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ANALYSIS PLAUTUS'S AND SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES' STRUCTURE

1) ARGUMENTUM
2) PROLOGUE
3) ACT AND SCENES

PLAUTUS , MENAECHMI

- 1) It's a small summary of the play.
- 2) it narrates the background of the play . The narrator tells that there were two twins . One of them gets lost in Taranto and he is rescued by one merchant from Epidamno. The grandfather of the twins thinks that Menecmo I is dead, but he is only lost, so he decides to give his name to the boy that remains . Menecmo I gets married and when his father dies he receives his inheritance . Menecmo II goes to Taranto looking for his brother .
- 3) there is an introduction of the characters who are speaking instead of the scenes.

SHAKESPEARE , THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

- 1) there is no prologue .
- 2) there is no *argumentum* .
- 3) the play is subdivided into five acts and in each scene there are references to the characters of the play.

1) TITLE 2) TIME 3) SPACE

PLAUTUS, MENAECMI

- 1) the title refers to the name of the twins : Menecmo. The meaning is dark because it doesn't tell us what the play talks about but who are the protagonists.
- 2) The play is set during one day from the sunrise to the night with no specific time references . **Example:** “what a day it happened to me” – Menecmo.
- 3) Act V takes place in front of the matron's home in Epidamno (now called Durazzo) .

SHAKESPEARE THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

- 1) it means that in the play there's the theme of the misunderstanding . It's clear because it gives us information about what will happen in the story.
- 2) the play lasts for only one day. Act V is at 5 p.m. . **Example :** “ I think this is the time (the deal points at five)” –Menecmo.
- 3) act V takes place in a street in front of an abbey in Epidamno .

1) CHARACTERS 2) THEMES

PLAUTUS , MENAECHMI

1) - **Menecmo I and Menecmo II** : *adulescens*, twins .

- **Menecmo's father in law** : *Senex* (a parody of the *pater familias*) .
- **Messenione**: Menecmo II's servant (*servus*) .
- **Spazzola** : Menecmo I's servant (*parasite*) .
- **Erozia** : *Meretrix*.
- **Matrona** : Menecmo's wife.

2) - **theme of the double** .

- **Use of irony** : in a satirical way to make people laugh .
- **Misunderstandings**
- *Agnitio*

SHAKESPEARE , THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

1) **Solino** : duke of Efeso; **Egeone** : merchant of Syracuse (*senex*); **Antipholus of Ephesus**: *adulescens* , twin ; **Antipholus of Syracuse** : *adulescens* , twin ; **Dromio of Ephesus** : *servus* ; **Dromio of Syracuse** : twin of the Antifolo's servant (*servus*); **Baldassarre** : merchant; **Pinza**: school teacher and exorcist; **Emilia** : Egeone's wife (*matron*) ; **Adriana** : Antifolo di Efeso' s wife (*matron*) ; **Luciana** : Adriana's sister; **Lucetta** : Adriana's servant (*servus*); **Etera** : *Meretrix* ; **Policeman** .
The main characters are two couples of twins.

2) - **Theme of the double**, even if Shakespeare saves the individuality of the characters as separate ones.

- **Irony** used in a modest and kind way .
- **Misunderstandings** .
- *Agnitio*.

WHY IS THE ACT V IN THAT POINT ?

PLAUTUS, MANAECMI

- Act V is at the end of the play, where there's the denouement because the characters understand that there are two identical twins and everything becomes clear. They meet and recognize each other.
- *Messenione: That man there is either one great faker or your lost twin brother. Never have I seen two men more similar than you two men: water isn't more like water, milk is not more like to milk than that man is like to you. And what's more he named your father. And your fatherland.*

SHAKESPEARE, THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

- Act V is at the end of the play because everything becomes clear: Egeone recognizes Emilia and his sons, so there is a happy ending.
- *Emilia: Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds
And gain a husband by his liberty.—
Speak, old Egeon, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once called Emilia,
That bore thee at a burden two fair sons.
O, if thou be'st the same Egeon, speak,
And speak unto the same Emilia.*

*Egeone: If I dream not, thou art Emilia.
If thou art she, tell me, where is that son
That floated with thee on the fatal raft?*

EXCHANGES OF CHARACTERS AND TWISTS IN *MAENECMI* , ACT V

✓ **There is an exchange of characters when the matron thinks that Menecmo II is her husband but he says it isn't him :**

MENECMO: You can't stand your husband? Do you feel like planting it? What do I care? Or is that the custom here? As soon as a stranger arrives, do you tell him everything? Make fun, make fun, then I want to see you with my dad. Here he comes. Turn around. Do you know him?

MENECMO: I know him as well as Calcante. You and him, I've never seen you before in my life.

✓ **There is an exchange of characters when *senex* thinks he's Menecmo I and he lives in that house with his wife even if is Menecmo II and he has never been there:**

MENECMO: I want to become the last of men, the most desperate of the desperate, if I never set foot within the walls of his house.

SENEX: Is that what you wish for? And you're sane? And you say you've never set foot in the house where you live? You're mad mad mad!

MENECMO : And you, old man, expect me to live in that house over there?

SENEX: Why, isn't it?

MENECMO : Of course it's not true.

MENECMO: Adverse, perverse! What a day it happened to me. Everything I thought I was doing the parasite put him in the square, covering me with shame, and of fag. And good is my Odysseus, who has so much trouble with his king. A That, if I escape, I'll tear his life out of his guts. I said yours. What a mistake! I had to say my, my because they grew my food, the my expenses. But I'll eat his heart, him. And you, the whore? He made me That's a good bitch. I ask for the cloak, to return it to my wife, and She says she's already given it to me. By Jupiter, I feel just a You wretched.

MESSENIONE : My master, if you want to be fair, now you must set me free.

MENECMO :Should I set you free? Me? **MESSENION :**Sure, Master. Didn't I save you?

MENECMO :What are you talking about, kid? Surely you're wrong.

MENECMO :Shameless! You have the nerve to tell me you've already met me, after I told you to meet me here?

MESSENIONE :But how? Did I not a little while ago, in front of this house, snatch you from the clutches of four scoundrels who were dragging you away by weight?

EXCHANGES OF CHARACTERS AND TWISTS IN *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*, ACT V

- ✓ In reality Antipholus of Syracuse has the chain, not Antipholo of Ephesus:

ANGELO: I made you late. I'm sorry. But I assure you I gave that necklace to him, and he took it, though he still insists on saying no with the most dishonest nerve. (...) It is he indeed, and he wears, as you see, the necklace he so brazenly swore he had not.

- ✓ Egeon is talking to Antipholus of Ephesus ; he thinks he is speaking to the other Anthipholus:

EGEONE: (to Antipholus of Ephesus) Why are you looking at me so dumbfounded as if I were a stranger? Yet you must know me well. I've never seen you before in my life.

EGEONE : Oh, yes, of course, grief has changed me since we last saw each other, and the hour of anguish with the execrable hands of time have marked strange disfigurements on my face. But tell me, my voice, at least, don't you recognize it?

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS : No (....)

But I have never seen or known my father since I came into this world.

MENAECHMI, ACT V

1) PARODY, A CARICATURE IMITATION OR ACCENTUATION OF THE PROTAGONISTS' DEFECTS : EXAMPLES :

MATRON : But he gets on with the whore that's nearby. **SENEX**: Oh, yes? Good. And after that, he'll keep it even dearer, I say. **MATRON** : And here he goes to dribbling. **SENEX**: Here or somewhere, or wherever he goes, do you think he'll drink less out of respect for you? You've got a pretty good claim. Would you suddenly forbid him to go to dinner? out of the house or invite someone into your house? **MENECMO**: Please, woman, advise me, if you know: what can I drink to send Down your petulance? I don't know who you think I am. Boh, maybe you I met in a fairy tale. **MATRON** : Fucking, fucking, then I want to see you with my dad. \ **SENEX**: What do you expect, husbands to be slaves to their wives? You want to put the distaff in his hand and have him sit in the servants' quarters, carding wool? \ **MENECMO**: And you, old man, expect me to live in that house over there? \ **MENECMO**: Who has On the left is an angry bitch, who won't let me move. There's a lurid goat, a horrible beast who, all his life... \ **MENECMO**: And now to him, the old man with the beard and the shakes. Yeah, with his cane. \ **MENECMO**: You want me to take wild horses and furious. And then what? Jump on the wagon, whip the horses, the investo, this decrepit lion that smells so much and has no tooth.

2) METAPHORS : EXAMPLES :

It means that he doesn't know his father as he doesn't know for example Calcante : **MENECMO** : I know him as well as Calcante. \ **SENEX** : ...A little gale (means quarrel)... \ **It means that he seems mad, furious** : **MATRON** : Look into his eyes, Dad. They're turning green. What about the forehead, the temples? They're green, too. His eyes sparkle, eh! \ **SENEX** : ...But move those ant steps.

3) COMBINATION OF REFINED AND CRUDE WORDS : EXAMPLES : **MATRON** : Can't you see he's mocking you? \ **MENECMO** : I'll do what you say, Apollo. Yes, I'll take the two-sedged one. cut, and I'll bon this old man, yes, I'll slice his guts into stew. \ **MEDICAL** : I'll give him a nice herbore treatment. Twenty days in a row. **MENECMO**: I'll hang you and embroider you with a whip for 30 days in a row.

4) MIXTURE OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTIC REGISTERS : EXAMPLES : **MESSENIONE** : I'll have my good man reverential fear, I'll beware of the scavengers.

5) VULGAR JOKES AND EXASPERATION OF NATURAL FEELING : EXAMPLES : **This is a vulgar joke said by Menecmo because every time than the matron sees her husband Menecmo she assaults him** : **MENECMO** : "Do you know, woman, why the Greeks call Hecuba a bitch? **MATRON** : I don't know. **MENECMO**: Because he did as you do. Just like that. As soon as he saw someone, he would bark at them. So they ended up calling her a bitch, and rightly so."

6) DOUBLE MEANINGS ESPECIALLY OF A SEXUAL NATURE : EXAMPLES : Donnacce (Menecmo leaving the house of Erozia).

7) THE FREQUENT USE OF HALF LATIN AND HALF GREEK WORDS OR WORDS FORMED WITH SEVERAL ROOTS . OR NEOLOGISMS , OR HYPERBOLIC AND RIDICULOUS SUPERLATIVES : EXAPLES : **Menecmo uses a hyperboly for saying he's never been in that house before** : **MENECMO** : I want to be the last of men, the most desperate of desperate men, if I ever set foot within the walls of his house. \ I'd never finish telling them one by one. \ Ludibrio, teco pecunia

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS , ACT V

- 1) PARODY , A CARICATURAL IMITATION OR ACCENTUATION OF THE PROTAGONISTS' DEFECTS.
- 2) METAPHORS .
- 3) COMBINATION OF REFINED AND CRUDE WORDS .
- 4) THE FREQUENT USE OF HALF LATIN AND HALF GREEK WORDS OR WORDS FORMED WITH SEVERAL ROOTS. OR NEOLOGISMS, OR HYPERBOLIC AND RIDICULOUS SUPERLATIVES.

- 1) **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE:** Brother, in your master's house there's a fat friend in the kitchen he made me have lunch today mistaken for you; From now on she will not be my wife My dear sister-in-law.
- 2) **Metaphoric language for saying going to an imaginary play in a climate of sadness and tears : SECOND MERCHANT:** ... to a valley of tears..
 - **This means they are acting like animals : they're arguing : DUKE:** Looks like you've all placed your lips to the cup of Circe.
 - **EGEONE:** Why are you looking at me so dumbfounded as if I were a stranger?
 - **EMILIA :** And you who are of their birth the calendars. = **Because their birthday is on the same day .**
- 3) a shameless villain, Rebellious piece, Censorious cyaltrons, Obnubilated , Beloved, Laxophant.
- 4) *grassona* (fat)