XXXVII

JONSONIAN ELEMENTS IN THE COMIC UNDERPLOT OF TWELFTH NIGHT

THE present study purposes to establish a direct relationship between the comic underplot in *Twelfth Night* and the Jonsonian comic method as first developed in *Every Man in His Humour* and *Every Man out of His Humour*. Shakespeare’s name appears first in the list of actors for the former play in the Jonson Folio (1616). This is almost the only indubitable instance of Shakespeare’s acting, attested by written evidence on the authority of Jonson rather than based on tradition or hearsay. His thorough familiarity with this play is, consequently, a certainty, and the production of *Every Man out of His Humour* by his company in the following year is sufficient evidence that his knowledge of both plays was intimate and detailed.

Shakespeare’s indebtedness may be indicated through a consideration of the following points of similarity: (1) the strikingly similar relationship between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew and that of the Jonsonian victimizer and gull; (2) Shakespeare’s adaptation of the Jonsonian “humour” character in Malvolio, no longer to be conceived as a satiric portrait of the Puritan but rather as a felicitous combination of psychological humorist and social attitudinizer, through whom Shakespeare attains comic effects superior to those of his model, Jonson.

Most critics, including the editors of the Cambridge edition, 1930, hold that the comic situations and characters are wholly of Shakespeare’s invention. Some attempts have recently been made to find a parallel in contemporary life to the situations in which Malvolio figures; but these, even if their doubtful plausibility find adherents, add little to our understanding of the particular comic method which Shakespeare has em-

1 *Every Man in His Humour* was produced and acted by the Lord Chamberlain’s Company in 1598 and *Every Man out of His Humour* by the same company in 1599. The date of *Twelfth Night* may now with considerable certainty be placed not earlier than the winter of 1600–01. As T. W. Baldwin, *Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (1927) and A. K. Gray, “Robert Armine, the Foole,” *PMLA*, xlii, 673 ff., have pointed out, Robert Armine succeeded Kempe in the Chamberlain’s Company in the spring of 1600, and there can be little doubt that the parts of Touchstone and Feste were written largely with a view to the peculiar capabilities of the new addition to the company.

2 Shakespeare’s name appears also in the actor list for Jonson’s *Sejanus* (1603).

3 Used throughout this paper in the sense of a “humour” character.

4 “No one has yet found Shakespeare a debtor to any one for Malvolio.” Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and J. D. Wilson, *Twelfth Night* (Cambridge, 1930), Introd., p. xiv.

ployed in this play. C. H. Herford, co-editor of the definitive edition of Jonson, in calling _Twelfth Night_ "the most Jonsonian comedy of Shakespeare," has indicated a line of fruitful investigation of what we believe to be a legitimate source of influence in the comic underplot. But neither he nor C. R. Baskervill, who pointed out that "_Twelfth Night_ and to a greater extent _The Merry Wives of Windsor_" are obviously influenced by the humour trend that was associated with satire," has done more than recognize an existing relationship.

The peculiarly individual Jonsonian method, developed to carry out his purpose of social satire in realistic comedy, has failed to be completely understood because most critics have assumed that Jonson's own definition of a humour has been consistently followed in the development of his humour types:

As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way.  

It is true that Jonson himself in this definition limits the use of the term _humour_ to a psychological master-bias, but in practice he uses it to apply also to more superficial attributes, and the discerning critic can distinguish three distinct types of humour: the psychological humour, which seems to be rooted in the nature of the individual, a trait so strong and warped that reason and will have lost the power to control its manifestations (e.g., Kitely); the humour of caprice or eccentricity, which always remains superficial (e.g., Justice Clement); and the social humour, "bred in a man by self-love and affectation."

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8 Ben Jonson (Mermaid Series), I, Preface, p. xliii.
7 L. Hotson, _Shakespeare vs. Shallow_ (1931) has proved conclusively, in our opinion, that _the Merry Wives_ dates early in 1597. It is highly probable, therefore, that the treatment of Falstaff is influenced not so much by the humour trend as by the traditions of Italian comedy.
8 _English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy_ (1911), p. 154, n. 1.—That the conception of the humour type sprang full-fledged from the brain of Jonson in the year 1598 has been thoroughly disproved by Baskervill's exhaustive study; but Jonson's particular contribution in enriching and popularizing the method is indisputable.
9 See particularly K. M. Lynch, _Social Mode of Restoration Comedy_ (1926), Chap. 2, pp. 13–19. 10 _Induction to Every Man out of His Humour._
11 The best example of the humour of eccentricity is Morose in _Epicoene_. The fully-developed humour of eccentricity finds no parallel in _Twelfth Night_ and need therefore concern us no further.
12 "What is this humour?" . . . "Marry, I'll tell thee what it is (as 'tis generally received in these days): it is a monster bred in a man by self-love and affectation, and fed by folly." _Every Man in His Humour_, III, 1. All quotations from this play have been taken from the earlier Italianate version of the play, the only one which Shakespeare knew, but the names of
Jonsonian Elements in "Twelfth Night"

tation, and fed by folly,” (e.g., Fastidius Brisk). Exploitation of the psychological humour in comedy leads to sombre, bitter satire of the Volpone type; the humour of caprice or eccentricity almost invariably leads to farce; and the exhibition of social affectations leads to the development of a Jacobean comedy of manners.

The extent to which Jonson is interested in the comic possibilities of social affectation—the pretentious gull in the early humour plays being numerically better represented than either of the other two types—has never been sufficiently realized; yet a careful analysis of Jonson’s dramatic technique reveals a highly developed method already clearly defined in the two earliest humour plays and brought to its most perfect expression in Epicoene (1609). In the early humour plays, therefore, we are concerned not only with the exhibition and purging of psychological humours but also with Jonson’s treatment of the socialized gulls, stratified on levels of intelligence in juxtaposition to the gallants who victimize and ridicule them. These types of social affectation, characteristic of the would-be (who would be witty or cultured or fashionable or anything other than he is) are conditioned by Jonson’s conception of the Renaissance gentleman—ideally a combination of the best qualities in a soldier and a man of letters with the social graces of a courtier. The delineation of the gull and the exploitation of his humour or his social pretensions had developed in the hands of Jonson from an incidental ingredient in the pamphlet and epigrammatic literature of the day to the recipe itself. In the process of transferring the gull from the satirical epigram and the pamphlet to the drama, Jonson immeasurably increased the vividness and vitality of his presentation and succeeded in creating a distinctive literary type, owing its fundamental nature to the comic derivatives of his conception of the Renaissance gentleman. A brief consideration of the nature of the pretensions of the gull in Jonson and his relationship to his victimizer is necessary before a comparison with Twelfth Night can be effectively made.

In Every Man in His Humour Master Stephen is listed in the Dramatis Personae as a “Country Gull,” and Master Matthew as a “Town Gull.” These two, with Captain Bobadill, a glorified Miles Gloriosus—though, in his present incarnation distinctively a Jonsonian creation—represent the trio of would-be’s, who ape the fashions of the Renaissance gentleman. Invariably, of course, the would-be oversteps the mark, mak-

characters have been retained from the more familiar Anglicized version which appeared in the 1616 folio. The later revisions are chiefly verbal; all changes of act and scene numbering, however, are indicated in the footnotes to facilitate reference.

ing himself the butt of ridicule and the dupe of his victimizer—represented in this play by Young Knowell, Wellbred, and the master of the intrigue, Brainworm.

Stephen, at the very bottom of the scale intellectually, is remorselessly held up to scorn by his cousin and Wellbred, but he is incapable of perceiving the contemptuous tolerance beneath their apparently flattering interest. He longs to learn the familiar hawking language of a gentleman; he pretends to valor and is always ready to pick a quarrel, but equally anxious to avoid the issue; he is proud of what he considers his good parts and ever eager to have them commended; and his stupidity leaves him utterly deaf to the significance of others' comments about him, even when spoken directly to his face.

Matthew is only a little less stupid than Stephen, having lived in the shadow of St. Paul's and borrowed some of London's surface sophistication, which the country gull had not yet acquired. His particular pretensions are to culture, poetry (witness his plagiarism), and valor—though he is but a weak shadow of his model, Bobadill. Both he and Stephen wish to be known as "melancholy," a state of mind which they probably consider the crowning grace of a courtier.

Bobadill is the braggart warrior par excellence with pretensions to valor and wit, which he more nearly attains than do either of the other two. As we have pointed out, all three suffer victimization and exposure at the hands of the wits.

*Every Man out of His Humour* is more genuinely a humour play than its predecessor, which is more concerned with plot manipulation. In the former, everything is subordinated to the development and presentation of the humour characters. Jonson's own characterization of the gulls in the "Characters of the Persons" will give one a fairly accurate idea of the sort of social attitudinizing he wished to represent:

*Fastidius Brisk.* A neat, spruce, affecting courtier, one that wears clothes well, and in fashion; practiseth by his glass, how to salute; speaks good remnants, notwithstanding the bass viol and tobacco; swears tersely, and with variety. . . .

*Fungoso* . . . one that has revelled in his time, and follows the fashion afar off, like a spy. He makes it the whole bent of his endeavours, to . . . put him in the courtiers' cut; at which he earnestly aims, but so unluckily, that he still lights short a suit.

*Sogliardo.* An essential clown, . . . yet so enamoured of the name of a gentleman, that he will have it, though he buys it. He comes up every term to learn to take tobacco, and see new Motions. He is in his kingdom, when he can get himself into company where he may be well laughed at.

It may be interesting to mention also Carlo Buffone, the nimble-witted and acid-tongued jester. His character is in no way allied to that of
Jonsonian Elements in "Twelfth Night"

Feste; but he serves a somewhat similar purpose—revealing the fopperies and stupidities of the would-be's through his comments, as Feste occasionally does through his less explicit but equally pertinent foolery.

The two gulls in _Twelfth Night_ are Sir Andrew Aguecheek (who also bears a certain remote resemblance to the old amorous fool in Italian comedy, being made to caper in similar fashion and finding himself served in the end with a broken pate instead of a bride) and Malvolio. Their victimizers are Sir Toby Belch and Maria, aided to some extent by Feste and Fabian. But before considering in detail the nature of Andrew and Malvolio, an interesting resemblance may be noted in the rendezvous of the gulls, as a background for the exhibition of their affectations, in _Every Man in His Humour_ and in _Twelfth Night_—the Kitely ménage in the former and Olivia's in the latter. The atmosphere of conviviality and riot, violently disturbed by the entrance of authoritative virtue, is common to both. Kitely complains to his brother-in-law, Downright, of the conduct of the latter's brother, Wellbred, in his house:

> My brother Wellbred (I know not how)  
> Of late is much declined from what he was,  
> And greatly alter'd in his disposition. . . .  
> He's grown a stranger to all due respect,  
> Forgetful of his friends, and not content  
> To stale himself in all societies,  
> He makes my house as common as a Mart,  
> A Theatre, a public receptacle  
> For giddy humour, and diseased riot,  
> And there, (as in a tavern, or a stews,)  
> He, and his wild associates, spend their hours,  
> In repetition of lascivious jests,  
> Swear, leap, and dance, and revel night by night,  
> Control my servants: and indeed what not? (I, 4)\(^{14}\)

Olivia's opinion of her kinsman, Sir Toby, as reported by Malvolio, is an obvious counterpart:

Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell you, that, though she harbours you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied to your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your misdemeanours, you are welcome to the house; if not, and it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell. (II, 3).

Kitely delegates the reprimanding of Wellbred to his elder brother, Downright, as Olivia designates Malvolio as her deputy. Downright is infuriated with the kind of company Wellbred keeps—the gulls, Mat-

\(^{14}\) In the Anglicized version of _Every Man in his Humour_, II, 1.
thew and Bobadill—as Malvolio and Olivia object to Sir Toby’s drinking with Andrew and the Clown at midnight. Downright enters, when Wellbred and his companions are holding forth in Kityel’s house, the gulls exhibiting their pretensions before the two women and the wits, and breaks out in wrath:

Come, you might practise your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and not here, I wiss: this is no tavern, nor no place for such exploits. (III, 4)

Malvolio’s interruption of the midnight drinking scene is expressive of a similar objection:

My masters, are you mad? or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an ale-house of my lady’s house, that ye squeak out your coziers’ catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you? (II, 3).

Downright, however, not being in the position of servant, rebuking the kinsman of his mistress, as is Malvolio, but rather an equal rebuking his own brother, goes to lengths to which Malvolio dare not. Malvolio leaves in a huff after they have laughed at him and refused to “mitigate” their noise and goes to call his mistress. Downright will brook none of it and draws his sword on the lot of them. Though the details of both scenes differ decidedly, the similarity of the general pattern and background is clearly recognizable.

Shakespeare’s treatment of Andrew exemplifies to the fullest extent the Jonsonian conception and treatment of the gull and his relationship to his victimizer. Andrew is of quite a different breed from Malvolio. He is pure, unadulterated fool and is more closely allied to Stephen than to any other of the characters in the two Jonson plays we have been discussing. His character is sketched for us through the comments of Toby and Maria before his first appearance on the stage. In their opening conversation, Maria broaches the subject of “a foolish knight that you brought in one night here to be her [Olivia’s] wooer,” (i, 3), and his

In the presentation of his humour characters, Jonson employed the character sketch, a type of delineation at least as old as Theophrastus, which had already become established as a convention in English literature. Jonson uses it to sketch briefly and pointedly the essentials of a character’s humour or particular affectations, almost invariably before his appearance or on his first appearance on the stage, his purpose being obviously to supply the audience with a correct preconception of the nature of the gull, that there may be no mistaking the author’s satire. Shakespeare had already to a certain extent used this method, as in the case of Don Armado in Love’s Labour’s Lost, but he employs it fully in the presentation of Andrew. He uses it also with the fop who annoys Hotspur on the battlefield, in Henry IV, Part I, and with Osric, in Hamlet.
essential qualities as a gull, later to be illustrated by Andrew in person, are here intimated.

Maria constantly makes him out a dullard and invariably gets the better of him in repartee:

And. Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?

Mar. Sir, I have not you by the hand. (i, 3).

According to his own confession, he thinks sometimes:

I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has; but I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit. (i, 3).

His total deficiency in this respect renders him an easy prey to Sir Toby whom he imitates with blind worship. He does not need to ape the outward appurtenances of gentility, as do Stephen and Sogliardo; he is himself a sample of decadent gentleman, yet he confesses:

I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting: O, had I but followed the arts! (i, 3).

Sir Toby represents him as being "as tall a man as any's in Illyria" and answers Maria's accusation that he is "a very fool and a prodigal" by the assertion:

[he] plays o' the viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages word for word without book, and hath all the good gifts of nature,

But Maria's quick retort exposes him as the fool and craven that he is:

He hath, indeed, almost natural: for besides that he's a fool, he's a great quarreller; and but that he hath the gift of a coward to allay the gust he hath in quarrelling, tis thought among the prudent he would quickly have the gift of a grave. (i, 3).

In this respect, however, Andrew's particular brand of timid bullying cowardice is much more akin to the pretended valor of Matthew and Stephen than to Bobadill's more flamboyant style. He is exposed in all

17 Matthew is liberally inoculated with the spirit of bravery by Bobadill's fencing lessons, but his stomach for quarrelling is rapidly dissipated at the prospect of actual danger from Downright's cudgel, and he flees ignominiously.

18 Cf. Maria's characterization of Andrew with Stephen's equally boastful cowardice, as revealed in the following conversation before and after Brainworm's entrance:

Know. Tut, now it's too late to look on it, put it up, put it up.

Step. Well, I will not put it up, but by God's foot, an e'er I meet him—... Whoreson, coney-catching rascal; oh, I could eat the very hilts for anger.

Know. A sign you have a good ostrich stomach, cousin.

Step. A stomach? would I had him here, you should see an I had a stomach. . . . (Enter Brainworm.) Oh, God's lid, by your leave, do you know me, sir?

Brain. Ay, sir, I know you by sight.
his native timidity in the mock duel, the most important scene of gulling in which he figures, second only to the Malvolio conspiracy. The trick Sir Toby and Fabian put upon him in inveigling him into challenging Cesario—a proceeding which produces more dangerous consequences than any of them had looked for, on the appearance of Sebastian—is thoroughly Jonsonian in character. The very terms of the challenge, which, by Toby's advice, Andrew sends to Cesario "to taunt him with the license of ink" (III, 2), yet keeping "o' the windy side of the law" (III, 4), are illustrative of Shakespeare's inimitable adaptive process—reminiscent as they are of Stephen's valorous oaths and his ambiguously apologetic threats to Brainworm when he takes refuge in words instead of action, in revenge for the cheat he had suffered in the purchase of the fake Toledo sword. Sir Toby gives the most perfect expression of Andrew's cowardice:

. . . if he were opened, and you find so much blood in his liver as will clog the foot of a flea, I'll eat the rest of the anatomy. (III, 2).

The ease with which Andrew is pacified and led by the nose by Sir Toby is reminiscent of Young Knowell's power over Stephen, who, in the opinion of Wellbred, can be compared "to nothing more happily than a barber's virginals; for every one may play upon him." (II, 3).

He tries to imitate Viola's poetic speech in addressing Olivia, as Stephen tries to master Bobadill's extraordinary oaths by painful repetition:

*Vio.* Most excellent accomplished lady, the heavens rain odours on you!

*And.* That youth's a rare courtier: 'Rain odours;' well.

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*Step.* You sold me a rapier, did you not?

*Brain.* Yes, marry did I, sir.

*Step.* You said it was a Toledo, ha?

*Brain.* True, I did so.

*Step.* But it is none.

*Brain.* No, sir, I confess it, it is none.

*Step.* Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confess it. By God's lid, an you had not confess it—(II, 3) (III, 1, in the Anglicized version). See also Stephen's boasted valor and its equally rapid evaporation in the servant incident (I, 1).

19 This incident is later developed by Jonson with extraordinarily good comic effect in *Epicoene.* 20 III, 1, in the Anglicized version.

21 See also Andrew's imitative repetition, probably corrupted in the process, of the Clown's words: "Thou wast in very gracious fooling last night when thou spok'st of Pigrogromitus, of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Quebus." (II, 3). Admiration of high-sounding words not native to their own vocabularies (and in this case obviously misunderstood) is common to Jonson's gulls as well as to Andrew. Cf. Matthew's use of "bastinado" for "cudgel" (due here, of course, to Italianate affectation.)
Jonsonian Elements in "Twelfth Night"

Vio. My matter hath no voice, lady, but to your own most pregnant and vouchsafed ear.

And. ‘Odours,’ ‘pregnant,’ and ‘vouchsafed?’ I’ll get ’em all three all ready. (iii, 1).

Bob. . . . Body of Caesar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I’d have stabbed him to the earth. . . . By this fair heaven, I would have done it.

Step. Oh, he swears admirably (by this fair heaven!) Body of Caesar: I shall never do it, sure (upon my salvation). No, I have not the right grace.

Mat. . . . By this air, the most divine tobacco as ever I drunk. . . .

Step. Oh, this gentleman doth it rarely too, but nothing like the other. By this air, as I am a gentleman: By Phoebus. (iii, 2).

Andrew pretends to appreciation of the Clown’s singing as Stephen does to Matthew’s plagiarized verses, and with as little true comprehension, for Sir Toby can catch him in the most open snares ever a fool fell into:

And. A mellifluous voice, as I am true knight.

Tob. A contagious breath.

And. Very sweet and contagious, i’ faith.

Tob. To hear by the nose, it is dulcet in contagion. (ii, 3).

Mat. . . . then do I no more but take your pen and paper presently, and write you your half score or your dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

Know. Mass, then he utters them by the gross.

Step. Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.

Know. I’ faith, as well as in measure. (i, 3).

His pretence to amorousness and to ladies’ favors, so marked a characteristic of a would-be wooer like Fastidius Brisk, is perhaps Andrew’s most pathetic as well as his weakest pretension. Fastidius boasts with gusto of his conquests (at least one to each new suit of clothes) but Andrew can muster up no more than a pitiful echo of Toby’s boast that Maria adores him:

And. I was adored once too. (i, 3).

This perpetual echoing of Sir Toby, moreover, is an almost invariable characteristic of the stupid gull. When Stephen announces that he is possessed of a “melancholy” disposition, Matthew hastens to assure him that “it’s your only best humour, sir, your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir: I am melancholy myself divers times, sir,” (ii, 3)—a conceit of self-analysis somewhat similar to Andrew’s statement that he is “a fellow o’ the strangest mind i’ the world.” (i, 3).

22 iii, 1, in the Anglicized version.
His ego is constantly in need of being bolstered up by Sir Toby, as Stephen is in need of reassurance from his cousin, Young Knowell, which the latter doles out to him in large measure that he may make the greater fool of himself—solely for his own entertainment and that of his companions. Toby has an ulterior motive as well23—Andrew's "three thousand ducats a year" (I, 3); and he labors to keep him in a good opinion of himself when he is cast down by a battle of wits with Maria, in which Andrew is always completely worsted. His mind is taken off his failings by Sir Toby's shrewdness in flattery, though he has scarce wit enough to keep him from swallowing a derogatory reference to his hair as a compliment.

_Tob._ Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.
_And._ Why, would that have mended my hair?
_Tob._ Past question, for thou seest it will not curl by nature.
_And._ But it becomes me well enough, does't not?
_Tob._ Excellent; it hangs like flax on a distaff, and I hope to see a housewife take thee between her legs and spin it off. (I, 3).

Toby's transparently satirical intention is as completely lost on Andrew as Brainworm's is on Stephen in the following parallel situation:

_Brain._ I marle, sir, you wear such ill-favoured coarse stockings, having so good a leg as you have.
_Steph._ . . . I think my leg would show well in a silk hose.
_Brain._ Ay, afore God, would it, rarely well.
_Steph._ In sadness, I think it would: I have a reasonable good leg?
_Brain._ You have an excellent good leg, sir: I pray you pardon me. I have a little haste in sir. (I, 2).

Under Toby's influence, Andrew rises to heights of self-conceit of which he is incapable by his sober self, as Stephen and Matthew, Fastidius Brisk and Sogliardo, are led to boast of their attainments and qualities by Wellbred and Knowell, or by Carlo Buffone, only to be laughed at for their pains behind their backs or to their faces.

The following conversation is perhaps the best single illustration of Toby's power over the foolish knight:

_And._ I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.
_Tob._ Art thou good at these kicke-chawses, knight?

23 The Elder Knowcll's reprimand to Stephen indicates that his foolish nephew, like Andrew, has frequently been fleeced by his flatterers:

_Learn to be wise, and practice how to thrive,
That I would have you do, and not to spend
Your crowns on every one that humours you._ (I, 1).

Even the impoverished Matthew contributes his two shillings to the exchequer of an even more indigent, though superior gull, Bobadill.
And. As any man in Illyria, whatsoever he be, under the degree of my betters; and yet I will not compare with an old man.

Tob. What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

And. Faith, I can cut a caper.

Tob. And I can cut the mutton to’t.

And. And I think I have the back-trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria.²⁴

Tob. Wherefore are these things hid? wherefore have these gifts a curtain before ’em? are they like to take dust, like Mistress Mall’s picture? why dost thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig; I would not so much as make water but in a sink-a-pace. What dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in? I did think, by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was formed under the star of a galliard.

And. Ay, ’tis strong, and it does indifferent well in a damn’d coloured stock.²⁵ Shall we set about some revels? (I, 3).

Young Knowell’s advice to Stephen provides an amazingly close parallel and illustrates clearly Shakespeare’s adaptation of Jonson’s use of slyly contemptuous flattery, calculated to lead the victim to a more outrageous exhibition of his pretentious stupidity:

Know. You speak very well, sir.

Step. Nay, not so neither, but I speak to serve my turn.

Know. Your turn? why, cousin, a gentleman of so fair sort as you are, of so true carriage, so special good parts; of so dear and choice estimation; one whose lowest condition bears the stamp of a great spirit; nay more, a man so graced, gilded, or rather, to use a more fit metaphor, tinfoiled by nature; not that you have a leaden constitution, coz, although perhaps a little inclining to that temper and so the more apt to melt with pity, when you fall into the fire of rage, but for your lustre only, which reflects as bright to the world as an old ale-wife’s pewter again a good time; and will you now, with nice modesty, hide such real ornaments as these, and shadow their glory as a milliner’s wife doth her wrought stomacher, with a smoky lawn or a black cyrus? Come, come; for shame do not wrong the quality of your dessert in so poor a kind; but let the idea of what you are be portrayed in your aspect, that men may read in your looks: “Here within this place is to be seen the most admirable, rare, and accomplished morali of nature!” Cousin, what think you of this?

Step. Marry, I do think of it, and I will be more melancholy and gentlemanlike than I have been, I do ensure you. (I, 2).

²⁴ Cf. the attractions Fastidius Brisk wishes to exhibit to the lady he is attempting to court:

Fast. By this hand, I’d spend twenty pound my vaulting horse stood here now, she might see me do but one trick.

Maci. Why, does she love activity?

Cin. Or, if you had but your long stockings on, to be dancing a galliard as she comes by.

Fast. Ay, either, O, these stirring humours make ladies mad with desire. (III, 3).

²⁵ Cf. Stephen’s “I think my leg would show well in a silk hose.” (I, 2.)
The distinctly Jonsonian relationship of victimizer and gull between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew is made transparently clear by Toby himself in his comment on his dupe:

Marry, I'll ride your horse as well as I ride you. (II, 4).

The closest counterpart of Andrew in the gallery of Jonsonian gulls is Stephen, and the recurrent parallels between the two, in the types of affectation exploited, the manner of expressing them, and the method of exposing them, are explicable on two counts: in the first place, Shakespeare's knowledge of the character types and dialogue of *Every Man in his Humour* was thoroughly intimate, and his memory of details was strengthened by the fact that he, as an actor, must have participated in the rehearsals of the play. In the second place, he apparently, in the creation of Andrew, recalled most vividly or was most attracted to the type of gull and the peculiar affectations manifested by Stephen. It must not be forgotten, however, that Andrew exhibits some characteristics which Stephen does not, which are either native to himself or may be discerned in other Jonsonian gulls, like Fastidius Brisk; and that, moreover, he is entirely free from the boorish self-assurance and the gratuitous insolence which Stephen flaunts throughout the play. One feels for the timid simpleton a sympathetic indulgence which Stephen's blustering stupidity fails to excite.

In Malvolio Shakespeare has created a character far more complex both as a literary type and as a human being than the simple-minded gull, Sir Andrew. The conception of Malvolio as a Puritan, which has been almost ineradicably fixed in our minds through the last century of criticism, has prevented us from recognizing his essential nature, which reveals at once his close kinship with the Jonsonian humour character. Let us consider on what grounds this misconception of Malvolio as the Puritan has been based.

The most direct reference in the play is Maria's comment: "Marry sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan." (II, 3). In addition, there is Toby's retort to Malvolio's order to cease his "disorders": "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (II, 3). This, coupled with Malvolio's avowed intolerance of drunkenness, as shown in his interruption of the midnight carousel, and of bear-baiting [Fabian says: "he brought me out o' favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here," (II, 5)], has confirmed the popular stage tradition of presenting Malvolio as a Puritan. The interpretation of these comments

about Malvolio and of his own actions as revealing essentially a Puritanical nature, which Shakespeare wished to satirize through the punishment inflicted upon the steward, is open to grave objections. Its weakness is fully recognized only when one begins to consider Malvolio as a representative of the humour type and to understand his nature in the light of his dominating quality of self-love.

Maria's description of him as "a kind of Puritan" is immediately contradicted by her assurance to Andrew:

The devil a Puritan that he is, or any thing constantly but a time-pleaser; an affected ass, that cons state without book and utters it by great swarths; the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work. (11, 3).

We may be sure that Maria has had sufficient opportunity to observe Malvolio's "playing-up" to his mistress. Moreover, Maria is the victimizer in whose mouth we are most likely to find the dramatist's own conception of the essential nature of a humour character. Her statement, which, as we shall show, is abundantly supported throughout the play, may be taken as a legitimate indication that Malvolio's humour is self-love, the very quality which Jonson himself, it will be remembered, cites in *Every Man in his Humour*, as a fundamental characteristic of the social pretender. It is through this dominating quality in him that Maria finds "notable cause to work" in "gulling him into a nayword," and the most effective comic scene in the play from the point of view of the spectator is Malvolio's exhibition of self-love on discovering the forged letter.

The interruption of the midnight drinking bout is his duty as Olivia's steward. His dislike of the participants explains his thoroughgoing officiousness in carrying out his mistress' orders. It is no more Puritanical, however, than the suggested parallel in contemporary life which Gollancz points out: the interruption of Sir Walter Raleigh, Southampton, and Mr. Parker, who were playing at primero in the Presence Chamber after the Queen had gone to bed, by Willoughby, Elizabeth's chief server. The utter disregard of Malvolio's reprimand by the offenders, their persistent misinterpretation of his orders, their teasing, and their continued noise, are more than enough to account for his flinging off the stage with the threat to Maria that Olivia should know of her misdemeanor, "by this hand." His reputation for virtue, in Toby's comment, is, as Maria assures us, merely hypocrisy to clothe his ambitions to her mistress' favor. The violence of his language toward the disrespectful merry-makers is partly due to his desire to curry favor with Olivia and partly

28 See p. 723, n. 12, infra. 29 Quoted in M. Luce, loc. cit.
to the pleasure he derives in being “round” with Toby and the others, because he, from his superior eminence, scorns them. Bringing Fabian “out o’ favour” with Olivia over a bear-baiting is probably another attempt to bring himself into favor. There is nothing else in either Malvolio’s action or his speech in the play on which the misconception of his character as Shakespeare’s contribution to the stage satire of the Puritans rests. It seems indubitable that whatever Puritanical aversions he exhibits, he merely shares in common with Puritans, though it is at least equally plausible that his vehement reprehension of drinking and bear-baiting is largely influenced by his desire to please his austere mistress as part of his ambitious hope to win her hand. The stage satire of the Puritans was as popular with theatre audiences as the Puritans themselves were unpopular and the occasional suggestion of a Puritanical bias in Malvolio’s pretentious virtue added to the opportunities for satire and ridicule of the steward.

Evidence in the play itself that Shakespeare’s emphasis is primarily on Malvolio’s humour of self-love, which finds expression in the detraction of others whom he conceives to be less virtuous, less noteworthy than he himself, is abundantly conclusive. His very first speech, his comment on the Fool in answer to Olivia’s question:

*Oli.* What think you of this fool, Malvolio? doth he not mend?

*Mal.* Yes, and shall do till the pangs of death shake him: infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool. (I, 5)

is a sententious expression of his superiority and conceit, which lead him to use these assured and high-sounding terms of condemnation. His second comment on the Clown is followed immediately by Olivia’s accusation that he is “sick of self-love” and tastes “with a distempered appetite”—our clue to the proper interpretation of his nature. His humour distemper his appetite because his acceptance of his own superiority leads him to condemn others, in whom he cannot perceive the qualities he considers himself to possess, as his inferiors. He is respectful to practically nobody in the play except Olivia, because she is his mistress and he hopes may become his wife; when his self-love is wounded, as he thinks by her connivance, he rails at her as he has previously at every one else with whom he has come in contact.

As we have pointed out, the clearest indication of the nature of his humour is provided by Maria, who bases her plot to “gull him into a nayword” on her observation of his amorous aspirations towards her mistress. Malvolio himself, in his soliloquy in the garden, before his discovery of the letter, reveals to what extent her flattering innuendoes
regarding Olivia’s supposed love for him have undermined his good sense and rendered him ripe for ridicule:

'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me: and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on’t? (ii, 5).

The letter which Maria, the “noble gull-catcher,” devises as the bait to catch “the trout” and “make a contemplative idiot of him” is the means which reveals to us, to the fullest extent, as it does to the watchers, Toby Andrew, and Fabian, the steward’s overweening conceit, which Shakespeare stresses with unmistakable emphasis. The superscription, beginning “Jove knows I love,” suggests to him instantly, “If this should be thee, Malvolio?”; and, acting on the advice of the letter, he immediately resolves:

I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-devise the very man. I do not now fool myself to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and with a kind of injunction drives me to these habits of her liking. (ii, 5).

So well does Maria’s invention “work upon him” that Toby can say of him, “His very genius hath taken the infection of the device” (iii, 4), and Maria invites her fellow-conspirators to observe his self-exhibition before Olivia, in terms unmistakably indicative of its complete success:

If you desire the spleen, and will laugh yourself into stitches, follow me. Yond gull Malvolio is turned heathen, a very renegado. . . . He’s in yellow stockings. . . . He does obey every point of the letter that I dropped to betray him: he does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies: you have not seen such a thing as ‘tis. I can hardly forbear hurling things at him. I know my lady will strike him: if she do, he’ll smile and take’t for a great favour. (iii, 2).

The more intense the obsession, the more drastic the punishment. The thoroughness of Malvolio’s discomfiture and the ignominy of his punishment in the cell of a madman, to be mocked by the Fool he despises, to be “made the most notorious geck and gull That e’er invention play’d on” (v, 1), are proportionate to the power of his humour, which

30 It is notable that Fastidius’ boasted confidence in his mistress’s favors, based equally on airy nothingness, finds expression also in their alleged commendation of his apparel: “O, I have been graced by them beyond all aim of affection; this is her garter my dagger hangs in: and they do so commend and approve my apparel, with my judicious wearing of it, it’s above wonder. (ii, 2)”
Shakespeare exhibits and attempts to purge through ridicule in typically Jonsonian fashion.

Malvolio is dominated by a psychological humour, a trait of character far more deeply ingrained than the superficial social affectations of an Andrew or a Stephen, but he is also to a certain extent a social attitudinizer. His pretensions consist largely in the manifestation of what Boas aptly termed the cultivation of the “grand style.” Maria tells us that “he has been yonder i’ the sun practising behaviour to his own shadow this half hour” (ii, 5), and since Malvolio does later actually put into practise her advice in the letter, one may legitimately ascribe the items contained therein to his collection of affectations:

To inure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble slough and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity. . . . Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered: I say, remember. Go to, thou art made, if thou desirest to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers. (ii, 5).

A most interesting parallel is discernible in Every Man out of His Humour in the satirical advice given to the would-be gentleman, Sogliardo, by Carlo Buffone:

Nay, look you, sir, now you are a gentleman, you must carry a more exalted presence, change your mood and habit to a more austere form; be exceeding proud, stand upon your gentility, and scorn every man; speak nothing humbly, never discourse under a nobleman. . . . (iii, 1).

It is from Malvolio's own lips, however, that the most complete revelation of his attitudinizing comes. The following quotations, with the violently interjected asides of Toby and Fabian omitted, exhibit clearly the nature of the affectations his day-dream has conjured up to his imagination as the exaltation of bliss:

To be Count Malvolio! . . . There is example for't; the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe . . . Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state—. . . . Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet gown; having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping—. . . And then to have the humour of state; and after a demure travel of regard, telling them I know my place as I would they should do theirs, to ask for my kinsman Toby—. . . Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him: I frown the while; and perchance wind up my watch, or play with my—some rich jewel. Toby approaches; courtesies there to me—. . . I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard of control—. . .

Saying, 'Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your niece, give me this prerogative of speech'— . . . (II, 5).

These affectations, however, are merely the incidental appurtenances of his dominating quality, the humour of self-love.

The theme of self-love had been popular in both the early humour plays and had been treated by Jonson to its fullest extent in *Cynthia's Revels, or The Fountain of Self-Love* (1600). The humourist, Puntarvolo, is the chief example of self-love in *Every Man out of his Humour*, and from this aspect of his character, Shakespeare may have drawn some suggestive hints in the treatment of Malvolio. Jonson's characterization of Puntarvolo in the "Characters of the Persons" labels him clearly:

A vain-glorious knight, over-Englishing his travels, and wholly consecrated to singularity. . . . a Sir hath lived to see the revolution of time in most of his apparel. Of presence good enough, but so palpably affected to his own praise, that—for want of flatterers—he commends himself, to the floutage of his own family.

. . .

A comparison of Puntarvolo and Malvolio leads one to marvel once more at Shakespeare's unique power in the adaptation and recombining of borrowed elements—for his cross-gartered gull is as superior to Jonson's affected knight as his mature dramatic genius was at this time superior to the experimental efforts of a tyro, highly successful as they were.

The method of exposing and ridiculing Malvolio's humour through Maria's trick, with his subsequent exhibition of himself before Olivia, reminds one irresistibly of Puntarvolo's affected pretension of courting his own wife in the guise of a knight errant at the window of his supposed castle. It is true that Puntarvolo has himself conceived and designed his project and that Malvolio is the dupe of Maria, but there are certain important similarities in the two situations. Both are observed and commented upon in the acting: Puntarvolo by Fastidius, Carlo, and Sogliardo; Malvolio in his preparatory rehearsal by Toby, Fabian, and Andrew, and in his scene with Olivia, by Maria. Both have rehearsed and studied their parts beforehand. Malvolio avows, after reading the letter:

I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. . . . I will smile; I will do everything that thou wilt have me. (II, 5).

32 It may be interesting to note that Maria's letter advises Malvolio to put himself "into the trick of singularity." His punctilious observation of her advice makes Malvolio singular indeed, as Puntarvolo's overactive imagination has made him. Singularity, in both instances, is merely the result of pride in the display of affectation.
And Carlo says of Puntarvolo:

It's a project, a designment of his own, a thing studied, and reheatr as ordi-

narily at his coming from hawking or hunting, as a jig after a play. (Π, 1).

Puntarvolo comes to court his own wife who pretends not to know him for what he is; Malvolio comes to court Olivia who can scarcely recognize him for the man he used to be. The Waiting-Gentlewoman at the window gives Puntarvolo in his catechizing "an inventory of his own good parts" (Π, 1) as Malvolio has been given his in the forged letter, the advice of which he proceeds to follow implicitly, for the benefit of Olivia.

Though the details have little in common, it is significant that the purpose in both situations is the same: they are created by the dramatist to expose the affectations of a humourist. The general design, therefore, coupled with the fact that each has come a-wooing (Puntarvolo his own wife) and that each is acting an assumed part, commented upon by a group of observers, lends a considerable degree of plausibility to the discernment of a relationship between the two.

Malvolio differs from Puntarvolo in the degree to which Shakespeare has combined the dominating psychological humour with the exhibition of social pretensions and affectations in the creation of a more human figure. Jonson's psychological humourists are almost caricatures of humanity, warped by a humour so exaggerated that it strains credulity. Shakespeare has humanized Malvolio through rendering credible the outward manifestations of his humour. Self-love which animates Puntarvolo finds its outlet in an absurd mock-wooing of his own wife; self-love in Malvolio produces the natural reaction of exalting his ambitions towards his superiors and increasing his contempt of his supposed inferiors. Consequently, his whole attitude in the scene in which he appears before Olivia, and later his defiance of Toby, Fabian, and Maria render him a more human and understandable figure than Jonson's.

Nowhere in the play is Shakespeare's genius more clearly exhibited than in the consistency of portrayal of Malvolio in his handling of the difficult "purge" scene and in Malvolio's final appearance. A weaker and less original imitator might have followed Jonson in the thorough purging of Malvolio's humour—causing at the end his admission of his failing and his reformation—as Jonson does with his humourists in Every Man out of his Humour, frequently sacrificing consistency of characterization for the sake of emphasizing the conception of the well-rounded personality as it should exist ideally, not warped by an overpowering and misdirected master-bias. Malvolio is not the man to throw off in an instant the habit of a life-time; his recognition of the trick which has been played upon him succeeds only in infuriating him the more, and
he stalks off the stage with, "I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you" (v, 1)—a reaction as psychologically true as Sordido's right-about-face is psychologically false.

Shakespeare, in the particular adaptation and use to which he has put the Jonsonian method of humour exposition and gull victimization in the comic underplot of Twelfth Night, has succeeded in evolving a comedy that moves with greater verve than Jonson's experimental humour plays, but his indebtedness to Jonson seems definitely established. Two highly significant facts afford conclusive support to this contention. First, in no other play does Shakespeare delineate the socialized gull, though he frequently presented, as in the case of Slender in the Merry Wives, a stupid fool; or in the case of Don Armado in Love's Labour's Lost, a braggart of the type so popular in Italian comedy. The affectations derived from the Jonsonian conception of the Renaissance gentleman are exploited for their comic possibilities only in Twelfth Night, chiefly in Andrew and, to a certain extent, in Malvolio. Moreover, the relationship of the socialized gull to the victimizer who anatomizes him and reveals his pretensions is similarly developed only in this play.

The second notable circumstance which merits attention is that in no other comedy of Shakespeare does the sub-plot attain the independence, complexity, and importance of the unique comic underplot in Twelfth Night, which exemplifies in its extraordinarily complete development, the essential characteristics of the Jonsonian method. There is sufficient justification for concluding that the nature of the pretensions of the socialized gull and his relationship to his victimizer, the method of exposing Malvolio's humour of self-love, and the similarity of incident are adaptations of the Jonsonian comic method in Every Man in his Humour and Every Man out of his Humour.

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