazar, with a great wisdom and the use of reason, is advising Antipholus of Ephesus about what he should do, it can be supposed that the tone should be the one from a wise and learned man, maybe with some imperative tone. But as it is said before, this is just a deduction.

3. SLY (Shr)

As it is known, stage directions and the information about the dressing are very limited in Shakespeare's plays. The social status of people determines the way of dressing, so one can apply the Elizabethan era, its wealth and way of dressing in order to explain how Sly's clothes are.



During the play, most probably when the lord first sees Sly, he should be in dirty clothes since he is unconsciously lying on the floor in the street. The lord orders his servants to take Sly into his own chamber and talks about the new clothes of Sly. After being taken to the lord's house he is rid of his dirty old clothes. As a new lord he should wear elegant and nice clothes that are made of silk or satin and the lord talks about the rings that should be very priceless. It can be understood that the speeches of the lord and his clothing are very important elements to persuade Sly to believe that he is really a lord.

Few things are known about the make-up and hairstyle of Sly but some points can be deducted from the scenes. While he is lying on the street his face can be dirty like his clothes, so a dirty image can be created in his face using some make-up. On the other hand, as he is a drunkard, his cheeks and nose probably become a little bit red, so the red or pink colour could be used in these parts. However, after having been taken into the lord's house, his face should become brighter. His hairstyle should be messy before going to the lord's house but later his hair should be tamarack very well like a real lord.

At the beginning of the induction scene, the actor who is performing Christopher Sly should use a voice of a drunken man. Drunken people cannot speak in a regular way since they cannot utter the words normally. After his awakening in the lord's house he should also speak in a sleepy tone, and he is still drunk. He is also so much surprised for all treatments towards him that he will probably talk in surprise.

4. GREMIO (Shr)



The character of Gremio is usually presented as what he really is: an old and rich foolish man. If his wealth is taken into account, it is easy to observe that his clothes reflect this aspect. As it has been mentioned before on several occasions, people wore according to their economic status in the Elizabethan times; so, as Gremio was an affluent person, he was performed in sumptuous costumes. Wearing a hat and carrying a walking stick can be understood as symbols of his richness. However, as this is an old character, the walking stick can also be used for its main purpose: to help Gremio walk. Taking a look at the film “The Taming of the Shrew” (1929) in which Joseph Cawthorn acted as Gremio, it can be observed that the actor also used opulent clothes which had some of the main elements of the Elizabethan men's garments (hose, vents and slashes in clothes, an embroidered jerkin, venetians). This Gremio wore in black colour, which can be seen as characteristic of old people in contrast to vivid colours in other younger characters' clothes.

On the other hand, as far as the hairstyle is concerned, this aged character is usually presented grey-haired or white-haired and wearing a grey or white beard. He often has a grey or white moustache, as it can be observed in both pictures or in Joseph Cawthorn as Gremio in “The Taming of the Shrew” (1929).



Regarding the make-up used for performing Gremio, this character usually has a very pale skin. This paleness was seen as a sign of wealth or nobility at the Elizabethan age in both men and women. Therefore, this feature coincides with the fact that Gremio is a wealthy character.

Finally, looking at the feature of the voice that is commonly used to perform the character of Gremio, one can imagine that his natural foolishness can be reflected in the use of a teasing voice and when Gremio mocks Katherine he probably uses derisive laughter. If Gremio's flattering attitude towards Baptista is taken into account, one can state that he could use a kind of sickly-sweet voice. However, all these aspects are mere deductions based on Gremio's character.

5. HORTENSIO (Shr)

Although he is a man who lives in the city, due to his dressing, he seems to be a hick (a man who works in a little town, maybe in a farm or something like that), dressing even as if he was an old man (in fact he is a middle-aged man).



<http://www.geocities.com/gavinstarrkendall/img/Hortensio.jpg>



In the different plays performed in the last years, Hortensio can be seen using a goatee, having short and probably blonde hair.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/shows/kissmekate/multimedia/images/slide1.jpg>

Hortensio is a middle-aged man, so he can be seen as a vigorous man, with a strong voice, maybe deep. Being an Italian man, and being a music teacher as he is, he might have a singing, even delicate and attractive voice to women, though his speech is not very convincing.

6. PUCK (MND)

What is not clear is the gender of Puck, since it has been represented as male and as female along history. So, male and female Pucks along history will be presented. Also some Pucks are cherubic, whereas others are older.

According to this, the dressing of this character may vary according to the director's intentions. However, one thing must be clear: Puck's dressing may let know the audience that s/he is a fairy or a Pan, but not a human being.



As Puck is a fantastic character, a lot of make up and hair complements or wigs were used.



As a witty and naughty fairy or spirit, Puck has a very lively and expressive language, which is in consonance with the tone of his voice. His speeches are full of onomatopoeic words, and his constant word plays characterize his voice by giving to it a funny and quick-witted aspect. His voice could be the one of a child, loud and emphasized, and sometimes it can put him in evidence, as when Oberon tells him to speak lower or be quiet sometimes.

On the other hand, as a magical and smart creature, Puck knows how to change his tone to persuade others, and even confuse them, as in Act III, Scene II, when he imitates both Lysander's and Demetrius's voices. At the end of the play, however, a confident Puck is saying that if there was something offensive for the audience, it is not important since all what happened was magic. With this final monologue the play ends, so his voice is more convincing and his tone more mature.

So, Puck's voice is very significant and it varies depending on his humour and his intentions, so he knows how to adapt himself to the situations and he does so using his voice.

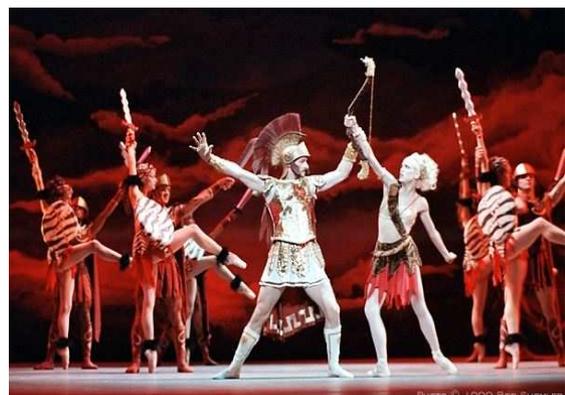
7. THESEUS (MND)



This is a typical Elizabethan Theatre's costume style. Theseus wears a magnificent golden crown, and on this crown, many brilliants occur in groups and a large eye-catching diamond is sparkled middle of these. This crown describes the rich and wideness of Athens. He has a long dark red velvet cape and golden cross motifs are placed on it. His shoulders shape should be diagonal over right. Since diagonal shoulders make his appearance more powerful and stable. Moreover, under his cape, he should wear a dark red and golden blouse and a balloon skirt above the white tights, and under the tights there is a pair of white man shoes. He has a thick and heavy white band and a red ruby-ring that he wears on his left hand's middle finger. This ring must show the passion of Theseus about loving Hyppolita. In addition to this, a large Brown leather belt surrounds his waist.

However, there have been many different representations of this character in plays and movies. It can be seen some of them here. For example:

<http://www.shomler.com/dance/dream/index.htm>



In the picture, there is a typical Roman costume of Theseus. On his red cape, there are golden Ancient Greek motives. On his head, he is wearing a red tasselled Roman soldier's hat. He is also wearing a white skirt, blouse and boots, and a coat of arms. His body has obvious muscles which show his power and that he is also ready for action. The curiosity of this representation is the creation of a Theseus who is presented as a Roman soldier, instead of a Greek citizen. This reflects how "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a play in which space and time are not clearly marked.

One may imagine that Theseus hairstyle can be a little bit curly and middle sized. His hair colour can be brown, and his eyebrows can be a little bit thick. Theseus' face lines should be clear, especially his eyes to praise his authority and to mark that he is the central figure of power in Athens. Also, under spots lights, the character's mimic should be clearly seen by the audience.

Then, according to these pictures, it can be seen the different representations of Theseus' hairstyles. While constructing Theseus' hairstyle, directors must take into account the age of the actor. Also, if he is a bald man, he should wear a wig. Apart from these obvious things, one may appreciate that he is always represented as a noble and almost old man. This fact is opposite to the concept of marriage that appears at the end of the play. If he is presented as an old man, not only is unreliable his marriage, but also the consequences of that marriage, which are reproduction and having children. Then, somehow, the end of the play may be confusing and weird, if one analyses these aspects from a realistic point of view.



His voice should be clear, stable and full. Moreover, it cannot be ignored that he is the king, so his words are the law and everybody should obey him. It is considered that a strong and powerful voice is needed to be respected. Then there should be also a parallelism between voice and mimics. In addition to this, gesture and posture of the king should be courtly and stable.

8. SNUG (MND)

The element of dressing is very important and significant in Snug. He must wear during the play at least two different suits. The first one would be his normal suit and the other one would be that shown when he is disguised as a lion.

Concerning his everyday suit, Snug is a joiner, an artisan, like the other members of the company. The most important aspect of dressing is that the dress of a character should give information about characters' personality, job, sexuality... When the audience is watching a play, they should appreciate all these aspects of any character at first sight. A stage manager may visualize a joiner as someone who wears his tools (set squares, hammers, rulers...) next to him. He is an artistic professional and somehow, a joiner must be wit in order to develop different pieces of furniture. Here is an example of how Snug can be presented:



http://www.music.indiana.edu/publicity/opera/20052006season/midsummer/webready_images/midsummerwebfiles/snug2.jpg

This can be a draw of how Snug is presented. He should be presented with dirty, cheap and old clothes. In fact, it is hard to tell how Snug should be dressed because “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” is not a clear marked time story. It is a mixture of several worlds: Athens-Greek World, fairyland, Middle Ages... so his representation may vary according to the director’s opinion and the place and era where the play is represented. However, as it has been mentioned before, the audience should recognize that Snug is a joiner when he first appears on stage.

On the other hand, Snug also has to wear another costume that is essential for the play: his lion’s dress. He should appear disguised as a lion, but his dress may create a conflict.

The conflict mentioned before refers to that moment when the play is performed in front of the Athens' nobility. Then, they must appreciate that Snug is a lion, but the ladies should not be frightened because of his aspect. So, his disguise must be a mixture of ferocity and tenderness. Moreover, the nobility should appreciate that there is a man inside that dress, because if that dress and performance is too convincing, they will all die.



<http://nationalplayers.tripod.com/images/55lionthesbe.jpg>

There is not any particular feature about these aspects in Snug representation. One could draw many hypotheses trying to guess how Snug really is. He is just a joiner, so there are no special characteristics that joiners should have. Each stage manager can present him depending on their own opinion. All sorts of hairstyle and make-up would be possible.

On the other hand, it is important to mention that Snug's concern about the difficulty of learning the "roaring" lines can be very interesting to analyze by directors in order to parody or to perform a satire on this character and his role in society. One must deduce that Shakespeare is not criticizing the joiners' profession. On the contrary, he may be criticizing all those nerds and perfectionists that are so concentrated on studying so hard that they are worried despite their lines being the easiest ones. This is what happens in this case when Snug tries to learn roaring. Therefore, a director could present Snug as a sort of nerd.

As far as the use of voice is concerned, it is impossible to categorize the type of voice a character should have. An actor who is performing Snug can use his own pitch or level of voice. Snug does not present any particular feature in his voice while he is speaking. Nevertheless, if a director wants to emphasize one aspect of Snug's personality, he can modulate his voice to create that aspect. If a director understands that Snug is a sort of "stupid" man, he should use that type of voice to make people start laughing.

Finally, when Snug is performing his lion's part, he should put some fierce emphasis in his voice while he is playing his role. The audience must witness the efforts of the lion for being convincing, but at the same time, his efforts on trying to control the ferocity. The comic aspect of this voice can be appreciated when the actor is trying to perform that weird mixture. Indeed, at the end, Snug must finish his part roaring, but at the same time explaining that he is a real man. This is a totally hilarious moment hilarious and voice is of great importance here. Snug performs in a moment of total confusion when the nobility that is watching the play within the play starts to get bored with the company's performance, and specially with the constant explanations they offer in each scene. However, Snug arrives there and he gets the audience's favour and applause with its convincing "roar", and he also makes the mood of those who are watching the play change into a positive reaction.

4 – CONCLUSION

Writing a good paper presents a lot of difficulties that can be found on the way. The planning team while doing this essay has found some troubles that had to be figured out to get the expected result.

The first problem we had to solve was that of creating a homogeneous essay in which, in contrast to the first one, all the parts function as a whole, trying to avoid, in this way, repetition of ideas. The great difficulty is to work as just one person when, in fact, there are eight members conforming the group. Moreover, there are different styles in writing which makes even more difficult to create this homogeneity.

When there are so many people working on the same subject there is inevitably a confrontation of personalities, goals and ideas about what an essay must be. These differences between the members of the group complicated the task, but, at the same time, enriched the final essay.

In addition to the difficulties, the group had the intention of exceeding the oral presentation doing it as educational as the first one but improving the originality and entertainment of the audience while learning. The Planning Team members must admit their own ambition trying to create an original and dynamic presentation. Our group is totally aware that there is nothing new that any of us could add to Shakespearean studies, so we concentrated our efforts on creating an original presentation, in which each member of the group feels that they are expressing their own ideas about Shakespearean comedies and, at the same time, entertaining the whole class.

Great effort has been made to outmatch the difficulties and exceed the quality of the first collective essay and we are really proud, not only by the satisfactory result of both oral presentation and written paper, but also for the arising of a good friendship between the members of the group.

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6 – NOTES ON THE ORAL PRESENTATION

Given that the name of the course is “Shakespeare in performance”, we decided not to follow the conventional way of presenting a topic, which would include just talking and explaining the main points of the theory. We rather considered the idea of doing some “performance” as a practical means of presenting that theory. As “actors” of our paper we decided that the most important thing was not to bore the audience.

A good way to include and explain a performance during the oral presentation is to deal with the comic characterization in Shakespearean plays. Following this, in our first presentation we disguised ourselves as the typical Shakespearean comic stereotypes and adopted some of their features while we were explaining the main points of our essay (such as stereotypes, make-up and dressing characterization, the creation of a comic voice...), but we were more concentrated on explaining the theory itself than on giving a real theatrical performance. So, for the second presentation, we decided just to put all the knowledge into a direct practice and concentrate ourselves on some Acts and Scenes of the plays that we were working during the course.

We observed that in the first presentation there was a certain lack of cohesion, and that we did not consider properly the aspect of “timing”. Therefore, we improved the second presentation by including an outline and measuring properly the time we would spend. The purpose of this presentation was not only to apply the concepts developed in the first paper, but we have also exemplified them throughout the three plays studied up to now, as are “Comedy of Errors”, “The Taming of the Shrew” and “A Midsummer’s Night Dream”.

Our aim was to show that the comicalness used by Shakespeare in his times could be perfectly applied nowadays. For that purpose, we recreated the popular TV programme “Andreu Buenafuente” as the outline for our presentation, where the host presented three sketches dealing with Shakespeare. The first one was one adaptation of a monologue in “Comedy of Errors”, where Luciana gives her own impression about love saying that a nice husband must love his woman or at least, make her believe that he does it. She believes that women are so innocent that they believe any pleasant word when they are in love. This idea is totally shared by women nowadays, so we see the first Shakespearean issue that is present in contemporary society. We presented it as a monologue of “The Comedy of Errors Club”.

The second sketch dealt with the relationships within a couple where the “courtly love” is completely useless because of the “lady” who is not a conventional one, since she does not behave so. Taken from a dialogue between Petruccio and Katherine in “The Taming of the Shrew”, a constant struggle between both characters could be appreciated. We presented a contemporary version of that struggle, in which, insults, language, motivations... are adapted to modern language. The purpose was to reflect that love/hate relationship that both have, and we compared it to the relationships that are easily present today in TV programmes such as “Big Brother”.

The last sketch was a parody of a scene in “A Midsummer’s Night Dream”, where due to the confusion, both sisters Helena and Hermia fight for Lysander’s love. We could see how confusion threatens the cordial relationship between both sisters and makes them argue and envy mutually. We compared this sequence to the contemporary TV programme “Salsa Rosa”, where love triangles and envious lovers are the main topics. In this case we have preserved practically the same structure of the scene, and we have conserved the same Shakespearean insults, which were really witty and funny.

Although our presentation could have appeared somewhat “vulgar” or senseless at some points, we should remark that working on the dialogues has implied quite a hard work, since making people laugh is often more difficult than just presenting them within the theory in a formal and conventional way. Moreover, in both presentations we have looked for disguises as similar as possible to the ideas and stereotypes that we wanted to show. So we also made an effort in finding the most appropriate props and dresses.

In conclusion, our main objectives were to catch people’s attention, to teach while having fun, to see Shakespeare from a different perspective in a more close and contemporary way and to try to find recognisable and standard (or universal) referents for everybody taking into account the different cultural backgrounds of the students. We should recognise that it has been a hard work to do concerning teamwork and organisation, but our goal has been reached, since we have learned and we have had a really good time that we all will remember for years.

“ANDREU BUENAFUENTE” OUTLINE

- **SERIOUS INTRODUCTION**

Hello guys, good afternoon. We are the **planning team** and what you are going to see is a **practical application** of our first collective paper. It is based on some characters of some Shakespearean comedies. We have given a close look at the **comicity** (what makes them funny), the **stereotypes** they represent, the **dressing**, the **hairstyle**, the **make-up** and finally at the use of the **voice**.

- **MONOLOGUE**

- Always writing.
- Chinese shop, buckets of ink, 22 feathers.
- Come on, Shakespeare, let's go party.
- Italian elements. Been to Italy? Not with Air Madrid.
- MND. Far away lands, fairies, amazons. The Globe! Always stoned.

- **PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION**

Collaborations from The Comedy of Errors Club, Salsa Rosa and Big Brother.

- **PRESENTATION 1ST SKETCH**

From The Comedy of Errors Club, we have Luciana who will talk about how a husband must lie.

- **PRESENTATION 2ND SKETCH**

Our colleague Mercedes Milá reports of a typical example of good behaviour in Big Brother's house. Let's see how Petruccio flirts with Kate. Don't miss the stichomythia, (whatever it is).

- **PRESENTATION 3RD SKETCH**

This week's most famous idol comes from Salsa Rosa and talks about the argument between Helena and Hermia Obregón for the Cuban of the moment, Lisandinio.

- **FAREWELL**

It is sad to ask for an excellent, but it is sadder to commit plagiarism.

1st SKETCH: Monologue from “Comedy of Errors”

(ACT III, Scene II)

Actually I don't understand. So how did you forget all your duties as a husband?
Even in the spring of love, could your love-springs rot, Antipholus?
Your desire is rotting just as quick as your lie!
How this charming love can disappear in such a quick way?
If you had married with my sister just for her wealth, be more kind for the sake of her
wealth!
If your eyes are looking for other women, do it secretly, or she will take your eyes out!
Please, make her blind so that she cannot see your false love!
Don't let my sister read it in your eyes!
Don't allow your tongue to be your shame, look sweetly, speak fair and become
disloyal.
Hide your wickedness and deceive people and seem as if you are an angel.
Even if your heart is full of sin, do not reflect this!
Train your sin so well that everybody supposes that you are a holy saint,
Cheat her secretly, does she has to know the truth?
Better living in a lie, than dying in the truth...
Even a simple thief is not proud of what he does.
It is doubly wrong both that you do: To betray your bed and to let her read this in your
looks.
If you can do this well managed, this shame has an integrity!
Bad situation is doubled with the evil words.
Oh poor women! We are so pure that you can make us believe about your love.
We are turning in your orbit, you can move us wherever you want,
So then, come on my gentle brother, go and get her heart again,
Send her an email and tell her how much you love, how much you want her,
Buy her chocolate boxes and roses,
To tell a lie for this situation is holy even if it is a game
And finally, shut up your lips forever!

2nd SKETCH: Dialogue from “The Taming of the Shrew”

(ACT III, Scene II)

PETRUCCIO: Good morning Kate, because I guess that is your name, isn't it?

KATE: You guess well. But you, bastard, must call me Katherine and better if you just don't call me.

PET: You are a liar! Your name is Kate, the dammed Kate, but the most beautiful one, and I'm here to take that Kate.

KATE: You are not taking any Kate, Neither any Katherine, so get away with your freaking desires.

PET: I'm not leaving, my darling. You shouldn't behave like that; you should treat men not so mean. Please, take it easy. Be water, my darling. Do you really know who I am? I am your Lord...

KATE: Who killed my father and made you my boss?

PET: Your words must be poison to others, but lullabies to my ears. Come on dearest snake. Come here and Kiss me!

KATE: You are pissing my dog off.

PET: Your dog is a male one, and then I see who the bitch is here. By the way... what is its name?

KATE: Its name is none of your business, but I told you its name before. It's name is P.C. because it is always pissed off with rats like you.

PET: Do you love your dog more than your father, your Lord?

KATE: At least, P.C. does not tell me what I have to do. He just shuts his stuff off and lets me do what I want, except when I stroke other dogs, then it bites me.

(To the dog) Calm down P.C. Behave!!

PET: Be careful Kate. Put your dog on a leash. Don't you see he's going to bite me??!!

KATE: I only see animals around here. My dog is my dog and in front of it, there is only a dirty pig.

PET: There are no pigs in here. Tell me... where are they?

KATE: If you had a mirror...

[mobile phone ringing - song "Ay, Campanera", by Joselito]

PET: It's Gremio!!!!.... Sorry Kate

KATE: You bastard!!!

PET: Hi Gremio!! What is the matter?? What!!!??? I told you M.L.A!!! You freaky bastard!! I will kick your ass as soon as I can.... Ok, ok... don't worry... What?

(To Kate) Liverpool or Chelsea?? Honey...

KATE: What the hell is that sucker??

PET: Soccer

KATE: I don't like Soccer

PET: You will. Gremio... Better bet for the devils. I've got one in front of me!

KATE: Definitely: I'm leaving... I'm fed up with your bullshit. Also, I'm starting to be pissed off. And trust me, you don't want to see me furious. I can be a total shrew.

PET: Don't say that honey. You are a sweet to my mouth. You're delicious. They told me you were a lioness, but I found you a cuttie cat. You are like a small horse. Do you want to take a ride with me?

KAT: Where the hell?

PET: To the theatre. I've heard of a play named: "The Taming of the Shrew" by someone called W. Shakespeare... Crap, you know. Are you coming?

KATE: Sure. I'll go with you when the fucking hell gets frozen, and when donkeys like you fly.

PET: Sweetie: What do you think about your rudeness? Don't you care about people's opinions? People will criticise you for being so mean. Tell me honey. What do you think about people?

KATE: Fuck them all!!!!!!

3rd SKETCH: Parody of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”

(ACT III, Scene II)

HERMIA: Oohh, last night, what a dark night! My Lysander, why did you leave me so unkindly?

LYSANDER: The night confused me, why should I stay?

HER: But you love me!! What could have pressed you from my side?

LYS: Your beautiful sister, Helena, who last night was more gorgeous than you, with your fiery oes and eyes of light. Don’t you see that I hate you?

HER: You speak not as you think! It cannot be!

HELENA: Lo! What are you two talking about? Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid! Are you conspiring against me? After all the counsel that we two have shared, the hours we have spent sharing bubble-gums, watching “Verano azul”, going together to the toilet...!

HER: I am amazed at your passionate words, but I think that is YOU who scorns me!

HEL: Are you two who mock at me! In pretending that Lysander is in love with me to later leave me in front of the audience and the paparazzi... And all this, oh! is because you ENVY me!

LYS: Yes, yes, she envies you, ugly Hermia is less popular than you and she only appears in one magazine, whereas you, dear Helena, appear in four I love you Helena, we have to present our commitment to the media!

HER: Oh, Lysander my sweet, I don’t understand you!

LYS: Away you, freaky! Hang off, you cat, you burr! Vile thing, let loose, or I will shake you from me as a vile serpent!

HER: Why are you grown so rude, my dear?? What change is this? Didn’t you like the Porsche that I gave you for your birthday?

LYS: A Porsche!! What Porsche?? It was a Seat Panda, you tawny tartar, loathed poison! Out of here!

HEL: Ha ha ha!!! How interesting is this!!!

HER: Ooo, my sister! You juggler, you canker-blossom! You thief of love! You have persuaded Lysander with Dad's inheritance!!!

HEL: Fine then!! Have you no modesty, no maiden shame? You envy me because I am taller than you. And blonde. And I am a biologist!

LYS: Fie, fie! You puppet, you!

HER: Puppet?? Aaayyy, that way goes the game! Helena, it is not strange that you are taller if we look at your feet, and I prefer being shorter and uglier than a silicon, yellow-dyed giraffe! Are you grown so high also in Lysander's esteem, because I am more dwarfish and low? Come on! How low I am, you painted maypole!!? Because I am tall enough to put my finger in your eye!

HEL: You should recognise that I can defend myself very well, but I can attack even better, you tadpole!

HER: I'm going to press charges against you, and I am going to visit every single program to tell people how bad and bitter you are!

HEL: Oh, yes, as you like it, but I am with your boyfriend...

LYS: Ex-boyfriend, by the way...

HER: Oh, you wrinkled scum! Dad will disinherit you and send you to exile!

HEL: Oh, when she is angry, she is keen and shrewd! She was a vixen when she went to school, and though she is little, she is fierce!

HER: Little again!! I'll kill you!! I'm going to kill heeeerr!!!! You broom stick, chard-faced, ugly old thing! Come here, come here!!!

LYS: Get you gone, you dwarf, you minimus, you bead, you acorn!!

HER: Look everybody! I can no longer stay in your curst company. So, dear sister, I leave you now with your HALF-IMPOTENT Lysander!! Goodbye!!! Ha ha ha!!!!

HEL: Oh.... Dear Hermia, maybe your hands are quicker than mine for a fray, but... my legs are longer to run away!! Bye bye!!

LYS: I am amazed, and know not what to say!