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The Comic Principles of the Tractatus Coislinianus as Exemplified in the Savoy Libretti of William Schwenk Gilbert with Emphasis on Patience and Iolanthe

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THE COMIC PRINCIPLES OF THE TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE SAVOY LIBRETTI OF WILLIAM SCHWENK GILBERT WITH EMPHASIS ON PATIENCE AND IOLANTHE

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

When one hears the name Sir William Schwenk Gilbert, there is usually a moment's mental pause. Or perhaps it is a matter of minutes. Or it may even be that no one comes to mind at all. But when one hears "Gilbert and Sullivan," there is, or should be, a sparkling reaction, a quick recognition of the great collaborators of English light opera in the late nineteenth century. Even the most musically pedestrian or literally naive may burst forth with "The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra la," or "Three little maids from school are we,"—two of the well-known songs from, perhaps, the most frequently produced of the Savoy operas, The Mikado. One may even go into a hornpipe dance and come forth with a lusty "We sail the ocean blue, And our saucy ship's a beauty" from an earlier work, H.M.S.Pinafore. The present generation, unfortunately, may not even know these tuneful selections. A query will almost inevitably follow the mere mention of "Savoy Libretti."

It is not my purpose in this introduction to write a condensed biography of either Sir William Schwenk Gilbert or Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan. It will deal rather with their work of collaboration in the Savoy operas, and with the significant aspects of their lives in connection with their work.

W.S. Gilbert was introduced to Arthur Sullivan in March 1869, by Fred Clay, the composer with whom Gilbert had collaborated on Ages Ago. However, at the time, it was merely a formal introduction—nothing more. Sullivan was then being hailed as the unofficial composer-laureate of England, having written such works as the incidental music to The Tempest; an overture In Memoriam; a musical farce, Cox and Box, in which he collaborated with F.C.
Burnand. Gilbert had turned his hand to playwriting, having "outgrown" the delightful and extremely clever Bab Ballads, many of which later formed the basis of some of his best songs and "ditties" in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. However, the paths of the two men were slowly being drawn together, and in 1871 Sullivan wrote the music for Gilbert's Thespis; or, The Gods Grown Old, the first of what was to develop into a famous partnership. Strangely enough, Thespis was not successful, playing nightly for only one month. It had been produced by John Hollingshead, founder and manager of the Gaiety Theatre, during the Christmas season, 1871, and its cool reception was hardly such as to suggest to Hollingshead—who had brought the composer and librettist together for the first time—that he give them another commission. And, unfortunately for himself, he let them go. It is important to note, however, that Thespis did contain two "Gilbertian" ingredients: the patter-song, in which a character tells the truth about himself, and the Gilbertian chorus, about which more will be said later.

The period between Thespis and Trial By Jury was an industrious era for both Gilbert and Sullivan, separately, in developing their individual talents—Sullivan becoming the arbiter of English music and Gilbert achieving a surprising dominance over the English theatre. "For Sullivan honors, ribbons, gauds, and decorations...he is the musical bulwark of Great Britain, unrivaled in versatility or productivity...through a dazzling period he is, to the commoner, British music, sacred and profane... For Gilbert, decorations of abuse. He is acquiring personal influence, wealth, and enemies."¹

¹ Cf. Isaac Goldberg, The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan; or the ' Compleat' Savoyard, New York, 1928, 155-158.
But from his prolific pen came many a successful play such as \textit{Pygmalion} and \textit{Galatea}, \textit{The Happy Land} (a travesty of his own burlesque \textit{The Wicked World}), and \textit{Topsy-Turvydom}.

It was not until 1875 that Richard D'Oyly Carte, acting manager of the Royalty Theatre, asked Gilbert to provide a curtain-raiser and suggested that Sullivan write the music. Fortunately for the world the latter was enthusiastic over the libretto:

From Sullivan himself we have a vivid picture of Gilbert calling upon him with the libretto, clad in a heavy fur coat against the thick snow and the intense cold. . . . 'As soon as he had come to the last word he closed up the manuscript violently, apparently unconscious of the fact that he had achieved his purpose so far as I was concerned, inasmuch as I was screaming with laughter the whole time. The words and music were written, and all the rehearsals completed within the space of three weeks'.

Thus was born that famous pair whose first striking success came on March 25, 1875, when \textit{Trial By Jury} was produced. The hearty reception accorded to the operetta by the public encouraged Gilbert and Sullivan to collaborate in a more ambitious venture. While discussing plans, they were approached again by the keen-sighted D'Oyly Carte who, at the time, was engaged in promoting an English comic opera company to carry out his idea of developing comic opera and who hoped to give it a permanent London lodging. An excellent man of business, Carte turned to Gilbert and Sullivan with a request that they write the first opera for his new company. They went to work on \textit{The Sorcerer}, produced by D'Oyly Carte's new Comedy Opera Company on November 17, 1877, at the Opera Comique—not by any means the most elite theatre of London. However, its phenomenal success justified a further commission, and the

\[\text{2 Ibid., 166.}\]
result was H.M.S. Pinafore, produced May 25, 1878. After this the Comedy Opera Company was terminated, but D'Oyly Carte took over the lease of the Opera Comique, and for him Gilbert and Sullivan wrote the Pirates of Penzance, produced April 3, 1880, and Patience, first played on April 23, 1881.

The operas by this time were so popular that they had outgrown the space of the Opera Comique. Under the direction of Carte, the dream of a permanent home for the English comic opera sprang into reality with the building of the spacious and elegant Savoy Theatre, boasting everything for the patrons' comfort—including electric lights (and gas jets in case of an emergency). The new theatre opened October 10, 1881, with Patience, which was transferred from the old theatre. For the space of ten years Gilbert and Sullivan operas were played nightly at the Savoy. Iolanthe, Princess Ida, The Mikado, Ruddigore, The Yeomen of the Guard, and The Gondoliers were the new productions during this decade, and the ten years' program was interspersed with various revivals of Gilbert and Sullivan dating back to Trial by Jury.

In the light of present-day risqué repartee, it is interesting to note the slogan of the collaborators: "Clean but clever fun." It was their intention to wipe out the grosser elements of early Victorian burlesque in which, indeed, Gilbert himself had indulged. He was not above coarseness and indecency as The Wicked World (produced first, by the German Reeds, on January 4, 1873) shows. Other of his earlier successes were hardly above reproach. The biggest "hit" in Cock Robin (produced in December, 1867) was a cancan dance. His Robert the Devil; or, The Nun, the Don, and the Son of a Gun, "commissioned by John Hollingshead for the opening bill of the Gaiety Theatre on Monday, December 21, 1868, lighted the 'sacred lamp of burlesque'
that Hollingshead was proudly to keep burning through the seventeen years that followed."3 John Hollingshead was interested in keeping before the public "short skirts and legs." Gilbert and Sullivan together wished to introduce "long skirt" comedy. "No vulgarity" was the keynote of their policy. Each had a free hand both in writing and producing, while D'Oyly Carte controlled the business side of the enterprise. All three were experts with implicit confidence in one another. As a result, the work dove-tailed into one harmonious whole. Indeed, the Gilbert and Sullivan operas might well be called the Gilbert, Sullivan, and Carte operas because without Richard D'Oyly Carte it is hardly conceivable that the great and continued success of librettist and composer could have continued. It was Carte's keenness, tact, shrewdness, energy and uncanny human understanding that guided these creators to their tremendous success.

The run of The Gondoliers, terminating June 20, 1891, completed an era of unbroken popularity when, for two years, Gilbert and Sullivan opera was banished from The Savoy owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding between the three partners. The root cause of this discord was their divergent temperaments. Gilbert was, in a real sense, the begetter of Sullivan's music. One reads in Hesketh Pearson's biography of the two collaborators that Gilbert was "the Svengali who by hypnotising Trilby-Sullivan could create the notes he wanted; and Sullivan surrendered gladly to the magnetism of a personality that could extract from him the essence of a light-hearted happiness he was otherwise unable to express."4 But Gilbert was jealous of the music he had

3 Ibid., 104.

inspired in Sullivan, and Sullivan was annoyed that he should be dependent upon Gilbert. These emotions became stronger as time went on. Wherever Gilbert went he heard people singing, humming, and whistling Sullivan's tunes. He had no ear for music (at least, according to himself, which seems strange in view of his technical excellencies in rhyming), and little admiration for it, and relieved himself by chaffing Sullivan in public.

From a relatively insignificant beginning the quarrel grew in intensity until both men were at swords' points. Through correspondence, in which their manager D'Oyly Carte figures, one may see the lengths to which professional jealousy can go. It is a long story, ably treated by many biographers. The bridge was temporarily gulfed, and the public enthusiastically welcomed back the triumvirate when Utopia Limited was produced at the Savoy on October 7, 1893. Their last work, The Grand Duke, opening on March 7, 1896, ended the famous cycle—and was their first undoubted failure. When Gilbert had lost Sullivan's admiration and Sullivan had lost Gilbert's approval, there was nothing left to fall back upon. Earlier unpleasantries became magnified out of all proportion. Pride, jealousy, personal antipathy, ambition did the rest. However, two such temperaments would find great difficulty trying to agree, and as Isaac Goldberg says succinctly,

Gilbert and Sullivan were human antonyms. Gilbert had been born with a genius for petulance, for hostility, for dissidence. Sullivan made friends as naturally as Gilbert made enemies; he was a social creature in whom conformity at times could take on the contours of self-surrender. 5

The somewhat effeminate, physically delicate, and procrastinating Sullivan must have been an irritating co-worker for the heartily masculine, cantankerous and caustic Gilbert. This librettist never went out of his way to make people comfortable; in fact, he was feared and hated by anyone whose vanity

he had pricked. His wit was like quick lightning, and with his essentially critical mind, his unadaptability, his disrespectful attitudes, and his prejudices and grumblings, Gilbert was too difficult a personality for the gentle Sullivan to endure.

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas are a "national possession, rivalled only in their widespread and apparently permanent appeal by the plays of Shakespeare and the novels of Dickens. They brought living and enduring art into a valley of dead bones and restored the literary self-respect of the English stage."6 They are distinctly British, despite a Japanese setting or a Venetian one; and the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company of London—founded well over a half-century ago—still preserves with meticulous exactness the ideas and ideals of those who brought it into being. Gilbert and Sullivan operas are presented with a respect for tradition that is almost a religion. The name "Savoy" conjures up a living picture of quaintly charming personalities singing and dancing amongst the shadows of an historic building whose walls echo with the merry laughter of hearts made glad by England's loved Gilbert and Sullivan.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to give the names and dates of the Savoy Operas. Following Patience, which had its long initial run at the Opera Comique before being transferred to the Savoy, were

Lolanthe; or the Peer and the Peri, 1882
Princess Ida; or Castle Adamant, 1884
The Mikado; or The Town of Titipu, 1885
Ruddigore; or The Witch's Curse, 1887
The Yeomen of the Guard; or The Merryman and His Maid, 1888
The Gondoliers; or The King of Barataria, 1889
Utopia Limited; or The Flowers of Progress, 1893
The Grand Duke; or The Statutory Duel, 1896

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This brief background of the Savoy operas is designed merely to give the reader a bowing acquaintance with the significant aspects of the work of the collaborators. The purpose of the thesis is to attempt to show how the comic principles of the ancient manuscript known as the *Tractatus Coislinianus* may be applied to modern comedy. A question immediately arises: What is the *Tractatus Coislinianus*? Chapter I will attempt to define and explain briefly the fragmentary treatise (a lengthier discussion may be found in the Appendix to this thesis) as developed by Lane Cooper in his scholarly work, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy*, and will also include a summary of *Iolanthe* and *Patience*. Chapters II and III will attempt to apply these principles to these libretti with an occasional reference to other of the Savoy operas.

The selection of *Patience* and *Iolanthe* was not simply an arbitrary one. They were chosen because of their literary value, their abundance of humour, their dramatic interest, their delightful incidents and situations. Goldberg says of *Patience* that "in statement, development, and dénouement, it is not surpassed in the world of topsy-turvy logic. Gilbert managed to abstract from a transitory fad those eternal aspects that brand the hyper-enthusiast in every age." The librettist, in *Patience*, is at his sparkling best in dialogue; and Sullivan is unmistakably burlesquing Italian opera in some of its melodramatic moments. While of *Iolanthe* Goldberg states:

*Iolanthe* is the fairy of operettas. In years it is as deceptive, in life as perennial, as the all-too-human fay from whom it takes its name. . . . It is, indeed, of Gilbert and Sullivan all compact.

The Gilbertian conflict between reality and fantasy is mirrored in
details great and small. 8

The libretto is lucid, clear of aim, direct in effect, with excellent malice
in double meanings. Both, unquestionably, are representative of some of the
best work of the collaborators. And both, as literature and as music, have
been too long neglected. It is to be hoped that future critics will find it
in their hearts to include in Histories of English Literature, and in works
on music as well, an analysis and appraisal of the heart-and-mind gladdening
operas of Gilbert and Sullivan.

8 Ibid., 273.
CHAPTER I

THE TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS AND SUMMARY

OF PATIENCE AND OF IOLANTHE

This chapter will be based largely upon two works of Lane Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy (the only work in English, to date, that adequately treats the Tractatus Coislinianus), and the Poetics of Aristotle: Its Meaning and Influence. A brief summary of the plots of Patience and Iolanthe will follow the translation and discussion of the Tractatus.

In the preface to An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy Cooper says:

To judge from my own experience, there has hitherto been no really serviceable theory of comedy at the disposal of teachers of literature. And, whatever the value attaching to the rest of my book, I have at least made accessible to classes in the drama and in literary types the Tractatus Coislinianus which, schematic though it be, is by all odds the most important technical treatise on comedy that has come down to us from the ancients. And modern times give us nothing of comparable worth in its field.1

According to Cooper, this Tractatus Coislinianus is a strange fragment of condensation of a theory of comedy bearing an obvious relation to the Poetics of Aristotle, first noticed by J.A.Cramer who printed it in the year 1839 from a manuscript of the tenth century, No. 120, in the De Coislin collection at Paris. A better transcript of the manuscript was utilized by J. Bernays for his Ergansung zu Aristoteles' Poetik (1853, 1880), and the

1 Lane Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy. With an Adaptation of the Poetics and a translation of the Tractatus Coislinianus, New York, 1922, viii.
text has been several times reprinted, as by J. Vahlen,² and by W.G. Rutherford,² the best editions being those of G. Kaibel² and of J. Kayser.² Kayser declares that of the ancient commentaries dealing with Greek comedy, as no one will fail to perceive, the most valuable for an investigation into the history of the art of poetry is the Tractatus Coislinianus. Brief though the fragment is, then, among the vestiges of a theory of comedy that have come down to us in the Greek tradition (aside from the Poetics of Aristotle and the Philebus of Plato) it is, not merely for historical purposes, but in itself, by far the most important.³

J.W.H. Atkins in his Literary Criticism in Antiquity, published in 1934, says:

Before proceeding, however, with the narrative of critical development it may be well...to give some account of a work to which it is true no certain date can be given, but which may possibly belong to the first century B.C. ...The work in question is what is known as the Tractatus Coislinianus, a Greek compilation, unique in form and possessed of considerable interest. That it cannot well be earlier than the first century, B.C., is the considered opinion of at least one authority [Kayser] and this, if true, provides a backward limit, though it obviously does not preclude a much later date. At the same time, there is something more to be said for associating it with the first century B.C. There is, first, its strong Aristotelian colouring, which may well have been due to the renewed study of Aristotle, made possible by the transference of the ms. of his works to Rome in the course of the century [thought to be around 86 B.C.²/ and their subsequent treatment at the hands of Tyran- nion, Andronicus, and others. Then, too, it is not without its signif- icance that Cicero's remarks on "the ludicrous" have much in common with the treatment of comedy in the Tractatus. Such evidence, it is


³ Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 10-11.
true, is not conclusive since both treatments have been based on a common original. Yet neither can the possibility of Cicero's indebtedness be arbitrarily ruled out, nor the consequent allocation of the Tractatus to the first century B.C. The evidence as to date is confessedly slight; but it is perhaps sufficient to justify some consideration of the work.\footnote{4}

Atkins notes that the manuscript has received from scholars less attention than it deserves; and that in its discussion of comedy we find many traces of Aristotle's methods and thought, as well as material which (so it is claimed—and Atkins' reference here is Lane Cooper) had formed part of the lost second book of the Poetics.\footnote{5} Atkins has used Cooper as his main source of information, both authors stating that the Tractatus is without doubt in the Aristotelian succession, and that it is a characteristic Peripatetic production, "embodiing the sober unimpassioned methods of the master, while devoted mainly to exposition of detail rather than to the philosophical inquiries of the earlier age."\footnote{6} Cooper holds that the fragment serves to explain Greek comedy in the same way, if not to the same extent, as the Poetics has served to explain Greek tragedy and the epic; and Atkins writes:

What is certain is that the work contains traces of Aristotelian doctrine in abbreviated and distorted form, that it embodies also a valuable analysis of the sources of comic effect, while it further illustrates the contamination of Aristotle's theories which had resulted from the temporary loss of the Aristotelian texts, and from the literary developments and theorisings of the Hellenistic period.\footnote{7}

\footnote{5}Ibid., 139.
\footnote{6}Ibid., 142.
\footnote{7}Ibid., 143.
Another author, Mary A. Grant, notes that:

The Coislinian Treatise on Comedy, appended to one of the mss. of Aristophanes, follows the Aristotelian tradition, at least, if it does not directly represent it. The theory that laughter has its origin in deformity of some kind, which we have seen in Plato and Aristotle, is here repeated: 'The jester ridicules faults of the mind and body.'

A divergent opinion from those given is that of James Feibleman in his In Praise of Comedy:

The Tractatus has no great value in itself. It proposes nothing new for comedy which could not have been equally well deduced by others from the general theories set forth by Aristotle in the Poetics and elsewhere. Its importance lies rather in the lesson it teaches of the widespread acceptance of the implicit realistic point of view which the Greek mind brought to bear upon all ab-

What are the principles laid down in the Tractatus Coislinianus?

The following is the translation as it appears in Cooper's text, and is, as the author explains, mainly based upon the text of Kaibel with the use of the work of Kayser.

THE TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS
Translatted

Poetry is either (I) non-mimetic or (II) mimetic.

I. Non-mimetic poetry is divided into (A) historical, (B) instructive.
   (B) Instructive poetry is divided into
      (1) didactic
      (2) theoretical

II. Mimetic poetry is divided into
   (A) Narrative
   (B) Dramatic and [directly] presenting action:
      (1) Comedy
      (2) Tragedy
      (3) Mimes
      (4) Satyr-dramas

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8 Mary A. Grant, "The Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the Laughable," Studies in Language and Literature, No. 21, 32.

Tragedy removes the fearful emotions of the soul through compassion and terror. And he says that it aims at having a due proportion of fear. It has grief for its mother.

Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect, of sufficient length, in embellished language, the several kinds of embellishment being separately found in the several parts of the play, directly presented by persons acting, and not given through narrative; through pleasure and laughter effecting the purgation of the like emotions. It has laughter for its mother.

Laughter arises (I) from the diction (expression); (II) from the things (content).

I. From the diction, through the use of--

A. Homonyms
B. Synonyms
C. Garrulity
D. Paronyms, formed by
   (1) addition and
   (2) clipping
E. Diminutives
F. Parversion
   (1) By the voice
   (2) By other means of the same sort
G. Grammar and syntax

II. Laughter is caused by the things--

A. From assimilation, employed
   (1) toward the worse
   (2) toward the better
B. From deception
C. From the impossible
D. From the possible and inconsequent
E. From the unexpected
F. From debasing the personages
G. From the use of clownish (pantomimic) dancing
H. When one of those having power, neglecting the greatest things, takes the most worthless
I. When the story is disjointed, and has no sequence

Comedy differs from abuse, since abuse openly censures the bad qualities attaching to men, whereas comedy requires the so-called emphasis (or innuendo).

The joker will make game of faults in the soul and in the body.

As in tragedies there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter.

The substance of comedy consists of (1) plot, (2) ethos, (3) diateme, (4) diction, (5) melody, (6) spectacle.
The comic plot is the structure binding together the ludicrous incidents.

The characters of comedy are (1) the buffoonish, (2) the ironical, and (3) those of the impostors.

The parts of dianoia are two:
A. Opinion and
B. Proof. Proofs (or 'persuasions') are of five sorts:
1. oaths
2. compacts
3. testimonies
4. tortures (tests or 'ordeal's)
5. laws

The diction of comedy is the common, popular language. The comic poet must endow his personages with his own native idiom, but must endow an alien with the alien idiom.

Melody is the province of the art of music, and hence one must take its fundamental rules from that art.

Spectacle is of great advantage to dramas in supplying what is in concord with them.

Plot, diction, and melody are found in all comedies; dianoia, ethos, and spectacle in few.

The quantitative parts of comedy are four: (1) prologue, (2) the choral part, (3) episode, (4) exode. The prologue is that portion of a comedy extending as far as the entrance of the chorus. The choral part is a song by the chorus when the song is of adequate length. An episode is what lies between two choral songs. The exode is the utterance of the chorus at the end.

The kinds of comedy are: (1) Old, with a superabundance of the laughable; (2) New, which disregards laughter, and tends toward the serious; (3) Middle, which is a mixture of the two.

* * * * *

The words and phrases enclosed in brackets have been inserted by Cooper in place of the oblique line and horizontal braces which appear in the original manuscript. He has likewise added the appropriate numerals and letters.

10 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 223-226
to this thesis contains a condensation of the material in that section. However, in *The Poetics of Aristotle; Its Meaning and Influence*, Cooper himself, in Chapter IV, gives a brief summary of this amplification. It is included here verbatim as it appears in that work.

"The Poetics . . . does not keep its promise regarding comedy. Did Aristotle ever discuss this? It is only reasonable to think so; yet if his analysis has come down in tangible shape, it must be in the scheme or fragment known as the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, which in part is concerned with Aristophanes. The *Tractate* is a strange and puzzling abstract. Nevertheless some parts of it at least betray the workings of a master-mind. Its three pages or less of Greek are worth more in the interpretation of comedy than all modern essays on comedy together.

"After noting the place of comedy among the types of poetic art, it [the *Tractatus*] begins with a definition echoing that of tragedy in the Poetics: 'Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect . . . . It has laughter for its mother.' [See p. 5 of this thesis].

"Laughter arises from the language used, or from the objects themselves (things, persons, thoughts, and deeds). Under diction we have seven heads: First, homonyms. (Words identical in sound, but with different meanings. Tramp says to tourist: 'Speaking of bathing in famous springs, I bathed in the spring of '86.') Secondly, synonyms. (Different names for the same concept. "Convey"

---

the wise it call. "Steal," foh! a fico for the phrase!".) Thirdly, garrulity. (This means idle prating, long-winded folly of every sort. Shakespeare's Dogberry is garrulous in the pompous style.) Fourthly, paronyms, formed by addition or clipping. (So, by addition, Gadshill's 'long-staff sixpenny strikers,' and 'mad mustachio purplish-hued malt-worms'.) Fifthly, diminutives. ('Coinlet' for coin, and 'gibelet' for gibe, in Aristophanes' Babylonians.) Sixthly, perverting words by voice or the sense of them by gesture. (Touchstone: 'I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths' - a play on Latin caper, 'goat,' with perversion of 'Goths' into goats.) Seventhly, grammar. (Ludicrous syntax and the like. Launce: 'I'll but lean, and my staff understands me.' Speed: 'It stands under thee, indeed'.)

"Under laughter from the objects we have nine heads. (It is hard to dissociate a thing from its name; but if the humour disappears when the language is altered, the laughter arises from the diction, and if not, then from the objects.) Under the objects, first comes assimilation of the worse to the better, and vice versa. (Bottom is assimilated to a donkey, while Aristophanes calls Brasidas and Cleon the 'pestle' and 'mortar' of Sparta and Athens; a time-honored comic device is the substitution of servants for masters.) Secondly, deception. (In a sense, all laughter arises from cheated expectation. In the Frogs we expect Dionysus to bring Euripides back from Hades — and he brings Aeschylus instead.) Thirdly, the impossible. ('It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God'; 'Woe
unto you, scribes and Pharisees . . . which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel'.) Fourthly, the possible and inconsequent.
(Dionysus' test of poetry by weighing verses of Aeschylus and Euripides in scales.) Fifthly, the unexpected. (So the refusal of the corpse in the Frogs to carry the luggage: 'Strike me alive if I do!'.) Sixthly, debasing the personages. (As with Dogberry and Falstaff.) Seventhly, ridiculous dancing. (See the witch-dance in Tam o'Shanter.) Eighthly, having the choice of fine things and taking worthless. (When asked if he will hear fairy music, Bottom says: 'I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and the bones'.) Ninthly, when the story is disjointed and without sequence. (Dogberry: 'Secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things'.)

'The lampooner openly censures the evil in men; comedy uses 'emphasis'. Yet the comic poet makes both physical and mental short-comings ridiculous.

'As in tragedy there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedy a due proportion of laughter. (This may mean that the ridiculous element should be balanced by the beautiful music—as in The Tempest.)

'The Tractate notes the same constituents of comedy that the Poetics gives for tragedy: plot, character, thought, diction, music, and spectacle. Comic characters are the buffoonish (as Falstaff), the ironical (as the Platonic Socrates), and those of the impostors (quacks, pettifoggers, Tartuffe, and so on).
"The parts of thought are opinion and proof. (Feste: 'What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?' Malvolio: 'That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird'.) Proofs (persuasions) are of five sorts. First, Oaths. (See Mollière's 'Juro' in Le Malade Imaginaire.) Secondly, compacts (as between Falstaff and the Prince to rob the travelers). Thirdly, testimonies (as Dogberry's 'O that he were here to write me down an ass'). Fourthly, ordeals (as the test of the candidate in Le Malade Imaginaire). Fifthly, laws. (In Les Femmes Savantes the cook is discharged for breaking the law of grammar.)

"The diction of comedy is the popular idiom, but the poet must make an alien speak as such. (Molière in general writes limpid French, but his domestics speak in dialect.) For the element of music the poet must consult technical treatises. After alluding to the utility of spectacle, the Tractate goes on to the quantitative parts of comedy: prologue, choricon, episode, and exode. It ends by differentiating Old, New and Middle Comedy. (In Shakespeare, the Falstaff-episodes are of the 'old' type, the Comedy of Errors is of the 'new', and The Tempest is intermediate.)

In discussing Cooper's explanation of this unique treatise, J.W. H. Atkins observes that:

The analysis proceeds on Aristotelian lines, as when for instance the constituent elements of comedy are said to be Plot, Character, Thought, the fragment uses the terms ethos and dianoia rather than character and thought, Diction, Song, Melody and Spectacle,

12 End of Chapter IV in Cooper's Poetics of Aristotle.
or when the quantitative parts, i.e., the structural divisions of comedy are described as Prologue, Choric Song, Episode and Exodus. As in the Poetics, these matters are unequally discussed; and in the first place, we note an absence of that emphasis attached by Aristotle to the plot, which is now said to be merely the structure binding together the comic incidents. The characters of comedy, on the other hand, are more or less defined. They are said to be the buffoon, the sly or ironical man, and the boaster or impostor, characters which were common to both earlier and later comedy.13

The following, from the same source, is important because of its application to the verse of Gilbert. The stressing of diction, and of things done, by the Tractatus makes it particularly applicable to the inimitable wit of the English comic opera librettist.

The Tractatus contains, as its most considerable item, a detailed analysis of the sources of laughter which . . . obviously calls for close attention. It is stated in the first place that laughter arises either from "diction" or from "the things done." Comic effects, that is, result in part from the manner of utterance, so that if the words are changed the humorous effect is lost; or again, they may be the outcome of actions or thoughts, in which case the matter apart from the manner affords the amusement . . . . After this, the subject in the Tractatus is treated under these two heads, the laughter bound up with diction or expression, and that which is due to things or subject-matter . . . .

. . . Some general and universal principles are incidentally implied; laughter, which may be excited by words or deeds, is shown to be the outcome of the disproportionate, the deceptive, or the surprising; and it is upon these points that the analysis mainly concentrates.14

As a preparation for the explication of these principles to Patience and Iolanthe, the summary which follows will serve to acquaint the reader with the plots of the operas. Both are highly entertaining simply as comic drama, and demonstrate the superb satiric skill of Gilbert.

13 Atkins, Literary Criticism in Antiquity, 140.
14 Ibid., 141-142.
Act I of *Patience* opens upon twenty lovesick maidens who greet the audience, sombrely, by singing a chorus which sets the temper of the operetta, namely, ridicule. The heavily-draped maidens have deserted their former lovers, the officers of the thirty-fifth Heavy Dragoons, for the "fleshly" poet, Reginald Bunthorne, who has "etherealized" them. They are not aware that Bunthorne is a sham, a poseur, who cannot live without admiration. The only seemingly normal person to be introduced to the audience is Patience, a practical-minded dairy-maid, who is madly loved by Bunthorne (although he is quite willing to be followed about by the clinging-vine damosals). Patience, however, has never loved anyone except two great-aunts and, during her childhood days, a little boy. Moreover, she is quite bewildered by this thing called love that makes people act so strangely. Soon Archibald Grosvenor appears upon the scene and Patience (who has resolved to fall in love since the maidens have informed her that it is the one "unselfish emotion in this whirlpool of grasping greed") learns that he is none other than the sweetheart of her baby days. She is, however, a very paragon of unselfishness, and while the fatal beauty of Archibald fascinates her, why, what virtue would there be in loving so perfect a creature as Archibald—the-All-Right? She tells him so and he agrees, of course, that there is no virtue but assures her that he may continue to love her since she herself has said that she is "plain, homely, and unattractive."

Bunthorne, meanwhile, broken-hearted over his rejection by Patience, puts himself "up to be raffled for," in aid of a deserving charity. All the maidens, especially the unglamorous Lady Jane (nearing middle-age), quiver with joy over the prospect of drawing the prize. Patience, coming upon the group, learns of the project and offers herself to Bunthorne because she must
be unselfish. The maidens, thwarted, cast fluttering eyes upon the dragoons but only for a moment. The first act closes upon the maidens turning toward Archibald Grosvenor who has come upon the stage, reading. Bunthorne, recognizing a rival, immediately becomes jealous.

After a self-revealing aria by Lady Jane at the opening of the second act, the maidens slavishly pursue Grosvenor with his pure and simple decalets. He is, however, longing for Patience, and is revolted by the sentimental ladies. Bunthorne, unhappy over the loss of their admiration (with the exception of the sighing Jane who still follows him about), decides upon a plan which will end Grosvenor's supremacy as an idyllic poet. Bunthorne places a curse upon Grosvenor: The rival poet must immediately grow commonplace.

In the meantime, the ignored dragoons, having cast aside their gay-colored uniforms, appear in flowing garb—new converts to Aestheticism! They writhe and sigh in poetic appreciation, fondly hoping for the renewed affections of their former sweethearts. And Grosvenor, weary of the ladies, is only too willing to become commonplace. Bunthorne, on the other hand, decides to reform, to become a perfect creature, to become, as a matter of fact, the beloved of Patience. But, woe unto Bunthorne! Patience, the too-too-self-sacrificing, now that he has reformed, can see nothing unselfish in loving him and therefore gives her love to Grosvenor since he is no longer a perfect being. The aesthetic maidens, having discovered that Archibald Grosvenor is now an "every-day-young-man" throw off their pose and become as he, as do the Heavy Dragoons. Lady Jane alone remains aesthetic.

Bunthorne, determined to see his pose through to the end, turns to Jane but, woe, once again! The Duke enters, accompanied by the Colonel and Major, and announces that he wishes to choose a bride. Indeed, he wishes none
other than the one who has the misfortune to be distinctly plain. As Jane and the Duke embrace, Bunthorne takes a lily from his buttonhole, gazes upon it affectionately, and sings

In that case unprecedented,
Single I must live and die -
I shall have to be contented
With a tulip or lily. 15

While London was still laughing at Patience, the collaborators again combined their talents in an effort to produce another outstanding success. It must be said honestly that both librettist and composer thoroughly enjoyed and desired public adulation. Likewise, both enjoyed easy living and the "feel" of money. And their efforts to give their beloved public something "entirely new and different" was realized in Iolanthe. This simple libretto is one of Gilbert's most charming, and, as has been said, it has unfortunately received too little attention, at least literally speaking. Musically it contains some of Sullivan's finest work, as shall be noted when the qualitative elements of the Tractatus are applied to these operas.

Iolanthe, a fairy, has been banished by the Queen of the Fairies for having married a mortal. According to the fairy law, her marriage had involved the death penalty but, because Iolanthe promised never to communicate again with her mortal husband, the Queen commuted the sentence to penal servitude. This servitude Iolanthe is working out "at the bottom of a stream." She has been doing so, in fact, for twenty-five years.

The opera opens upon the Fairy Queen and her little band singing their "identification" to the audience. All are melancholy because of the plight of Iolanthe, whom they love very dearly. The Queen, especially,
remembers her with tenderness and she is only too happy to yield to the fairies' plea to pardon their banished member. With joy they call her and Iolanthe rises from her watery home, a bit moss-covered, but beautiful as, of course, fairies must be. Iolanthe reveals that she has been living in her damp quarters in order to be near her son, Strephon (who is a fairy from the waist up, while the other half is indeed mortal). The fairies learn that Strephon is twenty-four, is extremely "pretty,"—although inclined to be stout—and is in love with Phyllis, a Ward in Chancery.

At that moment Strephon dances upon the scene, singing gaily that he is to be married that very day. He has not received permission from the Lord Chancellor, Phyllis' guardian, but is going to brave the issue anyway. The fairies promise to aid him should any difficulty arise, and, as they leave for another fairy ring, Phyllis enters. (She is a comely lass—so comely that she has won the affections of the Lords Chancellor, Mounterarat, Tolloller, of, indeed, almost the entire House of Peers.) Phyllis and Strephon vow to marry immediately, and, as they depart arm in arm, the Peers march upon the stage. The Lord Chancellor sends for Phyllis, who comes promptly being a dutiful ward. Both Lords Mounterarat and Tolloller offer themselves to her but she informs them that she has accepted the hand and heart of another.

Upon learning that it is none other than Strephon, a shepherd of Arcady, the Lord Chancellor takes the matter into his hands by forbidding the marriage.

In the Finale to the first act, Strephon, heartbroken, appeals to Iolanthe for help but as he does so, Phyllis, accompanied by Lords Mounterarat and Tolloller, comes unseen upon them. She thinks Strephon is making love to a rival and, stung by jealousy, she immediately gives her heart to either of the two lords—she doesn't care which—for surely Strephon has been untrue to
her. (Why, the young person he is singing to is very, very pretty and not a day over seventeen!) Phyllis reveals her presence to Strephon, who assures her that the lady he has been conversing with is his mother. She, together with the Peers, thinks he has great effrontery to call such a young creature his mother. At this point the Lord Chancellor enters and Iolanthe slips away unnoticed. Things seem to be going rather wretchedly for Strephon, who then calls upon the Fairy Queen for the aid she has promised. Instantly the entire band trips in. The Peers ridicule them thus incurring the wrath of the Queen. She tells them that Strephon shall enter Parliament and have complete power—in fact, the "program" with which she has just threatened the Peers is to be put into effect without the slightest delay. The nobles quake in apprehension.

Act II finds Strephon in Parliament, carrying every issue—why, the Peers have to sit through the fishing season! In the meantime, the fairies have been casting flirtatious eyes upon these mortals, these Peers, and the Queen herself has been entertaining a rather pleasant feeling for Private Willis, a sentry. Phyllis is still being wooed by the lords, much to Strephon's anguish. As he bemoans his fate, the lovely Ward comes upon him. In the dialogue which follows she learns that Iolanthe really is his mother, that she is a fairy and therefore immortal; and that fairies never grow older in appearance. Indeed, Iolanthe is a couple of centuries or so old. As the lovers once again decide to get married (Phyllis is willing to overlook Strephon's half-fairy make-up), Iolanthe is the first to hear of their re-engagement. As she bestows future mother-in-law blessings upon her daughter-in-law to be, Strephon begs her to intercede for them with the Lord Chancellor.

In a tense moment Iolanthe reveals that the Lord Chancellor is none other than
her husband and Strephon's father, adding that he must never know that she is alive.

As she says this, the Lord Chancellor enters, announcing that, after a long and painful internal struggle, he has finally awarded Phyllis to himself. Iolanthe, veiled, kneels at his feet pleading Strephon's cause. The Lord Chancellor says woe betide anyone who dares to separate him from Phyllis. The fairy chorus chants a lament (in Wagnerian style), warning Iolanthe that she is about to seal her doom should she make known her identity. Nevertheless she tells the Lord Chancellor she is his wife and the Fairy Queen commands her to bow her head to Destiny for she must die! At this, Leila, one of the band, informs her that all the fairies are now duchesses, marchionesses, countesses, viscountesses, and baronesses. Surely the Queen cannot slaughter the entire company—although the law is certainly explicit. Besides, the Queen still feels that strange fascination for the sentry and loses no time in deciding to become Mrs. Willis. But the problem remains. What about the fairy law? The Lord Chancellor, an old hand at the exigencies of the law, simply inserts into the fairy code a negative: "that all fairies who do NOT marry mortals shall die." While this is taking place, the Peers have rapidly grown wings and all soar away, on the light and bright elements of Sullivan's melody, to Fairyland.

Using these modern comic operas as good dramatic material, Chapters II and III will attempt to demonstrate how closely the comic devices mentioned in the ancient manuscript are as much a part of Today as they were of Yesterday.
CHAPTER II

THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ELEMENTS OF COMEDY APPLIED TO PATIENCE AND IOLANTHE

The prescriptions of the Tractatus Coislinianus are not peculiar to the early centuries only. Rather, the principles found in this ancient manuscript are applicable to comedy of all time, and a consideration of them will be made in adapting them to the Gilbert and Sullivan operas Patience and Iolanthe, with occasional references to one or another of the various Savoy operas. The study to follow will be made in order of sequence, i.e., first, the sources of the operas will be given, followed by a brief discussion of comedy, the quantitative parts of comedy as they apply to the work of Sir William Schwenk Gilbert, and the six qualitative (or constitutive) elements as well. This chapter will not be concerned with laughter arising from diction and from things done—the Tractatus deals at greater length with these latter two than with the other elements—because they are applicable in a very particular and detailed way to Gilbertian verse, and prose as well, and thus deserve separate treatment.

Patience, according to popular belief, was the outcome of an overwhelming desire on Gilbert's part to ridicule the aesthetic movement of the day as inspired by Oscar Wilde's cult of the beautiful. However, according to Edith Browne, in her biography W.S. Gilbert:

In the name of that cult to which the artistic world owes so much I rejoice to be able to point out that Gilbert had practically completed the scenario of Patience before he gave a thought to aestheticism. In the original plot all the aesthetes of the present version
were curates! Gilbert started Patience with the idea of satirizing the lesser dignitaries of the church and their sighing admirers on the lines of "The Rival Curates" in the Bab Ballads, but he was attacked by scruples, thought he might give offence, and looking 'round for a substitute for black cloth, his eye lit on the liberty garb. . . . By satirizing the pretentious followers of the new cult he knew he would not hurt the feelings of the genuine aesthete, and would certainly provide very palatable entertainment for practical souls. ¹

That we may accept Edith Browne's word as rather authentic is vouchsafed for by her statement that she owes a debt of gratitude to Gilbert who "so generously responded to my many exacting demands on his time, memory, and literary rights, and has perfectly supplied me with all the biographical facts which I have recorded . . . and has read through the proofs of this book with a view to insuring accuracy in historical details."²

Further influences are found in the Bab Ballads, among them "John and Freddy," (who are prototypes of Reginald Bunthorne and Archibald Grosvenor and "The Ladies of the Lea." Both provide worshipful admirers attentive to the cloth. In "First Love," Ellen bears a strong resemblance to Patience herself. Gilbert's earlier farce, Engaged (1881), provides still further source material.

Background material for Iolanthe is likewise to be found in a Bab Ballad entitled "The Fairy Curate" which appeared in Fun, July 23, 1870. A fairy marries a mortal attorney, which union results in a baby, Georgie, who becomes a curate. The last two stanzas are particularly illustrative:

(Bishop to Georgie):
"Who is this, sir,--
Ballet miss, sir?"

² Ibid.
Said the Bishop coldly.
"'Tis my mother,
And no other,"
Georgie answered boldly.
"Go along, sir!
You are wrong sir,
You have years in plenty;
While this hussy
(Gracious mussy!)
Isn't two-and-twenty."

(Fairies clever
Never, never
Grow in visage older...)

The similarity of these lines to those in Iolanthe is very marked. In that libretto one reads:

This gentleman is seen,
With a maid of seventeen;
A-taking of his dolce far niente;
And wonders he'd achieve
For he asks us to believe
She's his mother—and he's nearly five-and-twenty!

Another Bab Ballad, "The Periwinkle Girl," is the germ of "Scorn not the Lowly Born." The finale is foreshadowed as early as 1869 by the end of Gilbert's The Pretty Druidess, a travesty of Bellini's Norma.

The Bab Ballads, to which Gilbert returned again and again as sources for his Savoy operas, are in themselves a gold-mine of verse. As Isaac Goldberg says:

They are in the tradition of English nonsense verse. It may in an aesthetic sense, be pure or impure; that is, it may court the seeming absurdity of the dream, or the soothing logic of Fairyland. The escape of childhood—and, now and then, of wisest men—is effected either through magic or mischief. In Gilbert's madcap verses the two

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3 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 113-17.
4 Ibid., 257.
qualities were not always merged in happy blend. Gilbert's nonsense is "impure." It is, in a strictly technical sense, being constantly adulterated with products of ratiocination. It takes on the coloration of parody, or pun; it has overtones of satire; it tends to become, in a word, intellectual rather than intuitive. He spoke truths in jest.5

As stated in the preceding chapter, "Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect, of sufficient length, [in embellished language,] the several kinds [of embellishment being] separately [found] in the [several] parts [of the play]; [directly presented] by persons acting, and not [given] through narrative; through pleasure and laughter effecting the purgation of the like emotions. It has laughter for its mother." It is an artistic imitation of persons of an inferior moral bent; faulty, however, not in any and every way, but only insofar as their shortcomings are ludicrous, which do not strike us as painful, and are not harmful. Certainly the shortcomings of Gilbert's characters are neither painful nor harmful. Illustrative of this "non-painful" type of character is Lady Jane in Patience, who is middle-aged and fading; or the whimsical and somewhat buffoonish Lord Chancellor in Iolanthe. As for length, comedy is restricted by the conventions of the stage. In Aristotle's view, the number of lines is related to the length of time represented by the action. The narrative poem may represent a long time and may therefore be very long; the drama commonly represents a briefer time, and hence will be shorter. This quality later became known as unity of time. Gilbert's plays are written around a short space of time, with enough complication to allow for a quick dénouement. This point will be further elaborated upon in the consideration of plot. Pleasure or laughter will be treated under things said and things done.

5 Goldberg, The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan, 92.
The four quantitative parts of comedy—the prologue, the choral parts, the episode, and the exode—may be considered briefly in connection with Gilbert's dramas. The librettist does not employ a prologue in his Savoy operas, but rather follows the pattern of opening always with a chorus which acquaints the audience, to some extent at least, with the problem or action that is to follow. The comic chorus should be regarded as belonging to the *dramatis personae*. Gilbert loses no time in exposition but immediately presents what the *Tractatus* calls "episode," or that which lies between two choral songs. Characters and situations are quickly introduced—there is skillful blending of words and actions—until the dialogue leads logically to a solo-and-chorus. Never at any time does the author introduce a song purely for the sake of giving a character a solo. Each song and chorus is an integral part of the whole, the chorus being a very necessary part of the action and not merely stage "scenery." We find the emergence of the commentatious choir of the true Gilbertian canon in *Trial By Jury*. In this opera, as ever afterward in the works of the collaborators, the chorus acquires a whimsical *raison d'être*.

It ceases to be an inert group brought on only for display and vocal assistance; it is promoted from the status of human scenery to that of a logical offspring from the plot. It often assumes, in fact, the functions of the Greek chorus, breaking up now and then into individuals and offering comment upon the proceedings. It exhibits the delightful habit of echoing the final lines of a solo in the mood of a secular responsory.6

An example may be noted in the opening chorus of *Patience*, "Twenty Love-sick Maidens We," with solo lines interspersed. This is immediately followed by

an "episode" which acquaints an already interested audience with the aesthetic Reginald Bunthorne and the practical Patience. The plot throughout is thus evolved. The "exode" or choral utterance at the end is always made use of by Gilbert, the entire case usually participating in the finale.

The six qualitative, or constitutive, elements of comedy, briefly noted in the Tractatus, will presently be considered in some detail in relation to Patience and Iolanthe. These elements are, of course, (1) plot; (2) ethos, or moral dispositions of the characters, i.e., the characters must be true to their nature as first presented; (3) dia moi, or intellectual element which includes everything that is to be effected by the language of the agents; (4) diction; (5) melody, or music; and (6) spectacle.

The ancient fragment defines the comic plot as "the structure binding together the ludicrous incidents." This statement is extremely brief and hardly adequate. However, Cooper explains plot in the section of his work under "The Poetics Applied to Comedy." He tells the reader:

Plot means that synthesis of the particular incidents which give form or being to the comedy as a whole. . . . The most important of the constitutive elements is the plot, that is, the organisation of the incidents of the story; for comedy in its essence is an imitation not of men as such, but of action and of life. Consequently in a play the agents do not do thus and so for the sake of revealing their moral dispositions; rather, the display of character is included as subsidiary to the things that are done. So that the incidents of the action, and the structural ordering of these incidents constitute the end and aim of the comedy. That is, the structure of the comedy, as a whole, the 'form' of it, is equivalent to the main effect upon the audience. Here, as in everything else that we know of, the final purpose is the main thing. . . .

Again, one may string together a series of speeches in which the moral bent of the agents is delineated in excellent verse and diction, and yet fail to produce the effect of comedy. One is more likely to produce the effect with a comedy, however deficient in these respects, if it has a plot—that is, an artistic ordering of the incidents. In addition to all this, the most vital features of
comedy, by which the interest and emotions of the audience are most effectively stirred—that is, discoveries, and reversals of fortune—are parts of the plot or action.

The plot, then, is the first principle, and as it were, the very soul, of comedy.

The criticism that Gilbert's plots follow a rather similar pattern is true enough; and that they are interesting, quick-moving with brilliant verse and dialogue, never disjointed or incoherent, is likewise true. Edith Browne gives us his procedure: having first decided on the plot, he drew up the scenario in a detailed manner; he then went through the scenario with Sullivan, and both marked in the musical situations; Gilbert next wrote all the musical numbers of Act I, with a short epitome of the dialogue that was to connect them, and sent his manuscript to Sullivan; and while Sullivan was writing the music for the first act, Gilbert wrote the musical numbers to the second; he usually confined his libretti to two acts and while Sullivan was setting Act II to music, Gilbert completed the dialogue.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch says about Gilbert's plots:

Let us go on to deal with them a little after the manner of Aristotle. Obviously they obey Aristotle in preferring plot to character, even though by inversion; for, his plots being always legal rather than moral in their topsy-turviness, his characters behave always on a topsy-turvy legal logic. . . . They transfer their affections, or reverse their destinies, by insane rational process—

Quiet peaceful contemplation
Disentangles every knot.

A captain in the Royal Navy turns out to have been changed at birth with a common seaman; . . . a promising lad has been apprenticed to a pirate instead of a pilot; a love-philtre works the wrong way.


Quiller-Couch also outlines the general plot-plan and, to some extent, the characterization in the following:

Within these limits of absurdity you will notice that all the Operas have limits also in ethic, and are built on an almost rigid convention of design. There is usually an opposition of the Victorian real against the fanciful: of a House of Peers in robes against a chorus of fairies under Westminster clock-tower; a body of Heavy Dragoons against Bunthorne and his lackadaisy maidens. There is almost always a baritone singer, more or less unconnected with the story, introduced with some sort of patter-song—the Major-General's in The Pirates of Pensance, the Lord Chancellor's in Iolanthe, the Grand Inquisitor's in The Gondoliers. There is also a lady with a contralto voice, who deplores her mature years. The more you examine the Operas to compare them, the closer you will get to a severe and narrow model. And the model in its ethical content is no less straitly laced. It invites you to laugh at the foibles of kings, soldiers, lawyers, artists, and faddists.10

It should, perhaps, be noted that Quiller-Couch is not a Gilbert enthusiast. It is not, however, my purpose to explain some of the doubtful expressions such as "more or less unconnected with the story." The author has been referred to only insofar as he has explained the general plot structure of the librettist.

Comedy must form a "whole" of sufficient "magnitude" or extent: whole because it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end; and magnitude, because beauty depends on size and order, although the form or object must not be too large. It follows, then, that the plot of a comedy must have a proper length, so that the parts and the whole may be embraced by the memory. There are artificial limits, however, determined by the conditions of presentation on the stage and by the power of attention in an audience. The artistic limit is set by the nature of the thing itself, i.e., so long as the plot is perspicuous throughout, the greater the length of the story, the more beautiful it will be on account of its magnitude. An adequate limit for the

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10 Ibid., 225.
magnitude of a plot is this: Let the length be such as to allow a transition from better to worse fortune, or from worse to better, through a series of incidents linked together in a sequence based upon the law of probability or necessity.\footnote{Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 187-188-189.} To proceed on Aristotelian lines in an attempt to clarify plot, it may be stated that comic plots are either uninvolved or involved; an action is \underline{uninvolved} when the incidents follow one another in a single continuous movement, i.e., when the change of fortune comes about without a reversal of situation and without a discovery; an \underline{involved} action is one in which the change of fortune is attended by a discovery or a reversal, or by both together. And each of these two incidents should arise from the structure of the plot itself; that is, each should be the necessary or probable result of the incidents that have gone before.\footnote{Ibid., 195.} A discovery is a transition from ignorance to knowledge, resulting either in friendship or enmity on the part of those agents who are designed for better or worse fortune. The most artistic form of discovery is one attended by reversal of fortune. The third part of the plot would be incident, which might be defined as an occurrence of an especially ludicrous or joyful sort, such as victories in contests, marriages, feasts, and the like. The comic incident would be the parallel to Aristotle's third part, 'suffering' (pathos) in the tragic plot.\footnote{Ibid., 196-197.}

In the perfect comedy the synthesis of the incidents must be, not uninvolved, but involved and this synthesis must be imitative of occurrences that arouse pleasure and laughter. To be perfectly comic the plot must not have a double issue, fortunate for the better, unfortunate for the worse. The
change of fortune must be a transition from ill success to good [as in Volpone, for example]; the action must come about through some ludicrous defect or shortcoming in conduct.14

Gilbert's craftsmanship is carefully wrought and is not mere nonsense or a series of disjointed verses. His skill in plot development is demonstrated by involved action in which the change of fortune is attended by discovery or reversal. For example, in Patience, the discovery of the artistic sham of Bunthorne and his reversal of fortune in ironically being left without a bride in the dénouement, is Aristotelian; as is the discovery or recognition by the Lord Chancellor of his wife, Iolanthe. There is no exact reversal of fortune in Iolanthe. The Peers change their already desirable position as M.P.'s for the better, however, by sprouting little wings and becoming peris, thus entering a higher kingdom, so to speak. In Pinafore, Little Buttercup, the rosy bumboat woman, resolves the action. She steps up at the zero hour and behold! the favorable and unexpected reversal of fortune delights the audience. Buttercup, it seems, in her younger years had practised baby farming and she had, quite by accident, mixed two babies up (the two, of course, were the Captain and Ralph); so Ralph Rackstraw is really the ship's captain, while the Captain should be in the lowly position of a humble sailor—in fact, the Captain is Ralph. This revelation is important because each may, as a result, marry the woman of his choice and ignore the class-conscious element.

Every comedy consists of a complication and a dénouement. By complication is meant everything from the beginning up to that incident, the last in a series, out of which comes the change of fortune. Gilbert is a

14 Ibid., 199-200.
master in the art of building plot complication. Each opera (and all the Savoy operas contain but two acts, with the exception of Princess Ida which has three) is a tribute to Gilbert's genius for compactness. His "beginnings" follow the Aristotelian prescription, i.e., a beginning is that which does not follow anything else in a necessary sequence, but after which something else does naturally exist or come to pass. For example, the audience doesn't have to know what the fairies have been doing up to the time of their calling Iolanthe from her place of banishment; but the audience does want to know why she has been banished and to know what is going to follow from her pardon by the Fairy Queen. The same is true of the lovesick maidens in Patience. Each group, after a quick exposition, initiates the complication. Gilbert builds his complication rapidly in a necessary sequence (known as the middle in drama), which is followed by something else which has nothing following it (the end). The librettist never begins or ends at any chance point. Throughout each plot, the entire story is perspicuous, the parts and the whole being readily grasped and retained by the memory. Whether Gilbert was aware of it or not, it is a fact that he followed the "artistic limit" of Aristotle: "Let the length of the poem be such that the hero may fall from happiness to misery, or rise from misery to happiness, in a series of incidents linked together in a natural or inevitable sequence."15 Following the complication is, of course, the dénouement—or everything from the change of fortune to the end of the play. In the Savoy libretti, Gilbert's dénouements come at the very end when by a turn of his topsy-turvy logic everything comes out satisfactorily, generally speaking, although not always for everyone.

15 Cooper, The Poetics of Aristotle, 42.
Second in importance is ethos, or the moral dispositions of the characters. It is this moral bent which leads to the characterization of the agents as worse or better. This ethical element includes only such things as reveal the moral bias of the characters—their tendency to choose or to avoid a certain line of action in cases where the motive is not obvious. In a sense, every utterance of a speaker in a comedy illustrates his moral bent, and likewise shows the workings of his intellect. In respect to the moral dispositions of the agents, there are four things at which the poet must aim. First, the characters must not be good (that is, there must be some comic defect or inferiority). The ethical element will be present if, by speech or act, the characters manifest a moral bent in what they choose to do, or to avoid. For example, we note a desire for superiority and admiration by an inferior character, Reginald Bunthorne, who poses as a poet; or the choice of a superior being, albeit a fairy, in Iolanthe’s choosing to "live among the frogs at the bottom of a stream" to be near her half-mortal son, Strephon. Secondly, the comic poet must keep in mind the law of truth to type. There is, for example, a type of manly valor and great physical strength. It would be a mistake to attribute such characteristics to either Bunthorne or Grosvenor. Thirdly, there is the principle of truth to life, which is different from the principle of inferiority or from that of truth to type. Characters who are normal and do not fall into the comic type of buffoon, the ironic, or the impostor, should be true to life. And fourthly, there is the principle of consistency. Patience, the simple dairymaid, remains a dairymaid throughout the opera. She is true to her nature as first presented. The poet must remember that a certain kind of person must speak or act in a certain fashion as the necessary or probable outcome of his inner nature. As an instance of
this consistency in word and action, we find Reginald Bunthorne speaking and
acting in accordance with his rôle of impostor or poseur; and the Queen of
the Fairies is true to her rôle as the Commander-in-Chief of her little band.
Too, the poet must observe the method of successful caricaturists who repro-
duce the distinctive features of the original and yet render him ludicrous
and distorted, though not painfully so.

According to the Tractatus, the characters (ethe) of comedy are
(1) the buffoonish, (2) the ironical, and (3) the impostors. That Gilbert
utilized these categories is evident throughout all his work. Possessing as
he did an abundance of raw material (his own life is a wonderful story!) from
which to create his pattern characters, he made the most of that raw material.
Of invaluable assistance in this connection were his experiences in Govern-
ment office, in the Army, and at the Bar, and the contact with naval men
(because of a sea-faring hobby) which induced him to learn all the intricacies
of a full-rigged ship. This background gave him the necessary technical
knowledge to enable him to be correct in every detail in character building
for comic purposes.

A study of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas reveals a very shrewd
satire of many phases of the Victorian era: Patience ridicules sham and all
artificiality; Iolanthe lashes out at incompetency in Parliament; The Yeomen
of the Guard could be taken as an expose of negligences in the prisons; The
Mikado and Ruddigore doubtless made the nobility writhe; and H.M.S. Pinafore
probably did not make members of the Royal Navy too happy. Gilbert, tongue
in cheek, lampooned institutions, customs, and conventions through his use of
comic-character categories. Gilbert had a message to get across the foot-
lights. He succeeded.
In Patience, the Officers of the Dragoon Guards—the Colonel, the Lieutenant, the Major—all follow a pattern of buffoonery. The Colonel's patter-song in Act I is an example:

Narrative powers of Dickens and Thackeray—
Victor Emmanuel—peep-haunting Peveril
Thomas Aquinas, and Doctor Sacheverell—
Tupper and Tennyson—Daniel Defoe
Anthony Trollope and Mr. Guizot!
Take of these elements all that is fusible,
Melt them all down in a pipkin or crucible,
Set them to simmer and take off the scum,
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum!16

And the Duke's solo in Act II,

Our soldiers very seldom cry,
And yet—I need not tell you why—
A tear-drop dews each martial eye!
(Aside to Dragoons): Weep, weep, all weep!17

The buffoonish antics of the Lord Chancellor in Iolanthe are undoubtedly better than the preceding examples. From beginning to end he is "typed" in such a way that he is always a bit of a fool:

And I, my Lords, embody the Law.
The constitutional guardian I
Of pretty young Wards in Chancery,
All very agreeable girls—and none
Are over the age of twenty-one.
A pleasant occupation for
A rather susceptible Chancellor!18

Another character of the buffoon type is the far-from-beautiful Lady Jane in Patience. The second act opens with the famous recitative and musical monologue, "Sad is the woman's lot who, year by year, Sees, one by

16 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 190.
17 Ibid., 209.
18 Ibid., 216.
one, her beauties disappear," which Jane sings, accompanying herself on a violoncello. The following lines sung to energetic scrapings on her stringed instrument are not in particularly good taste (but are softened by the romantic and gentle character of Sullivan's music) and would seem to be of the type considered low in the Victorian era:

Fading is the taper waist,
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,
And although severely laced,
Spreading is the figure trim!
Stouter than I used to be,
Still more corpulent grow I—
There will be too much of me
In the coming by and bye.¹⁹

The characterization in Iolanthe is rather more delicate throughout than can be said of that in Patience. Phyllis and Strephon are dresden-china figures. Buffoonery is carried on by the Lord Chancellor, the Earls of Mountararat and Tolloller, and the Peers, who provide an excellent target for Gilbert's satirical

'Neath this blow,
Worse than stab of dagger—
Though we mo—
Mentarily stagger,
In each heart
Proud are we innately—
Let's depart,
Dignified and stately!

(All) Let's depart,
Dignified and stately!²⁰

The "blow," is nothing more than the humble-born Phyllis's snubbing of these particularly choice catches. Another caustic—and unquestionably so to the titled British—illustration is Lord Tolloller's solo:

¹⁹ Ibid., 214.
²⁰ Ibid., 252.
Her origin's lowly, it's true,
But of birth and position I've plenty;
I've grammar and spelling for two,
And blood and behaviour for twenty!
Her origin's lowly, it's true,
I've grammar and spelling for two;21

It is obvious that the librettist employed the use of "clownish"
actions or buffoonery to attain a specific purpose. While occasionally he
slips into low burlesque, Gilbert would seem to be a writer of high burlesque
if we can accept the following and apply it to the Savoy operas:

Burlesque first moves us to purposeless laughter of pure comedy by
its ludicrous plot or frame. This explains the mechanics whereby
most of the greatest satires convey an air of geniality or warm
humanity. The critical or corrective laughter of satire enters
when the story is recognized as a mirror in which the actions or
conditions of men are purposely distorted. . . .

Holding him /the character/ up against a standard obviously too
elevated for him will make his shortcoming stand out sharply. If
he conceived of himself as an exalted personage, let him be invested
with the trappings and dignities of a real hero, retaining only his
proper features. His pretentiousness will then stand out, to the
exclusion of all other qualities. . . . It is this principle of
magnification that gives us high burlesque.22

Surely the pretentiousness of Bunthorne (Patience), of the Lord Chancellor
(Iolanthe), of Pooh-Bah (The Mikado), and of the Learned Judge (Trial By
Jury)—to mention but a few—is enjoyed to the full by the Savoy opera-lover
even when an individual realizes that he is, himself, caricatured. Further:

Contrasting with the usual tenor of W.S. Gilbert's genial vein stands
the "elderly ugly daughter," thrusting her "caricature of a face"
into one opera after another. Professor Quiller-Couch calls it
"humanly vile" to taunt a female with her decaying charms; Gilbert,
however, is working in the age-old tradition of the grotesque, and
the question is one of artistic fitness, not of humanitarianism.23

21 Ibid., 248.
22 David Worcester, The Art of Satire, Cambridge, Mass., 1940,
pp. 45-46.
23 Ibid., 62.
Whether mankind as a whole wishes to admit it, or not, the world is filled
with Lady Janes, Katishas, Little Buttercups, Ko-Kos, King Gamas, and Richard
Dauntlesses!

Of the second type of comic character, the ironical man, Lane
Cooper states:24

It will be remembered that in the Ethics the Ironical Man and the
Impostor or swaggerer confront one another in the two vicious ex-
tremes which flank the virtuous mean of Truthfulness. While the
Impostor claims to possess higher qualities than he has, the Iron-
cical Man is given to making himself out worse than he is. This is
a generalized description, meant to cover all types of self-depre-
ciation, many forms of which are not comic. In comedy the special
kind of irony practised by the Impostor's opponent is feigned
stupidity. . . . The Iron that victimizes the Impostors masks his
cleverness under a show of clownish dullness. . . . Thus in the
concrete character-type as it exists in the Old Comedy /i.e., that
which contains a superabundance of the laughable/ "buffoonery" is
only the outer wear of "irony"; and the Ironical Buffoon is in
exact antithesis to the Impostor, who covers inward cowardice and
folly under a vain pretence of bravery and wisdom.25

Cooper says further, "the unmixed Ironical type is not so common as the
Buffoons and the Impostors, the last being numerous and important in the com-
edy of all times."26

David Worcester informs his readers that:

The Ironical man has the double pleasure of watching gleefully
from his hidden coign and of triumphing at the last. This foxy
character will not seem to embody a very lofty ethical concept.
The ironical speaks less than the truth, and appears to be elegant
in manner.27

The same author notes that "irony is a form of criticism and all irony is

24 Lane Cooper gives F.M.Cornford's opinion of the Ironical Man
from Cornford's The Origin of Attic Comedy.
26 Ibid., 265.
Satirical, though not all satire is ironical. Skepticism and pessimism and melancholy are the ironist's portion."\(^{28}\) The ironical man is foxy, crafty; he is a specialist in understatement; his qualities are cynicism, hypocrisy and duplicity. From these few remarks, it may be quite safely pointed out that Gilbert did not, strictly speaking, make use of the "ironical man" in its fullest sense. His use of the ironical type is rather to be found in the ironical buffoon than in the unmixed ironical type. The Duke in \textit{Patience} is a good illustration of this:

For "toffee" read flattery, adulation, and abject deference, carried to such a pitch that I began, at last, to think that man was born at an angle of forty-five degrees! Great Heavens, what is there to adore in me? Am I particularly intelligent, or remarkably studious, or excruciatingly witty, or unusually accomplished, or exceptionally virtuous?\(^{29}\)

After the Colonel's reply that the Duke is about "as commonplace a young man as ever I saw" the dialogue continues in ironical vein,

Exactly! That's it exactly! That describes me to a T. Thank you all very much! Well, I couldn't stand it any longer, so I joined this second-class cavalry regiment. In the Army, thought I, I shall be occasionally snubbed, perhaps even bullied, who knows? The thought was rapture, and here I am.\(^{30}\)

There is mild ironical buffoonery in the chorus of the heavy dragoons in Act I of the same libretto:

\begin{verbatim}
Now is not this ridiculous—and is not this preposterous? A thorough-paced absurdity—explain it is you can. Instead of rushing eagerly to cherish us and foster us, They all prefer this melancholy literary man. Instead of slyly peering at us, Casting looks endearing at us, Blushing at us, flushing at us—flirting with a fan;
\end{verbatim}

\(^{28}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 78.

\(^{29}\) \textit{Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert}, 192.

\(^{30}\) \textit{Ibid.}\)
They're actually sneering at us, fleering at us, jeering at us!
Pretty sort of treatment for a military man!
Pretty sort of treatment for a military man!31

The irony of Lady Jane's solo at the beginning of Act II has already been cited. It is an example of Gilbert at his ironical best. Additional lines from the same aria are as follows:

Silvered is the raven hair,
Spreading is the parting straight,
Mottled the complexion fair,
Halting is the youthful gait,
Hollow is the laughter free,
Spectacled the limpid eye—
Little will be left of me,
In the coming by and bye!32

Ironical characters in depreciating themselves usually demonstrate more refinement of character than the buffoon, for in general their object is not to make gain but to avoid pomposity. They are particularly fond of disclaiming the same qualities as the boaster affects, that is, the qualities which the world esteems. It is necessary to be careful because sometimes irony itself appears to be boastfulness—for exaggerated deficiency is a form of boastfulness and also of excess. In Iolanthe a shrewd piece of irony, as well as satire, is contained in the song of Lord Mountararat as Act II opens:

When Britain really ruled the waves—
(In good Queen Bess' time)
The House of Peers made no pretence
To intellectual eminence,
Or scholarship sublime;
Yet Britain won her proudest bays
In good Queen Bess's glorious days!

When Wellington thrashed Bonaparte,
As every child can tell,

31 Ibid., 193.
32 Ibid., 214.
The House of Peers, throughout the war,
Did nothing in particular,
And did it very well:
Yet Britain set the world ablaze
In good King George's glorious days!33

There is nice irony throughout Iolanthe. The play is less rollicking than Patience, and the situations are ironic rather than the characterizations. The following verse illustrates this point:

I wouldn't say a word that could be reckoned as injurious,
But to find a mother younger than her son is very curious,
And that's a kind of mother that is usually spurious.
Taradiddle, taradiddle, tol lol lay!34

There is irony in the situation wherein Strephon reveals himself to Phyllis as half fairy:

Strephon. I'm half a fairy.
Phyllis. Which half?
Strephon. The upper half—down to the waistcoat.
Phyllis. Dear me! (Prodding him with her fingers.) There's nothing to show it!

Strephon. Don't do that. . . .
Phyllis. Please forgive me!
Strephon. I don't think I ought to. Besides, all sorts of difficulties will arise. You know, my grandmother looks quite as young as my mother. So do all my aunts.
Phyllis. I quite understand. Whenever I see you kissing a very young lady, I shall know it's an elderly relative.35

The third category, the Impostor, is a favourite with Gilbert. The Impostor is one who covers inward cowardice and folly under a vain pretence of bravery and wisdom. He claims to possess higher qualities than he has. Cooper finds in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics a parallel to the Tractatus Coislinianus:

A person who pretends to greater things than he possesses, if he

33 Ibid., 269.
34 Ibid., 261.
has no ulterior object in doing so, seems to be a person of low character, as otherwise he would not take pleasure in a falsehood; but he looks more like a fool than a knave. Supposing he has an object, if the object be glory or honor, the pretentious person, like the boaster, is not highly censurable; but if it be money, or the means of getting money, his conduct is more discreditible. It is not a particular faculty, but a habit of choice, which constitutes the boaster; for it is by virtue of his moral state and his character that he is a boaster, as a person is a liar, if he takes pleasure in falsehood for its own sake, or as a means of winning reputation or gain. Thus it is that boastful people, if their object is reputation, pretend to such qualities as win praise or congratulation. . .

The preceding quotation contains a good description of the type of impostor found in Reginald Bunthorne who, from his entrance upon the stage, is seeking the admiration of the "twenty lovesick maidens, we." Bunthorne, in an aside, reveals himself.

Though my book I seem to scan
In a rapt ecstatic way,
Like a literary man
Who despises female clay,
I hear plainly all they say,
Twenty lovesick maidens they!

And a little later:

Am I alone,
And unobserved? I am!
Then let me own
I'm an aesthetic sham!

Let me confess!
A languid love for lilies does not blight me!
Lank limbs and haggard cheeks do not delight me!
I do not care for dirty greens
By any means.
I do not long for all one sees
That's Japanese.
I am not fond of uttering platitudes
In stained-glass attitudes.

36 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 118.

37 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 193.
In short, my mediaevalism's affectation,  
Born of a morbid love of admiration:38

Gilbert's arrows strike at the very root of Oscar Wilde's Cult of the Beautiful in Bunthorne's song which follows upon his disclosure:

Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh and new,  
and declare it's crude and mean,  
For Art stopped short in the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen,  
An attachment à la Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-French French bean!  
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high aesthetic band,  
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediaeval hand.  
And every one will say,  
As you walk your flowery way,  
"If he's content with a vegetable love which would certainly not suit me,  
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be!"39

Archibald Grosvenor, as well as Reginald Bunthorne, is not above playing the role of a poseur:

No, Patience, that may not be. These gifts—irksome as they are—were given to me for the enjoyment and delectation of my fellow-creatures. I am a trustee for Beauty, and it is my duty to see that the conditions of my trust are faithfully discharged.

And you, too, are a Poet?

Yes, I am the Apostle of Simplicity. I am called "Archibald the All-Right"—for I am infallible!40

In regard to this character-type of impostor, here again Iolanthe is less definite than is Patience. There is something of the impostor in

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38 Ibid., 198-199.
39 Ibid., 200.
40 Ibid., 206.
minor character of Private Willis (and irony in the fact that the Queen the Fairies chooses to marry him—the only male character not of the ability). The opening song of Act II, rendered by Private Willis, contains the following:

When all night long a chap remains
On sentry-go, to chase monotony
He exercises of his brains,
That is, assuming that he's got any.
Though never nurtured in the lap
Of luxury, yet I admonish you,
I am an intellectual chap,
And think of things that would astonish you.
I often think it's comical—Fal, lal, la!
How Nature always does contrive—Fal, lal, la!
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative! Fal, lal, la! 41

There is a little of the impostor element in the Fairy Queen's dialogue with Willis, as well as light irony:

Queen. You're a very fine fellow, sir.
Willis. I am generally admired.
Queen. I can quite understand it. (To fairies). Now here is a man whose physical attributes are simply god-like. That man has a most extraordinary effect upon me. If I yielded to a natural impulse, I should fall down and worship that man. But I mortify this inclination. 42

Next in order of sequence, after plot and character, in developing the principles of comedy, is the element of intellect or diacoria. It is shown in all the utterances by the characters in arguing special points, or in avouching some general truth. This intellectual element must be clearly distinguished from the ethical (moral) element in the drama. It is manifest

41 Ibid., 266.
42 Ibid., 272.
in everything the poet makes the characters say to prove or disprove a special point—the faculty of saying what can be said, or what is fitting to be said, for the ends of comedy in a given situation.\footnote{43} It is evident, too, that the same underlying forms of thought must be in operation whenever the comic poet makes the characters try by their acts to arouse emotion in one another, or to give these acts an air of importance or naturalness. With the act, the impression has to be made without explanation; with the spoken word it has to be made by the speaker and result from his language.

The parts of dianoia are, as previously noted, opinion and proof. In comedy as a whole the characteristic series of opinions require special attention. Opinion may be likened to the wisdom of a maxim, or the answer to a question if the answer reveals the intellect of the speaker, or a soliloquy, or in fact any statement that points to the working of the mind. It need not be profound. This is particularly true in comedy. Examples of dianoia (thought) may be found in the first chapter of this thesis as well as in the Appendix. In both Patience and Iolanthe many illustrations of this element could be given because in almost every episode and in the songs, also, there are numerous manifestations of opinion. In Act I of Patience the lovesick maidens are languishing for Bunthorne, and Ella says to Saphir:

\textbf{Ella.} The love of maidens is, to him, as interesting as the \underline{taxes}.

\textbf{Saphir.} Would that it were! He pays his taxes.\footnote{44}

A little later Patience, who is seeking to learn just what love may be, is informed by Lady Jane,

\begin{quote}
There is a transcendentalilaty of delirium—an acute
\end{quote}

\footnote{43} Cooper, \textit{An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy}, 185.

\footnote{44} \textit{Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert}, 186.
accentuation of a supremest ecstasy—which the earthy might easily mistake for indigestion. But it is not indigestion—it is aesthetic transfiguration! 

Still bewildered, Patience puts the same query to Lady Angela, receiving the response:

Poor blind child! Oh, forgive her, Eros! Why, love is of all passions the most essential! It is the embodiment of purity, the abstraction of refinement. It is the only unselfish emotion in this whirlpool of grasping greed. 

Lady Jane, as she scornfully appraises the red-and-yellow uniform of the heavy dragoons, tells the Duke:

Still, there is a cobwebby grey velvet, with a tender bloom like cold gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth-century, trimmed with Venetian leather and Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with something Japanese—it matters not what—would at least be Early English! Come, maidens!

When Patience asks Grosvenor why he does not disfigure himself to escape the persecution of being madly loved at first sight by every woman he encounters, his response that he must permit his fellow-creatures to feast their eyes upon his beauty clearly reveals his mind. Patience's explanation of what she considers true love is a series of opinions: it is single-hearted, unselfish, seeks no personal gain, is without alloy. Later, in a ballad, "Love is a Plaintive Song," she continues to reveal her ideas about love:

Rendering good for ill,  
Smiling at every frown,  
Yielding your own self-will  
Laughing your tear-drops down;  
Never a selfish whim,  
Trouble, or pain to stir;  
Everything for him,  
Nothing at all for her.

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45 Ibid., 188.  
46 Ibid., 202.  
47 Ibid., 397.  
48 Ibid., 211.  
49 Ibid., 221.
From Act II, a pertinent and ironic illustration is seen in Grosvenor’s agreeing to recite one of his own poems to the maidens:

Here is a decal— a pure and simple thing, a very daisy— a babe might understand it. To appreciate it, it is not necessary to think of anything at all. 50

The entire trio of the Duke, Colonel and Major sets forth their opinions of aestheticism. A few of the better lines are:

You can’t get high Aesthetic tastes, like trousers, ready made.

and

By hook or crook you try to look both angular and flat. To cultivate the trim Rigidity of limb You ought to get a Marionette, and form your style on him. 51

Reginald Bunthorne reveals his “inner self” to Patience in the amusing lines,

... Do you know what it is to be heart-hungry? Do you know what it is to yearn for the Indefinable, and yet to be brought face to face, daily, with the Multiplication Table? Do you know what it is to seek oceans and to find puddles— to long for whirlwinds and yet to have to do the best you can with the bellows? That’s my case. Oh, I am a cursed thing. 52

And, upon learning that Patience doesn’t like poetry, he says,

(Aside). Can I trust her? (Aloud). Patience, you don’t like poetry— well, between you and me, I don’t like poetry. It’s hollow, unsubstantial— unsatisfactory. What’s the use of yearning for Elysian Fields when you know you can’t get ‘em, and would let ‘em out on building leases if you had ‘em? 53

50 Ibid., 216.
51 Ibid., 224.
52 Ibid., 201.
53 Ibid.
Opinion in Iolanthe may be found in the Lord Chancellor's speech to the Peers concerning the problem of Phyllis's marriage. She is his favourite ward and therefore the choosing of a suitable "candidate" presents many difficulties:

By all means. Phyllis, who is a Ward of Court, has so powerfully affected your Lordships, that you have appealed to me in a body to give her to whichever one of you she may think proper to select, and a noble Lord has just gone to her cottage to request her immediate attendance. It would be idle to deny that I, myself, have the misfortune to be singularly attracted by this young person. My regard for her is rapidly undermining my constitution. Three months ago I was a stout man. I need say no more. If I could reconcile it with my duty, I should unhesitatingly award her to myself, for I can conscientiously say that I know no man who is so well fitted to render her exceptionally happy. But such an award would be open to misconstruction, and therefore, at whatever personal inconvenience, I waive my claim.54

Strephon's defense of himself in arguing his "case" for the hand of Phyllis after the Lord Chancellor accuses him of having disobeyed an order of the Court of Chancery exhibits diamoia.

My Lord, I know no Courts of Chancery; I go by Nature's Acts of Parliament. The bees—the breeze—the seas—the rocks—the brooks—the gales—the vales—the fountains and the mountains cry, "You love this maiden—take her, we command you!" 'Tis writ in heaven by the bright barbed dart that leaps forth into lurid light from each grim thunder-cloud. The very rain pours forth her sad and sodden sympathy! When chorused Nature bids me take my love, shall I reply, "Nay, but a certain Chancellor forbids it?" Sir, you are England's Lord High Chancellor, but are you Chancellor of birds and trees, King of the winds and Prince of thunderclouds?55

The solos, "Spurn Not the Nobly Born" and "When I Went to the Bar as a Very Young Man" are mind-revealing. The first aria would also come under that part of diamoia known as argument. Both Lords Mountararat and Tollorelli are trying to convince the pretty ward, Phyllis, that he is the one

54 Ibid., 247.

55 Ibid., 252.
to be chosen her partner for life:

Nor treat with virtuous scorn
The well-connected.
High rank involves no shame
We boast an equal claim
With him of humble name
To be respected.56

In the second selection the Lord Chancellor sets forth his youthful ideas (and probably caused the dignified members of the British Bar to wince):

I'll never assume that a rogue or a thief
Is a gentleman worthy implicit belief,
Because his attorney has sent me a brief
(Said I to myself—said I!)

My learned profession I'll never disgrace
By taking a fee with a grin on my face,
When I haven't been there to attend to the case
(Said I to myself—said I!)57

An illustration of saying what is fitting to be said for the ends of comedy in a given situation may be found in the quartet in the long and clever finale to Act I of Iolanthe where Phyllis comes upon Strephon speaking most confidentially to his fairy mother, asking her assistance after the Lord Chancellor has made marriage between the lovers impossible. Phyllis misunderstands their intimacy and the audience (feeling superior by reason of its knowledge of the situation) enjoys mental satisfaction in the complication. Lords Mountararat and Tolloller (who have accompanied the Ward), after some excellent by-play, ridicule Strephon. Why, they

...wouldn't say a word that could be reckoned as injurious
But to find a mother younger than her son is very curious,
And that's a kind of mother that is usually spurious...58

56 Ibid., 249-250.
57 Ibid., 251.
58 Ibid., 261.
At that moment the Fairy Queen arrives with her band. She assures them that they have "done him an injustice for the lady is his mother," which further adds to the complication. Immediately following this the Lord Chancellor and his Peers attempt to banish the fairies in the famous patter-song which reveals their attitude of mind toward the band:

Go away, madam;  
I should say, madam,  
You display, madam,  
Shocking taste.  

It is rude, madam,  
To intrude, madam,  
With your brood, madam,  
Brazen-faced!  

You come here, madam,  
Interfere, madam,  
With a peer, madam,  
(I am one.)  

You're aware, madam,  
What you dare, madam,  
So take care, madam,  
And begone!  

The Queen answers in a dramatic ultimatum to the Peers: Strephon shall go into Parliament! In her recitative the audience perceives her mind and will:

Peers shall team in Christendom  
And a Duke's exalted station  
Be attainable by Competitive examination!  

The action of Act II begins with Strephon, now a member of Parliament, carrying "every bill he chooses." The Lords are, quite naturally, very unhappy and the opinions of Lords Mountararat and Tolloller are worth noting:

59 Ibid., 260.  
60 Ibid., 261.  
61 Ibid., 264.
Lord Toll. ... I don't so much mind for myself, but with a House of Peers with no grandfathers worth mentioning, the country must go to the dogs. 62

Lord Mount. I don't want to say a word against brains—I've a great respect for brains—I often wish I had some myself—but with a House of Peers composed exclusively of people of intellect, what's to become of the House of Commons? 63

Phyllis' disclosure of her mental state is a further example:

I can't think why I'm not in better spirits. I'm engaged to two noblemen at once. That ought to be enough to make any girl happy. But I'm miserable! Don't suppose it's because I care for Strephon, because I hate him! No girl could care for a man who goes about with a mother consider-
ably younger than himself. 64

As a last illustration, the verse of the finale sung by Iolanthe, together with Phyllis, voices their joint opinion:

Though as a general rule we know
Two strings go to every bow,
Make up your minds that grief 'twill bring,
If you've two beaux to every string. 65

The second division of diaNoia—proof or persuasion—is of five sorts: oaths, compacts, testimonies, tests or ordeals, and laws. Each shall be considered separately.

Proofs or persuasions may be considered in relation to the one who persuades or to the one who is persuaded, and they may be effected by word or deed since mental operations are expressed in both ways. Thus one person may try to convince another by an oath, or to learn his identity by an ordeal. Oaths are chiefly verbal—yet one may swear by motion of the hand or of the body. Gilbert makes use of the oath, although not too frequently, and the

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., 268.
64 Ibid., 274.
65 Ibid., 287.
device is less evident in Iolanthe than in Patience. In Act I of Patience, after the discovery by the dairymaid of Grosvenor as the sweetheart of her childhood, there is the following dialogue:

... It is Archibald Grosvenor!
Yes, Patience, it is!
(In a trance): We will never, never part!
We will live and die together!
I swear it!
We both swear it! 66

Later, Lady Jane swears never to leave Bunthorne, the pseudo-aesthete:

Not all! I am still faithful to you.
Yes, and a pretty damozel you are!
No, not pretty. Massive. Cheer up! I will never leave you, I swear it! 67

Further use of oath may be found in the lines between Patience and Grosvenor, after the latter has renounced aestheticism to become "a commonplace young man, a matter-of-fact young man!":

This is terrible. Go! I shall never set eyes on you again.
But—oh, joy!
What's the matter?
Is it quite, quite certain that you will always be a commonplace young man?
Always—I've sworn it. 68

There is no formal oath in Iolanthe, but there is implication of swearing in the lines of the fairies who are vowing to bring down woe upon the Peers:

Gelia: Our wrath, when gentlemen offend us,
      Is tremendous!
Leila: They meet, who underrate our calling,
      Doom appalling!
Queen: Take down our sentence as we speak it.
      And he [Strephon] shall wreak it! 69

66 Ibid., 206.
67 Ibid., 222.
68 Ibid., 232.
69 Ibid., 263.
from the world of the Queen will come fairy-horrors:

I will launch from fairy portals,
All the most terrific thunders
In my armory of wonders. 70

After oath the Tractatus lists compacts. Compact, like other more technical terms, has a general and specific application. Diancia is shown by persons of the drama in arguing for, as well as from, compacts. Bunthorne, after losing hope of winning Patience, puts himself "up to be raffled for"—a compact of a sort with the young ladies:

Heart-broken at my Patience's barbarity,
By the advice of my solicitor,
In aid—in aid of a deserving charity
I've put myself up to be raffled for. 71

But the Dragoons quickly remind the maidens of their earlier compact with them:

Stay, we implore you,
Before our hopes are blighted;
You see before you
The men to whom you're plighted. 72

Patience generously sacrifices herself at the feet of Bunthorne, whom she does not love, in agreeing to become his bride:

If you, with one so lowly, still
Desire to be allied,
Then you may take me, if you will,
For I will be your bride. 73

After this Patience in her "True Love Must Single-hearted Be" (already given under opinion) completes the compact, stating her reasons why she is willing to become engaged to Bunthorne:

70 Ibid., 262.
71 Ibid., 208.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 211.
It follows, then, a maiden who
Devotes herself to loving you
Is prompted by no selfish view. 74

In an amusing quintet in Act II the Duke, Colonel, Major, Angela, and Saphir arrange for his or her life partner:

If Saphir I choose to marry,
I shall be fixed up for life;
Then the Colonel need not marry
Angela can be his wife. 75

Perhaps the best example of combining compact with an oath in this opera is the scene wherein Bunthorne threatens to curse Grosvenor if he does not become commonplace:

Gros. (wildly) . . . Oh, reflect, reflect! You had a mother once.
Bun. Never.
Gros. Then you had an aunt! (Bun. affected). Ah, I see you had! By the memory of that aunt, I implore you to pause ere you resort to this last fearful expedient. Oh, Mr. Bunthorne, reflect, reflect. (Weeping).
Bun. (Aside, after a struggle with himself). I must not allow myself to be unmanned! (Aloud). It is useless. Consent at once, or may a nephew's curse----
Gros. Hold! Are you absolutely resolved?
Bun. Absolutely.
Gros. Will nothing shake you?
Gros. Very good. (Rising). Then I yield.
Bun. Ha! You swear it?
Gros. I do, cheerfully. I have long wished for a reasonable pretext for such a change as you suggest. It has come at last. I do it on compulsion!
Bun. Victory! I triumph! 76

Their agreement to the above compact is then elaborated upon in the hilarious duet, "When I Go out of Door."

The finale of the libretto is, of course, in the nature of compact:

74 Ibid., 212.
75 Ibid., 226.
76 Ibid., 229.
Duke. After much debate internal,
    I on Lady Jane decide,
Saphir now may take the Colonial,
    Angy be the Major's bride!

Bun. In that case unprecedented,
    Single I must live and die—
I shall have to be contented
    With a tulip or lily.

Compact in Iolanthe is found in Act I with the agreement of Strephon and Phyllis to marry without the consent of the Lord Chancellor:

Strephon: My Phyllis. And today we are to be made happy forever.
Phyllis. Well, we're to be married.
Strephon. It's the same thing.
Phyllis. I suppose it is. But oh, Strephon, I tremble at the step I'm taking! I believe it's penal servitude for life to marry a Ward of Court without the Lord Chancellor's consent! I shall be of age in two years. Don't you think you could wait two years?
Strephon. Two years. Have you ever looked in the glass?
Phyllis. No, never.
Strephon. Here, look at that (showing her a pocket mirror), and tell me if you think it rational to expect me to wait two years?
Phyllis. No. You're quite right—it's asking too much. One must be reasonable.

This is followed by the delicate duet,

None shall part us from each other
One in life and death are we:
    All in all to one another—
        I to thee and thou to me.

Strephon, after losing Phyllis through the intervention of the Lord Chancellor, implores his mother, Iolanthe, to assist him. The verse is a form of compact, or agreement, between mother and son:

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77 Ibid., 233.
78 Ibid., 243-244.
79 Ibid.
Strephon. When darkly looms the day,  
And all is dull and grey,  
To chase the gloom away,  
On thee I'll call.

Iolanthe. When tempests wreck thy bark,  
And all is drear and dark,  
If thou shouldst need an Ark  
I'll give thee one!80

This is misunderstood by Phyllis, as has been stated, and serves to introduce  
a highly amusing scene wherein she agrees to marry either Lord Mountararat or Lord Tolloller:

The riches and rank that you befall  
Are the only baits you use,  
So the richest and rankiest of you all  
My sorrowful heart shall choose.  
As none are so noble—none so rich  
As this couple of lords, I'll find a niche  
In my heart that's aching,  
Quaking, breaking,  
For one of you two—and I don't care which!81

The continuation of this compact contains excellent irony:

Phyl. To you I give my heart so rich!  
All (puzzled). To which?  
Phyl. I do not care!  
To you I yield—it is my doom!  
All. To whom?  
Phyl. I'm not aware!  
All. I'm yours for life if you but choose.  
Phyl. She's whose?  
All. That's your affair!  
Phyl. I'll be a countess, shall I not?  
All. Of what?  
Phyl. I do not care!  
All. Lucky little lady!  
Strephon's lot is shady;  
Rank, it seems, is vital,  
"Countess" is the title,  
But of what I'm not aware.82

80 Ibid., 255.  
81 Ibid., 259.  
82 Ibid.
After Phyllis learns that Strephon is half-fairy and that Iolanthe is really his mother and is a "couple of centuries or so" old, she agrees to wed Strephon in the duet, "If We're Weak Enough to Tarry." This compact leads to the revelation by Iolanthe that she is the wife of the Lord Chancellor, who thinks her long dead. The libretto comes to a quick finale with Iolanthe's doom about to be sealed by the Queen when the fairy band announces that each member has, indeed, become the wife of an irresistible Peer!

This revelation by the fairies opens the consideration of the next point under proofs or persuasions, namely, testimony. In the Tractatus, according to Cooper's explanation, "we have the abstract word 'testimonies' or 'witnessings,' which would include not only 'ancient' and 'recent' witnesses cited in an argument, but also the spontaneous offer of testimony by a character in a play as a means of persuasion, or even the clamor for it. Patience opens with spontaneous testimony on the part of the lovesick maidens:

Twenty love-sick maidens we,
Love-sick all against our will,
Twenty years hence we shall be
Twenty love-sick maidens still.
Twenty love-sick maidens we,
And we die for love of thee.84

Bunthorne, himself, bears witness to his pose, in lines already quoted under the heading of Impostor:

Let me confess!
A languid love for lilies does not blight me!
Lank limbs and haggard cheeks do not delight me!85

As well as in his confiding to Patience,

83 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 274.
84 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 185.
85 Ibid., 199.
Let me tell you a secret. I am not as bilious as I look. If you like, I will cut my hair. There is more innocent fun within me than a casual spectator would imagine.  

Patience's own testimony that she has loved only one other than her great-aunt is contained in the clever word-play duet of Patience and Angela,

**Patience.** Ah, how we loved, that child and I,  
How pure our baby joy!  
How true our love—and, by the by,  
He was a little boy!  

**Angela.** Ah, old, old tale of Cupid's touch!  
I thought as much—I thought as much!  
He was a little boy!  

**Patience.** Pray don't misconstrue what I say—  
Remember, pray—remember, pray,  
He was a little boy!  

**Angela.** No doubt! Yet, spite of all your pains,  
The interesting fact remains—  
He was a little boy!  

Another illustration from Patience is one wherein the audience learns from Grosvenor that he is

A broken-hearted troubadour,  
Whose mind's aesthetic and whose tastes are pure.

In Iolanthe, Gilbert again opens with the fairies giving testimony of themselves, although, strictly speaking, not as a means of persuasion:

We are dainty little fairies,  
Ever singing, ever dancing;  
We indulge in our vagaries  
In a fashion most entrancing...  
If you ask us how we live,  
Lovers all essentials give—  
We can ride on lovers' sighs,

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86 Ibid., 201.  
87 Ibid., 203.  
88 Ibid., 212.
Warm ourselves in lovers' eyes,
Bathe ourselves in lovers' tears,
Clothe ourselves with lovers' fears,
Arm ourselves with lovers' darts,
Ride ourselves in lovers' hearts. . .

The fairies then inform the audience that Iolanthe was "the life and soul of fairyland," and the Queen's testimony of her love for Iolanthe follows:

What was your love to mine? Why, she was invaluable to me! Who taught me to curl myself inside a buttercup? Iolanthe! Who taught me to swing upon a cobweb? Iolanthe! Who taught me to dive into a dewdrop—to nestle in a nutshell—to gambol upon gossamer? Iolanthe.90

Strephon bears witness to his half-fairy status in:

My dear aunt! It's the curse of my existence! What's the use of being half a fairy? My body can creep through a keyhole, but what's the good of that when my legs are left kicking behind? I can make myself invisible down to the waist, but that's of no use when my legs remain exposed to view. My brain is a fairy brain, but from the waist downwards I'm a gibbering idiot. My upper half is immortal, but my lower half grows older every day, and some day or other must die of old age. What's to become of my upper half when I've buried my lower half I really don't know?91

There is also the use of evidence by witness for purposes of discovery, persuasion and the like. The Lord Chancellor asks Strephon what excuse he has to offer for having disobeyed an order of the Court of Chancery. Strephon's reply has already been quoted under dianoia (opinion) inasmuch as there is frequently an overlapping of the various divisions of the Tractatus.92

A final example of testimony, or discovery, from Iolanthe, is the real crisis when Iolanthe reveals her identity—it is forced rather than spontaneous testimony: "You know not what you ask! The Lord Chancellor is—my husband."93

89 Ibid., 237-238.
90 Ibid., 239.
91 Ibid., 242.
92 Cf. page 44 of this thesis.
93 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 283.
The fourth element, that of tests, or ordeals, follows upon testimonies and is often combined with the latter. As noted in Chapter I, the term embraces mental as well as physical ordeals, forcible inquisitions, systematic tests of every sort, yet particularly those of a mechanical nature.

"A satisfactory rendering of the word ἡξωσίαι in the Tractate would combine the motions of 'torture' (such as mock-floggings), decisions by mock-combat, tests, and, on the mental side, persistent inquiries and mock-examinations." 94

In general, the ordeal tends rather to be of a physical sort, although there are mental ordeals or inquisitions. In neither Patience or Iolanthe does Gilbert make much use of tests or ordeals save in a very mild sense, and in Patience the "ordeal" is delightfully ludicrous. Upon Archibald Grosvenor's recognition by Patience, as her grown-up baby sweetheart, the following dialogue would seem to be on the side of mental ordeal or test:

Yes, Patience, I am much taller and much stouter than I was.
And how you've improved!
Yes, Patience, I am very beautiful! (Sighs).
But surely that doesn't make you unhappy.
Yes, Patience. Gifted as I am with a beauty which probably has not its rival on earth, I am, nevertheless, utterly and completely miserable.
Oh, but why?
My child-love for you has never faded. Consider, then, the horror of my situation when I tell you that it is my hideous destiny to be madly loved at first sight by every woman I come across!
But why do you make yourself so picturesque? Why not disguise yourself, disfigure yourself, anything to escape this persecution? 95

and Patience to Grosvenor:

To monopolize those features on which all women love

94 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 276.

95 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 205.
to linger! It would be unpardonable.
Why, so it would! Oh, fatal perfection, again you interpose between me and my happiness!96

Later Grosvenor moans:

What is this mysterious fascination that I seem to exercise over all I come across? A curse on my fatal beauty, for I am sick of conquests.97

In Iolanthe, this element of tests or ordeals is more evident. At the beginning the audience is informed by two of the fairies and their Queen, of the ordeal to which Iolanthe has been subjected:

To think that five-and-twenty years have elapsed since she was banished! What could she have done to have deserved so terrible a punishment?
Something awful! She married a mortal!
Oh! Is it unjust to marry a mortal?
Injudicious? It strikes at the root of the whole fairy system! By our laws, the fairy who marries a mortal dies!
But Iolanthe didn’t die!
No, because your Queen, who loved her with a surpassing love, commuted her sentence to penal servitude for life, on condition that she left her husband and never communicated with him again!
That sentence of penal servitude she is now working out, on her head, at the bottom of that stream!98

The preceding example also contains the fifth element of proof, law.

Another mock-ordeal is the hilarious dialogue between Lords Mount-ararat and Tolloller, with the clever use of their first names:

Toll. ... But the awkward part of the thing is that if you rob me of the girl of my heart, we must fight, and one of us must die. It’s a family tradition that I have sworn to respect. It’s a painful position, for I have a very strong regard for you, George.
Mount. My dear Thomas!
Toll. You are very dear to me, George. We were boys together--

96 Ibid., 206.
97 Ibid., 219.
98 Ibid., 238.
at least I was. If I were to survive you, my existence
would be helplessly embittered.

Mount. Then, my dear Thomas, you must not do it. I say it again
and again—if it will have this effect upon you, you must
not do it. No, no. If one of us is to destroy the other,
let it be me!

Toll. No, no!

Mount. Ah, yes!—by our boyish friendship I implore you!

Toll. Well, well, be it so. But, no—no!—I cannot consent to an
act which would crush you with unavailing remorse.

Mount. But it would not do so. I should be very sad at first—
oh, who would not be?—but it would wear off. I like you
very much—but not, perhaps, as much as you like me.

Toll. George, you're a noble fellow, but that tell-tale tear be-
trays you. No, George; you are very fond of me, and I cannot
consent to give you a week's uneasiness on my account.

Mount. But, dear Thomas, it would not last a week. Remember, you lead
the House of Lords! On your demise I shall take your place!
Oh, Thomas, it would not last a day!

There is a moment of mock-serious intensity as Iolanthe is about
to die for breaking her vow a second time. The Queen speaks:

Bow thy head to Destiny;
Death thy doom, and thou shalt die.

There are perhaps better illustrations of torture, or ordeal, in
other of the Savoy libretti. For example, Manky Poo in The Mikado must
"suffer" the ordeal of knowing that he is to be beheaded at the end of a
month, thereby yielding possession of the delicious (to borrow a pun from
Deems Taylor) Yum-Yum to Ko-Ko, while Robin Oakapple of Ruddigore (after
he is identified as none other than Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd) grieves over his
obligation of having to fulfill the family curse of committing a crime—a-day.
The semi-tragic Jack Point in The Yeomen of the Guard does indeed endure a
trial in the loss of his beloved Elsie Maynard.

99 Ibid., 275.
100 Ibid., 285.
101 Deems Taylor, A Treasury of Gilbert and Sullivan, New York,
1941, 240.
Last in the series under proof is the category termed \textit{laws}. Almost any general statement proceeding from a notable authority may fall under this head if it has greater cogency than a maxim. Throughout the entire libretto of \textit{Patience} there is no good illustration of law as defined and explained by Cooper. In \textit{Iolanthe}, however, the entire opera turns about the fairy law from beginning to end. As shown under torture, or ordeal, Iolanthe has been banished for having married a mortal and Leila is first to inform the audience that "by our laws, the fairy who marries a mortal dies!"\textsuperscript{102} The theme is carried throughout with several repetitions such as those found in the solo of the Fairy Queen, "Oh, Foolish Fay," and in the budding affections of the fairies for the Peers,

\begin{quote}
You break our laws---
You are our foe:
We cry because
We hate you so!
You know!
You very wicked peers!
Don't go!\textsuperscript{103}
\end{quote}

The fairy band is instantly reprimanded by their Queen who reminds them of the law:

\begin{quote}
Oh, shame—shame upon you! Is this your fidelity to the laws you are bound to obey? Know ye not that it is death to marry a mortal?\textsuperscript{104}
\end{quote}

The opera closes on a turn of logic springing from this law. As related in the summary in the first chapter, the entire fairy band, having married the peers, surely cannot be done away with! The Lord Chancellor, now aware that Iolanthe is his long-thought-dead wife, takes the matter into his hands:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} \textit{Plays and Poems} of W.S. Gilbert, 238.
\item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, 271.
\item \textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
Allow me, as an old Equity draftsman, to make a suggestion. The subtleties of the legal mind are equal to the emergency. The thing is really quite simple—the insertion of a single word will do it. Let it stand that every fairy shall die who doesn't marry a mortal, and there you are, out of your difficulty at once.\textsuperscript{105}

The use of law also arises in the song in which the Lord Chancellor informs the audience that he is the true embodiment of the Law—the constitutional guardian of Wards in Chancery, which law prohibits Strephon from marrying Phyllis. When the fairies make Strephon a member of Parliament, their song contains law, although it is implied rather than expressed:

Strephon's a Member of Parliament!  
Carries every Bill he chooses.  
To his measures all assent—  
Showing that fairies have their uses.  
Whigs and Tories  
Dim their glories,  
Giving an ear to all his stories—  
Lords and Commons are both in the blues!  
Strephon makes them shake in their shoes.\textsuperscript{106}

A trio rendered by the Lords Chancellor, Mounterarat, and Tolloller has as its "motif":

\begin{verbatim}
Be your law
The ancient saw
"Faint heart never won fair lady!"\textsuperscript{107}
\end{verbatim}

It is evident that Gilbert liked to employ this particular element of diaphoria. His own experience (although brief) as a member of the Bar was unquestionably an influence. \textit{Trial By Jury}, for example, is a topsy-turvy turning of the law:

\begin{verbatim}
Though homeward as you trudge,
You declare my law is fudge,
Yet of beauty I'm a judge,
And a good Judge too!\textsuperscript{108}
\end{verbatim}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 286.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 267.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 280.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 104.
\end{itemize}
In The Mikado there is the decree:

That all who flirted, leered or winked
(Unless connubially linked)
Should henceforth be beheaded.  

Later, Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu, ascertains that, by the Mikado's law, when a married man is beheaded his wife is buried alive. One might go through all the Savoy operas and find a great many illustrations of law, as defined by Cooper.

The sixth constituent element, diction, will be considered in detail in the following chapter. As a generalization here, under diction, the Tractatus specifies that in comedy it is the use of common, popular language. The comic poet must endow an alien with alien idiom. Gilbert was too shrewd a wit not to take extreme care to endow his characters with diction peculiar to each. To illustrate, Saphir, one of the lovesick maidens, says:

Deign to raise thy purple eyes
From thy heart-drawn poesy.

But the practical Patience is heard to say, after Bunthorne's would-be poetic recitation, "Well, it seems to me to be nonsense." Richard Dauntless in Ruddigore is endowed with the idiom of the sailor; Jack Point in The Yeomen of the Guard is a distant relative of the Shakespearean fool. Gilbert uses nothing which would be unintelligible to his listeners. He does not make frequent use of dialect; there is, if anything, too often a lack of contrast in the diction of classes or types. The author is fundamentally upper-class; he does not go into the slums of London as does Bernard Shaw, and find a good, substantial Cockney.

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109 Ibid., 348.
110 Ibid., 377.
111 Ibid., 193.
112 Ibid., 194.
"Melody is the province of the art of music; hence it is necessary to take its fundamental rules from that art" is as much as the Tractatus gives. In Cooper's amplification of the foregoing statement, the author tells his readers that the technique of music was of great importance to the dramatic poet, who in the flourishing days of the Greek stage was likewise a composer. . . yet the Poetics virtually neglects the subject of music and is perfunctory in its treatment of the chorus.\footnote{113} Cooper does mention that music "furnishes the chief of the accessory pleasures in comedy.\footnote{114}

That the music of Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan is of equal importance with the libretti cannot be doubted. In Stanford-Forsyth's \textit{A History of Music} we read of Sullivan:

At the Savoy he set a standard of clearness, elegance and graceful charm that was unknown before his day. He began the tradition of adequate orchestral accompaniment which has ever since been a feature of comic-opera in London. On the aesthetic side we owe him a lasting debt for his recognition of the fact that it was not only necessary to set his text to music which was pleasing in itself, but to invent melodies in such close alliance with the words that the two things become (to the audience) indistinguishable\.\footnote{115}

To dismiss music with just the brief paragraph from the Tractatus without giving it its deserved attention would be almost like cutting a picture in half, losing thereby the oneness, or destroying part of the very essence of these never-equalled English operas. Maurice Baring writes in his essay on Gilbert and Sullivan that it is perhaps "because Sullivan's lighter music is so essentially English that it has taken years to obtain serious recognition."\footnote{116} Baring speaks of the daintiness, the elegance, the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[113] Cooper, \textit{An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy}, 283.
\item[114] \textit{Ibid.}, 186.
\end{footnotes}
finish, the workmanship of the tunes, the beautiful business-like quality of
the work, its ease and distinction, its infinite variety—the music of English
soil, so noble, so gay, so debonair, so beautiful. He is of the opinion that
the lyrical beauty found in the choruses of Aristophanes is supplied, and
plentifully, to Gilbert’s verse by Sullivan; that the most salient and supreme
of his gifts is that of tune—the gift of pouring out a stream of beautiful,
bubbling melodies.117

It has sometimes been thought that the collaborators were the
originators of the patter-song. Isaac Goldberg, one of the finest of their
biographers, assures his readers that the patter-song is not an invention of
the famous pair. He states, "To go back no further than Aristophanes, it is
an ancient device. Musical patter is found in Haydn, in Mozart, in Samuel
Arnold’s Enraged Musician."118 The patter-song of John Wellington Wells in
The Sorcerer demonstrates Gilbert and Sullivan’s first use of this type of
song as a principal feature. It is a combination of the usual Gilbertian
self-announcement and the patter-song that, after Pinafore, became a regular
feature of the operas.119 The lyrical elements of the Greek theatre as
specified in the History of Music already mentioned would seem to be peculiar-
ly adaptable to the Savoy libretti, at least in part:

The most important of these lyrical forms were the parodos, or
choral song of entry into the theatre; the various stasima, or
"songs between the acts" as we should say; the kommaï, or lyrical
dialogues between the chorus and the actors; the monodiai, or
solo songs; and (in comedy) the parabasis, an elaborate half-way

117 Cf. ibid., 293-295-295-298.
119 Cf. ibid., 195.
house go-as-you-please mixture of poetry and patter. (The patter was known as the "choker.")

Before noting a few musical examples, it is worth mentioning that Maurice Baring contends that "it is, perhaps, in Iolanthe that Gilbert and Sullivan display, if not their highest, their most peculiar qualities." He considers Iolanthe the most Gilbertian of all the operas, and the music peculiarly characteristic of Sullivan; and he finds the whole essence of Gilbert and Sullivan in the song of Patience and Grosvenor in "Prithee, Pretty Maiden, Will You Marry Me?" Baring says of this particular aria,

Gilbert never wrote anything better than that, and Sullivan, as usual, rose to the occasion, and clothed these tripping syllables with a most delicate vesture of melody, in which a fairy-like pizzicato accompaniment falls on the thread of tune, like dewdrops on gossamer. If this song had had German or Italian words, and had reached us from Vienna or Milan, the critics would have made as much fuss over it as over any tune in Mozart.

From the moment the curtain opens upon the doleful chorus in Patience, the audience is aware that Sullivan is emphasizing the absurdity of the lovesick maidens through the mock-tragic quality in his music. The few measures given here are a good example:

Twain, Ty wean hence we shall be. Twain, love-sick maids are still

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121 Baring, Lost Lectures, 300
122 Ibid., 370.
At intervals throughout this opening the phrase, "Ah, miserable!" is interspersed in minor key, which prepared the audience from the outset to laugh. There is a melodramatic element that cannot be denied, but Sullivan is probably burlesquing the more flowery type of Italian opera, as he did in *Trial By Jury* and in *The Pirates of Pensance*. This quality is unmistakable in the recitative of Bunthorne when he takes the audience into his confidence:

That Sullivan had Verdi's "Miserere" from *Il Trovatore* in mind as he composed the introduction to the graceful and melodious "Love that No Wrong can Cure" is more than a little obvious. He might even be accused of mild

12h Ibid., 31.
In the recitative and solo of Lady Jane from the same opera, it is really the delicacy of Sullivan's music that prevents the verse from becoming too vulgar and just too "funny." Many examples of musical satire could be cited inasmuch as both plot and characters lend themselves particularly well to this type of composition. It has been said that "it is hard to forgive him however, for having passed by a rare challenge; even in 1880 there was a 'modernist' music that would have lent itself to 'aesthetic' caricature." 126 Be this as it may, it is possible that Sullivan, who in musical form is largely a classicist with overtones of the romantic, may possibly have realized his limitations in handling modern dissonances, for example, and preferred not to experiment in new types of strange harmony—especially as theatre-goers of the Gilbert and Sullivan era very probably would not have opened their hearts to unusual chord combinations. Even today the musically uneducated do not trill off tunes from Gershwin's Porgy and Bess.

The humour of the music in Iolanthe is less definite than it is in Patience because of the ethereal element or atmosphere. It is more enchanting than laughable. From the opening chorus of Patience to the finale, a smile

125 Ibid., 88.
126 Goldberg, The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan, 263.
will play around the lips of the audience; the same cannot be said of *Iolanthe*. From its overture and opening chorus until the last note dies away one is more inclined to feel its shimmering, gossamer quality, akin to Mendelssohn's incidental music to *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The invocation of the Fairy Queen and her band at the opening of Act I, as they summon the banished *Iolanthe*, contains no humour at all—indeed there is something of the ancient Celtic strain here, as there is in the minor wail of the fairies when *Iolanthe* is about to die because she has revealed her identity, "Aiaiah! Aiaiah! Willa-halah! Willaloo!" Gilbert momentarily reaches out and grasps the hand of Poetry in this and Sullivan makes the most of it. The composer at this point, particularly, shows the influence of Wagner. It is regrettable that contemporary critics were not too kind to the music of *Iolanthe*. Certainly the subtle Wagnerian overtones (Sullivan can not be said to have employed a leitmotif) were either unappreciated or entirely missed. A possible explanation might be that Wagnerian music-drama was not too well-known or understood in England; for that matter, the great German was rather slow to be accepted, even though he was recognized, on the Continent. The fact remains that Sullivan unquestionably was as aware of Wagner as he was of Verdi, as *Iolanthe* proves. It is not unlikely that this dramatic and intellectual quality of the music explains why *Iolanthe* is so little known when compared to *Pinafore* or *The Mikado*.

The nightmare patter-song of the Lord Chancellor (as, for that matter, is true of all the patter-songs) is music skilfully restrained; the words are all-important and Sullivan makes no attempt to overshadow them. There is musical mockery, however, in the chorus of Peers and song of Lords Tolloller and Mountararat:
and throughout the remainder of the same number both collaborators have a little fun at the expense of Parliament:

Let's pretend it's most amusing
Ha, ha, ha!
Ha, ha, ha!
Ha, ha, ha!

A comic contrast is noted in the entrance music of the Peers. Up to this point Sullivan has bewitched his listeners into a fairyland mood; a crashing fanfare enlivens and changes this to a down-to-earth marching military tune.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch says very aptly:

We must reckon the quite marvellous sense of words in all his musical settings. You may examine number after number of his, and the more closely you examine the more will you be convinced that no composer ever lived with an exacter appreciation of words, their meaning, their due emphasis, their right articulation. A singer must be a fool indeed if you do not hear through Sullivan's notes the exact language of any song.129

After music comes spectacle, which "is of great advantage to drama in supplying what is in accord with them," according to the Tractatus; this is stated succinctly, but hardly adequately. Cooper does not elaborate upon this point save to illustrate it briefly with an example or two, (included in the Appendix of this thesis). But that spectacle was vitally important in the Savoy operas is an undisputed fact. Many biographers and critics make specific, and sometimes detailed, references to the exactness of Gilbert with regard to his stage properties. Nothing was too small to be overlooked.

There is the famous example of a rope on the ship in Pinafore, moved from its

128 Ibid., 50.
129 Quiller-Couch, Studies in Literature, 221.
original place to another spot by a member of the cast, which incident result-
in Gilbert's raging refusal to go on with the rehearsal until the seemingly
significant rope was replaced. A miniature stage in his own home served his
fastidious wants in determining stage settings, as well as positions of actors,
actresses, and choruses during the actual performance. Descriptions of the
stage at the beginning of each opera attest to the fact that Gilbert saw a real
need for an appropriate, decorative set, and minute directions which appear
throughout the operas exhibit his knowledge of what was necessary and peculiar
to that particular drama. The opening of Patience has the direction:

Exterior of Castle Bunthorne. Entrance to Castle by drawbridge
over moat. Young ladies dressed in aesthetic draperies are
grouped about the stage. They play on lutes, mandolins, etc.,
as they sing, and all are in the last stage of despair.130

Gilbert was not above keeping his eye on box office returns, and his
keen sense of stage technique and all things that possessed audience-appeal is
everywhere evident. To retain his successful position was ever before his
eyes—and nothing was too difficult to insure this success. He feared failure
and when it came, he was not a virtuous example of accepting it.

The concluding statement in the Tractatus concerning these six qual-
itative, or constituent, elements is also very brief: "plot, diction, and
melody are found in all comedies; dianoia, ethos, and spectacle in a few."131
Cooper mentions that the preceding dubious statement of the fragment regarding dianoia and spectacle is hard to understand and difficult to illustrate in
view of our limited acquaintance with complete Greek comedies outside of
Aristophanes. And in his attempt to explain the foregoing the author says:
"The statement of the Tractate is at best difficult to interpret; perhaps one
is wiser not to throw out too many suggestions concerning it."132

130 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 185.
131 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 226 and 284.
132 Ibid., 185.
In the modern conception of the theatre, the only one of the elements that may be totally absent is melody—or, in the present-day interpretation of the term, music. Melody in its earlier comprehension meant rhythm in a broad sense. Spectacle, too, is not an absolute necessity, although the modern mind ordinarily is not trained to supply, with the imagination, the necessary backgrounds or embellishments. However, Gilbert utilized to the full these six qualitative parts as the foregoing pages have attempted to show.

Finally, the three kinds of comedy named in the fragment are, first, Old Comedy, containing a superabundance of the laughable; secondly, New, which disregards laughter and tends toward the serious; and lastly, Middle, which is a mixture of the two. It should be noted that these divisions "represent not only periods of time, but also tendencies that were present from an early date in Greek comedy." The Tractatus does not specify that the Middle is intermediate in point of time, but that it is a mixture of the other two.133 The Savoy operas, generally speaking, fall into the classification of Middle Comedy with occasional lapses into the Old. It is possible that there may be divergent opinions as to whether the operas more than "occasionally" fall into the Old. But it is apparent that Gilbert is not generally interested in slapstick, in horse-play, or in melodrama as such, but he is interested in getting over some idea, or principle, or in exposing some weakness, or folly. However sugar-coated the underlying thought, there can be no doubt that Gilbert had some sound teaching to do—and did it. Here again, of course, he demonstrates his showmanship, as well as his craftsmanship—and the world has these stimulating comic operas to make it laugh and to make it think.

133 Ibid.
CHAPTER III

LAUGHTER ARISING FROM THINGS SAID AND THINGS DONE
AS FOUND IN PATIENCE AND IOLANTHE

"Comedy ... distorts proportions; its essence is the imitation of things seen out of proportion. In pure comedy the spectator laughs from the outset; and the catharsis is effected by a series of explosions, doubtless culminating in one final laugh when the situation is cleared; that is, if the plot is involved."¹ Laughter, arising from the diction and from things done, includes laughter provoked by mental acts as well as physical. There is necessarily some overlapping between the two main categories of words and things, as there is, frequently, an overlapping of the subheads under each.

The Tractatus does not mention versification and therefore it is not, strictly speaking, within the province of this thesis; a detailed study of Gilbert's verse forms is in itself a subject that would make a worthwhile contribution to English literature. However, the following excerpt from Goldberg's The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan seems to apply to laughter arising from his diction and from his versification and may be pertinent here:

Gilbert's humour and his versification, as Beerbohm saw, are inextricably connected. Verse has its natural affinities with humour as with tragedy, but in Gilbert's case the affinity is closer than usual. ... The lines of his verse, the rhymes, gave frame and fillip to his feelings. Their lilt, their conciseness, energized

¹ Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 181.
his conceptions. He may have had the soul of a poet; he did not have the poet's art. He wrote verse, not poetry, even when he would soar. He had wings, but they were for swooping, not for flight. His verse is the perfect image of his wit and humour. . . . Not only the comedians grimaced—the language "pulled" faces and performed stunts. . . . Gilbert began as a playwright by making burlesque of opera; he ended by making opera of burlesque.2

Concerning poetic humour, Max Eastman writes:

Aside from the hypnotic assistance of rhythm, there are two methods by which poetic language makes vivid our realization of things. It chooses some salient detail or flavor in those things upon which we may focus our attention; and it compares those things with others which are similar in some salient detail or flavor. In poetic humor we can distinguish these same two arts—an art of inappropriate choice, and an art of incongruous comparison. . . . These two simple acts of choice and comparison underlie and explain all the forms of poetic language which grammarians call simile. . . . It is just the perpetual streaming out of quaint, odd, grotesque, jolly-foolish, droll and fantastic mixtures of the qualities of experience that gives them so poetic a popularity.3

And Lane Cooper notes the following from the Poetics 21, 22:

In respect to diction, the ideal for the poet is to be clear without being mean. The clearest diction is that which is wholly made up of current terms (the ordinary words for things). But a style so composed is mean. But the language attains a distinction [suitable to comedy] when the poet makes use of terms that are less familiar, such as rare words, metaphors, lengthened forms—everything that deviates from the ordinary usage. . . . The comic poet should employ a certain admixture of these expressions that deviate from the ordinary; for distinction and elevation of style will result from the use of such means as the strange word, the metaphor, the ornamental word, and the rest; and clearness will arise from such part of the language as is in common use. . . . Most important by far is it to have a command of metaphor, this being the one thing the poet can not learn from others. It is the mark of genius, for to produce apt metaphors requires an intuitive perception of resemblances.4

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2 Goldberg, The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan, 100 and 104.
Under dictation, the *Tractatus* lists first, homonyms, or ambiguities, i.e., words having the same pronunciation, but differing in meaning, origin, and often spelling. To refer briefly to Cooper's detailed analysis, equivocal terms are the class of terms most useful to the sophist, for it is with the help of these that he juggles.

Gilbert does not "juggle" too frequently with equivocal terms in *Patience* or in *Iolanthe*. There is a certain ambiguity in the illustration of Bunthorne's describing one of his "poems," and in *Patience*'s answer:

It is a wild, weird, fleshly thing; yet very tender, very yearning, very precious. It is called, "Oh, Hollow! Hollow! Hollow! Hollow!

Is it a hunting song?
A hunting song? No, it is not a hunting song. It is the wail of the poet's heart on discovering that everything is commonplace. To understand it, cling passionately to one another and think of faint lilies.5

Later in the opera there is a further play upon the word hollow:

Ah, Patience, come hither. I am pleased with thee. The bitter-hearted one, who finds all else hollow, is pleased with thee. For you are not hollow. Are you?
No, thanks, I have dined; but—I beg your pardon—I interrupt you.6

The change from "thee" to "you" is a nice incongruity.

A homonym is often (and more loosely) called a pun. In *The Sense of Humor* Max Eastman states:

We call verbal absurdities puns only when they offer, besides the humor of pure nonsense, some reasonable excuse for their intrusion—some meaning in another sense, or at least some vocal likeness of identity with a thing already said.7

That Gilbert found it difficult to resist this device of word-play is obvious.

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5 *Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert*, 195.
7 Eastman, *The Sense of Humor*, 68.
However one may try to excuse him, nevertheless he can be accused of violating good taste occasionally—particularly where middle-age has descended, so to speak, upon a woman. Lady Jane is one of his victims:

Reduced, with rouge, lip-salve, and pearly grey,
To "make up" for lost time as best she may!

There is border-line vulgarity in Bunthorne's remark to Jane just before the finale:

Thank you, Jane. After all, there is no denying it, you're a fine figure of a woman.

The entire "Fable of the Magnet and the Churn" is composed of double-meaning words. A few illustrative lines are:

The scissors declared themselves "cut out,"
The kettles they boiled with rage, 'tis said,
While every nail went off its head,
And hither and thither began to roam,
Till a hammer came up—and drove them home.

The introduction of this particular song is one of the few instances in which Gilbert permitted himself to insert what seems to be extraneous; it adds nothing essential to the opera itself, although the music is daintily charming.

Use of homonyms in Iolanthe is found in Lord Mountararat's aria to Phyllis:

If you ask us distinctly to say
What Party we claim to belong to,
We reply, without doubt or delay,
The Party I'm singing this song to!

And Lord Tolloller observes to the Lord Chancellor:

This is what it is to have two capacities! Let us be

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8 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 214.
9 Ibid., 232.
10 Ibid., 218.
11 Ibid., 249.
thankful that we are persons of no capacity whatever.\textsuperscript{12}

Another instance was given earlier under \textit{dianoia} (opinion):

\begin{quote}
Though as a general rule we know
Two strings go to every bow,
Make up your minds that grief 'twill bring,
If you've two beaux to every string.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Synonyms are, of course, different terms applied to the same thing. The important distinction here, as differing from homonyms, is that the terms are not identical, but have the same, or nearly the same, essential meaning.

"The comic poet has the option of calling the worse thing by the better name, or the better thing by the worse name. By the use of metaphor, the number of names applied to the same thing may be indefinitely extended."\textsuperscript{14} Patience's first solo is a series of metaphors.

\begin{quote}
If love is a thorn, they show no wit
Who foolishly hug and foster it.
If love is a weed, how simple they
Who gather it, day by day!
If love is a nettle that makes you smart,
Then why do you wear it next your heart?\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

The same type of thing is to be found in the Colonel's descriptive patter-song. The Heavy Dragoons are the pride of England!

\begin{quote}
Force of Mephisto pronouncing a ban -
A smack of Lord Waterford, reckless and rollicky -
Swagger of Roderick, heading his clan -
The keen penetration of Paddington Pollaky -
Grace of an Odalisque on a divan -\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

And, later, when the Dragoons assume the pose of devotees of aestheticism in

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 280.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 287.
\textsuperscript{14} Cooper, \textit{An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy}, 230.
\textsuperscript{15} Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 188.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 191.
order to regain the love of the maidens, Gilbert employs amusing (and absurd) comparisons in the passage:

Oh, Saphir—see, see! The immortal fire has descended on them, and they are of the Inner Brotherhood—perceptively intense and consummately utter.

How Botticellian! How Fra Angelican! Oh, Art, we thank thee for this boon! 17

While Grosvenor's remark, "Ah, I am a very Narcissus," 18 follows an earlier revelation that he is a trustee for Beauty.

The Tractatus does not specify metaphor in the list under "laughter arising from the diction" but it is included in Cooper's interpretation of Aristotle. [See Synonyms in Appendix.] Iolanthe does not contain as much metaphor as one finds in other Savoy libretti although there is a good example in the delicate, lovely duet of Phyllis and Strephon in Act I:

Thou the tree and I the flower—
   Thou the idol; I the throng—
Thou the day and I the hour—
   Thou the singer; I the song! 19

Another is found in the Chorus of the Peers:

We are peers of highest station,
Paragons of legislation,
Pillars of the British nation! 20

In this, as in the following, Gilbert's irony is more than a little apparent.

The pompous, strutting Peers sing to the fairies, in mock-terror,

Distinction ebbs
Before a herd
Of vulgar plebs!
   (A Latin word). 21

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17 Ibid., 225.
18 Ibid., 227.
19 Ibid., 244.
20 Ibid., 245.
21 Ibid., 265.
the appropriate synonym seems always to have fallen effortlessly from Gilbert's pen. In Princess Ida (and one can't help but wonder what the dignified fennyson must have thought, the opera playing for the first time eight years before his death) one reads:

Mighty maiden with a mission,  
Paragon of common sense,  
Running fount of erudition,  
Miracle of eloquence...22

from the same libretto, the caustic King Gama indulges in a little name-calling at the angered King Hildebrand's expense:

Hil. You dog, you'll find though I wear woman's garb  
My sword is long and sharp!  
Gama. Hush, pretty one!  
Here's a virago! Here's a termagant!  
If length and sharpness go for anything,  
You'll want no sword while you can wag your tongue!23

There is no question that the Savoy operas reveal much clever use of synonym. Perhaps one of the best examples is the description of Rose in Ruddigore, sung by the salty Richard Dauntless:

For you are such a smart little craft,  
Such a neat little, sweet little craft,  
Such a bright little, tight little,  
Slight little, light little,  
Trim little, prim little craft;24

A string of depreciatory synonyms is found in the Chorus of the deceased Bad Baronets of Ruddigore as they step from their "portrait" frames. Robin is the object of their censure:

Coward, poltroon, shaker, squeamer,  
Blockhead, sluggard, dullard, dreamer,  
Shirker, shuffler, crawler, creeper,

22 Ibid., 305.  
23 Ibid., 337.  
24 Ibid., 438.
Sniffler, snuffler, wailer, weeper, Earthworm, maggot, tadpole, weevil.25

And from The Mikado, Yum–Yum must

Braid the raven hair—
Dye the coral lip. . . . 26

And Ko–Ko describes the pretended execution of Manky–Poo in,

As he squirmed and struggled,
And gurgled and gugged,
I drew my snickersnee!27

Garrulity, next to be treated, is "a staple device of comic writers

. . . the simplest case is the repetition of the same word over and over
again, but the term embraces verbosity of every sort—bombast, triviality,
learned nonsense, the garrulity of age, or children, of the idle, of clowns,
domestics, and the like."28

In Patience, there is no truly garrulous character. The nearest to
approach this classification is the Colonel, who, as has been explained in
Chapter II, falls into the category of the buffoon–type of comic character.
However, in Iolanthe the Lord Chancellor indulges in verbosity in both prose
speeches and rhyme. One needs but to glance at his musings in,

I thank your Lordships. The feelings of a Lord chancellor who is
in love with a Ward of Court are not to be envied. What is his
position? Can he give his own consent to his own marriage with
his own Ward? Can he marry his own Ward without his own consent?
And if he marries his own Ward without his own consent, can he
commit himself for contempt of his own Court? And if he commit
himself for contempt of his own Court, can he appear by counsel
before himself, to move for arrest of his own judgment? Ah, my
Lords, it is indeed painful to have to sit upon a woolsack which
is stuffed with such thorns as these!29

25 Ibid., 440.
26 Ibid., 372.
27 Ibid., 385.
28 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 231.
29 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 248.
Perhaps the best example from this comic opera is the Chancellor's excellent nightmare patter-song which embraces triviality and clownishness. (The internal rhyme is well done, and the lines, in spite of their length, have drive and motion):

And bound on that journey you find your attorney (who started that morning from Devon),
He's a bit undersized, and you don't feel surprised when he tells you he's only eleven.
Well, you're driving like mad with this singular lad (by the by, the ship's now a four-wheeler)... 30

The close of the nightmare patter-song is apt, clever, and strenuous. (It almost requires "Handelian" breath control).

You're a regular wreck, with a crick in your neck, and no wonder you snore, for your head's on the floor, and you've needles and pins from your soles to your shins, and your flesh is a-creep, for your left leg's asleep, and you've cramp in your toes, and a fly on your nose, and some fluff in your lung, and a feverish tongue, and a thirst that's intense, and a general sense that you haven't been sleeping in clover;
But the darkness has passed, and it's daylight at last, and the night has been long—ditto ditto my song—and thank goodness they're both of them over. 31

Finally, after numerous struggles with himself, the Lord Chancellor decides Phyllis is to be his. His lengthy reasoning is typical of clownish talkativeness:

Victory! Victory! Success has crowned my efforts, and I may consider myself engaged to Phyllis! At first I wouldn't hear of it—it was out of the question. But I took heart. I pointed out to myself that I was no stranger to myself; that, in point of fact, I had been personally acquainted with myself for some years. This had its effect. I admitted that I had watched my professional advancement with considerable interest, and I handsomely added that I yielded to no one

30 Ibid., 277.
31 Ibid., 279.
in admiration for my private and professional virtues. This was a great point gained. I then endeavoured to work upon my feelings. Conceive my joy when I distinctly perceived a tear glistening in my own eye! Eventually, after a severe struggle with myself, I reluctantly—most reluctantly—con­curred. 

Gilbert enjoyed making many of his characters talk a good deal of learned nonsense. This type of garrulity is apparent throughout the various operas. Certainly Pooh-Bah of Mikado fame is more than slantly talkative:

Don't mention it. I am, in point of fact, a particularly haughty and exclusive person, of pre-Adamite ancestral descent. You will understand this when I tell you that I can trace my ancestry back to a protoplasmal primordial atomic globule. Consequently, my family pride is something inconceivable. I can't help it. I was born sneering. But I struggle hard to overcome this defect. I mortify my pride continually. When all the great officers of State resigned in a body, because they were too proud to serve under an ex-tailor, did I not unhesitatingly accept all their posts at once? . . . It is consequently my degrading duty to serve this upstart as First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, both acting and elect, all rolled into one. And at a salary! A Pooh-Bah paid for his services! I a salaried minion! But I do it! It revolts me, but I do it! 

At the close of The Mikado, Nanki Poo is still very much alive. When Ko-Ko is questioned about the supposed-to-be-executed Heir Apparent, the too-voluble Pooh-Bah interrupts with his customary, "Merely corroborative detail intended to give artistic verisimilitude to a bald and—" followed by the exasperated Ko-Ko's "Will you refrain from putting in your oar?" The audience loves having Pooh-Bah silenced.

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32 Ibid., 284.
33 Ibid., 349.
34 Ibid., 399.
Still another "babbler" is Richard Dauntless of Ruddigore, one of Gilbert's most verbose of characters. Typical of Dauntless' nautical-flavoured speeches is:

I'd no thoughts of sayin' this here to you on my own account, for, truth to tell, I was chartered by another; but when I see you my heart it up and it says, says it, "This is the very lass for you, Dick"—Speak up to her, Dick, it says—(it calls me Dick acos we was at school together)—"tell her all, Dick," it says, "never sail under false colors—it's mean!" That's what my heart tells me to say, and my rough, common-sailor fashion, I've said it, and I'm a-waiting for your reply. I'm a-tremblin', miss. Lookye here—(holding out his hand). That's nervousness!35

Of different stamp is the pathetic figure of Jack Point in The Yeomen of the Guard:

Thou dost not? Now observe. She said, "Hands off!" Whose hands? Thine, off whom? Off her. Why? Because she is a woman. Now, had she not been a woman, those hands had not been set upon her at all. So the reason the laying on of hands is the reason for the taking of hands, and herein is contradiction contradicted! It is the very marriage of pro with con; and no such lopsided union nor, as times go, for pro is not more unlike con than man's unlike woman—yet men and women marry every day with none say, "Oh, the pity of it!" but I and fools like me! Now ere withheld shall we please you? We can rhyme you couplet, toilet, quatrain, sonnet, gondolet, ballade, what you will. One can dance you saraband, gondolet, carole, pimpernel, or Japing Joan.36

The recitative of Wilfred and Point from the same libretto becomes a trifle drawn out, but length is a characteristic of garrulosity and Gilbert stops before the audience tires.

Wil. I beheld a figure creeping—

Point. I should rather call it creeping—

35 Ibid., 417.
36 Ibid., 472.
Wil. He was creeping--
Point. He was crawling--
Wil. He was creeping, creeping--
Point. Crawling.
Wil. He was creeping,
Point. He was crawling--
Wil. He was creeping, creeping,
Point. Crawling. 37

It would be a relatively easy matter to point out many examples of garrulosity of different kinds in these works of Gilbert. It is worth mentioning that most of Gilbert's "talkers" are men—not women.

Following garrulity, the Tractatus lists paronyms, specifying that they are formed either by adding to a word, or taking something away from it. Cooper explains this category by telling his readers that the sense may be [italics mine] that they are formed by first dropping some part of a word and then adding something to what remains. A paronym is, so to speak, a name lying at the side of another. In each case, two words are concerned, one of them being derived from the other, generally by a change of termination. The relation may be true, according to scientific principles; or fancied, according to popular notions of etymology; or pretended, based upon an assumed principle. In comedy they are extemporaneous formations, or formations rare in the language; and in a comic compound epithet, if the first element is regarded as a base, the whole may be considered as a paronym derived from it. 38

The compound epithets, "heart-drawn poesy," "long-haired aesthetics," "stained-glass attitudes," "bold-faced thing!" "smug-faced idiot," (from Patience) and "brazen-faced," and "jewel-laden," (from Iolanthe—there is a minimum, if any, use of paronym in this opera) may possibly be regarded as paronyms, but only

37 Ibid., 503-504.
38 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 233.
in the very broadest sense. It is difficult, in view of language changes over the centuries, to be absolutely certain of the original meaning of the term. Hence this category is difficult to illustrate.

Cooper includes W.J.M. Starkie's (Acharnians, xlix-liv) nine subdivisions under paronym: compounds, coinages to suit special occasions, jocular feminine forms, comic comparatives and superlatives; character-names with diverse terminations; verbal formations; comic adverbs; imitative words and phrases, such as mimic notes of birds, musical instruments; comic exclamations, mostly imitative. The device, strictly considered, seems to involve a stem of some word in regular usage; the customary termination may be dropped and then something added. Or something may be clipped from the end (and Cooper suggests also the possible clipping from the beginning or middle) so that the resultant coinage is shorter than the ordinary word. He says this last is hard to find in comedy, except insofar as comedy makes use of ordinary colloquial contractions.39

If we accept the definition of a "stem of a word in regular usage with customary termination dropped, and something added," (or something added to the beginning of an ordinary word) the following examples may possibly be of the type of paronym specified in the tract. The amusing duet, "When I Go Out of Door," sung by Bunthorne and Grosvenor contains such lines as:

An ultra-poetical, super-aesthetic,
Out-of-the-way young man.

A commonplace young man,
A matter-of-fact young man,
A steady and stolid-y, jolly Bank-holiday
Every-day young man!

39 Ibid., 234.
A Japanese young man,
A blue-and-white young man,
Francesca da Rimini, miminy, piminy,
Je-ne-sais-quoi young man!

... A greenery-yallery, Grosvenor Gallery,
Foot-in-the-grave young man!**

In the nightmare patter-song in *Iolanthe*, there is a kind of paronym in the introductory line, "Love, nightmare-like, lies heavy on my chest," and also in the lines, "From the greengrocer tree you get grapes and green pea," and "While the pastrycook plant cherry brandy will grant..."** And in *The Mikado* the following may be cited:

> When the lion is a-roaring,
> And the tiger is a-lashing of his tail!**

But here, again, these illustrations may be only a type of paronym.

Although Gilbert's works do not contain, to any extent, the preceding category, the author does use the device of perversion which follows. Perversion is wrought by the voice and by other means of the same sort. Perversion of a word's intention is accomplished through mispronunciation or intonation, by gesture, grimace, wink, twinkle in the eye, or combinations of these. The laughable through perversion by the voice and similar means, such as mocking and parody, would include many puns—through not those arising from the confusion of things having names exactly alike.** Gilbert's word perversion is deliberate and clever. Certainly comic emphasis is placed on pronunciation in order to emphasize a definite rhythm. *Patience* demonstrates this.
The consequence was he was lost totally,
And married a girl in the corps de Bally.\textsuperscript{44}

and in,

In that case unprecedented
Single I shall live and die--
I shall have to be contented
With a tulip or lily.\textsuperscript{45}

A parallel example from Iolanthe is found in,

In the Parliamentary hive,
Liberal or Conservative.\textsuperscript{46}

while an excellent illustration may be seen in the following:

\begin{verbatim}
A plague on this vagary,
I'm in a nice quandry!

I ought to be more chary;
It seems that she's a fairy
From Andersen's library,
And I took her for
The proprietor
Of a Ladies' Seminary!\textsuperscript{47}
\end{verbatim}

A further similar type of pronunciation-emphasis (given earlier
under opinion) is Private Willis' observation

\begin{verbatim}
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative!\textsuperscript{48}
\end{verbatim}

Not only does perversion of pronunciation exist here, but correct grammar is
violated through the use of the slang for girl, although at the same time it
perfects the rhyme. Internal perversion is found in many lines, e.g., "And

\begin{verbatim}
\textsuperscript{44} Plays and Poems of W.S.Gilbert, 216.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 233.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 262.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 263.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 266.
\end{verbatim}
telling the tars all the particulars of a company he's interested in. Words ending in "y" are not infrequently terminated with a double "e" which changes or stresses the normal accent. Arcady is Arcadee, perplexity is perplexitee, carefully is carefulllee, and so on. An illustration of this, taken from Pinafore, is

I polished up that handle so carefullee.
That now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Gilbert, the acknowledged master of rhyme, increases through perversion the effectiveness and usefulness of words, thus adding to the whimsicality or humour of his verse.

**Diminutives**, according to Cooper, are ordinarily derivatives. English is not particularly rich in diminutives, as is Italian, German, or Greek. Such terms may be endearing, caressing, ludicrous, or contemptuous—two or more qualities often being mingled. Gilbert—certainly not a sentimentalist—does not make too frequent use of diminutives in any sense. In *Iolanthe*, Lord Mountararat's stanza in the trio with the Lords Chancellor and Tolloller, "Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady," contains a diminutive in the strict sense, i.e., the addition of "ie" being, at least according to the explanation of the *Tractatus*, a common ending of words falling into this classification. Mountararat sings, "Yours will be the charming maidie"; while from *The Mikado*, Ko-Ko's "Willow, Titwillow, Titwillow" demonstrates this device very well:

And I said to him, "Dicky-bird, why do you sit
Singing 'Willow, titwillow, titwillow'?
"Is it weakness of intellect, birdie?" I cried,
"Or a rather tough worm in your little inside?"

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49 Ibid., 277.
50 Ibid., 110.
51 Ibid., 280.
52 Ibid., 395.
Even when Gilbert uses endearing terms, they do not have diminutive status, as it were. He does slip in a "My darling," or "My own," or occasionally a "dear," but these only add to the fun. They are not sentimental, certainly. Diminutives would seem to be better adapted to sentimental comedy rather than to satire. The personality of Gilbert himself might explain the lack of such terms. Throughout all the Savoy operas there is very little use of "ie" as an addition to a word. He does employ "dainty" and "little."

As a last category under Diction, the Tractatus lists grammar and syntax. Here Cooper includes also rhythm and cadence—the arrangement of the diction in a general sense. Laughter arises from inflections and syntax formed on a spurious analogy with correct usage. In ordinary speech such forms are barbarisms, and taken from the usage of illiterates they may serve a comic purpose. This category of false grammar overlaps with that of perversion.

It is surely here—under rhythm and word-order—that Gilbert's talents find their fullest expression. Only occasionally does he permit himself to use incorrect grammar, except, of course, where the character is an illiterate. The reader will note a few instances of "don't" for "doesn't" but it is done for rhythmic purposes; and there are a few barbarisms, such as Bunthorne's question to Patience and her answer:

Bun. Tell me, girl, do you ever yearn?

Fat. I earn my living. 53

or

To cut his curly hair, and stick an eyeglass in his ocular—

Sing "Bah to you! Ha! Ha! to you!" 54

53 Ibid., 201.

54 Ibid., 223.
And in Iolanthe:

When you know us, you'll discover
That we almost live on love. 55

Later, as the sentry accepts the Fairy Queen's proposal,

Well, m'am, I don't think much of the British soldier who
wouldn't ill-convenience himself to save a female in dis-
tress. 56

Slang expressions and exclamations are also effectively employed at
intervals by Gilbert. These are never overdone. The following is the type
of language used: "pooh-pooh to you," "good gracious!" "crushed again!" and
the delicate song in Patience, "Hey, but I'm doleful, willow willow waly."

Iolanthe contains slang such as,

Lucky little lady!
Strephon's lot is shady; 57

The burlesqued Peers use language foreign to their station:

Young Strephon is the kind of jout
We do not care a fig about; 58

Both fairies and Peers are "low-brow" in

Lords and Commons are both in the blues!
Strephon makes them shake in their shoes!
Shake in their shoes,
Shake in their shoes!

Carrying every Bill he may wish:
Here's a pretty kettle of fish!
Kettle of fish,
Kettle of fish! 59

Gilbert was aware of the theatrical appeal of this type of diction, as well

55 Ibid., 238.
56 Ibid., 286.
57 Ibid., 259.
58 Ibid., 264.
59 Ibid., 267-268.
as of its appropriateness for comic drama. He uses the simplest of words; it
is the word-order in his prose and the rhythm of his verse that are genuinely
refreshing. Take, for example, the following verse from *The Mikado*:

To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,
In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock,
Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block.60

The alliteration follows a definite pattern; the words, mainly monosyllabic,
are precise, clipped, and rhythmically perfect. Many such examples could be
given, because rhythm is the very essence of Gilbert's writing. Occasionally
he uses inversion for emphasis. In *Ruddigore*, an illustration of this is to
be found in a ballad sung by Rose,

By here it says of those who point--
Their manners must be out of joint--
You may not point--
You must not point--
It's manners out of joint, to point!61

The effectiveness of repetition in the well-known "ditty" of the
Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe* should not be overlooked:

Go away, madam;
I should say, madam,
You display, madam,
Shock­ ing taste!62

This is made amusing, and clever, by the repeated use of "madam." The stanza
in prose would simply read, "Go away, madam. I should say you display shock-
ing taste." Most of the humour would immediately be destroyed.

There is a seeming inconsistency in *Iolanthe* in the use of "you" or
"he" and "thee" or "thy." However, when the latter forms are used, there is

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60 Ibid., 364.
61 Ibid., 407.
62 Ibid., 261.
either a crisis approaching, or else they are used, ordinarily, to enhance or elevate the verse used by lovers in song. They are not simply used interchangeably. Too, as a last point under grammar, it may be pointed out that Gilbert slips "for to" into his lines here and there: "If you're anxious for to shine in the high aesthetic line" in Patience is an example. And the author often inserts short sentences with an unexpected turn of phrase which provide many a laugh for the audience. Further, he makes use of the aside rather frequently, which device in the hands of a lesser writer can be awkward and melodramatic. There is none of the Villain and Little Nell quality in Gilbert.

Gilbert's diction stands alone in the field of modern comic opera. He has no peer.

Laughter arising from things follows diction. Things, above all, are things done, that is, deeds and activities including the acts and experiences of the mind. The first is laughter caused from "assimilation employed (1) toward the worse; and (2) toward the better." Both of these are explained in some detail in the Appendix; therefore a summary here, for the purpose of immediate application, should suffice. The principle of assimilation or equation can be freely illustrated from the basic idea of many plays, i.e., man may be assimilated to some inferior being (donkey, pygmy, ape, etc.). In using the category of "tending toward the worse," an author may apply a long string of invective to a specific character. Falstaff's invective in Henry IV bears this out. Or when an author has a character "tend toward the better," he may employ complimentary, endearing or sentimental terms to someone less worthy, or buffoonish, of the dramatis personae: "Thou art as wise as thou
art beautiful," says Titania to Bottom with his decoration. Shakespeare is master par excellence in utilizing both these dramatic devices. A rustic or a servant who pretends to a higher state or position comes under the heading of assimilation to the better, while the disguise of lovers as menials to obtain entrance to the home of the beloved is assimilation to the worse. Ordinarily, where Gilbert has a character assume a lower position, it is not for the purpose of "tending toward the worse," but it is rather for the purpose of deception, which category follows. Reginald Bunthorne is a sort-of combination of "assimilation toward the better," (as explained by Cooper, although his interpretation seems very broad indeed) and "deception." It is necessary to keep in mind at all times that laughter arising from things done includes acts and experiences of the mind.

Another device, that of "debasing of personages," overlaps with that of "assimilation to the worse." But Cooper differentiates here by stating that debasing is a more general term since there are other means of lowering a character besides assimilation to the worse. It (debasing) is also more specific, since it is confined to persons, whereas the other pertains to things as well as to persons. Still another category, deception, overlaps with that of debasing. Although the debasing of personages is not listed in the Tractatus after assimilation to the worse (or better) and deception, because of its relation to these latter two, it would seem logical to consider them in sequence.

63 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 250.
Assimilation to the worse is found in the banishment of Iolanthe to live "among the frogs at the bottom of a stream"; Strephon--half-fairy and therefore half-immortal--is a "mere shepherd of Arcadie"; the fairies, by marrying mortals, are reduced to a lower position until all are "elevated" by the Fairy Queen in the finale. This last example, by inversion, is "assimilation to the better" for the Peers as they sprout little wings and fly away to a "higher kingdom." The illiterate Willis, after receiving the hand and heart of the Queen, is every bit the equal of the now fairy-peers. Patience offers no striking examples of either "worse or better" unless it is the promise of the poet Grosvenor to become a "commonplace, every-day young man," (worse); or the mock-aesthetic pose of the Dragoons in order to regain the love of the maidens (better). These examples are not a good parallel to those of ancient Greek comedy. In modern comic drama, turning man into some animal form (worse) or having animals impersonate man (better), such devices are not considered as amusing as they were in ancient or medieval times. But Gilbert was smart and farsighted. The Victorians had outgrown the bestiary and were on the way to becoming sophisticated.

However, in debasing of personages the character is distorted, and oftentimes lowered, but not painfully so; people of high position such as kings, statesmen,—the "aristocracy" in general—are made to appear ridiculous as are would-be poets, philosophers, teachers. All furnish excellent comic material for debasing purposes. Debasing of persons is especially well adapted to Gilbert's particular brand of humour. Through his distorted characterizations he is able to make his audience laugh at things. Examples are plentiful—in fact, critics have tried to point out that Gilbert was boorish,
crude, ungentlemanly, vicious, commonplace, and vulgar. The conclusion of this thesis will attempt to show, briefly, that such criticism is largely unwarranted. For instance, in *Patience* the entire *dramatis personae*, with the exception of the dairymaid herself, is to some extent lowered. But the author wasn't being "ungentlemanly." He had an end to accomplish, and accomplish it he did. Again, the Officers of the Dragoon Guards are far from being dignified leaders of the soldiers of the Queen; the twenty-lovesick-maidens are genuinely foolish; while the unfortunate Lady Jane is the example par excellence of a debased person. Her recitative

Sad is that woman's lot who, year by year,
Sees, one by one, her beauties disappear. . . .

does a thorough job of making her—and all women of succeeding generations who would be young instead of accepting years gracefully—ridiculous, and stupid, but at the same time pitiful if the reader or listener will take just a moment to think a little. In *Reginald Bunthorne*, Gilbert is not destroying the Cult of the Beautiful in its genuine sense; he is dealing a death-blow to artistic pretense for all time.

In *Iolanthe*, the buffoonish Lord Chancellor falls into the lowered-personage status, as do Lords Tolloller and Mountararat—indeed as do all the Peers. Through debased persons Gilbert is enabled to pigeon-hole weaknesses, of government, statesmen, institutions, and customs. Outstanding illustrations are the Judge in *Trial By Jury*, King Gama in *Princess Ida*, the Major-


65 *Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert*, 214.
General of the **Pirates of Penzance**, Katisba, the "Lady Jane" of *The Mikado*.

Deception includes every ludicrous accident to which an author carefully leads with a view to surprising us into laughter; and the outcome is unexpected. Deception really governs the entire plot of *Patience*—Bunthorne is an impostor, a sham; he does not represent aestheticism in its true sense. He may be universalized to include all pretenders. An element of deception is also found in *Iolanthe*. Strephon strives to conceal the fact that he is half-fairy from Phyllis, while Iolanthe desires to conceal her identity from the Lord Chancellor if she desires to stay alive. Then there is jocular deception illustrated by jests on words. The audience anticipates a correct word or answer and the reply is, in the works of Gilbert, unexpected more often than deceptive. An instance of an unlooked-for answer seems to be where the maidens are gushing over Grosvenor's doggerel. They are highly complimentary and Grosvenor, who up to this point is all-too-ready to agree to his superior beauty and talents, gives an unexpected reply, to the delight of the audience. Ella says:

> **Oh, sir, you are indeed a true poet, for you touch our hearts, and they go out to you!**

And Grosvenor replies:

> **(Aside). This is simply cloying.** (Aloud). Ladies, I am sorry to appear ungallant, but this is Saturday, and you have been following me about ever since Monday. I should like the usual half-holiday. I shall take it as a personal favour if you will kindly allow me to close early today.66

However, jocular deception is not too important. Laughter arising from deceit includes things of greater moment: deeds, schemes, disguises; while
Impostors, pretenders, quacks, disguised lovers are most useful. While Gilbert does not utilize all these types in every comic opera, he does possess an awareness of the superb comic possibilities that lie therein. Wilfred and Jack Point in The Yeomen of the Guard scheme to deceive Sergeant Merry and Lieutenant Cholmondeley by saying they have shot Colonel Fairfax who has escaped from prison. Point tells Wilfred:

\[
\text{You on Elsie are to call} \\
\text{With a story} \\
\text{Grim and gory;}
\]

with Wilfred making reply,

\[
\text{How this Fairfax died, and all} \\
\text{I declare to} \\
\text{You're to swear to.}
\]

Deeds done (although only mentioned in the lines of the characters rather than actually accomplished) by the Bad Baronets of Ruddigore, may be found in Sir Despard's revelation of the crime he is obliged to commit daily:

\[
\ldots \text{I get my crime over the first thing in the morning, and then, ha! ha! for the rest of the day I do good—I do good—I do good. (Melodramatically). Two days since I stole a child and built an orphan asylum. Yesterday I robbed a bank and endowed a bishopric. Today I carry off Rose Maybud and atone with a Cathedral. . . .}
\]

Ridiculous "bad deeds" follow for the pure enjoyment of the audience.

Impostors have already been shown in the persons of Bunthorne and Grosvenor; a pretender is found in Colonel Fairfax's "pretending" in The Yeomen to be Leonard Merry; a quack-of-a-sort is observed in John Wellington Wells, the sorcerer, in the libretto of the same name; a disguised lover is the wandering minstrel Nanky-Poo, who is none other than The Mikado's son.

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67 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 243-244.
68 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 497.
69 Ibid., 248.
Indeed, The Mikado is full of deception from beginning to end. As a matter of fact, the entire Savoy repertory demonstrates fully the superb comic possibilities within this category.

Next listed, the impossible provides another extremely fruitful source of fun-making for the dramatist. It includes the irrational, the unintelligible, violations of the laws of natural sequence, especially those of cause and effect. It does not, however, include inconsistencies on the part of the author—such would be flaws in artistic craftsmanship. As far as the irrational is concerned, Gilbert might, in his topsy-turvy logic, be said to make use of this classification. But he is never unintelligible. Most moderns yawn at unintelligibility, even when it comes from the pen of the Master, Shakespeare. Where Gilbert has characters demonstrate volubility, it is of the patter-song type. It may be ludicrous, tangled, and to some extent pointless, but not senseless, i.e., sentences or words with no sequence of thought. For example, the four-line stanza beginning, "Love, unrequited robs me of my rest," recited by the Lord Chancellor immediately before singing the vigorous nightmare patter-song in Iolanthe, supplies the reason for the song. In Patience, the original poems of both Bunthorne and Grosvenor are nonsensical but not senseless. Even the jester Jack Point in The Yeomen is not unintelligible. Point at times is garrulous, but always intelligible.

It is in the violation of laws of sequence that Gilbert revels. Indeed, the whole plot of Iolanthe is based upon the impossible, as are a number of the Savoy operas, among the best of which are The Sorcerer, The Pirates of Penzance, and Ruddigore. In Gilbert's hands the impossible does not seem impossible at all—it is, rather, charming, quaint, entertaining.
Maurice Baring has written aptly and delightfully:

In Gilbert's world the impossible is always happening. The Arcadian shepherd does marry the Ward in Chancery. Private Willis, of the Grenadier Guards, does sprout little red wings and the Fairy Queen sees to it that he is properly dressed. The pictures come down from their frames in Ruddigore, and the picture that hangs at the end of the gallery in a bad light comes to life in obedience to Gilbert's inflexible and impossible logic, and marries an old love. Even in the operas, where there are no actual fairies and no element of the supernatural, no pictures coming to life, no dapper salesman brewing love-philtres as in the Sorcerer; even in a plain satire such as Patience, we look at things through a coloured glass, or a glass that reveals hidden colours, such as that which the wizard gave to the Prince in the fairy tale, and through which, when he looked at the stars, he saw that they were many-coloured instead of all of them being white. They would be many-coloured looked at through such a glass, of course. And constantly throughout this opera [Patience] we hear the horns of elfland faintly blowing, especially when the twenty lovesick maidens languish vocal in the valley, or when they lead Bunthorne "like a heathen sacrifice with music and with fatal yokes of flowers" to his (and to their) eternal ridicule.70

Following upon the impossible is, naturally enough, the possible and inconsequent, or the possible but not probable or relevant. Lane Cooper informs his readers that "the category may be termed that of 'the irrelevant'" and that "Irrelevancy whether in garrulity or in brief answers is frequent in comic dialogue."71 And he adds that "an inconsequent reply is a ruse of shifty debtors."72 It would seem logical, then, that the ruse might be a good one for a pretender, an impostor, or other of the comic types.

In Patience an irrelevancy is noted at the end of one of Grosvenor's replies to the doting damosels:

70 Baring, Lost Lectures, 302-303.
71 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 247-248.
72 Ibid.
Poor, poor girls! It is best to speak plainly. I know that I am loved by you, but I never can love you in return for my heart is fixed elsewhere! Remember the fable of the Magnet and the Churn.73

gilbert uses the last sentence as an excuse for introducing the musically dainty, pun-filled song of the "Magnet and the Churn" and also to remove the chorus of twittering maidens gracefully from the stage. In itself, it is totally irrelevant.

Cooper further notes that "irrelevancy is perhaps more frequently to be looked for in extended comic debate."74 Gilbert does not, however, include extended debate in his librettii. There are mock-arguments such as the one between Lords Mountararat and Tolloller in Iolanthe but they develop from the sequence of events. There is an unexpected answer to Phyllis! "Now, I do hope you're not going to fight about me, because it's really not worth while," as Tolloller replies, while appraising her with critical eye, "Well, I don't believe it is," with Mountararat agreeing with "Nor I."75 But this is hardly a true example.

The Savoy operas are compact and unified. Each is a carefully wrought whole—irrelevancies being mainly short remarks inserted unexpectedly. A favourite expression to introduce something that would seem to be beside the point is, "Well, well." In Gilbert's writing, seeming irrelevancies are not irrelevancies at all. They are the needed comic twist. From The Mikado, Ko-Ko's brief soliloquy is an example:

There she goes! To think how entirely my future happiness is wrapped up in that little parcel! Really, it hardly seems worthwhile!76

73 Plays and Poems of W.S.Gilbert, 275.
74 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 2h8.
75 Plays and Poems of W.S.Gilbert, 275.
76 Ibid., 363.
And immediately preceding the finale in *Trial By Jury* the lines of the Judge are "possible but not probable," but they are not irrelevant:

Put your briefs upon the shelf,  
I will marry her myself.""

There is a category of the *unexpected proper*, which includes the strange, the marvelous, the astounding. The "marvelous" is evident in the fairy element of *Iolanthe* in somewhat the same way that *Midsummer Night's Dream* is marvelous, only of course to a lesser degree. (Shakespearean critics would probably shed tears over anyone daring to compare a work of the Greater S. with the Lesser G.) Gilbert does not use what is understood in literature by "the strange." One could never in the slightest degree associate him with say, *les symbolistes*. But neither would anyone think of calling him a poet. As a matter of fact, in none of the operas does the audience feel that anything said or done is either strange or astounding. (In Gilbert's world, the return to life of the Ruddigore Baronets is just what should happen.) Whatever the plot, everything is quite simply "Gilbertian," all is accepted without question—a tribute to the genius of William Schwenk Gilbert.

Surprising statements or answers fall under the unexpected, and overlap with the irrelevant, and also with deception. Obviously all are related.

The use of *clownish dancing* is particularly adapted to comedy. In comic drama, this is opposed to the dignified motions of tragedy, and while the dancing *may* be beautiful, it is often ludicrous, including *dumb-show* of every kind, especially that of a rhythmical sort. The *indecent cordax* frequently found in ancient Greek comedy is *never* to be found in the operas of

Gilbert and Sullivan—the Tractatus does not even specify this lascivious kind of dance. In the stage directions of Gilbert, (and he never permitted any leeway or originality on the part of the cast) every detail was minute, meticulous. In Patience, Bunthorne demonstrates dumb-show as he "wretes in all the agonies of composition . . . and stagger overcome with the mental strain into the arms of the Colonel"; it is further exhibited when the poseur recommends that the maidens "cling passionately to one another and think of faint lilies"; and when he puts "himself up to be raffled for," Bunthorne is the cause of much dumb-show of grief on the part of the Dragoons. Later, a very good illustration may be seen in the abandoning of their uniforms by the Duke, Colonel, and Major in order to don the long-hair-and-purple velvet aesthetic attire of the poets. They then walk in "stiff, constrained, angular attitudes about the stage." Iolanthe is not as rich in clownish antics as Patience, but Gilbert makes the most of ridiculing the Peers through this device. As they are thrown over by Phyllis, they march around with mock-dignity, singing,

Though our hearts she's badly bruising,
In another suiter choosing,
Let's pretend it's most amusing.
Ha! ha! ha! Tan-ta-ra!61

Patience does not contain much light or beautiful dancing. The "dancing" is rather a burlesquing of things that should be dignified. Iolanthe, however, is filled with dainty, tripping steps appropriate to the fairy-theme throughout. Ruddigore possesses a wealth of dumb-show such as Rose's

78 Ibid., 194.
79 Ibid., 195.
80 Ibid., 223.
81 Ibid., 252.
referring to her "hallowed volume" of etiquette before every action. And H. W.S. Pinare's Little Buttercup demonstrates sentimentality toward the Captain at every opportunity in such ways as peeking around corners, rolling her eyes, or sighing. Cooper says, "One may now add that all modern light opera illustrates Category G [The use of clownish dancing]; so the 'very loud' chorus of the Pirates in Gilbert and Sullivan (Pirates of Penzance, Act II): 'With cat-like tread Upon our prey we steal; In silence dread Our cautious way we feel.'"82 The Aristotelian definition of dancing as an imitation of "actions, characters, and passions by means of postures and rhythmical movements (Poetics I)"83 is peculiarly suited to Gilbert's work.

The remaining two classifications under things done, namely, having the choice and taking the worthless, and disjointed stories, are not found to any extent in the Savoy operas. In Iolanthe, the choice by the Fairy Queen of Private Willis is not, strictly speaking, an illustration of having the choice and taking the worthless because, first, there is no other choice in the given situation, and, secondly, while Willis' station is far below hers, it does not follow that he is "worthless." The choice of the prettiest ward, Phyllis, by the Lord Chancellor for his bride does not indicate the "worthless" for the same reason given in the preceding illustration; nor is the simple Patience less worthy than her would-be aesthetic (and therefore cut from finer cloth?) acquaintances, the lovesick maidens. The Duke's choice of Jane is surprising but would not come under the heading of having a choice and taking the worthless. As a matter of fact, the stock-in-trade characters in Gilbert's plots grow a trifle monotonous. He is fundamentally "upper

82 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 255.
83 Ibid.
crust" in spite of a "low-brow" (Dick Deadeye and Little Buttercup) here and there. As for disjointed stories, it has already been pointed out under the irrelevant that Gilbert does not permit any looseness of construction in his dramatic unity. The very brevity of the operas necessitates rapidity and fine coherence in both action and speech. Cooper explains disjointed stories as lack of sequence, although such may be tolerable and ludicrous in a farce. When disjointed stories do not refer to the whole, but to a part, such as a single speech or song of a character or chorus, then it is relatively easy in comedy to illustrate the point of disjointed discourse. As the explanation in the Tractatus suggests, "many examples of garrulity would fall under this head, as well as parodies; . . . and it overlaps with those of 'the impossible' and 'the possible and inconsequent (or irrelevant)'."84 In Patience, the Colonel's patter-song

If you want a receipt for that popular mystery
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon,

would probably be considered an example of garrulous disjointed verse. A few lines are,

The genius strategic of Caesar or Hannibal—
Skill of Sir Garnet in thrashing a cannibal—
Flavour of Hamlet—the Stranger, a touch of him—
Little of Manfred (but not very much of him)—
Beadle of Burlington—Richardson's show—
Mr. Micawber and Madame Tussaud!85

The same may be said for the disjointed lines of the nightmare patter-song in Iolanthe. The recitative of Princess Ida in Act I in the opera of the same name is a further example. It is wordy and lacks the real humour of the two just mentioned. An explanation for this might lie in the blank verse, al-

84 Ibid., 258.
85 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 191.
though even here Gilbert adheres rather strictly to iambic pentameter. Blank verse is not as good a vehicle for comedy as for tragedy, and in Gilbert's hands it does not possess the skill of his rhymed verse. And, although many of the patter-songs would seem to fall into the disjointed stories classification, they in no wise cause a disruption in unity inasmuch as they follow an introduction which gives a reason for their presence. (Another reason was that the public loved and waited for this peculiarly Gilbertian semi-plainchant "ditty"—and the public meant box-office.)

Laughter arising from things done ends with the category just treated. However, the *Tractatus* gives two more points which, logically enough, follow upon the foregoing. The first is that "comedy differs from abuse, since abuse openly censures the bad qualities attaching to men, whereas comedy employs what is called emphasis of *[and here Cooper is doubtful]* 'innuendo'." Peculiarities are heightened so as to produce laughter. Comedy is not a vehicle for scurrility; the author should employ good-natured ridicule. That Gilbert sometimes erred by letting the whiplash sting where it would most hurt, cannot be overlooked, or simply dismissed with an indifferent shrug. The man could hurt and very likely often did. For example, Robin's recitative-and-song in *Ruddigore* is abusive and is too sweeping to be entirely truthful. (But at the same time it is necessary to remember Gilbert was using satire for corrective purposes.)

*Ye supplie M.P.'s, who go down on your knees,*
*Your precious identity sinking,*
*And vote black or white as your leaders indite*

(Which saves you the trouble of thinking),
For your country's good fame, her repute, or her shame,
You don't care the snuff of a candle—
But you're paid for your game when you're told that
your name
Will be graced by a baronet's handle—
Oh! allow me to give you a word of advice—
The title's uncommonly dear at the price. 87

There is more than a little suspicion of "sour grapes" in this. His wit hadn't contributed to his popularity with the Powers-That-Were—and he hadn't been knighted. It wasn't until 1907 that he was titled, and Ruddigore had appeared in 1897. Another interesting sidelight here lies in the fact that nine years earlier, when H.M.S.Pinafore was first produced, Gilbert had much the same idea. In the fifth stanza of Sir Joseph Porter's ironic solo one finds:

I grew so rich that I was sent
By a pocket borough into Parliament.
I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.
I thought so little, they rewarded me
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navee! 88

Ko-Ko in The Mikado sings "They'd none of 'em be missed" as the closing lines of a selection very prejudicial in tone, but which is more lightly abusive than the illustrations given. These certainly do not possess the good-humoured ridicule found in Patience or Iolanthe.

The second point is that "the joker will make game of faults in the soul and in the body," such as the outward form and dress of a character, (and certainly there is no better type to illustrate this than Reginald Bun-

87 Plays and Poems of W.S.Gilbert, 1117.
88 Ibid., 111.
thorne) or baldness, knock-knees, bow-legs, or other things of the sort which do not strike the on-looker as painful. There is, of course, "a limit beyond which the comic poet may not go in representing bodily defects ..." The important thing for the author to remember is not to use any kind of defect that could be construed as painful, or in poor taste. The suggestion of pain must be absent. Here, too, Gilbert errs in poking fun at the fading beauty of women through over-emphasis, but his verse does not affect one in any painful way. It is often harsh and, were it not for Sullivan's artistry, could not be considered in the best of taste. Again it is necessary to keep in mind the satire behind this type of thing. His description of King Gama in Princess Ida, given by Gama himself, is not humorous in any way:

This leg is crooked—this foot is ill-designed—
This should wear a hump! Come, out with it!
Look, here's my face. Now, am I not the worst
Of Nature's blunders?90

Mad Margaret of Ruddigore is a pathetic figure, as is Jack Point in The Yeomen. In the final analysis, however, Gilbert's characters served his end. No one ever left the theatre laughing hilariously over a funny man with a Bald Head any more than one could leave Cyrano de Bergerac shouting in glee over the Big Nose.

The Tractatus closes its section on laughter with the brief sentence that as "there should be a due proportion of fear in tragedies, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter."91 It is important to keep in mind that laughter must be neither that of scurrility nor that

89 Ibid., 261.
90 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 298.
91 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 226 and 262.
of bitter invective. Surely, even considering Gilbert's tendency to be a little more caustic than was necessary, he never bends to actual scurrility; and his "invective" is very mild. Jane's and Bunthorne's,

Sing "Booh to you--pooh, pooh to you"--
Sing "Bah to you--ha! ha! to you"--

or the Peers' "Taradiddle, taradiddle, tol, lol, lay" or "ha! ha! ha!" illustrate the author's most frequently used type of mockery. Gilbert at most is disrespectful or contemptuous rather than scurrilous. Disrespect is shown to the clergy in the Bab Ballads; to members of Parliament in Iolanthe; to rules of the Navy in Pinafore. As for proportionate laughter, Cooper says,

If we are to extract anything from the passage, perhaps the meaning is that the element of laughter must not be in excess--there must be a sufficient admixture of the pleasing accessories of comedy, such as beautiful language, music, etc.93

This thesis has attempted to point out the "pleasing accessories" of music, of the rhythmic verse, of plot craftsmanship, of appropriate language. Gilbert's language is not beautiful save for a very occasional burst of very fine verse such as the duet of Phyllis and Strephon, "None Shall Part Us from Each Other." It doesn't reach the heights but it does soar for a moment. It is completely serious and artistically stops the "fun" for a minute or two--permitting the listener to become nostalgic . . .

When in joy, I woke to find
Mine the heart within thee beating,
Mine the love that heart enshrined!94

Gilbert, a theatre man par excellence, was too astute not to realize that an intelligent audience wanted more than foolishness. His nonsense

92 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 223.
93 Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 262.
94 Plays and Poems of W.S. Gilbert, 244-245.
is common sense masquerading under many guises. The audience has a good time at its own expense. The Savoy operas laugh thought into us which is a compliment the English librettist would doubtless appreciate. He had something to give, and he gave it, as did Sullivan. The music elevates the work of Gilbert—there can be no doubt that Sullivan's genius was perfectly adapted to Gilbert's. When the words were all-important, Sullivan subordinated his talents to his collaborator's inimitable verse; when a ballad required a lilt and tenderness, he never failed. Unerringly the partners appreciated each other's gifts. In the field of contemporary music drama, there is nothing to compare with the heritage the world has received from Gilbert and Sullivan. Indeed, the world, while laughing heartily at Gilbert's quips and sallies, could well blush, and, awakened to its idiosyncracies, learn a lasting lesson from the pen of the comic opera dramatist.
CONCLUSION

"The intellectual, critical spirit that attacks pretense and acts as the watchdog of society is the comic spirit," says David Worcester in *The Art of Satire*.\(^1\) William Schwenk Gilbert doubtless was motivated by such a critical spirit and chose satire as his medium, as is apparent when one reads these highly entertaining libretti. Satire has, of course, a preconceived purpose: it desires to install certain definite opinions into the minds of its readers or listeners; and it must practice the art of persuasion. Drama is the vehicle *par excellence* through which the satiric artist may attack existing weaknesses or evils of every sort. It is the dramatist's problem to get his ideas over the footlights and, at the same time, keep his own personality behind the scenes.

Gilbert, living at the end of the Victorian period, was in a position to recognize conditions as they existed at that time. An observation made by Edith Batho and Bonamy Dobree about Gilbert is particularly succinct: "It should be noted that much 'nonsense' and parody is wisdom and acute criticism, and should be treated with respect, as much is due to inspired nonsense."\(^2\) Certainly the "nonsense" of the operas considered in this thesis manifests acute criticism, because these satires—not violent in any way but highly effective—reflect in no small way the foibles of England herself and her very-British subjects. As H. Rowland Brown has aptly written:

The times were ripe for his satire of our insular complacency; the

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social atmosphere was congenial to his wit; . . . John Bull's blissful outlook of superiority offered Gilbert just the object he required for his gentlemanly arrows . . . . He derided pretense and made enemies only of the pretentious who, to change the metaphor, fitted such fools-caps as he fashioned upon their own precious heads. . . . The world laughed at itself, as it laughed with him, and will continue to do so, as long as the Savoy operas remain to charm our ears and captivate our senses. 3

The satirist must simultaneously appear amiable to his audience, hostile to his enemies. Rhetorical devices serve to win over the reader, or hearer, and also serve to make more gentle—or otherwise—the blows being dealt to society. Such devices of course are all-important in a study of satire. It has been the purpose of this thesis to attempt to show that the rhetorical devices used by ancient writers are as applicable to the work of a modern author as they were to that great Greek writer of comedy, Aristophanes, with whom Gilbert has been compared. Although the Tractatus Coislmaniaus is hardly more than an outline, it is an essentially complete and important document. The manuscript does not specify the so-called unities because the term was not in use until a much later date (they were categorically set forth and defined in the Poetica of Castelvetro in 1570). A further observation is that if the Tractatus is the supposedly-lost Aristotelian theory of comedy, the unities as such would not appear. But Gilbert was keenly aware of time, of place, and of action. Further, the fact that the fragment lists all the necessary elements for drama, i.e., the quantitative and qualitative parts together with devices that make for a whole comedy, would seem to bear out the contention that it is complete. Too, the fact that the treatise has been known to but very few does not mean it is not a worthwhile document, and it is curious to find that Gilbert unwittingly used

comic devices such as the ones named in this ancient form. His skill and
finesse in using such comic principles is noteworthy and Chapters II and III
of this thesis have attempted to adapt these principles—as old as Ancient
Greece perhaps—to modern comic drama.

Although some of the categories given in the Tractatus, such as
"diminutives," or "lack of sequence through disjointed stories," or "paronyms"
or "assimilation to the worse or better," are not found to a large extent in
Gilbert's writing, nevertheless it is of considerable interest to note how
very many of the different classifications are used. This is particularly
true when one is aware of the relatively insignificant number of pages that
make up a Savoy libretto. Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas are extremely
compact and quick-moving; one does not find an abundance of detail or ex-
traneous matter. Because of their brevity, the utilization of too many comic
categories would unquestionably produce a looseness in construction. If the
principles of the Tractatus were to be applied to comedies of Shakespeare,
the length of the comedies and the type of humour and situations found in
Renaissance drama would doubtless prove in some respects more adequate.
Shakespeare was mainly concerned with individual characters in their relation
to life. His dramas were not (with the exception of The Merry Wives of Winds-
sor, Love's Labour's Lost, Midsummer Night's Dream, and The Tempest—and
singularly enough, these were largely original in plot) dramas of idea. A
Shakespearian clown, often a hidden philosopher, may tumble through an entire
play without actually being necessary to the plot. This cannot be said of
Bottom, of course. But one does not think of Shakespeare as a satirist and
therefore the comparison is not a good one. Gilbert's clownish characters
are an integral part of his plots because his purpose was to draw pictures of
the social milieu in which he lived. As characters were "typed" to serve
this end (the author wasn't being boorish). It was the idea that lay behind
the entire plot which gave life to the comic situation. As for the libretti
considered from a dramatic standpoint alone, Gilbert's works contain the
artistic requirements of plot, though (dianoia), and characterization (ethos
or moral bent), as they contain, to a degree unequalled in contemporary com-
edy, superb diction and flowing melody (whether one regards melody in the
very broad sense of rhythm in verse or Sullivan's "half"). Spectacle
holds its own, too—as it does today. In the Savoy operas, there is beauty,
and appropriateness, and careful detailing in setting and costume. True, the
eighteen nineties couldn't boast breathtaking lighting effects, or any of
the extravaganza of today. Theatre-goers were not brought up on a diet of
super-colossal, gigantic, magnificent, emotionally shattering, you-can't-
afford-to-miss-this-one type of salesmanship, although this high-powered
language is more peculiarly Hollywood than Provincetown. Victorians attended
comic opera for the same reason that twentieth century enthusiasts flock
to contemporary musicals, namely, to be entertained. And they were. Gilbert,
a master technician of comic device, gave them what they wanted and taught a
lesson at the same time.

If it is true that in pure comedy the audience laughs from the outset, with the catharsis being effected in one final explosion or in a satisfac-
tory solution of the problem for all, or almost all, concerned, then Gil-
bert's dramas are pure. And if it is true that "laughter arises from the
diction" and "from things done," it is surely within these categories with
their various subheads that the librettist found his fullest expression.

Above all, in the Savoy operas there is nothing that can be considered morally offensive in the slightest degree. In view of the present-day emphasis on sex, and the double-meaning "wisecrack" type of repartee—which apparently is considered necessary to insure a laugh—it would be stimulating to hear these Gilbert and Sullivan operas either in the theatre, or on the air, or through the sound-picture. But the present era is sophisticated, blase, accustomed to risque comedy (if, indeed, it is not openly and unabashedly immoral); to psychoanalytical drama; to the frustrated woman complex play; or to an attempt to expose the "subconscious"; and the glorious, fresh, clean air that would blow the soiled and sordid from contemporary offerings of stage and screen through a presentation of the Savoy operas might be a fine thing morally, musically, and intellectually.

For Gilbert does have something to say, even though he says it simply. Oliver Elton says: "Poetry, indeed, is not always on severe heights; and there are perfections too in the valleys, or on the moderate plateaux. The critic must range over many altitudes and climates." In criticizing the work of Gilbert as good, mediocre, or poor drama, the reader does not find the Poetry of the Heights, but finds, rather, the perfections of the Verse in the Valley. Unfortunately, for the most part, the actual literary value of Gilbert's writing has been overlooked. What David Worcester says of all writers of satire seems to apply to these dramas in a special way:

He the author contrives ways of making his readers comprehend and remember that criticism and adopt it as his own. Without

style and literary form, his message would be incomprehensible; without wit and compression it would not be memorable; without high-mindedness it would not 'come home to men's business and bosoms'.

Surely Gilbert's "wit and compression" are memorable. It is to be noted, as Walter Sichel observes, "As literature the libretti will endure."

A study of Gilbert does not, it is true, reveal that he was a great dramatist, nor even a great dramatist, and certainly not a great poet. But he was an artist cannot be denied. His feeling for symmetry and proportion is unmatched in verse, his condensation is remarkable, his lyrics possess an irrepressible and irresistible gaiety. Indeed, "the genius of Gilbert is a thing apart, his place in English letters unique. In his as a librettist he has no predecessors. He has had many imitators, but successors."

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APPENDIX

Although much of the material in this Appendix has necessarily been used in the content of this thesis to introduce and explain the various categories found in the Tractatus Coislinianus before attempting to apply them to comic dramas of William Schwenk Gilbert, the following has been added for the purpose of clarification or for more detailed information. It has been condensed from the rather lengthy amplification given after Cooper's translation of the Tractatus in An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy. The asterisk after the last line of each page is footnoted and indicates the pages from which this material has been taken.

Cooper opens this final section of his work with a brief discussion of poetry.

* * * * *

Poetry is either non-mimetic (non-imitative) or mimetic (imitative). The first is divided into historical and instructive poetry. Historical poetry finds illustration in the ... Pharsalia of Lucan; and in Samuel Daniel's Civil Wars between the two Houses of Lancaster and York. Instructive poetry is divided into didactic and theoretical. ... Examples of didactic poetry would be the lines from Solon quoted in Aristotle's Constitutions of Athens ... and Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty." Examples of theoretical poetry would be Parmenides' On Nature, and similar cosmological poems on pre-Socratic philosophers; likewise Erasmus Darwin's The Botanic Garden. Mimetic poetry is divided into narrative and dramatic. Dramatic *
poetry, or that directly presenting action, is divided into (1) comedy, (2) tragedy, (3) mimes, and (4) satyr-dramas.

Tragedy removes the fearful emotions of the soul through compassion and terror. It aims at having a due proportion of fear. And it has grief for its mother. Further elaboration of tragedy is beside the point here. It is with that classification of dramatic poetry known as comedy that this thesis has been concerned.

Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect, of sufficient \( \text{for } ' \text{perfect}' \) length, \( \text{In } \text{embellished language}, \) the several kinds of embellishment being separately found in the several parts of the play; directly presented by persons acting, and not in the form of narrative; through pleasure and laughter effecting the purgation of the like emotions. It has laughter for its mother.

Laughter arises from the diction, and from the things done. \( \text{Things' or 'things done' would include mental acts as well as physical.} \)

There is necessarily some overlapping between the two main categories of words (expression) and things (content), as there is overlapping between the subheads under each.

I. Laughter arises from the diction through the use of:

A. HOMONYMS. \( \text{That is, equivoca, or ambiguities. Things having the same name, but in themselves distinct, are homonymous. Thus . . . 'Iris' may refer to (1) the messenger of the gods, (2) the rainbow, (3) a halo—round the moon or round a candle—(4) the flower. 'Spring' has more than one meaning in English, as in the remark of the tramp to the tourist: 'Speaking of bathing in famous springs, I bathed in the spring of '86.' The use *}

* 228–229.
of equivoca is, of course, very frequent in the comedy of every age. The number of meanings a given word (e.g., bow) may have is, therefore, not necessarily restricted to two, especially if, as in English, we include all the meanings indicated by the same sound (bow, bough). 'Equivocal terms,' says Aristotle in *Rhetoric* 3.2, 'are the class of words most useful to the sophist for it is with the help of these that he juggles.' The comic poet also juggles with them.

B. SYNONYMS. The interpretation is obvious. In the passage last quoted Aristotle continues: 'Synonyms are most useful to the poet. By synonyms in ordinary use I mean, for instance, "to go" and "to walk"; these are at once accepted and synonymous terms.' Different terms applied to the same thing, then, are synonymous—as go, fare, proceed. . . . The comic poet has the option of calling the worse thing by the better name, or the better thing by the worse name. By the use of metaphor, the number of names applied to the same thing may be indefinitely extended. . . . Starkie (Hermathena 42. 30-1) gives examples from Shakespeare and Molière, and notes the fertility of Rabelais in strings of depreciatory synonyms—for example, the epithets addressed to monks in the inscription over the entrance to the convent of Thelema.

C. GARRULITY. This is . . . a staple device of comic writers, to which Socrates makes allusion in the *Apology* and *Phaedro*. . . . The simplest case is the repetition of the same word over and over again, but the term embraces verbosity of every sort—bombast, triviality, learned nonsense (in the philosophical discussions of the *Clouds*, in Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*, in *Les Femmes Savantes* of Molière), the garrulity of age, of children and *

* 229-230-231.
the childish, of the idle, of clowns, domestics, and the like. Dogberry is 'garrulous' in the pompous style. . . .

Parodies and travesties are likely to be of the same windy nature . . . Many passages of garrulity . . . betray a lack of sequence, which in itself may be a source of laughter, and is so listed in the Tractatus (and will be considered under "things"). But long-winded speeches afford opportunity for various sorts of comic effect, and hence contain illustrations of other categories.

D. PARONYMS. These are formed (1) by adding to a word, and (2) by taking something away from it. Or the sense may be that they are formed by first dropping some part of a word and then adding something to what remains. A paronym is, so to speak, a name lying at the side of another. In each case, two words are concerned, one of them being derived from the other, generally by a change of termination. The relation may be a true one according to scientific principles. Or it may be a fancied one according to popular notions of etymology—as in the time of Aristophanes, before the advent of strict linguistic science. Or it may be a pretended one based upon an assumed principle. . . . Derivatives are common in everyday speech while a language is in the making. In comedy they are extempore formations, or else formations otherwise rare in the language. In a given instance it may be difficult to say whether the word is a coinage of the poet, or a term, not previously recorded, from common usage. If the reading 'great oneyers' is authentic, a paronym formed by addition is found in Gadshill’s 'I am joined with no foot-land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, none of these mad mustachio-purple-hued malt-worms, but with nobility and tranquility, burgo-masters and great oneyers'. (I Henry IV 2.1.76-9). . . . Starkie *
(Acharnians, xlix-liv) gives nine subdivisions under the head of Paronymy:
(1) compounds; (2) coinages to suit special occasions; (3) jocular feminine
forms; (4) comic comparatives and superlatives; (5) character-names with di-
verse terminations; (6) verbal formations; (7) comic adverbs; (8) imitative
words and phrases (as the mimic notes of birds, frogs, and musical instruments;
(9) certain comic exclamations, mostly imitative. But the device, strictly
considered, seems to involve a stem of some word in regular usage; the custom-
ary termination of the word may be dropped, and then something may be clipped
from the end (? or beginning, or middle) of a word, so that the resultant
coinage is shorten than the ordinary word. This last case apparently is hard
to find in comedy, save as comedy makes use of ordinary colloquial contrac-
tions; compare also Gib (for Gilbert) and Daw (for David) in the Towneley
Secunda Pastorum. It would simplify matters could we reverse the order of
the Tractate under this category, and say, 'paronym by subtraction and addi-
addition,' since commonly the familiar ending of a word is dropped, and an
unusual ending then supplied—as in the proverbial jocular derivation of
Middleton from Moses: you take away the termination -esse, and add the termin-
ation -iddleton. The categories of paronyms and perversion overlap, since a
perversion often contains some considerable part of the word it travesties. /

E. DIMINUTIVES. These, of course, are usually derivatives. Aris-
totle has defined and illustrated them in Rhetoric 3.2: 'Again, without aban-
donning a given epithet, one may turn it into a diminutive. By a diminutive I
mean a form that lessens either the good or the bad in a description; for ex-
ample, the banter of Aristophanes in the Babylonians, where he uses coinlet
for coin, cloaklet for cloak. . . . ' Greek is rich in diminutives, as is
also Italian—much more so than English, which in this point lags behind ∗
German. . . . Diminutives may be endearing, caressing, ludicrous, or contemptuous, two or more of these qualities often being strangely mingled in the same epithet. . . . Effects are attained in English, partly by the use of such diminutives as we possess (as -ie in birdie), partly by means of additional words, as adjectives; thus: 'Why, that's my dainty Ariel!' (Tempest, 5.1.92). The same effect is gained by the use of the rhymes in the song by Titania (herself a diminutive!) in MND. 3.1.162-72: eyes, dewberries, mulberries, humblebees, things, eyes, arise, butterflies, eyes, courtesies; consider, too, the names of the attendant elves, particularly Mustard-seed.

Flute's perversion, 'Ninny's tomb' ('"Ninus' tomb," man!' interrupts Quince) belongs equally well under the next head.]

F. PERVERSION. (1) by the voice; (2) by other means of the same sort. Cooper quoting from W.G.Rutherford says: 'This is further so particularized that there can be no doubt that it is any ludicrous perversion of a word's intention by means of mispronunciation or of intonation' (that is, by the voice), 'or by gesture, grimace, wink, twinkle in the eye' (that is, by other means in the same class with the voice), 'or, of course, by both combined' . . . .

1 In Henry V 4.4.408, where Pistol captures the French soldier, he says: 'Art thou a gentleman? Why is thy name? Discuss.' French Soldier: 'O Seigneur Dieu!' Pistol: O Signieur Dew should be a gentleman. Perpend my words, O Signieur Dew, and mark.' The laughable through perversion by the voice and similar means would therefore include many puns—though not those arising from the confusion of things having names exactly alike. . . . *

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* 235-236-237.
Or take the unconscious pun uttered by the illiterate maid-servant Martine to the purist Bélise in Les Femmes Savantes 2.6.64-5. Bélise: 'Veux-tu toute ta vie offenser la grammaire?' Martine: 'Qui parle d'offenser grandmère ni grandpère?' ... The category embraces all sorts of perversions in diction.

G. GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX. 

... Laughter arises from inflections and syntax formed on a spurious analogy with correct usage. In ordinary speech such forms are barbarisms; and taken from the usage of illiterates they may serve a comic purpose. The luckless Martine has offended Bélise by the 'solecisme horrible': 'Mon Dieu! je n'avons pas étugé (= 'étudié') comme vous, et je parlons tout droit comme on parle chez (= 'chez') nous.' Bélise: 'Ton esprit, je l'avoix, est bien matériel: Je n'est qu'un singulier avons est pluriel. Veux-tu toute ta vie offenser la grammaire?' (Femmes Savantes 2.6.58-9, 62-4). ... However, the comic poet outdoes ordinary illiterate usage (though often through the speech of rustics, servants, and the like) in producing spurious grammatical forms and false congruities. In Two Gentlemen of Verona 2.5.25-33, Shakespeare gives the following. Speed: 'What an ass art thou! I understand thee not.' Launce: 'What a block art thou, that thou canst not. My staff understands me.' Speed: 'What thou sayest?' Launce: 'Ay, and what I do, too. Look thee, I'll but lean, and my staff understands me.' Speed: 'It stands under thee, indeed.' Launce: 'Why, stand under and under-stand is all one.' The category of false grammar overlaps with that of perversion. ... In parodies, the individual style of the author parodied—his pet forms and constructions—will become the standard which the comic writer travesties.

II. Laughter arises from the things. (Things' include arts and *
persons in themselves (again as distinct from their names), regarded objectively. 'Things' are, above all, things done, that is, deeds and activities, including the acts and experiences of the mind. But it is hard to dissociate a thing from its name, and hence, as we have observed, a particular example of the ludicrous may be sometimes classified under more than one head and subhead. If a garrulous person, for instance, uses the same word over and over, he will keep talking about the same object—as prunes. In general, however, we have this distinction: if the humor disappears when the joke is translated, we have to do with 'laughter from the diction'; if not, then with 'laughter from the things.' Let a shrewd translator will often be surprisingly close to the foreign language in his rendering of 'laughter from the diction.'

A. From ASSIMILATION. The assimilation may be (1) of what is better (superior) to what is worse (inferior), or (2) vice versa.

(1). Assimilation or equation of what is better to what is worse. Since comedy in general tends to represent things as worse than they commonly are, the principle of assimilation can be freely illustrated from the basic ideas of many plays. Thus men (superior) are assimilated to birds (inferior), to frogs, and to wasps, in the respective comedies of Aristophanes, and to the denizens of the farmyard in Rostand's Chantecler. In like manner Swift assimilates men to pygmies, to heavy giants, to horses, to apes. The method also reaches to detail. The Platonic Socrates' comparison of the State to a sluggish horse, and of himself to a gadfly sent to arouse it (Apology 30, 31), is a case in point.

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2 Italics not in Cooper's work.

* 239-240-241
of Falstaff): 'He is very sick, and would to bed. Good Bardolph, put thy face between his sheets, and do the office of a warming-pan.' (Henry V 2.1 83-5). ... The interchange of master and servant, the disguise of lovers as menials so as to obtain entrance into the house of the beloved, and similar devices of the New Greek Comedy and its successors, hardly need to be mentioned; we immediately think of Valère finding employment in the household of Harpagon in L'Avare.

(2). Assimilation or equation of what is worse to what is better... The principle involved has a general value for comedy. It may serve to bring out a ludicrous contrast in which 'the worse' gains nothing from its ostensible approximation to 'the better' ... as in the case of Bottom, who, after his metamorphosis, is called 'angel' and 'gentleman' by Titania (MND. 3.1.126, 161). Or it may serve to elevate or soften what is too low or painful for comedy, to the right comic degree of inferiority that gives no pain.

In the Birds, some of the qualities taken on by men are those in which winged creatures excel all human beings, as Ariel, in The Tempest, excels them. ... Particular comparisons may be, not odious, but complimentary. Yet in the main the equation of the worse to the better in comedy is ludicrous, and the compliments are ironical. 'Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful,' says the enchanted Titania to the transformed Bottom with his decoration (MND. 3.1.145). The assimilation of Sgnarelle to a great physician in Le Médecin Malgré Lui lends but a mock-dignity to that jocular rustic. The elevation of Sly in The Taming of the Shrew does not ennoble him. And servants disguised as masters become only the more ridiculous.

B. From DECEPTION. (This category overlaps with that of (E) 'the *

* 2h1-2h2-2h3.
unexpected," since every ludicrous accident to which an author carefully leads up with a view to surprising us into laughter has the nature of a deception; and similarly the outcome of deception is unexpected. Deception may be said to govern the plot of the Birds, which is an elaborate lie (men are birds); the poet cheats us into accepting the falsehood through a gradual, yet swift, transition from what is more credible to what is less, and through an accumulation of circumstances that would result if the primary assumption were true. . . . Still, we must differentiate between surprise and deception, as also between laughter arising from deception in regard to things and the deception illustrated by jests on words. . . . But the category of laughter arising from deceit may preferably include things of greater moment—deeds, schemes, disguises. It was Homer who taught those who came after how a lie should be represented—in effect, who has shown how a poet ought to represent Odysseus or the like deceiving some other personage.

In An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy Cooper explains deception in his Appendix:

. . . Turning to the Bath Scene in Odyssey 19, we see the force of Aristotle's illustration. Here Odysseus, disguised in rags, wishes to convince Penelope that he, the Beggar, has seen the real Odysseus alive = A, a falsehood. Accordingly, he adds an elaborate and accurate description of the hero's clothing = B. Penelope knows B to be true, since the garments came from her. If A were true, that is, if the Beggar had seen Odysseus, the natural consequence, B, would be a true description of the clothing. From the truth of B, Penelope mistakenly infers the occurrence of A, and believes the Beggar. 

The crafty Odysseus, with his many wiles, became very useful to the comic poets. And impostors, pretenders, quacks, disguised lovers—any sort of person in disguise, any one affecting to be other than himself—are similarly *

3 295.

* 243-244.
useful; likewise the scheming slaves and servants of Menander, Plautus, Terence, and all modern comedy. Instances are the following: Falstaff disguised as Mother Prat (Merry Wives 4.2) and Feste disguised as Sir Topas the curate (Twelfth Night 4.2).

C. From the IMPOSSIBLE. The impossible (irrational, unintelligible, violating the laws of natural sequence, especially that of cause and effect) may be used for comic purposes, and it is then to be distinguished from the unintentional lapses to which any author, comic or not, is exposed.

For example... the building of Clouduckkootown with its massive walls midway between heaven and earth (Birds 1124 ff.). Lucian's True History abounds in comic impossibilities, giving rise to many imitations in subsequent writers—as in Swift's Voyage to Laputa. With the category in the Tractate compare also the following. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (Matt. 19. 24).... Unreason and unintelligibility for the sake of laughter are often employed by Shakespeare. Second Servingman: 'Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him; he had, sir, a kind of face, methought—I cannot tell how to term it.' First Servingman: 'He had so, looking as it were—would I were hanged but I thought there was more in him than I could think' (Coriolanus 4.5.161-6). Garrulity, of course, may evince 'impossibility' (unreason). Bottom (after returning to his normal shape, and awaking): 'I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was; man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was—and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand*
is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what
my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream; it
shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom' (MND. 4.1.216-17).
In the Birds (1221-4) Iris is threatened with death, although she is immor-
tal. 7

D. From the POSSIBLE AND INCONSEQUENT. The possible, but not
_probable' or relevant, used for comic effect. The category may be termed
that of 'the irrelevant.' A good cause is Dionysus' attempt to measure the
literary value of lines from Aeschylus and Euripides by weighing them in
scales (Frogs 1365-1410); compare the similar device employed by Irving in his
Knickerbocker's History of New York, Book 3, Chap. I, where Governor Van
twiller pronounced that, 'having carefully counted over the leaves and weighed
the books, it was found that one was just as thick and as heavy as the other;
therefore it was the final opinion of the court that the accounts were equally
balanced; therefore Wandle should give Barent a receipt, and Barent should
give Wandle a receipt—and the constable should pay the costs.' So Rabelais
(3.39-43) represents Bridoyse, that excellent judge, as deciding cases (after
hearing the arguments on both sides) by means of dice. . . . It is 'possible'
to measure and judge by such standards, but the process is irrelevant (incon-
sequent'). . . . Irrelevance, whether in garrulity or in brief answers, is
frequent in comic dialogue. . . . It is perhaps most frequently to be looked
for in extended comic debate, as in the agon of the Aristophanic play. So
Aeschylus argues that the terms of the proposed contest are unfair; his own
poetry, having survived its author, can not be brought forward in Hades, while
that of Euripides died with him—'he's got it here to recite' (Frogs 866-9).*

* 247-248-249.
During the argument between the two poets Dionysus interjects irrelevant remarks (ibid., 1036-8; 1067-8; 1074-5; 1158-9).

E. From the UNEXPECTED. /Deception and surprise are, strictly considered, the sources of laughter par excellence, and underlie all others. Thus the irrelevant is unexpected, and similarly the impossible, since things normally follow one another in a 'probable' or 'necessary' sequence. Still, we may have a category of the unexpected proper, including simpler forms, and also the strange, the marvelous, the astounding. The marvelous clearly is a distinctive feature of the Birds, the Frogs, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, and other comedies having the scene laid outside the world of our everyday experience. But to illustrate in detail, laughter is caused at the end of the Frogs by the unexpected choice of Dionysus in taking Aeschylus instead of Euripides; ... by that of Bottom (just transformed) and Puck amongst the artisans rehearsing (MN D. 3.I). ... Aristotle's use of the following quotation, by an unknown author—possibly an example taken from Theodorus—

'Tastefully stept he along, and under his feet were his—chilblains' (where we anticipated sandals), illustrates either 'deception' or 'the unexpected.'

F. From DEBASENING THE PERSONAGES. /That is, more literally, 'fashioning' the personages in the direction of the worthless.' There is a difference, says Aristotle, in Poetics 3, between tragedy and comedy, in that 'tragedy tends to represent men as better, and comedy tends to represent them as worse, than the men of the present day.' So Aristophanes makes the Socrates of the Clouds worse than the Socrates of reality; but, (anticipating the dictum of Poetics 5) not worse in any and every way—only ridiculous. The character is distorted, and to some extent lowered, from the truth, yet not painfully so...
To call Dionysus 'son of Wine-jar' (when we expected son of Zeus) is to make him worse than reality. In the *Acharnians*, Pericles still near in point of time, is casually debased, and his statesmanship ridiculed. In the New Comedy, nearly all the personages are made somewhat worse than the average. Old men have the vices of age, avarice, apprehension, and garrulity, in excess; as the young men are prodigal, lustful, and so on, and the courtesans are worse than the average of their class. But now and then the courtesans, since the class is already below the average, are endowed with certain virtues so that they may be less odious, and that the comedy may not fail to give pleasure; just as the intriguing slave, chief agent in the plot, has intelligence, good humour, a measure of fidelity to his master, and the like. The principle of making the agents worse is easily illustrated from comic poets ancient and modern.

G. From the use of CLOWNISH (PANTOMIMIC) DANCING. Perhaps even 'clownish'—perhaps even 'vulgar'—which is opposed to the dignified motions of the chorus in tragedy, and hence is about equivalent to 'comic.' Some of the dancing in comedy is beautiful, some ludicrous; there is much of both sorts. The present category must include not only the traditional dance of the Old Comedy, the cordax, or any dance introduced by the poet for comic effect, but ridiculous dumb-show of every kind, especially that of a rhythmical sort. The Tractate does not specify the indecent cordax, coarse and lascivious, that was suggestive of the phallic song and dance from which comedy took its origin...

In pantomimic dancing and rhythmical dumb-show, the mechanical regularity imposed upon what is by nature irregular—as the motions of the drunken, or of men engaged in fisticuffs, or the like—is incongruous, and is a source of laughter. In modern comedy perhaps the most striking instance of pantomimic dancing is the movement of the tramp in the musical *The Music Man*. The tramp dances a rhythmical 'dumb-show' of the most mechanical sort, imposed upon what is by nature irregular.
mimic song and dance is the close of Le Malade Imaginaire, introduced by these stage-directions: 'C'est une cérémonie burlesque d'un homme qu'on fait médecin en récit, chante, et danse. Plusieurs tapisseries viennent préparer la salle et placer les bancs en cadence. Ensuite de quoi toute l'assemblée, composée de huit porte-seringues, six apothicaires, vingt-deux docteurs, et celui qui se fait recevoir médecin, huit chirurgiens dansants, et deux chantants, entrent, et prennent place, chacun selon son rang.' The dancing of Shakespearean comedy is often for 'pleasure' more than for 'laughter'; the statement doubtless holds for romantic comedy in general . . . . A typical case for the Tractate would be the dance of the 'fairies,' when Falstaff is trapped in Windsor Park (Merry Wives 5.5.93 ff.), and the dancers are incited to their work by Anne Page as the Fairy Queen:

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!
About him, fairies, sing a scornful rime;
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

As commentators on the Tractate at this point have hitherto limited themselves to discussion of the cordax, one may now add that all modern light opera illustrates Category G; so the 'very loud' chorus of the Pirates in Gilbert and Sullivan (Pirates of Penzance, Act II): 'With cat-like tread Upon our prey we steal; In silence dread Our cautious way we feel.' There is 'vulgar dancing' in the Walpurgisnacht scene of Goethe's Faust . . . the accompanying words of Mephistopheles are unfit for quotation. . . . The art was carried by the Greeks to the highest perfection, and a good dancer was able to accompany a song with such expressive pantomime as to create a visible picture of the things described. Aristotle defines dancing as an imitation of 'actions, characters, and passions by means of postures and rhythmical movements'

(Poetics I)
H. When one of these HAVING POWER, NEGLECTING THE GREATEST THINGS, TAKES THE MOST WORTHLESS. Thieves become ludicrous when they pass by things of value, and fasten upon what is trivial. Cherished memories of trifling adventures come under this head. An example of this category is that of Titania and Bottom. 'Under this head,' says Starkie (Acharnians, lxxii), 'comes bathos, even when confined to a single thought. As the sudden drop causes surprise, many of these instances may be classified under the 'unexpected.'

I. When the story or 'discourse' is DISJOINTED, and HAS NO SEQUENCE. This means, at least, a single speech in a play. If it covers also the plot of a comedy, there must be limits to the want of sequence in that, since the whole must not be utterly devoid of organic structure. If the law of causality, or of probability, may be violated, while yet suggested for comic effect, still the poet should rather aim at a seeming than at a real lack of plan. Even that is dangerous in a work of any length. Yet the Frogs has struck more than one critic of Aristophanes as not well-jointed, though not less amusing on that account. The comic effect of a disjointed story is safer to aim at in shorter pieces like Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas, above all when the author pretends that his work is a fragment. A lack of sequence may be tolerable, and ludicrous, in a farce. Many examples of garrulity would fall under this head, as well as parodies; and the present category overlaps with those of 'the impossible' and 'the possible and inconsequent.' Bottom's account of his 'vision' (MND. 4.1) is disjointed, as is the talk of the Servingmen in Coriolanus 4.5. Parodies of the tragic and lyric poets are common in Aristophanes, as the lyrical imitation, without *

* 256-257-258-259.
sequence, in the *Birds* 948-53 (Rogers' translation). Poet: 'Yes, I'll depart, and make to the city pretty songs like this:

O thou of the golden throne,
Sing Her, the quivering, shivering;
I came to the plains many-sown,
I came to the snowy, the blowy.
Alalaie!

disjointed composition may be seen in the verses proffered to the ladies by Missotin in *Les Femmes Savantes* 3.2.

It is with the preceding analysis of the disjointed story that Lane Cooper ends his discussion of laughter arising from the dict.ion, and from things or things done. Following the form of the *Tractatus Coslinianus* closely, he proceeds to amplify in somewhat lesser detail, with the exception of *dianoia*, this fragmentary treatise. The following will be a continuation of the text, likewise in condensed form. Each point as treated by Cooper will be briefly explained.

Comedy differs from abuse, since abuse openly censures the bad qualities attaching to men whereas comedy employs what is called 'emphasis' (*innuendo*). *(This 'emphasis' is commonly taken to mean the same thing as Aristotle's 'innuendo' in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (see Kaibel, 52). The term 'emphasis' is found also in late Greek, and hence in Latin, theories in rhetoric; the orator employs 'emphasis' when he has a deeper meaning than his words, taken literally, suggest. But the term may not have just the same sense for comedy. According to the usual interpretation, 'abuse' would refer to a characteristic of the Old Comedy, and 'emphasis' to a characteristic of the New . . . . Perhaps it would be safer to connect 'abuse' with the earlier stages of the Old Comedy, and 'emphasis' with the later plays of Aristophanes, and with those of his successors who leaned toward the New Comedy. In *
Aristophanes does not directly abuse Socrates, or the gods, or Aeschylus and Euripides. In his hands the peculiarities of Socrates are heightened so as to produce laughter; the traditional Heracles becomes a buffoon through a process of selection and accentuation of the comic possibilities in the myth; and a similar method of selection and over-stress is employed in order to arouse laughter with Aeschylus and Euripides. . . . The titles of many plays of the Old Comedy betray the same tendency to avoid open abuse, and to render ludicrous by indirection—as the Wasps, Frogs, and Clouds of Aristophanes. In the Birds, the poet does not openly censure the bad habit of speculation attaching to the Athenians; he employs an indirect form of good-humoured ridicule.

The joker will make game of faults in the soul and in the body.

The word 'joker' may be applied to a comic poet. . . . Cooper gives the Ciceronian view that both bodily and mental qualities lie within the province of the truly ludicrous:

Moderation, therefore, is chiefly to be observed in matters of wit. And the objects that are most easily played upon are those that deserve neither great detestation nor the greatest compassion. Hence it happens that the whole subject of the ridiculous lies in the moral vices of men who are neither beloved nor miserable, nor deserving to be dragged to punishment for their crimes. . . . Deformity and bodily defects are likewise happy enough subjects for ridicule. But let us consider what ought to be the main object of investigation in other respects—how far we ought to go. Here we must make it a rule to do nothing insipidly, nor to act like a buffoon. An orator must avoid both extremes; he must not make his jests too abusive nor too buffoonish. . . . There are two kinds of humor: one arising from the thing, the other from the diction.

The sentiment is doubtless ancient, possibly belonging to early

5 88.

* 260–261.
Greek rhetorical theory as well as to the theory of comedy. With regard to comedy it is a mere truism in view of the actual practice of writers great and small. Aristophanes makes use of the bodily features and also the philosophy and method of teaching of 'Socrates' for laughter in the Clouds. Shakespeare makes game of the unwieldy frame not less than the buffoonery of Falstaff. Bottom with an ass's head is as wise as he is beautiful.

Perhaps the propriety of laughter at bodily defects was questioned in Greek treatises on poetry, as it has been since. Certain blemishes, however, such as baldness, knock-knees, bandy-legs, lack of an eye, do not strike humanity at large as painful; they are like the comic mask, mentioned in the Poetics, as an example of something ugly, distorted, and ludicrous, without suggesting pain. No doubt there is a limit beyond which the comic poet may not go in representing bodily defects, as there are forms of vice that are excluded from comedy. The obvious results of severe illness would not be suitable for comic treatment, nor would mortal emaciation or frightful scars. But it is hard to draw the line. Extreme emaciation coupled with activity, like extreme corpulence, or any unusual departure from the norm, may be rendered ludicrous. Hunchbacks have often served their turn in comic writers; yet Dickens' Quilp and Hugo's Quasimodo are not strictly comic, but saturnine, with a hint of pain. So long as the suggestion of pain is absent, even the dead man of the Frogs may create amusement.

As in tragedies there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter. Kayser (30-1) thinks the statement to be Aristotelian. Bernays (151) interprets thus: As in tragedy a due proportion of fear to pity is demanded, so in comedy a due pro-

* 261-262.
portion of laughter to pleasure; in other words, the laughter must be neither that of scurrility nor that of bitter invective. But if we are to extract anything from the passage, perhaps the meaning is that the element of laughter must not be in excess—there must be a sufficient admixture of the pleasing accessories of comedy, such as beautiful language, music, etc.

The substance of comedy consists of (1) plot, (2) ethos, (3) dianoia (4) diction, (5) melody, (6) spectacle.

The comic plot is the structure binding together the ludicrous incidents.

The characters of comedy are (1) the buffoonish, (2) the ironical, and (3) those of the impostors. The three are distinguished by Aristotle in Nicomachean Ethics 4.13-4, but other types that might serve for comedy are likewise described. Examples of the 'buffoon' in Aristophanes are Dionysus in the Frogs, Eupolides in the Birds, Strepsiades in the Clouds, Philocleon in the Wasps. In Shakespeare, Polonius, Dogberry, and Bottom are buffoons of several sorts; Monsieur Jourdain in Le Bouffon is fundamentally a 'buffoon,' with leanings toward the type of 'impostor.' Falstaff is an 'impostor' with frequent indulgence in the language of the buffoon. The great example of the 'ironical man' is the Socrates of Plato, with his customary affectation of ignorance. No modern language has an exact equivalent of the Greek ἐξψωπικός, though the character is found in modern society; Bishop Stubbs, the historian, was an example; cf. the description in Walton, Letters of William Stubbs, 407: 'I think that sometimes he came near displaying what was not real for fear of being tempted into displaying what was.' Comic 'irony' resembles one of the traits of old age; according to
Aristotle (Rhetoric 2.13), the old 'are never positive about anything, and always err on the side of too little excess; they "suppose," but never "know" anything; and in discussion they always add "perhaps," or "possibly," expressing themselves invariably in this guarded manner, and never positively.' Says Cornford (137-8): 'The Buffoon and the Eiron are more closely allied in Aristotle's view than a modern reader might expect. . . . It will be remembered that in the Ethics the Ironical Man and the Impostor or swaggerer confront one another in the two vicious extremes which flank the virtuous mean of Truthfulness. While the Impostor claims to possess higher qualities than he has, the Ironical Man is given to making himself out worse than he is. This is a generalized description meant to cover all types of self-depreciation, many forms of which are not comic. In comedy the special kind of irony practised by the Impostor's opponent is feigned stupidity. . . . The Eiron who victimizes the Impostor masks his cleverness under a show of clownish dullness. . . . His attitude is precisely expressed by Demus in a passage of cynical and even sinister self-revelation to the Knights, at a moment when the stage is clear of the two impostors who are competing for his favor. In the previous scene Demus has feigned simplicity almost to the point of idiocy, and when the two rogues are gone, the chorus reproach him for being so easily deceived by flattery. . . . Demus replies that his wits are safer than those sheltered by the young Knights' curled locks. He is letting the rascals feed fat before he gobbles them up: 'play the simpleton like this on purpose.' Thus in the concrete character-type as it exists in the Old Comedy, 'buffoonery' is only the outer wear of 'irony'; and the Ironical Buffoon is in exact antithesis to the Impostor, who covers inward cowardice and folly under a vain pretence of bravery and wisdom. The ironical jester, says Aristotle, *
makes fun for his own amusement, the buffoon for the amusement of others. The unmixed ironical type is not so common as the Buffoons and Impostors, the last being numerous and important in the comedy of all times. In the *Birds*, Aristophanes has a motley crew of them. In a later age, the braggart soldier, the deceitful slave, the scheming or pretentious rogue of every description (in the New Greek Comedy, and hence in Plautus and Terence), all belong to this type. As we have seen, Falstaff, the many-sided, is likewise related to it. Molière's Tartuffe, or 'the Impostor' (one should put 'the' in italics), is our chief modern example. But Molière's cohort of medical quacks will go into the same class. Aristotle picks out skill in prophesying or medicine as the kind of excellence to which 'boasters' are likely to pretend.

The parts of dianoia are two: (A) opinion and (B) proof. Proofs or 'persuasions' are of five sorts: (1) oaths, (2) compacts, (3) testimonies, (4) tortures or 'tests' or 'ordeal', (5) laws. The division into 'opinion' ... and 'proof' ... corresponds to the dual division of dianoia in the Poetics; there the intellectual element of tragedy is seen to be composed of general statements (such as maxims) and particular efforts to prove, disprove, magnify, minify, and the like. ... Instead of the weighty maxims of tragedy, we find in comedy a more trivial kind of generalization that still must be termed 'opinion'.

A. OPINION. All thought consists of more general, and less general, operations of the mind; the mind is constantly passing from one kind of thought to the other in either direction; but, logically, we advance in a play from particulars to conclusions. One might therefore begin a study of comic dianoia by examining the first few lines of the *Birds*, where Euphides
and Peisthetaerus consult a crow and a jackdaw ('witnesses,' perhaps) as guides in their quest; here is an example of 'words.' But let us follow the order of the Tractate, and begin with general statements. In the Frogs, 1420 ff., Dionysus, seeking for the poet who can best advise the city, asks Euripides and Aeschylus each for an 'opinion' of Alcibiades; and each replies with a kind of maxim. Euripides: 'I hate a citizen who by nature is slow to help, and swift to hurt, his fatherland.' Aeschylus: ' 'Tis best to rear no lion's whelp in the city.' . . . Isolated maxims may occur in comedy as in tragedy; so that of Sgnarelle at the opening of Molière's Don Juan: 'Quoi que puisse dire Aristote et toute la philosophie, it n'est rien d'égal au tabac.' . . . The maxims in Menander and Terence tend to be more serious than those of Old Comedy. In comedy as a whole, however, if isolated 'opinions' are not more frequent than are maxims in tragedy, the characteristic series of 'opinions,' such as we have noted in the Frogs demand special attention. . . . Instances of isolated or accumulated 'opinions' may be gleaned from Falstaff, and from the wisdom of Touchstone, Feste, and the clowns and fools of Shakespeare generally. . . . Falstaff: 'There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch; this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest' (I Henry IV 2.4.419-23). In the speech of Falstaff we have a combination of 'witnesses' with an 'opinion,' as well as the particular inference the Prince is to draw; it is a capital illustration of dianoia, considered in its elements and as a whole.

B. PROOFS (or 'persuasions.') (1) Oaths. (Proof or persuasion *)
has a double aspect, and may be considered in relation to the one who persuaded or the one who is persuaded. It may be effected by word or by deed, mental operations being expressed in both ways. Thus one person may try to convince another by an oath, or to learn his identity by an ordeal. 'Oaths' are chiefly verbal—yet one may swear by motion of the hand or body. Oaths in a general sense (swearing by deities, etc.) are often combined with those of a formal sort. . . . Xanthias: 'Cheer up! . . . Spectre's vanished.' Dionysus: 'Swear it!' Xanthias: 'Yes, by Zeus.' Dionysus: 'Swear it again.' Xanthias: 'Yes, by Zeus.' Dionysus: 'Swear.' Xanthias: 'By Zeus.' (Frogs 302-6). In Lysistrata, 183 ff., the women make a compact to abstain from all relations with the men until the men effect a peace between Athens and Sparta, and they take an oath to carry out this plan of the heroine. . . . The preceding is a formal oath. . . . Since comedy employs a popular diction, it contains more of them than does the elevated language of tragedy. It also contains strange and unexpected oaths; compare Jonson's Bobadil (Every Man in His Humor 2.2.2-3): 'Speak to him? Away! By the foot of Pharaoh, you shall not; you shall not do him that grace!' . . . In the closing ceremony of Le Malade Imaginaire the Bachelierus undergoes a 'test' or 'ordeal' which he successfully passes by giving satisfactory 'opinions'; finally he is called upon to swear, formally, and thrice, that he will maintain the established traditions of medicine, no matter what the outcome for the patient.

(2). Compacts. The term ('compact,' 'treaty,') occurs but twice in the extant plays of Aristophanes (both times in the plural), namely, in Lysistrata (1268) and Peace (1065), in each case referring to the conclusion.

* 270-271
of peace between Athens and Sparta which is the desideratum in these comedies.
The word is not used to indicate those compacts which often exercise the
intellect (dianoia) of some chief personage in a comedy, about which not a
little of the discussion revolves, and to which the Tractate doubtless alludes.

... No reader of the Acharnians, Lysistrata, and Peace needs a reminder
of Aristophanes' preoccupation with treaties of peace. As for the Tractate,
we may suppose that 'compact,' like other technical terms, has both a more
general, and a more special, application. The general sense is exemplified
by the three plays just mentioned. And, to judge from the illustrations, both
general and special, dianoia is shown by persons of the drama in arguing for,
as well as from, 'compacts'; we are here dealing, not with Rhetoric and an
oration or legal argument, but with the tissue of life as represented on the
comic stage—not merely with the citation of oaths, compacts, witnesses, or-
deals, and laws from the past but with the genesis and growth of such things
before our eyes. Peisthetaeus argues for the compact with the birds until it
is ratified; it is then carried into action, and thereafter he argues from it;

... the compact between Chremylus and Wealth in the Plutus; ... the compact
of Euripides in the Thesmophoriazusae never again to abuse women in his plays.

... From Aristophanes and the Middle Comedy, the 'compact' passed into
Menander and the New, later reappearing—for example, in the Self-Tormentor
of Terence—in agreements between a young man and a household slave to per-
suade or deceive a father, or the like. ... Modern examples of the 'com-
pact' are seen in the scheme for drawing Beatrice and Benedick from enmity
into love (Much Ado 2.1 ff.), and in the agreement between the Prince and
Falstaff, Poins, Gadshill, and the others, to rob the travelers, and between *
the Prince and Poins to frighten Falstaff and the others from the booty (Henry IV 1.2) . . . . Under the present head we regard these schemes and compacts, not in relation to 'plot,' but in the light of dianoia—as exercising the reason of the agents, and as displayed in their uttered arguments. 

(3). TESTIMONIES. In both lists of 'unartistic proofs' as given by Aristotle in the Rhetoric, we have the word 'witnesses.' In the Tractate we have the abstract word 'testimonies' or 'witnessings,' which would include not only 'ancient' and 'recent' witnesses cited in an argument, but also the spontaneous offer of testimony by a character in a play as a means of persuasion, or even the clamor for it. . . . The personages of Aristophanes are much given to 'witnessing' and 'calling to witness.' When Peisthetaerus maltreats the Inspector, the latter cries: 'I call to witness that I, an Inspector, am struck!' . . . Of the formal summons there is a good comic instance in the Wasps 935 ff., (esp. 936-7), where Bedylecleon for the defence calls the kitchen-utensils that were present on the occasion of the alleged theft by Labes of the cheese. Bedylecleon: 'Summon the witnesses. Witnesses for Labes stand forth! Bowl, Pestle, Cheese-grater, Brazier, Pipkin, and the other wall-scorched vessels!' . . . The use of evidence by witness for purposes of discovery, persuasion, and the like, is illustrated in Molière as follows. In Tartuffe 4.4-5, Orgon is placed in hiding so that he may observe the attempt of the dissembler upon Orgon's wife Elmire. In Le Malade Imaginaire 2.11, Argan forces his little daughter Louison to bear witness as to the endearments that have passed between her sister and Cléante, the evidence being given after 'torture' . . . . The song of Ariel (Full fathoms five) in The Tempest 1.2.394-400, bears witness to Ferdinand concerning the supposed 

* 274-275.
death of his father. The Prince and Poins are witnesses to the flight of Falstaff from the booty he has taken (Henry IV 2.3.255-67). ... The prince asks Falstaff for an exhibition of dianoia; Falstaff gives it with an 'oath' adding an 'opinion' (ibid., 2.4.270-5): 'By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. ... The lion will not touch the true prince.'

(4). TESTS. The usual translation is 'tortures'; but for comedy the term embraces ordeals (mental as well as physical), forcible inquisitions, systematic tests of every sort, yet particularly those of a mechanical nature, as may be inferred from the primary meaning—that is, touchstone. A satisfactory rendering of the word, touchstone, in the Tractate would combine the notions of 'torture' (such as mock-floggings), decisions by mock-combat, tests (as of poetry by weight and measure), and, on the mental side, persistent inquiries and mock-examinations. Sharp mental inquisitions naturally form a part of the literary technique in the Platonic dialogue; Plato systematically introduces them for comic effect, as in the Protagoras and the Phaedrus, and even in the Apology. ... But in general, perhaps, the 'ordeal' tends rather to be of a physical sort, or at least to involve the use of material objects and instruments, such as the scales of Wouter Van Twiller ... or the cart-wheel described at the end of the Summoner's Tale in Chaucer. There is a test or inquisition, with a threat of torture, in Acharnians 110 ff., when Dicaeopolis cross-questions Pseudartabas. 'You get away!' he tells the Ambassador; 'I'll test this man alone.' ... Turning to modern comedy, we may again note the examination of the Bachelierus in Le Malade Imaginaire. In the same play we have the ordeal by which Argan extracts information from Louison, and the test devised by Toinette when she prevails on Argan to feign *

* 274-275-276.
death in order to find out how much his wife and daughter love him. This ex-
ample was discussed under the head of 'witnesses' but, as we have seen, the
categories of the Tractate, like those of the Poetics, are not always mutually
exclusive—or the devices are constantly uniting to form a whole. . . .
Aristotle says of dianoia in Poetics 19, 'the act must produce its effect
without verbal explanation.'

(5). LAWS. \[\text{Laws are either human or divine. Divine laws include}
the utterances or oracles;—yet oracles at times may serve as witnesses. There
are also laws of birds. Human laws include legal codes, medical dicta, and so
on. Almost any general statement proceeding from a notable authority may fall
under this head if it has greater cogency than a maxim. . . . In the Birds,
Peisthetaerus cites 'the law of Solon' prohibiting bastards from the right of
inheritance; therewith he persuades Heracles, the 'bastard' son of Zeus, to
renounce all claim to possession of the Lady Sovereignty. The law of filial
obedience is often appealed to by characters in Aristophanes in their efforts
to prove or disprove, to urge or dissuade. . . . There are over fifty refer-
ences to 'laws' (singular and plural) in Dunbar's Concordance of Aristophanes.
. . . Philamine discharges Martine (Les Femmes Savantes 2.6) because the un-
lucky maid-servant has broken the laws of grammar laid down by Vaugelas, and
argues on the strength of those laws against Chrysale, who would protect the
girl (ibid., 2.7) for her ability as cook. Chrysale demands: Qu'importe
qu'elle manque aux lois de Vaugelas, Pourvu qu'à la cuisine elle ne manque
pas? . . . The Comedy of Errors turns upon the law that any Syracusan found
at Ephesus must die.\]

[So much for 'proofs' or 'persuasions' as illustrated in comedy. *

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\[* 277-278-279-280-281.\]
It will be readily understood that there can be an admixture of a serious kind of dianoia—that is, of 'artistic' proofs—in a comic play, and the more so as the play verges toward a more serious type of comedy; but this is only saying in another way that the Tractate is right in singling out the 'unartistic' proofs as characteristic of speeches in the comic drama.

The DICTION of comedy is the common popular language. The comic poet must endow his personages with his own native idiom, but must endow an alien with the alien idiom. So the language of Aristophanes is in general pure, limpid, Attic Greek; the language of Terence, however, refined, is natural Latin, and the language of Molière is straightforward, perspicuous, idiomatic French. (Some allowance must be made for the modifications of diction that are introduced for comic purposes—as in word-play.) Aristophanes endows Lysistrata with his own tongue, and her Spartan ally, Lampito, with forms from the dialect of Sparta. The differences in language mentioned by the Tractate are, for Greek comedy, differences in the Greek dialects. Molière and Shakespeare observe the same economy as Aristophanes in their use of dialect. In Le Médécin Malgré Lui the nurse Jacqueline and her husband employ dialectal forms in harmony with their station in life. . . . Shakespeare indulges less in dialect, possibly because of the relative isolation of the English audience from Continental tongues, and because different languages (as well as different dialects of English) were spoken in different parts of Great Britain . . . Fluellen (Henry V 4.7) betrays his origin, not by speaking Welsh, but by the broken English of a Welshman. The principle noted in the Tractate may thus by extension include comic gibberish. . . . In Acharnians (98-104) . . .

Ambassador: 'He says the King is going to send you gold.' To Pseudo-Artabas:

* 281-282
'Be more distinct and clear about the gold.' Pseudo-Artabas: No getti goldincompoop lawny.ʃ

MELODY is the province of the art of music; hence it is necessary to take its fundamental rules from that art. ʃSo Aristotle in the Poetics sends us to the Rhetoric for the technique of dramatic speeches. The technique of music was of great importance to the dramatic poet, who in the flourishing days of the Greek stage was likewise a composer. In our sense, Sophocles and Aristophanes were as much 'musicians' as 'poets,' yet the Poetics virtually neglects the subject of music and is perfunctory in its treatment of the chorus. In the Politics, the author disclaims a knowledge of music such as one could find in technical treatises, to which he refers.ʃ

SPECTACLE is of great advantage to dramas in supplying what is in concord with them. ʃThe remark would apply to the Frogs and the Birds.ʃ

Here Cooper refers the reader to pages 73-74 of his text:

Only the slightest hints concerning the dress of the chorus in the Birds and the Clouds, for example, are to be gathered from decorations on vases, chance remarks of scholiasts, and the like. ʃCooper's source for this statement is A.E.Haigh, The Attic Theatre, 3d ed., by A.W.Pickard, Oxford, 1907, 295-7ʃ. For an abundance of grace and charm, the outstanding comedy should be the Birds, with its choral odes and solo to the Nightingale, its fantastic imagery and ethereal setting, with parti-colored Iris, messenger of the gods, and with the splendid goddess Sovereignty arrayed for her marriage with the hero.ʃ

Plot, diction, and melody, are found in all comedies; dianoia, ethos and spectacle in few. ʃThis dubious statement has some relation to a difficult passage in the Poetics (6.1450ί12,5) which is thus rendered . . . : 'These ʃ

6 73-74.
* 283-284.
constitutive elements, accordingly, not a few of the tragic poets, so to speak, have duly employed; for, indeed, every drama must contain certain things that are meant for the eye, as well as the elements of moral disposition, plot, diction, melody, and intellect. Here the 'so to speak' possibly should be read with the reference to 'spectacle.' . . . The statement of the Tractate regarding dianoia and spectacle is hard to understand, and, if ever intelligible, hard to illustrate in view of our limited acquaintance with complete Greek comedies outside of Aristophanes. In the Plutus, spectacle doubtless is not so important as in the Birds. Perhaps there is less extensive use of ordeals, testimonies, and the like, in the later comedies; yet surely the Plutus is rich in 'opinions' on the relative advantages of poverty and wealth. Diction, and some sort of plot, there must be in all comedies as in all tragedies. But what of the melody? According to modern conceptions, there is the one formative element out of the six that can be totally absent from a play. For the Greek drama, the question of the presence or absence of any of the elements would seem to be a matter of more or less, not of absolute exclusion. After the impoverishment of Athens through her reverses in war, the entire choral element became less significant on the stage, and for reasons of economy the cost of stage-setting dwindled. Why should not 'melody' tend to disappear with 'spectacle?' . . . The statement of the Tractate is at best difficult to interpret; perhaps one is wiser not to throw out too many suggestions concerning it.

The quantitative parts of comedy are four: (1) prologue, (2) the choral part, (3) episode, (4) exode. The prologue is that portion of a *

* 284-285.
comedy extending as far as the entrance of the chorus. The choral part [choricon] is a song by the chorus when it [The song] is of adequate length. An episode is what lies between two choral songs. The exode is the utterance of the chorus at the end. 7

The kinds of comedy are (1) Old, with a superabundance of the laughable; (2) New, which disregards laughter, and tends toward the serious; (3) Middle, which is a mixture of the two. (The allusion to the 'New' comedy may place the source of this part of the Tractate after Aristotle. . . . Is it possible that Aristotle invented all three terms, or at all events that they were current in his time? But this is mere conjecture. The three kinds represent not only periods of time—in a rough and general way—but also tendencies that were present from an early date in Greek comedy; the Tractate does not say that the 'Middle' is intermediate in point of time, but that it is a 'mixture' of the other two. The Frogs, perhaps, has 'a superabundance of laughter,' and is of the older type. The tendency of the 'new' toward a more serious vein may be observed in the Self-Tormentor of Terence, adapted from Menander. The Plutus possibly belongs to the type of 'middle'. . . . In Shakespeare, Falstaff belongs to the 'old' comedy, the Comedy of Errors to the 'new' and The Tempest to a region intermediate. . . . That the 'new' while tending toward the serious nevertheless is amusing, and thus duly belongs to the realm of comedy, may be learned from a study of Tartuffe—that is, if not on a first, yet on repeated perusal. 7

7 A detailed analysis of the quantitative parts of comedy may be found in Cooper's An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, 54-59; 198-199.

* 285-286.
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* / The bibliography given here has been taken principally from Lane Cooper's An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy. Not all have been consulted, because of unavailability. These have been indicated by a double asterisk after the entry. It should be noted that J.W.H. Atkins' main source is Lane Cooper. J. Kayser's work has been compared with Cooper's Tractatus and has been found to be fundamentally the same. /

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NOTE: The principal works used in the writing of this thesis have been Lane Cooper's An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, and Plays and Poems of W.S.Gilbert, with a Preface by Deems Taylor, including the complete text of the fourteen Gilbert and Sullivan operas, three dramas by Gilbert, and all of the Bab Ballads with illustrations by the author. The bibliography given here served principally as
a reading background, although many of the publications here listed have been quoted in the thesis and there acknowledged. All have been investigated.
APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Sheila Cannon, B.V.M., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Dec. 1, 1949

[Signature of Adviser]