

Age in the Eye of Shakespeare, focus on; *As You Like It*

Dipak Kumar Sarkar*

Department of English, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science & Technology University, Basherhat, Sadar, Dinajpur-5200, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author: Dipak Kumar Sarkar, E-mail: dipak.hstu@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: January 27, 2020

Accepted: March 29, 2020

Published: April 30, 2020

Volume: 8 Issue: 2

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

Keywords:

Age,
Aged People,
Gerontology,
Shakespeare

ABSTRACT

Being aged is an inevitable process of nature but the way society and its institutions define aged people may not be an acceptable process to judge every single aged people, as each human is different from others in regard to physis, life philosophy and mentality signifying that every human is a unique creation of the Creator. However, Shakespeare, being so much celebrated, praised and a universal writer delineates his characters and their involvement to his drama being somehow dogmatic in regard to age. This paper aims at the approach of Shakespeare towards the young and the elderly characters and tries to bring out a hypothesis based on gerontological theory in mind. The key objective of this paper is to find out what Shakespeare thinks about the aged people and how the aged characters been portrayed in *As You Like It*. Furthermore, this paper will distinguish the thought of Shakespeare, being xenophobic about the aged, with that of the gerontologists' remark of approaching an aged man. In order to achieve its aim, a critical analysis planted on the gerontological view of Age will be conducted. Decisively, this paper hopes to come up with the attitude Shakespeare possesses at the time of treating an elderly man.

INTRODUCTION

As You Like It is commonly known as a romantic comedy but the theme of love, romance, bodily zeal, energy and sex, all revolve around the young men and women only, keeping the aged ones not only secluded from those but also been shown as vividly fulfilling the stereotypes expected from a good aged soul completely forgetting the idea of love and romance for the elderly. Moreover, Shakespeare has given a glimpse of his ideas regarding young and the old where he, may be unintentionally, has placed these two generations, namely young and the aged, in opposite positions highlighting their qualities that the then society approves. To add to this, Shakespeare's own creation, Duke Senior, is portrayed as a noble, ideal kind of old soul of that particular society as he satisfies the stereotypes of being aged. Again, the famous melancholic character, Jacques, as a spokesman of Shakespeare, has specified a deep philosophical thought on the aged stages of human life. Besides, Adam, though a minor and stock character, is an obvious example of how the poor, aged have been to that particular society. So, *As You Like It*, though by its romance and comedy tries to entertain the then audience and becomes successful enough, is a presentation of the universal picture regarding the aged people and the very attitude of Shakespeare towards those neglected, discriminated elderly souls.

AGE, SIGNIFYING THE GENRE:

As You Like It is associated with the literary term 'Romantic Comedy' but the way Shakespeare has presented it, the drama seems to be a fiction of mere pastoral comedy and love affairs among the youths. It is well known that in the true academic sense, a romantic comedy is a kind of narrative genre which deals with mysterious, adventurous and a spiritual story focusing on a pursuit that revolves round the spiritual values like bravery, courage, persuasion of imagination, giving wings to desire, but not compulsorily love interest among the characters. It can also be said that a romantic comedy contains some sort of tension and conflict where the plot arrangements move from creation to resolving of the conflict that is been depicted in the drama. But, there are certain things, actions, characters and their dialogues happening in pastoral arena which make one laugh but not in that way which can provide the audience with the reason of laughing. It means the laugh and the excitement come not from within but somehow superficial making someone puzzled. However, the approaches to comedy as a literary genre have changed from time to time giving it a vivid flavor in various times. Moreover, the Greeks have tended to produce satirical comedies. Aristotle in his *Poetics* says that tragedy shows humans as the best whereas the comedy as the worst. This refers to the traditionally vices of the stock characters which are certainly greed, lechery, vanity and foolishness. And, the characters in this particular drama are not Aristophanes'

stereotypes as they are remarkably known for their loose personalities. Besides, *As You Like It* does not follow the guideline given by Aristotle which is seen in the plays of Shaw's too. Almost all the characters, especially Jaques, Touchstone, Rosalind or Ganymede and Oliver contribute to the comic scenes by their own participations. The whole drama especially starting from Arden forest scene turns out to be a family pastoral with pastoral activities of the characters. Here, laughter comes by no means of any persuasive action taken by Shakespeare but smoothly without knowing the exact reason. For example;

Jaques: Rosalind is your love's name?

Oliver: Yes, Just

Jaques: I do not like her name.

Orlando: There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened. (III.II.240-244)

In another scene;

Rosalind: Here comes Monseieur Le Beau
With his mouth full of news.

Celia: Which he will put on us,
as pigeons feed their young.

Rosalind: Then shall we be news crammed.

Celia: All the better; we shall be the more marketable. (I.II.83-87)

Again in another scene, Jaques says;

You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmith's wives and conned them out of the rings? (III.II.259-260)

Suggestion comes out Duke Senior in the way;

Find tongues in trees, brooks in the running brooks, sermon in the stones and good in everything. (II.I.16-17)

However, the cross dress of Rosalind also brings sub plot which also presents laugh and hilarious situation which brings relax from the dominating conflicts in the drama. The sub plots of Ganymede – Phebe, Ganymede – Orlando make audience laugh as they are known to the fact of Ganymede being a woman, Rosalind. This disguise not only puts a twist to the main theme of drama, love and romance but also gives a lot of pastoral and the then applicable laughable materials. Here, the comedy part is used only keeping the audience in mind and make them laugh without any reason but not to get the audience them relived of the main profoundly brain hammering conflict and injustice found in the drama and seems to be not the main stream of this drama, as said by many critics. Again, Shakespeare has regretfully diverted his creation from a true romantic in an academic way. As there is a lack of serious mysterious, adventurous and spiritual story line. Though love affair is found, on whose basis this drama can be called romantic, it is only among the youths where there is no such action to break the shackles and give wings to their desire. Age, here, is important to Shakespeare when he deals with the love affairs of the young only. Even there is no courageous, youth like activities shown in this drama. As a result of that the love affairs' sub plots involve the characters like Rosalind or Ganymede, Orlando, Celia, Oliver, Phebe and Silvius. The young people enjoy the so called loving, wooing and the aged persons are to play the role of their guardian only to approve or disapprove them of the affair and

passing comments on those. Interestingly, love at first sight is been shown in both the affairs of Rosalind-Orlando and Celia-Oliver which is also possible for the elderly people but Shakespeare has been not in that mood to portray a love relation or a romantic characteristics in any of his elderly ones. To add to this, the famous controversial novel, *Lolita*, by Russian American novelist Vladimir Nabokov is worth mentioning where an aged man falls in love with a pretty young girl. Besides, there is another novel by Madeline Sheehan named, *Undeniable*, which is a love story of two characters named Deuce and Eva. It is a two sided and love at first sight type. The novel is a journey of the pain and gain of those to lovers with big age difference. Eva and Deuce has been five and twenty three respectively when the first meet. This is an epic love story with no boundaries and no age limits. Though their first sight has been in innocence, Eva matures into a woman; their reunions involve lust and love. In this journey, Eva finds in Deuce that he cannot see in himself, a man worth being loved by so young a girl. On the other hand Deuce is also in very much in love with her but he finds himself unworthy of her and her undeniable love is the one, he cannot live without. Here, love is shown as such an important thing that deserves breaking every obstacle that comes before their union even those can be society, age. Likewise, hundreds of novels like these, there are also a lot of movies dealing with the same age difference issue. In regard to Hollywood movies there are a lot like *American Beauty* (1999), *Lolita* (1997) etc. In Bollywood, there is also many movies related to this like *Joggers' Park*, *Chini Kum*. Even it is found in Bengali Indian movies too like *Titly*. Love being eternal should not be separated due to age. If love relation, despite millions of real life examples, is possible in these novels and movies, then what reason there can be that Shakespeare has overlooked that and been obsessed with the love relation between the young. It is, perhaps, Shakespeare himself has willingly underestimated the possibility of love between the aged to be a societal writer. In his wish to be societal dramatist before the audience of Elizabethan and Jacobean period with their typical mindset for the elderly people and love, Shakespeare may have overlooked that idea in *As You Like It*. As a result, Shakespeare in this play is engrossed with the love affair of the young keeping the elderly for the fatherly or guardian like love. It is, as if, an aura which can be felt, exercised but not to be expressed by any means. So his very approach to love is not admissible and understandable at present which is a kind of proof that he has always placed the aged one to such a place where they do not have the desire to exercise, fulfilling their desire and taking that thing in their hand but to wait for the God to do so for them. So, Shakespeare's societal and stereotypical thoughts about the aged are less visibility, inactiveness, weak body, waiting for miracle to bring justice to them and death after all who, the elderly, can never think of indulging themselves with something like love or desire.

DIFFERENCES IN THE ATTITUDE OF SHAKESPEARE BASED ON AGE:

Shakespeare, in a sense, has made a differentiation among the characters in *As You Like It* according to their age and

also has characterized with some key opposite qualities. Here, two opposition parties are the young and the elderly characters. Starting with the young, Shakespeare has bestowed a few characteristics that support the young only which unquestionable are been used to satisfy the then society and its norms. Among the qualities of the young people, at first, there comes love. Shakespeare has tried to portray a drama configuring the youth love at its best. Love as in real life can be focused due to the pity and fear for humanity. This is what is found in Rosalind's speech when she first meets Orlando and she say;

Do, young sir. Your reputation shall not therefore be misprized. We will make it our suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

(I. II. 140)

Rosalind also wishes;

The little strength that I have, I would it were with you.

(I. II, 150)

While the wresting goes on between Orlando and the mighty Charles, the heart of Rosalind seems to be bouncing and she again wishes;

Now Hercules be thy speed, young man! (Act: 1, Scene: II, 170)

There is another romantic scene after the winning of the wrestling by Orlando where there is risen heart beat found both in case of Rosalind and Orlando.

ROSALIND

Gentleman,

(giving him a chain from her neck)

Wear this for me—one out of suits with fortune

That could give more but that her hand lacks means.

—Shall we go, coz?

Interrupting them Celia says;

CELIA

Ay.—Fare you well, fair gentleman.

ORLANDO

Can I not say “I thank you”? My better parts
Are all thrown down, and that which here stands up
Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block

ROSALIND

He calls us back. My pride fell with my fortunes.
I'll ask him what he would.—Did you call, sir?
Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown
More than your enemies.

Now, one can understand what Orlando feels right now and he says;

What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.
O poor Orlando! Thou art overthrown.
Or Charles or something weaker masters thee. (I. II. 205-222)

Thus they meet in the wrestling arena and fall headlong in love there. Later Celia asks;

Why, cousin! Why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy, not a word?

(I. III. 205-222)

Celia being persistent to hear something from the heart of Rosalind, Rosalind says;

I would try, if I could cry “hem” and have him. (I. III, 205-222)

Again, in the Arden forest Rosalind calls Touchstone a fool and goes away only for making fun of Orlando's poetry, though she is quite well known to the fact that Orlando's poetry is not only loose but also weak. Even the act of posting the poems on the tree is a foolish one but everything is right in sight of a lover to seek for his beloved. Interestingly enough here in this position any beloved will be enjoying the fact and so does Rosalind as she finds open declaration of Orlando's love and feelings towards her. Because of this, Rosalind becomes touchy and protective to Orlando and calls Touchstone a fool. Besides, in another scene Rosalind asks a slew of questions about Orlando's appearance which Celia gently mocks and the Rosalind says;

Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on.

(III.ii.226)

In addition to that, Rosalind disguised as Ganymede makes fun of groaning and sighing lovers to Orlando who has come late for his lesson and so she blames his tardiness and says;

Then there is no true lover in the forest, else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of time as well as a clock. (III.ii.271-275)

Then about love Rosalind says;

Love is merely a madness and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do, and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love, too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel. (III.ii.357-359)

Despite being disguised as Ganymede, she shows her intrinsic womanish desire for love to keep him near and for that she says;

I would cure you if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me. (III.ii.381)

Now to talk about the love sense playing in the heart of Orlando, he speaks to himself;

What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?

I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.

O poor Orlando! Thou art overthrown.

Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.

(I.ii.219-22)

Moreover, Orlando shows his obsession for the love of Rosalind in such a way that he says Ganymede;

I am he that is so love-shaked. I pray you tell me your remedy. (III.ii.330)

Orlando's open declaration, his poetry and the madness for getting love are good enough to prove that he is in deep love with Rosalind and so is Rosalind's condition here, though she does not say anything explicitly. Moreover, there

are other characters that are in love and young too, such as Phebe-Silvius, Phebe-Ganymede and Celia-Oliver though due to the disguise of Rosalind there are confusions being created and the love bond becomes stronger and real. This is how Shakespeare celebrates love along with the young. On the other hand, to the aged people love have a very different meaning than that of the young. Duke Fredrick is been shown as the opposite to the youth who is in love with her daughter, Celia, in the way of a father. Even he loves her in such a way that makes him accept Rosalind to stay with Celia. Whereas, Celia, being young, has the liberty to disrespect and reject her father's love for the sake of Rosalind and due to the unrequited wrong doing. So the young has been shown as not only courageous but also as romantic in the sense of fulfilling their desire rejecting the thought of society and any other bond or relation. About the male female love the aged characters like Jaques, as presented by Shakespeare, has a different meaning. Even of the nature's beauty, he is remorseful and so he says;

I thank it. More, I prithee, more. I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs. More, I prithee, more. (II.iv.12-13)

While sparing with Orlando, Jaques picks up Orlando's greatest fault which is being in love with Rosalind. In Jaques' speech;

The worst fault you have is to be in love. (III.ii.259)

Besides, Jaques has been asked to tell about Ganymede and the he describes himself;

I am so. I do love it better than laughing. (IV.i.4)

In this way in regard of love the young and the aged characters and their approach to it have been shown as opposite to each other. Secondly, the character, Touchstone, delivers a sexual approach. Touchstone criticizes the shepherds' life saying that they live by 'the copulation of cattle'. (3.II.69-70) Despite all his capabilities of fantasizing and flattering the love between Orlando- Rosalind, Touchstone decides to marry Audrey not on the basis of love but on the realistic ground that a man need to satisfy his physical desire. He says to Audrey;

But be it as it may be, I will marry thee... (III.iii.33-34)

Significantly he justifies his decision of marriage by citing the natural cause to Jaques;

As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so men hath his desire. (III.iii.66-67)

An ox, a horse or a falcon each of them has been restrained in their movement, and similarly man's sexual desire must be constrained by confining himself to a woman by marriage. In answer to that, Jaques, a representative of the opposite group named aged ones, says;

And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush like a beggar? Get you to church, and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is. This fellow will but join you together as they join wainscot. Then one of you will prove a shrunk panel and, like green timber, warp, warp. (III.iii.63-70)

Here, in third position, the courage and zeal to gain the lost by fighting is to be discussed as the difference between the elderly and young which is been presented by

Shakespeare in his drama. Though there is tremendous rivalry between senior Duke and the Duke Fredrick, the fighting zeal to gain the unattainable, to bring justice is not seen in the mindset of the elderly character like Duke Senior which should have been the main plot of this drama rather this fighting zeal is been found in Orlando. Though Duke Senior is been erroneously been banished from his own kingdom, he never thinks of regaining it by whatever means it take. On the other hand, in the very first scene there is a fight between the Sir Rowland de Boys. Here, they fight and Adam, another representative of the elderly group, tries to stop them from doing so saying;

Sweet masters, be patient. For your father's remembrance, be at accord.

(1.i.56-57)

This is a fight between one brother with another for ones right and place in home which is almost the same to the two Dukes' situation. Being young, energetic, having strong body, the young are shown capable for fighting where the aged ones wait for miracle. Not even for those reason, but for honor, the young fight in this drama in another scene where Orlando fights with the mighty Charles. This fight is not like that cannot be avoided but Orlando is been shown as capable of handling the hardships of life. Rosalind asks him to avoid the fight but Orlando says;

I beseech you; punish me not with your hard thoughts, wherein I confess me much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies anything. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein, if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that was willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing. Only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty. (I.ii.51-63)

At this stage Orlando tries his luck by fighting as because he has no other option left to live with honor and a win in this fight brings not only love in the life of Orlando but also changes his future which has been full of darkness. This is a shining discrimination shown by Shakespeare in this drama between the aged and young where the young and the elderly are rendered as spirited and meek respectively. Fourthly, in *As You Like It*, all the parts of melancholy, teaching civility and wisdom are been rested on the aged one only while the youth are busy with love making and enjoying the nature. Jaques, in this regard, is a prominent character whose melancholic mind disperses many important thoughts about the human life which are quoted at present too with honor of being universal speech. When Jaques speaks with Rosalind, he asserts;

...it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness. (IV.i.11-12)

Perhaps, the bitter experience of the world has made Jaques delightful in being sad. In act II, Scene VII he conveys;

All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players.
 They have their exits and their entrances,
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
 Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
 Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
 Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel, (142-154)

Here, Jaques philosophizes on the human the stages of human life. Thus, Shakespeare presents aged people as wise, knowing the world with all the experience and to be guardian of and to lead the whole youth to the path of righteousness. And, these qualities can be found in the characters that are aged one here in this drama. But, significantly Shakespeare has shown a few common characteristics between these two generations and those are hatred, envy and ambition. So, it means that in sense of negativity aged are quite equal to the young ones but in the sense of positive view of life, the aged one do not have the authority to deal with those as because they are weak in body, eye sight and in almost everything. So, the aged ones are to enjoy or get pain from nature and wait in their society for a revelation to happen. In this way, Shakespeare puts a border line among the character and their characteristics keeping age in mind and this also shows how much aware he has been at the time of depicting the aged characters which must satisfy the audience and society after all.

DUKE SENIOR, A PROTOTYPE OF THE NEGLECTED CHARACTER

Duke senior, the father of Rosalind, leads the main role from the point of view of age who is been input the quality, according to Shakespeare, best suited to an aged one but this character and his actions would have to be different due to the demand of the plot. Besides, Duke Senior ia found to be satisfied with the place and company he is living with. And so he says;

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
 Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
 Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
 More free from peril than the envious court?
 Here feel we not the penalty of Adam,
 The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
 And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
 Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
 Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,
 "This is no flattery. These are counselors
 That feelingly persuade me what I am."
 Sweet are the uses of adversity,
 Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
 Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
 And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
 Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
 Sermons in stones, and good in everything. (II.i.1-17)

He is portrayed so much kind hearted that even killing animals for food is a matter of pain to him. In that case he says;
 Come, shall we go and kill us venison?

And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools, (II.I.22-23)
 Moreover, Duke senior is such a person who notices the positivity even in the rush behavior and answer of Orlando. And he asserts;

What would you have? Your gentleness shall force
 More than your force move us to gentleness. (II.vii.103-4)
 After this speech with Orlando Duke Senior becomes nostalgic but not in a sad way. Hearing his speech it seems that he has been blessed as being banished. He responds;

True is it that we have seen better days
 And have with holy bell been knolled to church,
 And sat at good men's feasts and wiped our eyes
 Of drops that sacred pity hath engendered. (II.vii.121-122)
 However, after ensuring food for both Orlando and Adam, Orlando goes out to bring Adam while Duke Senior puts light on his unopened heart which also gets hurt like others. He conveys;

Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy.
 This wide and universal theater
 Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
 Wherein we play in. (II.vii.138-141)

Here, though unhappy inside, Duke tries to consume the beauty of nature to heal the broken heart which yeals all the time. But, he never tries or wishes to change his fate. As he may be aged, he along with Shakespeare think that it is not possible to get what he deserves right now and so he pretends or made to pretend to be happy in the forest accompanied by some so aged , deprived and faithful souls, leaving the luxurious, powerful court life. Besides, hearing songs and getting daily food for living and waiting for justice are the things that are found as activities by Duke Senior here in the forest o Arden. Again, because of age and the past social status Duke Senior, as expected from a typical society of Shakespeare, acts as guardian to all who live in that forest and everyone, Duke Senior, Shakespeare, audience and society, is satisfied. He is, perhaps, a symbol of fatherly love which not only Rosalind and Celia enjoy but also everyone around him enjoy the same affection from him. Suddenly, at the end of the play the negative associations of Oliver and Duke Fredrick change to good without showing any reason for that which is nothing but a God gift or miracle. It is possible that human and their mind setup change seeing the reality and absurdity of life in this world which is to be ended by death and death only. But, seeing and being in pastoral area, being banished, or losing everyone and therefore having no one to cry after death cannot easily change the mind of a real life villain who can dethrone his own brother and banish his family. Before every change in the world there is a must need for a catalyst to help the change to take place in real. This is, however, is possible in fancies and in fantasy how there can be any discrimination of any kind except goodness for all, light of peace and eternal peace. After regaining his dukedom, daughter Duke Senior utters;

Welcome, young man.
 Thou offer'st fairly to thy brothers' wedding:
 To one his lands withheld, and to the other

A land itself at large, a potent dukedom.
 —First, in this forest let us do those ends
 That here were well begun and well begot,
 And, after, every of this happy number
 That have endured shrewd days and nights with us
 Shall share the good of our returned fortune
 According to the measure of their states.
 Meantime, forget this new-fall'n dignity,
 And fall into our rustic revelry.
 —Play, music.—And you brides and bridegrooms all,
 With measure heaped in joy to th' measures fall.
 (V.iv.159-171)
 Interestingly enough Jaques informs;
 Sir, by your patience: if I heard you rightly,
 The duke hath put on a religious life
 And thrown into neglect the pompous court.
 (V.iv.173-175)

How easily it is been portrayed that without any self judgment, pain and what's so ever, that the Duke Fredrick , a greedy, selfish human being turn himself to religious path leaving all the pleasures of court life behind. At this stage of discussion *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles can be brought. The character Oedipus, in spite of having ardent desire and activities to forfeit his fate, he has been bound to surrender himself. As a result of that he becomes one of the actor, as said by Jaques, in the stage called world. In the continuation of his life, he kills his father, marries his mother and begets children from his mother. Even after all these, he has been living a good life but the epidemic causing deadly disease to his citizens, his too much curiosity and pride in himself makes him to decide to get out of the pleasures of not only court life but also of the eye sight living a life of a beggar. Here, there are hamartia, nature or fate play the role of catalyst to change himself from a King to beggar. But, here in *As You Like It* what causes can be there to make the impossible, possible. Duke Senior is banished and been abducted of his rightful dukedom. If this is the main conflict of this drama, then he has to prepare himself for regaining what he has lost. Again, in Homer's *Iliad* , it is seen that Agamemnon , not certainly young and very much in love with his wife, Helen though, makes every possible arrangements to bring back his wife not to live a life with but to kill her so that he can keep his ego, self esteem high. Interestingly, if Homer, being a man of ancient time, can think of an aged man like Agamemnon can take revenge against the mighty Troy, then why a universal writer like Shakespeare should depend on miracle only. As Agamemnon knows that he alone cannot capitalize the Troy by himself and so he prepares collaboration of armies from all his allies and also includes Achilles. He finally marches towards his aim and gets that done by a lot of hardships, though it cannot be said that he lives and sees the job done but at least he has made an attempt and how good reason he has seen in this mammoth death havoc is another question. On the other hand, in this drama, Duke Senior keeps singing and enjoying the company of some loyal elderly souls regretting on the natural process of human birth and death. Duke Senior, if Shakespeare has

thought like that as this is the main conflict of this drama, could have gathered allies and could have used Orlando, who has defeated the mighty Charles, as an Achilles, to march against the Duke Fredrick. As a result of that, after a fight between good and evil, there could have been a great end and find a capable man, Orlando, to get his girl married with. But, it is not possible in *As You Like It* because the dramatist's contradistinguished view about the aged one. The prominent plot of duke's rivalry is been neutralized using some magical, unknown process with a view in mind that is biased to age and also puts emphasize on the nature and its process. So, the attitude, shown by Shakespeare in this drama, to Duke Senior can be called, from the gerontological point of view, not only a discriminated but also a prejudicial one, as Shakespeare prefers the aged people to be the guardian of the young, a father, a wise man with remorseful past which is to be taught to the young and one who is waiting for death.

JACQUES, A SPOKESMAN OF SHAKESPEARE:

In *As You Like It*, Jaques plays a special role, as designed by Shakespeare, of a proud, anti romantic, melancholic, philosophical, complex and a critic of the real life that significantly demonstrates Shakespeare's vision of seeing the aged. Moreover, Jaques carries a poster of motley-minded gentlemanliness with his ripe observation, cynical sight and experienced knowledge. However, even before Jaques appears in the play, he has been tagged with the name, 'the melancholic Jaques' (III.II.26) who has the expertise to moralize upon any spectacle no matter how ignorable it is. Here, Duke Senior adds;

But what said Jaques?
 Did he not moralize this spectacle?
 In reply First lord says;
 Oh, yes, into a thousand similes.
 First, for his weeping into the needless stream:
 "Poor deer," quoth he, "thou mak'st a testament
 As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
 To that which had too much." Then, being there alone,
 Left and abandoned of his velvet friend,
 "'Tis right," quoth he. "Thus misery doth part
 The flux of company." Anon a careless herd,
 Full of the pasture, jumps along by him
 And never stays to greet him. "Ay," quoth Jaques,
 "Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens.
 'Tis just the fashion. Wherefore do you look
 Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?"
 Thus most invectively he pierceth through
 The body of the country, city, court,
 Yea, and of this our life, swearing that we
 Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,
 To fright the animals and to kill them up
 In their assigned and native dwelling place. (II. i. 45-65)
 Later, Jaques, himself, illustrates the miserable world saying;
 Give me leave
 To speak my mind, and I will through and through
 Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world,

If they will patiently receive my medicine. (II.v.58-61)

It seems he is always ready to 'rail against our mistress, the world and our misery' (III.II.295-6). This attitude is seen by other characters of the play too. In this regard, Duke's answer to Jaques who claims to heal the world of every possible misery is;

Most mischievous foul sin in chiding sin,
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
As sensual as the brutish sting itself,
And all th' embossèd sores and headed evils
That thou with license of free foot hast caught
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world. (II.vii..65-70)

In this way, it can be understood that Jaques has an overconfidence in him in seeing the unseen. It is age, perhaps, which makes him talk and think like the way and take pride in the experience of the world he has which, eventually, has given him the ability to talk on such matter which everyone sees and feels but does not express. He with the age has made himself to a morbid existence and he finds;

The worst fault you have to be in love. (III.ii.270)
And, Orlando, the romantic hero, answers;
Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue
I am weary of you. (III.ii.271-272)

Not only Orlando, but also Rosalind is weary of him. At one stage, Rosalind also rebukes Jaques for disabling 'all the benefits of your own country' for being 'out of the love with nativity' and also for blaming 'God for making you that countenance you are' (IV.I.34-7) As a consequence, Jaques comes up with all the ingredients in right proportion to be called an anti romantic man. He has been portrayed by Shakespeare in the way to give and to share what Shakespeare has experienced and thinks of the world around even of the aged people. Being aged, Jaques is been shown as a real life philosopher who philosophies;

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
(II.vii. 142-154)

The point of view philosophized here in this speech is enlightened by Jaques' cynicism and thought. It, the speech, has been so powerfully thought that it elevates Jaques' melancholy and makes everyone to pause a bit and contemplate the schematic evaluation of human being. According to the speech, the first stage of human life is the infancy when the human mewl and puke in mother's arm. The second stage is the school boy who creeps like snail and shows unwillingness to go to school. After that, there is third stage is

defined by Jaques as a lover who sighs, woes and writes ballads for the beloved. Then there is the fourth stage of human life where they are the soldiers who are bearded and full of energy, self honor, reputation. The next stage is the fifth one where humans cross examine themselves and walk to the path of wisdom which is called, by Jaques, the justice. Interestingly, here in this stage people are expected as men with formal beard cut. In the sixth position Jaques puts the dotard, absent minded old man, as the last but one stage of human life. Here in this stage, people belonging to this stage are expected as lean and slippery highlighting the fact of physical weakness. He also adds that the sixth staged people should wear spectacles due to poor eye sight but they should have no financial problem as they have money with them. At last, Jaques talks about the seventh stage of human life which is termed as the senile and sick elder which is compared to a second childishness. Here, humans lose every physical facility like teeth, eye, taste, and wait to die and death it is. This philosophy is worth praising and can surely come out of a mastermind only. It is not of any doubt that Jaques, as shown in these lines, are wise enough to speak something like universal truth keeping the society, its norms, institution and natural way of seeing the human being. In addition to that Jaques, it must not be forgotten, is a character made and spoken by Shakespeare in a melancholic way who himself adds;

I thank it. More, I prithee, more. I can suck melancholy
out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs. More, I prithee,
more. (II.v.12-13)

He again is been given a speech;

It is my only suit,
Provided that you weed your better judgments
Of all opinion that grows rank in them
That I am wise. I must have liberty
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please, for so fools have.
And they that are most gallèd with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
The "why" is plain as way to parish church:
He that a fool doth very wisely hit
Doth very foolishly, although he smart,
Not to seem senseless of the bob. If not,
The wise man's folly is anatomized
Even by the squand'ring glances of the fool.
Invest me in my motley. Give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine. (II. v. 45-62)

He, in a sense, enjoys being in the sad mood and it is possible that he has fallen in love with sadness. Besides, Jaques is also charged with insincerity and cynicism. Despite his entire sour mouth and appearance, he possesses the position of the spirit of Arden. At the end of the play when excitement, enjoyment overflow all over the Arden forest, Jaques wants;

To see no pastime I. What you would have
I'll stay to know at your abandoned cave. (V. iv. 94-95)

In this way Shakespeare has not only produced a prominent character to be criticized but also uses him to speak

for Shakespeare, himself, the life philosophy which cannot be taken lightly. Shakespeare's Jaques is in the sixth stage of life. This is a good example of how a people of sixth stage would be, according to Shakespeare. Jaques has been presented as a man without any romantic zeal and happiness as if he does not deserve that being a man of this stage of age. Even, Jaques looks at everything from the eyes given by Shakespeare which are somehow secluded from the society to see, perhaps, the society from a far. Through this character and his speeches, somehow, Shakespeare wants the aged to be true, religious, weak in all parts of physic, and certainly religious one keeping faith in something special which can do the wrong, a right. Moreover, Shakespeare, through this character, has defined the mind, body and soul of aged people. But, here, raises the question of loosing eye sight, teeth, black hair, and having white beard which cannot be the definition of an aged man. However, like a xenophobic, Shakespeare here wants to clarify the ideas related to the aged one neglecting the real life fact that only loosing teeth, hair, taste, strength cannot be applied to all the elderly human being as these may happen in pretty early age depending on geography, genetics, live hard life style.

STOCK CHARACTERS AND BIASEDNESS TOWARDS THEM DUE TO AGE

While there are lots of critical thoughts humming around Shakespeare's *As You Like It* being a romantic and comedy drama, the very significant position of the thought of aged man, like Adam, and their situation in this drama is scarcely been discussed. Shakespeare extracts a great deal of insights for his plays from the ancient Greek and Roman classics where he has been particularly fond of the idea of using stock characters. Simply, stock characters mean the characters that are being used repeatedly within a specific literary genre. Moreover, Shakespeare has made use of those characters as parents, guardians, servants, advisors to create an obstacle to or accelerate the smooth development of plot. And, Shakespeare has mostly used aged man as those stock characters. Likewise, the Earl of Kent and Lear's Fool in *King Lear* are to be said the stock characters who give company to the king till the death and take nothing back. Adam's role in this play is also of that of stock character type but has a lot of matters to consider in regard to gerontology. Adam works as a good listener in the play but there are two things to be considered in regard to Adam. And, they are; he is crazy old and crazy loyal. Despite lifelong service with loyalty, he is also ready to give his savings of entire life to Orlando so that he can go away for his own safety. Adam shows his loyalty saying;

But do not so. I have five hundred crowns,
The thrifty hire I saved under your father,
Which I did store to be my foster nurse
When service should in my old limbs lie lame
And unregarded age in corners thrown.
Take that, and He that doth the ravens feed,
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,
Be comfort to my age. Here is the gold.

All this I give you. Let me be your servant.

Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty. (II. iii. 39-48)
Orlando, instead, justly takes Adam with him to the Forest of Arden but dealing with so hard journey, wilderness and hunger Adam gets almost killed. In fact, he is taken closer to death but still he gives company to Orlando and this can be called devotion at its best. He, though, been treated well by Orlando and Orlando's concern for him can be understood by his speech with the Duke senior; where he mentions;

There is an old poor man
Who after me hath many a weary step
Limped in pure love. Till he be first sufficed,
Oppressed with two weak evils, age and hunger,
I will not touch a bit. (II.vii. 130-134)

As Adam is been treated with sympathy, so has he been treated badly. Oliver, when he has been in fight with Orlando, expresses his disgust;

Get you with him, you old dog. (I.i.83)

It is quite like there is no place for aged man like Adam in this world. Even after being in forest, he has not been seen or heard of. At least, Orlando-Rosalind's marriage could have been a place where Adam would have been seen or heard of but nowhere is he. Meanwhile, Adam is simply gone with no remembrance of any kind even for the audience. Shakespeare, being dogmatic towards aged ones, finds it needless to tell anything about Adam as he has been only a stock character, brought in drama with a fixed purpose of highlighting the mercy and love for all in Orlando and hatred, negativity in Oliver. Here, Shakespeare thinks that aged ones are capable of showing loyalty and keep the loved ones in better place. But, why this has to be the duty of the aged ones, according to Shakespeare, is not clear enough. Faithfulness is to be expected from the aged only and this is another stereotypical thought by Shakespeare shown in his drama. Besides, Shakespeare's negligence towards the aged man with intransient mind is focused in the character, Adam. So, Shakespeare has set an example of his ideology where the people belonging to the seventh stage are not necessary for the world to go on rather they should be kept like dogs, faithful, in house and so is the reason, perhaps, of Oliver's choice of word when he rebukes Adam.

GERONTOLOGY AND SHAKESPEARE'S APPROACH

Shakespeare in his drama, *As You Like It*, has dealt with aged characters who have been treated differently. Then, there arise some questions about the characteristics of being aged, their identity and their necessity in the society. Kate Davidson says;

One of the first seminar exercises I give to groups of both undergraduate and postgraduate students is to make two lists, one with negative stereotypes of older people, and one with positive stereotypes. Unsurprisingly, the first list is rapidly filled: *smelly, forgetful, physically and mentally sick, bad-tempered, deaf, impatient, miserable, narrowminded* and so on. The positive stereotypes

list takes longer, but mostly they come up with things like *kind, patient, wise, keepers of the family and social history, good at crosswords* (because knowledgeable), *skilled at sewing and other crafts, good gardeners and can talk over problems* (grandparents). With encouragement, it eventually dawns on the students that the negative stereotypes can and do apply to every generation but that many of the positive attributes apply almost exclusively to older people.

(Hamilton 228)

The stereotypes discussed by Kate, have been followed in *As You Like It* by Shakespeare also. As the young people at present, Shakespeare hardly shows the aged ones as men capable of doing everything with some stereotypical considerations for his characters. It is paradoxical that the aged characters are presented as Duke, Lord but regretfully they are all retired or been banished. Besides, they all have retired forcefully or somehow they are been considered as men with those stereotypes that come directly from society. From that point of view, Shakespeare keeps his aged characters out of the social involvement like marriage, romance, fight, warfare and involves them with fatherhood, loyalty, melancholic experienced wise man. However, there is no finite variety or definition of what age is to be called old. The stereotypes marked to identify the aged differ with regard to health, personality, area, ethnicity, sexuality geographical reasons and social support networks. Here, in this drama, Shakespeare becomes judgmental and decides a few characters to be shown with the aging stereotypes. And, in this regard, Kate Davidson in the article 'Social Perspectives on Ageing' says;

Herbert Blumer (1986) originally coined the term *symbolic interactionism* in 1969 and posited that it is through language and gestures (symbolism) as well as interaction with the physical environment that we understand and locate ourselves in society. Thus, the ageing process can be seen in terms of the relationship between individuals and their social environment and the interpretation of events which accompany old age. This is a particularly useful approach in making sense of the ageing process and takes into consideration experience at an individual level in the context of the macro, societal level

(Hamilton 231)

Again Diana Wallace in her article, 'Literary Portrayals of Ageing' says;

Voice and point of view can be manipulated in a literary text so that we see through the eyes of, for instance, the 76-year-old first-person narrator of May Sarton's novel *As We Are Now* (1973) and identify with her desperation at being trapped in a 'concentration camp for the old' (1973, p. 3). This capacity to evoke empathetic response together with the sheer range of representations of ageing in literature – from Chaucer's cuckolded old husband in the May–January story of *The Merchant's Tale* through Shakespeare's maddened Lear to T.S. Eliot's lyric assertion that 'Old men ought to be explorers' (Hamilton 390)

And, Shakespeare wants others to see aged ones associated with the social stereotypes of the then society. Wallace also says;

The concept of life as a series of 'ages' or 'stages' is perhaps most familiar to us through Jaques' 'All the world's a stage' speech in *As You Like It*, which ends with 'second childishness and mere oblivion, / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything' (Act II, scene vii, ll. 165–6). Shakespeare's sonnets return repeatedly to the questions of time and mortality and contain some of our best-known treatments of age as a poetic motif, including sonnets number 22, 'My glass shall not persuade me I am old', and number 73, 'That time of year thou may'st in me behold' (1999, pp. 87, 113).

(Hamilton 392)

Like Shakespeare, Tennyson is also tagged with this idea but many of the people who are acquainted with 'Ulysses' are unknown of the fact that Tennyson writes a companion piece named, 'Tithonus'. And, about this poem Wallace says;

In this poem, ageing is no longer a heroic consummation but a torment to be shed, with the titular hero of this poem longing for the release of death, having (as mentioned earlier in the chapter) been cursed with everlasting ageing. At the end of this poem, there is a rather different tone, as Tithonus pleads with Eos (his former lover, who in some versions of the myth visited him each sunrise in her silver-wheeled chariot) to allow him to die: Release me, and restore me to the ground; Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave; Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn; I earth in earth forget these empty courts, And thee returning on thy silver wheels. Tennyson (1973, p. 91)

(Hamilton 393)

On the other hand, nothing is found from Shakespeare where he deals with the elderly people by not the age and the age stereotypes they belong from the society. And, this has been his attitude to the elderly ones throughout the drama *As You Like It* too.

AS YOU LIKE IT, A NON ROBIN HOOD PLAY

Though Shakespeare in *As You Like It* presents Duke Senior as the heroic outlaw of British folklore; Robin Hood, He fails to keep Duke Senior active in the journey of justice which makes it an anti Robin Hood play. On the surface level it is quite obvious that there are similarities between these two characters as they both live in forest and have a group of loyal followers indeed. It is found in the speech of *As You Like It* also;

They say he is already in the Forest of Arden and a many merry men with him, and there they live like the Old Robin Hood." (1.1.100)

Besides, they both are been outlaws driven into the forest by a corrupt ruler. In case of Robin Hood, the villainous brother of Richard the Lionheart, King John has exiled him to the forest of Sherwood. Likewise, in this play, Duke Senior is also been forced out of his kingdom and been exiled to Arden Forest by his brother, Duke Fredrick who replaces King John. Again, neither Robin

nor Duke Senior grieves the exile rather they enjoy the pastoral life as they have the company of 'some merry men'. In both cases, these two characters seem to be opportunistic as they seize the positivity of pastoral life where Robin Hood steals from rich and delivers to the poor and Duke Senior claims to learn more from the stones and brooks than the library and churches. Again, in some productions both characters even have the similar appearances. Robin Hood is traditionally seen in green dress, a choice given his leafy surroundings. Similarly, Duke Senior is therefore a clear tribute to Robin Hood and his distinctive dress sense, right down to the feathers in their caps. These similarities puzzle Shakespeare's mind which makes him compare with Robin Hood but the diversion of these characters' activities are to be noted carefully to understand the reality. While Robin Hood, with the intention of philanthropy, redistributes wealth and promotes equality, Duke Senior is found contented with what he has showing no activity of any kind except waiting and mesmerizing wise talk and death after all. Moreover, Robin Hood plays the role of savior, destroyer of evil, and a mighty fighter. These qualities are seen lacking in regard to Duke Senior. The fight between Robin Hood and Little John offers a lovely description of a rehearsed fight;

The stranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,
Which caused the blood to appear;
Then Robin, enrag'd, more fiercely engag'd,
And followed his blows more severe.
So thick and so fast did he lay it on him,
With passionate fury and ire,
At every stroke, he made him to smoke,
As if he had been all on fire.
O then into fury the stranger he grew,
And gave him a damnable look,
And with it a blow that laid him full low,
And tumbled him into the brook.
'I prithee, good fellow, O where art thou now?'
The stranger, in laughter, he cried;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, 'Good faith, in the flood,
And floating along with the tide'. (Child 135)

Besides fighting, Robin Hood encounters sexual activities in the forest life. But, the way Shakespeare has portrayed the life of Duke Senior; it denotes that he plainly avoids the discomforts of fight or being rebellious not even for justice. In fact, Robin Hood and Duke Senior cannot be compared as they have shown different life zeal and philosophies. In this regard Professor Stephen Knight has confidently asserts;

Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is a consciously non-Robin Hood play. (Knight 02)

Here, Shakespeare tries to make other think Duke Senior, Robin Hood but keeps the Duke aloof from any such courageous action. Duke's passivity is highly noticeable here in this drama which, surprisingly enough brings reward for him at the end of the play when Duke Fredrick returns his thrown. Moreover, Duke Senior gets the benefit of working in moral compass living a life in passivity. Portraying this passive life idea of Shakespeare can

come out from nothing but the discriminated idea of age. As Duke Senior is an aged man, according to Shakespeare, he may not have the energy to fight for justice rather he should wait for something miracle to happen. This certain approach of Shakespeare towards Duke Senior makes *As You Like It* not only a non Robin Hood play but also a dogmatic play representing the discrimination in regard to age.

CONCLUSION

Considering the activities and qualities of the characters shown by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, it is not difficult to imagine what has been the thought in the mind of Shakespeare about age. Moreover, Shakespeare has neglected his aged characters in such a way that they are portrayed physically deformed characters. On the other hand, the youth enjoy all the flavors of life keeping the aged ones secluded from real action. In fact, this pastoral comedy is the celebration of youthfulness and its circumstances called love and so. In contrast to youthfulness, the aged have found nothing but inactivity and a representation of wisdom from Shakespeare. However, the aged have been given a place at the sixth and seventh stage of life where, according to Shakespeare, they lose eye, teeth, taste and everything one by one. As Shakespeare is a world by himself, this kind of approach to satisfy the norms and the institutions of society cannot be accepted. Finally, it can be said that even a grand master of arts has not been capable to overdo the social norm and think in a way different about the aged people.

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