

Tenets of Poetics on *As You Like It*

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Abstract

This study delves into the application of Aristotle's Poetics within Shakespeare's play, *As You Like It*. Through a qualitative exploration, it investigates the play's adherence to the fundamental principles outlined in Poetics, analyzing the aspects like plot structure, character development, diction, and thematic expression. Shakespeare, in his characteristic dramatic style, intertwines elements of comedy, romance, and realism, ultimately resolving conflicts through matrimonial unions. The play introduces central characters such as Rosalind, Orlando, Oliver, and Celia to navigate the intricate web of relationships. The main plot revolves around the love between Rosalind and Orlando, while sub-plots involving Silvius-Phoebe-Ganymede, Touchstone-Audrey, and Celia-Oliver add depth to the narrative. Shakespeare employs both verse and prose in this play, with poetic eloquence in Duke Senior's reflections and Jaques' famous "seven ages of man" speech. His witty wordplay and antitheses in the prose sections add a distinct charm to the play's dialogue. Natural imagery, particularly within the Forest of Arden, enriches the pastoral setting, invoking images of trees, brooks, animals, and aspects of rural life. Thematically, the play explores love, injustice, usurpation, loyalty, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Through this analysis, *As You Like It* emerges as a compelling embodiment of Aristotle's Poetics, blending entertainment with philosophical inquiry and providing a timeless reflection on human nature and social harmony.

Keywords: character, critics, dramatic work, pastoral comedy, tenets

Introduction

This research explores the tenets of *Poetics* (PT) on *As You Like It* (AYL). Shakespeare introduces them in his AYL to give a dramatic taste to his audiences. This study intends to explore how Shakespeare employs them in his play as per Aristotle's PT. For it, this researcher makes a sequential study of Aristotle's PT, followed by Shakespeare's AYL. Aristotle propounds PT, a base for the western plays. He analyzes the forms of drama—comedy, tragedy and the satyr play—as well as lyric poetry, epic poetry, dithyrambic poetry, and the music. He explores its genres and basic elements. He exposes the principles of artistic composition in it.

His analysis of 'tragedy' constitutes the core of discussion in the western plays. Researchers attribute to Aristotle "the first critic to attempt a systematic discussion" ((Adams, 1992, p. 49) of the treatise on poetry. House finds *PT* "the earliest surviving treatise to record and distinguish systematically one poetic kind from another" (1970, p. 13). Aristotle describes literature on the basis of his knowledge in Greece. Lane Cooper finds *PT* the "versions of Aristotole's lecture notes" (as cited in Krstovic, n.d.). Aristotle's remarks on 'Rhetoric' and 'Metaphysics' relate to literature but his *PT* stands as a contribution to literary theory.

Aristotle divides his *PT* into twenty-six chapters. He introduces 'poetry' as a medium of imitation. He analyzes different kinds of poetry according to its nature of imitation. It differs from one another in its "medium, object and manner" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 50). It introduces tragedy, epic and comedy as the "chief kinds of poetry" (House, 1970, p. 37). Poetry imitates life through rhythm, language, and a harmony as medium of imitation. Music, dance, and verse poetry can accomplish imitation through language alone.

Aristotle finds man's instinct to imitate things "imitation is implanted in man from childhood" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 51), as reasons for the emergence of poetry. It diverges in two directions, one group of poems imitate noble actions of good men and another of trivial actions. The former evolves into tragedy, and the latter into comedy. Aristotle analyzes 'comedy' as "an imitation of characters of a lower type" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 52). Poor and common mass look ugly but do not inflict pain or destruction. He postulates, "the ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly" (Adams, 1992, p. 52). He compares it to a comic mask which looks ugly for its distortions, but it doesn't cause pain to others. 'Comedy' does not have its history as long as of tragedy.

Aristotle introduces 'tragedy' as "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 53). It creates a cause-and-effect chain. It arouses not only pity but also fear. It propounds the theory of catharsis. Aristotle portrays characters in a 'tragedy' "better than in actual life" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 50). However, he explores their tragic actions, some of it due to of their fate and other by their flaws. Protagonists bring miseries that lead to arouse catharsis in the audiences.

Aristotle's 'tragedy' consists of six parts which he enumerates in order of importance: plot, character, thought, diction, song (melody) and spectacle. He explores 'plot' as "the arrangement of the incidents" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 53). It has "unity of action" (McManus, 1999). It forms the soul of a tragedy. Plot and character constitute the medium of imitation; diction the manner; thought, spectacle and song, the objects.

PT explores 'character' that identify either with his "moral purpose" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p.53) or a kind of things he chooses or avoids. His actions produce pity and fear

in the audience. Tragic incidents occur for his tragic flaw or hamartia. It comes not from its moral status but from the inevitability of its consequences. *PT* analyzes 'thought' that associates with how speech should reveal character. It is "the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p.57). His 'diction' expresses the meaning in words; and its essence is the same "both in verse and prose" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 54). It teaches the art of delivery - a command, a prayer, a statement, a threat, a question, an answer, and so forth. Aristotle analyzes the stylistic elements of tragedy; particularly the 'metaphor'. It marks his genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye of resemblances.

PT introduces 'song or melody' as the musical element of the chorus. It employs 'chorus' to be fully integrated into the play like an actor. Aristotle views 'song' to hold "the chief place among the embellishments" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 54). The music in the play gives entertainment values to the spectators. He introduces 'scene' in his dramaturgy as a component of drama. He asserts "a poet should place the scene" (Adams, 1992, p. 59) along with plot and diction to match to the passions of spectators. *PT* explores the 'end of a tragedy' with the catharsis of the tragic emotions of pity and fear. It arouses these emotions in order to purge away their excess, to reduce these passions to a healthy, balanced proportion.

Shakespeare's art of playwriting heralds a literary renaissance in England. He belongs to the Elizabethan era, a period mark by "cultural flourishing and artistic renaissance" (Montrose, 1996, p. 45). This era fosters a vibrant cultural environment where literature and the arts thrive, reflecting the intellectual vitality of the time. People increase their love for "music, arts, theatre, sports, education, and developed a common tendency for traveling" (Wells, 1997, p. 78). A keen interest in various forms of entertainment and learning characterizes the Elizabethan society, which transcends social classes. However, the period also witnesses "superstition, misery, ignorance, disorder, violence, and bloodshed" (Wilson, 2004, p. 102). Alongside its cultural advancements, significant social and political strife plagues the era, which often leads to widespread suffering and instability.

Shakespeare contributes to the Elizabethan era with his plays and sonnets. G.B. Harrison adduces, "no household in the English-speaking world is properly furnished unless it contains copies of the Holy Bible and of the works of William Shakespeare" (1991, p. 11). They keep his plays at homes as a mark of culture. He receives impression on writing plays from his predecessors known as the 'university wits'. He follows Elizabethan's principles of romantic drama. Greenblatt adduces, "in the crucible of the Elizabethan era, Shakespeare's genius emerged as a defining force in English literature" (2004, p. 120). Critics classify Shakespeare's plays as historical, legendary or partly historical and fictional. His six dramas of English history make a study of the country, and its patriotisms. His *AYL*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* reflect the rural lives of Elizabethan's England. It ventilates the society of the period.

Shakespeare introduces *AYL* as a pastoral comedy. This genre of drama exposes the romanticized notion of rural life, often involving shepherds and pastoral settings. However, he adds complexity to the genre by infusing it with wit, humor, and observations on love, identity, and the human condition. The play portrays comic elements like the witty banter, mistaken identities, and the resolution of conflicts through marriage. The Forest of Arden serves as a pastoral backdrop, providing a contrast to the courtly setting. The interplay of courtly and pastoral settings, the use of verse and prose, and the exploration of universal themes within a specific cultural and artistic milieu collectively shape the unique poetic landscape of the play. He employs a wide range of poetic devices such as metaphors, similes, and wordplay. The play's tone fluctuates between the lightheartedness of comedy and moments of introspection, creating a dynamic and engaging poetic landscape.

Critics and scholars make a critical appreciation of Shakespeare's literary outputs. In Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury*, Bardolatry examines, "as Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latin: so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage" (as cited in Sampson, 2001, p. 215). Shakespeare lives in a play-loving age, and he studies the crowds. Ben Jonson adduces, "the applause! delights! the wonders of our stage!" (as cited in Ludowyk, 1979, p. 58).

Research Problems

Shakespeare's plays introduce actions both exciting and dramatically important. For instance, the duels like a wrestling match in *AYL*, scenes of fighting in the streets in *Romeo and Juliet*, a riot in *Julius Caesar*, etc. Thomas Heywood asserts, "mirth stands for comedy, and passion for tragedy, and Shakespeare was well at ease in both the literary genres" (as cited in Ludowyk, 1979, p. 10). Shakespeare's plays introduce both comedies and tragedies, largely written on the basis of Aristotle's *PT*. Ludowyk finds Shakespeare "like Moliere or Sophocles or Ibsen, a man who had been associated with the performing and presentation of plays" (1979, p. 23). Shakespeare equals Sophocles or Ibsen in the art of theatres for his skills of performance and presentation. All his plays reflect the Elizabethan age. For all these, Daiches finds Shakespeare, "unquestionably the greatest poetic dramatist of Europe" (1994, p. 246). Theater lovers, researchers, etc. make a study of his plays and sonnets, and find them still entertaining to audiences. This study formulates following research questions to analyze *AYL*:

- (a) What are the tenets of *PT* that have implications on Shakespeare's *AYL*?
- (b) How Shakespeare employs the tenets of *PT* in his play, *AYL*?

This research proposes the following objectives to reach to its conclusions:

- (a) To analyze the tenets of *PT*, a tool to study Shakespeare's *AYL*
- (b) To explore the western dramaturgy, Shakespeare employs in his *AYL*

The significance of this research lies in finding the effectiveness of western dramaturgy on *AYL*. Further, the researchers can gain valuable insights into the artistry of the playwright. They can analyze the enduring impact of his contributions to the world of literature and drama. This

research limits its study to the primary texts of Aristotle's *PT* and Shakespeare's *AYL*. It studies *PT*, especially its 'comedy' and other tenets that have relevance to Shakespeare's *AYL*. It explores the secondary sources to draw proofs for its primary data.

Research Materials and Methods

This article employs the qualitative approach to the research. It analyzes Shakespeare's *AYL* through the lens of Aristotle's *PT*. It makes a study of the play as outlined by *PT*, like its plot structure, character development, etc. It introduces interpretative research designs to analyze the implementation of tenets to the play. It employs thematic analysis to analyze the primary sources of the data like the textbooks of *PT* and *AYL*, the secondary sources like the literary criticisms, interpretations, scholarly articles, reference books, online sources, etc. It compares the findings of the sources, to ensure the rigor of the analysis. The foregoing discussions assist the research to find the play a poetic one.

Results and Discussion

Comedy in *AYL*

'Comedy' as Adams postulates, "is an imitation of characters of a lower type" (1992, p. 52). It imitates the action of ordinary people. It amuses spectators, as "a comedy ends on a note of tinkling of marital bliss. It aims at nature and society; contemplations and action; cynicism and love; satire and spontaneity" (Kaur, 2009). It studies ordinary lives, the customs and traditions they practice; considers happiness and sadness as part of their living, and enjoy the present rather than to contemplate on past or the future.

This study finds Aristotle's 'comedy' different from a classical comedy. For instance, this researcher finds *AYL* at once a romantic and realistic, a critical and poetic, a rational and imitative, allowing individual freedom and justifying a society. Thus, these features make it flexible and accommodating. It ends on a note of forgiveness. It affects a note of reconciliation between Oliver and Orlando, the Senior Duke and his younger brother, Duke Frederick in the end. The play begins through a fissure in the courtly order but it ends on a note of resolution. Dowden finds *AYL* a "sprightly graceful, exquisite" and "sweetest and happiest of all of Shakespeare's comedies" (1962, p. 80). Shakespeare employs certain techniques in *AYL* to prove it a comedy like love and marriage, the use of the lower class for comedy, the use of eavesdropping, and happy ending of the play. As a romantic comedy, it contains romantic and comic elements that make spectators laugh and forget their anxieties. He introduces emotions; imaginations; and fancy as common phenomenon of *AYL*. The criteria for romantic comedy comprises love at first sight, the influence of nature, the use of supernatural elements, the role of the forest, the romantic setting, the happy ending, the involvement of individual characters, etc. *AYL* explores Rosalind and Orlando falling in love at first sight. Its central theme revolves around love and marriage. Its prime characters take refuge in the Forest of Arden. Jaques'

speech on the seven ages of man demonstrates a cynical wit. Rosalind and Celia in disguised shape demonstrate comic and humor.

Plot and sub-plot in *AYL*

Aristotle introduces 'plot' as an intrinsic element of a play. He analyzes "the structure of the plot as requisite to a good poem" (as cited in Adams, 1992, p. 50). He explores it as the arrangement of the incidents, the series of events that give a story its meaning and effect. *AYL* introduces 'love' as its main theme; and round the passion of love does the entire action of the play revolve. The main plot of the play portrays the love of Rosalind and Orlando. They tempt each other; fall in love at first sight, at a wrestling match. He tempts her through his manliness and physical prowess. Her beauty fascinates him. They expose their love in the Forest of Arden. He composes verses on love, hangs them in the trees; she in disguise as Ganymede attempts to woo him. She leads him to act like a lover of her, and finally, they marry to each other after she sheds her disguise.

PT analyzes sub-plot as a plot within a plot that Shakespeare maintains in *AYL*. He develops three sub-plots: Silvius – Phoebe - Ganymede (Rosalind) tangle, where Silvius pines for the love of Phoebe but she does not reciprocate his love; Touchstone-Audrey prosaic affair (a parody of the romantic love of Rosalind and Orlando), and Celia - Oliver romantic love-affair. The play introduces the surprises and suspense through its sub-plots. However, its structures stand weaker than the sub-plots of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*.

Shakespeare introduces disharmonies in *AYL*, to make the main plot moving. For instance, the dispute between two dukes leads to the banishment of Duke Senior. The dispute between two brothers, namely, Orlando and Oliver, leads Orlando to flee from the city. He takes refuge in the Forest of Arden. Duke Frederick's envy to the popularity of Rosalind leads to her banishment. Adam's starving for food in the forest leads Orlando to draw his sword at Duke Senior's feast. A tiger attacking Oliver in the forest leads Orlando to put his life at stake. The play surprises readers at the end with the transformations Oliver and Duke Frederick undergo, in the Forest of Arden. The playwright converts these men from a life of wickedness to a life of goodness.

Character in *AYL*

Aristotle's treaties on drama analyze character to be "good, propriety, consistent, and true to life" (Adams, 1992, p. 58). A play should portray a character on the basis of "necessity or of probability" (ibid). *AYL* follows *PT* for its characterization. It portrays Rosalind, a female protagonist as its central character. She demonstrates her quick-witted verbal intelligence. She outshines Orlando and can hold her own with Touchstone and Jaques, in the combat of wit. In the matter of disguise, she makes a virtue of necessity.

AYL portrays Orlando as a victim of injustice at the hands of his elder brother. He falls prey to a conventional practice of primogeniture. His spirit of self-assertion to be a grown up

man, sets the plot in motion. It converts his love affair with Rosalind to a marriage, in the end. Celia stands true to her cousin, Rosalind till the end of the play. As a daughter of the ruling Duke, she denounces all her courtly comforts, and gets embarrassed by the conduct of her father towards Rosalind. She joins her to the forest; falls in love with Oliver at first sight. She proves herself as witty and playful in her own right.

Oliver plays a shadowy role in *AYL*. He ill-treats Orlando. He deprives Orlando of his rights. He plots murders against him for twice. However, Orlando saves him in the Forest of Arden. Eventually, his wickedness transforms to noble mind. He becomes worthy of the love of Celia. The play introduces Duke Senior seeking refuge in the Forest of Arden, in the company of a few of his lords. He loses his dukedom and he "is banished by his younger brother" (*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene I). He expresses his preference for a life in the forest over a life at the court. He bears a capacity of adjustment to his new environment. He has a refinement of temper. He meets his daughter in the Forest of Arden. He restores his dukedom after Duke Frederick renounces the worldly life.

Shakespeare portrays Jaques as melancholic in character. His wit and malcontented perspective undercuts the spirit of romance. Orlando calls him "Monsieur Melancholy" (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene II). His jaundiced view upon life results in a disposition to satire and invective. He seeks asylum in the Forest of Arden as one of the lords, in the group of Duke Senior. His speech about the seven ages of man reflects his satiric attitude towards worldly life, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII). He rejects love and marriage. He adopts a hermit life at the end of the play.

AYL introduces Touchstone, a court jester, as an earthy and unruly incarnation of the comic spirit. He accompanies Celia and Rosalind to the Forest of Arden. He converts his love affairs with Audrey into a marriage, at the end. Beside these characterizations, Shakespeare explores the role of Corin, Silvius, Phoebe, Amiens, Charles and Le Beau at length.

Language in *AYL*

'Language' in poetry, for Aristotle, comprises of "letter, syllable, connecting word, noun, verb, inflection or case, sentence or phrase" (Adams, 1992, p. 60). His 'diction' (rhythmic language) is "the art of delivery" (Adams, 1992, p. 60), the expression of the meaning in words appropriate to the plot, and characters. *AYL* explores its variety in its language, in the division between prose and verse and in the different kinds of verse. For instance, the play explores the formal poetic eloquence of speeches of Duke Senior (at the beginning of the Act II) and of Jaques' disquisition on the seven ages of man (Act II, Scene VII); the lyrical poetic beauty of Orlando's plea to the Duke for food (Act II, Scene VII); Orlando's verses to Rosalind (Act III, Scene II) and Phoebe's verses to Ganymede (Act IV, Scene II). The playwright characterizes the prose of the play, which amounts to more than half of the whole, by a witty style with a marked use of wordplay and antitheses whether or not it is humorous. For instance, "My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks/ goldenly of his profit. / For my part, he

keeps me rustically at home" (*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene I). Shakespeare's use of prose and verse in *AYL* represent Elizabethan England use of languages amongst its citizens.

Oliver treats his two brothers differently; this contrast visible in the arrangement of the opening clauses, with its antithesis between keeping 'at school' and keeping 'at home.' The wordplay serves as a cause of repartee between characters, which not always intend to create humor. The language of the play follows a complicated patterning, achieved through the simple use of antitheses. For instance, "A lean cheek, which you have not; a blue eye and/ sunken, which you have not; an unquestionable spirit, /which you have not;" (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene II). Touchstone's utterances of witty words, reducing things to absurdity abundant the play.

Song or Music in *AYL*

Song or Music "holds the chief place" (Adams, 1992, p. 54) in a play. Aristotle analyzes how "poetry and music belong together, as successive arts" (House, 1970, p. 38). Songs having entertainment value make pastoral works remarkable. For instance, Sidney's *Arcadia*, Lodge's *Rosalynde*, Shakespeare's *AYL*, etc. Ludowyk adduces, "there are a number of things to be noted of Shakespeare's songs: their words; their relevance to the action; and the skills required of the performer" (1979, p. 53). *AYL* contains five songs, remarkable for their music. The two songs by Amiens, "Under the greenwood tree, /who loves to die with me" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene V) and "Blow, blow, thou winter wind, /Thou art not so unkind" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII), reflect the situation of Duke Senior and his comrades in the Forest of Arden. A song sung by the two pages "It was a lover and his lass, /that o'er the green cornfield did pass, / In spring-time" (*As You Like It*, Act V, Scene III) analyzes the romantic love between a lover and his lass.

Scene or Setting in *AYL*

Aristotle makes a study of 'scene' or 'setting of a play', in his treatise of drama. To construct a plot, and to make it working with diction a poet needs to "place the scene" (Adams, 1992, p. 59) proper to it. Most of the actions in *AYL* take place in the Forest of Arden that once surrounded Shakespeare's hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon, situated on the border of Belgium and Luxemburg. The first Act of the play portrays scenes of a city and of Duke's court. Duke Senior describes the court as "painted pomp" and "envious court" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene I). The second Act and rest part of the play portray scenes of the Forest of Arden. The exiled Duke Senior along with his lords takes refuge in it. He finds in it the churlish chiding of the winter's wind, "Which when it bites and bites and blows upon my body; /Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say, / 'This is no flattery'-these are counselors" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene I). Shepherds, shepherdesses, wild deer, the banished men from the court, etc. make it their shelter. Charles finds them "live like the Robin Hood of England" (*As You Like It*, Act I,

Scene I). Most of the repartees of the court find the forest as their shelter. They make it their abode in the midst of animals.

Love in *AYL*

Rosalind - Orlando relationship archetypes a romantic love. They fall in love at first sight. They meet and fall in love traditionally – Orlando wins over Rosalind by his manly labors and good looks, at his wrestling match with Charles. "Sir, you have wrestled well and over thrown / More than your enemies" (*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene II). Later, they articulate their 'love' in 'love poetry' and in carvings on trees. The disguised Rosalind in the Forest of Arden mocks at the affectations of the courtly lover, Orlando. She finds his smart dress and controlled demeanor a sign of a man in love, seriously, "your bonnet unbanded, your/sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a /careless desolation" (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene III). However, Orlando expresses his love to her from his heart, in these lines:

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love;
And thou, thrice-crowned queen of night, survey
With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,

Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway. (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene II)

Rosalind pours cold water on the romantic enthusiasm of Orlando. However, she expresses her 'cure' for his love-madness. Although he rejects the 'cure', a note of realism lies in response to his avowal of eternal love. She bids him, "Say a day without the 'ever'. No, no, Orlando: men are April / when they woo, December when they wed; maids are May when / they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives" (*As You Like It*, Act IV, Scene I). She attempts to prove her love for Orlando as genuine and sincere. She proclaims it ecstatically to Celia, and spectators believe her.

The playwright explores Oliver's falling in love with Celia at first sight, a little. Similarly, Touchstone and Audrey act as a foil to Rosalind and Orlando's characters. They oppose a romantic love and their relationship bases more on the physical side of love, "we must be married or we must live in bawdy" (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene IV). He admits of his foolish behavior as a lover "we that are true lovers run into strange capers" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene IV) that echoes the words of the romantic lover, Silvius, when he says to the aged Corin, "If thou remembreth not the slightest folly/That ever love did make thee run into, /Thou hast not loved" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene IV). The playwright regards his sententious remark "but as all is mortal in Nature, so is all nature in nature in love mortal in folly" (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene IV) as one of the play's main themes. Spectators may decide which kind of love proves an honest one. This researcher finds a courtly love as superficial, based on manners and appearance as opposed to bawdy love as cynical and base but truthful.

Rosalind - Celia relationship archetypes a sisterly love in the play. Celia abandons her home and privileges to join Rosalind in exile. She asserts, "I cannot live out of her company"

(*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene III). She proposes her to go to the Forest of Arden together, "to seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden" (*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene III). The latter part of the play presents instances of brotherly love. Oliver undergoes a miraculous change of heart when Orlando saves him from being savaged by a lioness. Duke Frederick renounces the worldly affairs to contemplate religion after speaking to a holy man, offering Duke Senior his usurped dukedom.

The play introduces fatherly love, with the love of Duke Frederick towards his daughter Celia. He indulges her by allowing Rosalind to stay, "we stayed her for your sake" (*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene III). When he has a change of heart, and wants to banish Rosalind he does it for his daughter Celia, "She is too subtle for thee, / And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous / When she is gone" (*As You Like It*, Act I, Scene III). Duke Frederick shows his evil intentions by repatriating Rosalind. He envies her popularity, believing that her presence in the court will overshadow Celia.

Phoebe and Silvius as pastoral lovers, exemplify their unrequited love. Brooke analyzes their love as "the conventional love of the Elizabethan Pastoral" (2005, p. 160). It portrays a contrast to the "academic, literary love" (2005, p. 160). Silvius declares her romantic love:

The common executioner,
Whose heart th' accustomed sight of death makes hard,
Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck
But first begs pardon. Will you sterner be

Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops? (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene VI)

Silvius' devotion to disdainful Phoebe imbibes spectators' sympathy. Phoebe's attention to Rosalind adds a new dimension to Silvius' unfortunate passion "I for Ganymede" (*As You Like It*, Act V, Scene II). Rosalind responds her in a query: "Why look you so upon me?" and "I pray you do not fall in love with me, / For I am falser than vows made in wine" (*As You Like It*, Act III, Scene VI). Phoebe falls in love with the disguised Rosalind. So, she looks foolish. Rosalind does not reciprocate her love.

Conclusion

This study finds the tenets of *PT* on *AYL*. Through meticulous analysis and interpretation, it becomes apparent that Shakespeare adeptly employs comedic techniques, as elucidated by *PT*. Elements such as love at first sight, the institution of marriage; comedic interludes, the influence of nature, the incorporation of supernatural elements, and the pivotal role of the forest all converge to shape the thematic landscape of the play. Ordinary individuals hold centre to the narrative, whose intricate relationships form the crux of both main and sub-plots, predominantly revolving around themes of love and marriage. Characters like Rosalind and Celia, disguised for much of the play, inject a blend of comedy and wit. Furthermore, inherent discordances, such as sibling rivalries and romantic misfortunes, propel the plot forward, adding depth to the storyline.

In *AYL*, Rosalind, Oliver, Jaques, Touchstone, and Duke Frederick each contribute distinct hues to the overarching narrative, portraying a rich tapestry of human experience. The juxtaposition of verse and prose, complemented by melodic interludes and vivid natural imagery, imbues the play with a poetic allure, captivating audiences with its lyrical charm. Themes of love, injustice, and usurpation serve as the thematic nucleus, embodying the essence of the play's 'thought.' In aligning with Aristotle's *PT*, Shakespeare establishes *AYL* as a comedic masterpiece. However, future scholars may delve deeper into facets such as catharsis, mimesis, spectacle, reversal, and recognition, thereby enriching the readers' understanding of comedic literature.

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