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The Great Feast of Language:

A Study of Love's Labour's Lost

by

William C. Carroll

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
of the Graduate School of Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1972

That Love's Labour's Lost is difficult and complex is a judgment every reader of the play will agree with. That it is a successful play is another question. This study attempts to demonstrate that the play is not simply "apprentice" work, but an exploratory and sophisticated work of art. A close reading of the entire play tries to show how the play works, why it takes the form it does.

Love's Labour's Lost can be read as a débat on the nature and use of rhetoric, poetry, and the imagination. In the language and style of the play a wide variety of attitudes towards words is evident, from words as symbols of things to words as things in themselves. A dialectical tension between these two impulses is found throughout the play. There are in addition a range of dramatic styles offered, through three plays-within-the-play, and an analogous range of poetic styles, from the clumsy to the glib, the archaic to the topical. None of these styles finally satisfies, however. The various imaginations in the play, with the exception of Berowne at his very best, never achieve genuine poetic transformations.

The play reveals a maturity and sophistication behind it in dealing with various dualisms--Illusion and Reality, Words and Things, Art and Nature, Spring and Winter--which link it with Shakespeare's more mature works, and especially A Midsummer Night's Dream. The play's basic structure is an expanded version of this dualistic impulse: a series of concentric circles of awareness, with Dull and Costard at the lowest level, and Moth and the ladies at the highest. The audience, then the dramatist himself, form still further circles. It appears, though, that virtually all of the dualisms and concentric circle structures in the play are no sooner affirmed than they are dissolved or subverted in some way. The specific factor which mediates between Art and Nature is decorum; the play works towards various definitions of decorum, from the rhythm of the seasons to a specific poetic requirement. The noblemen will learn, in their year-long penances, the full range of possibilities of style, the meaning of decorum and propriety in all its aspects. This is something the audience has presumably already learned in the course of the play.

The final songs of Spring and Winter are the triumph of the play. They turn out to be the finest "poetry" in a play filled with a variety of verse. The songs are themselves the exemplum and model of style--dramatic and poetic--towards which the play's debate had all along been moving. They are an emblem of all the other dualisms in the play, and they suggest how they are all to be reconciled. The songs also sum up the play's concern with Time, and show that the playwright, at least, achieves the "fame" and timelessness so much discussed by the characters in the play. The "living art" sought by Navarre is finally found in the theater, with its own easy marriage of Art and Nature, Illusion and Reality. The play's debate ends, like the medieval conflictus, with no formally declared victor, one side of the dualism over the other. It ends, rather, with the reconciliation of division, with the victory of the imagination.

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This study owes the most to my former teacher, colleague, and friend, David P. Young. He first taught me Shakespeare, and he read this manuscript at an early stage, offering many helpful suggestions. His own work is an obvious inspiration to mine.

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The clues he left did not establish his identity, but they reflected his personality, or at least a certain homogenous and striking personality; his genre, his type of humour--at its best at least--the tone of his brain, had affinities with my own. He mimed and mocked me. His allusions were definitely high-brow. He was well-read. He knew French. He was versed in logodaedaly and logomancy. He was an amateur of sex lore. . . . His main trait was his passion for tantalization. Goodness, what a tease the poor fellow was! He challenged my scholarship. I am sufficiently proud of my knowing something to be modest about my not knowing all; and I daresay I missed some elements in that cryptogrammic paper chase. . . . I noticed that whenever he felt his enigmas were becoming too recondite, even for such a solver as I, he would lure me back with an easy one.

Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita

Moth. They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.
Costard. O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words. I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word; for thou art not so long by the head as honorificabilitudinitatibus: thou art easier swallowed than a flapdragon.
Moth. Peace! the peal begins.

(5.1.37-44)

INTRODUCTION

There is such an unlimited potential for unintended self-revealing irony when writing about Love's Labour's Lost that one hesitates even to begin. Like the double-initialed editor of Nabokov who is forced to protest that he is neither Nabokov nor a fiction created by him, the commentator on Shakespeare's supremely complex parody of pedantry and pedagogia must always carefully mark himself off from the play itself, keeping close watch over his own Latinate diction and antithetically balanced phrases. We can't help the way we think, but it should at least be possible to avoid sounding like Holofernes, too.

The danger in considering such a parody-play too closely is the tendency of trivia and "background" material to expand unreasonably; and, unlike yeast, such a mixture rarely expands into anything edible. The very fact of writing at such length on this play risks the comment that "he draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument." It is no longer news when a full-length book (much less a dissertation) on a single Shakespeare play appears, and there are several full-length works on Love's Labour's Lost already. Why another? Because none of these other works has anything to do with the play itself: they are about the Earl of Oxford, Lord Strange, John Florio, Sir Walter Ralegh,

the history of the Nine Worthies, contemporary French history, Shakespeare's puns, and possible early revisions of the play. There is as yet no extended close reading of Love's Labour's Lost. It may reasonably be asked whether it is worth the effort to give such a reading for this play. I believe that it is, as the play itself is in part an examination of what is "worthy" in human relations, in love, and in art.

A brief summary of the plot, such as it is, may be helpful as a refresher here, since Love's Labour's Lost is not the best-remembered of Shakespeare's plays. The play opens with three young lords, Berowne, Dumain, and Longaville, agreeing to join with King Ferdinand of Navarre in forming a "little academe." The regimen will be harsh: for three years the members may not see or speak to a woman, they must fast one day a week and take only one meal on the others, they may sleep only three hours a night, not nap during the day, and, always, study. Berowne demurs at this at first, but finally signs the oath with the rest. All of the oaths will soon be broken. First, as a living refutation to the denial of the flesh just expounded, the clown Costard is brought in by Constable Dull, having been caught "in the manner" with the wench Jaquenetta. Costard was reported by one Don Adriano de Armado, a fantastical Spaniard brought to the court for the lords' entertainment: Armado is accompanied by his quick-witted page, Moth.

The noblemen are suddenly forsworn when the Princess of France, accompanied by her ladies, Rosaline, Maria, and Kath-

arine, arrives to negotiate an alleged debt of the Princess's sick father, the King. They are accompanied by their foppish courtier, Boyet. The noblemen quickly fall in love, as they think, with the women and begin wooing them. The women, we learn, find the men attractive too, but essentially immature. These love-relationships are parodied in the low characters by Armado professing his love for the pliant Jaquenetta.

The rest of the play features brilliant and witty wooing and a good deal of verbal sparring back and forth between the lords and ladies. The ladies continually surprise and defeat the cleverness of the lords, mainly through their superior mastery of language. All of the men, including Armado, are soon engaged in writing love-sonnets to their mistresses, and both Berowne and Armado employ Costard as a messenger to their respective ladies. Naturally, the two notes are confused and delivered to the wrong ladies.

Act Four, Scene One contains the first of a series of stylized, consciously artificial scenes: the Princess takes her place at a stand for a deer-shooting. In 4.3, each of the four lords enters on stage reading his love-sonnet. Berowne is the outermost of three hidden audiences, as each of the men is spied on by the others; the highly schematic use of multiple concentric circles of awareness here could serve as a paradigm for the structure of the entire play. Berowne himself, who exposes the folly of all the other lords, is exposed when Jaquenetta and Costard enter with his mis-delivered sonnet to Rosaline.

In the meantime, in 4.2, we have met the last two of the low characters, the pedant Holofernes and the curate Sir Nathaniel. These two are stepped in folly and self-deception so far that there is no hope of recovery. Their sense of self-importance is ludicrous, and Holofernes professes to be an expert in matters poetical. It is he who suggests, in 5.1, that the low characters perform the time-worn Pageant of the Nine Worthies for the King and his court.

When Berowne is exposed in 4.3, the men resolve to join together in wooing the ladies, and Berowne delivers the most famous lines in the play, the great "Promethean Fire" speech, to justify breaking their oaths. The men resolve to woo the women in disguise, in a Masque of Muscovites. They have been seen by Boyet, however, and the forewarned women once again confound the expectations of the noblemen. The men then return without their masks and are again mocked. In another famous speech here, Berowne forswears "figures pedantical" and "Taffeta phrases," but we are not convinced of the sincerity or completeness of his recantation by this or his subsequent speeches.

Just as the men realize they were deceived in the Masque, Costard enters announcing the Pageant of the Nine Worthies. It is a venerable subject, common in pageants, but Holofernes and his crew are hopelessly amateurish, their speeches clumsy and inept. The lords, joined by Boyet, refuse to sympathize properly and mock the actors, sending them away in confusion. After a while Costard-Pompey and Armado-Hector almost come

to blows over the wench Jaquenetta. The increasing chaos of the scene comes to an abrupt halt with the dramatic entrance of a messenger from France, Marcade, and the news of the death of the Princess's father. The lords try one last time to win the ladies, but each lord is given a difficult year-long penance instead; the usual comic resolution in harmony and marriage is thus postponed. The play ends with the dialogue between Spring and Winter compiled by "the two learned men," Holofernes and Nathaniel. To our great surprise and delight, it turns out to be the finest poetry in the entire play.

The Text

The authoritative text for Love's Labour's Lost is the 1598 Quarto; the 1623 Folio was apparently set up from a copy of the Quarto, with only minor improvements added. The edition quoted throughout this study, with a few exceptions as noted, is Richard David's Arden edition.[1]

There are two textual considerations worth mentioning here. The first, the possible revision of the play, is indicated by the title page of the Quarto, which says that the play is "Newly corrected and augmented." There is in addition some internal evidence of supposed revision: Berowne's speech at 4.3.287-362 and Rosaline's imposition of penance (5.2.808-12, 831-44) both appear in two versions in the text, one shorter and less interesting, then one longer and seemingly more mature. The Katharine-Rosaline tangle in 2.1, the

second main textual peculiarity, indicates a confusion in speech-ascriptions which may also be attributable to revision.[2] Variant speech-ascriptions elsewhere (characters given generic names in certain places in the Quarto) and conflicting topical allusions are also adduced as evidence of revision.

The dominant view today, that of both Richard David and Dover Wilson, is that the first draft of the play must have been composed c. 1593-4 and the revision, possibly for the court performance, in 1597.[3] The real question, still unresolved, is the extent of the revisions. At one extreme of opinion is H. D. Gray, whose general thesis is that before revision the play was much shorter (comparable in length to Errors), more artificial and stylized, with much more symmetry between the parts; he finds most of the new matter in the "over-long" 5.2. Gray suggests that Shakespeare went back, in 1597, and in effect satirized in his revisions the earlier artificialities by breaking them up and by introducing other qualifying scenes. The play supposedly ended just before Armado returned; Marcade brought in a packet of papers which resolved the financial dispute, the Princess's father did not die, and the play ended with a complete rejection of the men. Chambers quite rightly labelled this theory "quite fantastic."[4] At the opposite pole to the revisionist theory, F. A. Yates concludes, on the basis of her investigation of Florio, that "the play was written practically as we have it . . . some time during the year 1595."[5] Chambers, agreeing

with 1595, also claims "I see no evidence for two dates."[6] Most other critics fall in between these two positions.

If the fact of revision, based on internal and external evidence, is generally agreed upon, the extent of it remains controversial and, it seems, logically insoluble. The indisputable facts are modest: two duplicate passages, a Quarto title-page blurb, a confusion of names in 2.1, and other debatable textual oddities. It is best to be conservative here, and in any case the extent of revision will have little effect on this study of the play. By emphasizing the unity and craft of Love's Labour's Lost, we shall hopefully at least demonstrate the error in comments such as Gray's:

> [Holofernes and Nathaniel] are abruptly introduced in the fourth act, and except for receiving Biron's love sonnet and sending it on to the King . . . they have not the faintest excuse for being in the play except to take part in the 1597 version of the masque.[7]

Surely no two characters, as we shall see, more clearly reflect the energy of Shakespeare's parody in the play as a whole.

The Occasion

Apparently baffled by the play, most editors and scholars have assumed that there must have been some special occasion for which Love's Labour's Lost was written. It seems especially suited for a sophisticated, courtly audience in its language, "wit," symmetrical structure, and apparent topicality. The title page of the 1598 Quarto says, "As it was

presented before her Highnes this last Christmas," and it was, we know, presented before Queen Anne at "my Lord of Sowthamptons" in 1604.[8] The 1631 Quarto title page says, "it was Acted by his Maiesties Servants at the Blacke-Friers and the Globe," which suggests that it was enjoyed by both popular and courtly audiences as well. Austin K. Gray has argued that the play was first performed in Southampton's house at Tichfield on the occasion of Elizabeth's progress there, but this date is now generally rejected.

Tichfield or not, most scholars agree with David that there was some special purpose:

> All the evidence then goes to show that Love's Labour's Lost was a battle in a private war between court factions. This confirms the indications, from other sources, that it was written for private performance in court circles.[9]

The difficulty is in deciding just who is being alluded to and exactly where. Most of the extant theories are conveniently summarized in the Variorum, Arden and Cambridge editions and their details need not detain us. While admitting the possibility of such an occasion, even its probability, it seems unlikely that any logically satisfying proof will ever be mustered, and a polite skepticism is perhaps the best approach in general. The most important thing about the putative occasion, it seems to me, is also the most obvious: the sense of the type of fashionable audience which it indicates. Shakespeare appears to have written a certain kind of play for a certain kind of audience which enjoyed such plays, and we can work from this point, even if we can't explain

every single line in the play--no one else has, anyhow. At the least we can return our attention more directly to the play as we have it now.

Topical Allegory

Love's Labour's Lost is the darling of the Shakespearean lunatic fringe. The complexities of the play and its suggestions of topicality have given carte blanche to a wide range of imaginative speculations. Most of it centers about either of two embassies from France received by the real King of Navarre.[10] The first took place in 1578, when the Princess of France, Marguerite de Valois, visited Navarre. The second was in 1586, from Queen Catherine herself. One of these, possibly both, is said to have been the nominal "source" of Love's Labour's Lost, though little of the "source" beyond the names of some of the characters and the fact of the embassy itself is used in the play. Out of this modest beginning, vast theories have been constructed.

One of the few full-length works on the play, The Satirical Comedy Love's Labour's Lost (1933) by Eva Turner Clark, rapidly takes us through the looking-glass, when the author tells us that the play was written in 1578 and that,

> My own theory is that the writing of the plays was begun in 1576 by the young Earl of Oxford who, in that year, at the age of twenty-six, returned home after sixteen months of travel on the Continent.[11]

Miss Clark makes the following remarkable identifications: Ferdinand=Henry, King of Navarre. Berowne=Marchal de Biron.

Longaville=Henri d'Orleans, Duc de Longueville. Dumain=Duc du Maine. (English prototypes, including Burghley, Leicester, and Sidney are also linked with the four lords.) Armado=Don John of Austria. Sir Nathaniel=William of Nassau, Prince of Orange. Holofernes=Francois Hercules. Dull=Antonio de Guaras. The list continues, sad to say, for some time, ending in the purest realms of fantasy, with Jaquenetta=Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots!

Abel LeFranc, in Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare" (1919), argues less fantastically and more convincingly for the close parallels between the play and the events of 1578, but he, alas, is also trying to prove throughout his book that "William Shakespeare" was actually William Stanley, the sixth Earl of Derby. However, in another full-length work, Shakespeare's Early Contemporaries. The Background of the Harvey-Nashe Polemic and Love's Labour's Lost (1956), W. Schrickx believes that the fifth Earl of Derby, Ferdinando Stanley, is behind much of the topical satire in the play.

Warburton seems to have initiated this form of mania in his 1747 edition of the plays, when he suggested that Holofernes was John Florio, a translator of Montaigne, language teacher, and contemporary of Shakespeare.[12] Since then, Armado has been identified with the mad Monarcho of the late 1570s, with Lyly, Ralegh, and Gabriel Harvey. Holofernes, in addition to Florio, has been seen as the mathematician Harriot, Chapman, Richard Mulcaster, and Shakespeare's supposed schoolmaster, Thomas Hunt. Moth is either Nashe or a

French ambassador named La Mothe-Fenelon. And so on. Miss Yates, in her A Study of Love's Labour's Lost (1936), has seized on the convenient but still debatable reference to a "School of Night" (4.3.252), which is identified with Ralegh's "academy," termed in 1592 "Sir Walter Rauley's Schoole of Atheisme."[13] Miss Yates combines this identification with the supposed Nashe-Harvey references,[14] and concludes that,

> although there are no definite "portraits" of individuals in Love's Labour's Lost, it is full of allusions to contemporaries. The play is written against the "School of Night", but with the emphasis on Northumberland, rather than on Raleigh. In the four male characters are reflections of Raleigh and his friends and of Southampton and his friends, and also some vague memory of Bruno. The eyes of the ladies frequently recall the eyes of "Stella" and of her sister. The comic characters mirror, without losing their identities, the dependent "artists" of the "School of Night", Chapman, Hariot, and perhaps others, also Harvey and Nashe, and Eliot's joke against Florio and the foreign schoolmasters. Florio is most important in the play in all kinds of connections.[15]

And, oh yes, Costard's triumphant "honorificabilitudinitatibus" has been appropriated by the Baconians for its obvious anagrammatic potential. All rules of logic and evidence, quite obviously, find no place in this speculation.

What is to be done with all of this? Where is the dividing line between pure fantasy and rational possibility? Not all of the scholars mentioned above are equally absurd, to be sure; Miss Yates's book, for one, is more cautious than the others, and offers us a few useful insights into the play. But the habit persists, and it is the habit itself which is peculiarly associated with Love's Labour's Lost. Dr. Johnson's

reply to Warburton may be summoned up against all of these phantoms:

> I am not of the learned commentator's opinion, that the satire of Shakespeare is so seldom personal. It is of the nature of personal invectives to be soon unintelligible; and the author that gratifies private malice, animam in volnere ponit, destroys the future efficacy of his own writings, and sacrifices the esteem of succeeding times to the laughter of a day. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sarcasms which, perhaps, in the authour's time set the playhouse in a roar, are now lost among general reflections. Yet whether the character of Holofernes was pointed at any particular man, I am, notwithstanding the plausibility of Dr. Warburton's conjecture, inclined to doubt.[16]

But Johnson goes on to admit "a trick / Of the old rage" himself, as he felt Holofernes was modelled directly on Sidney's Rhombus. The wonder, to paraphrase Johnson in another context, is not that such things are done so poorly, but that they are done at all.

In any event, the durability of Love's Labour's Lost, its growing acceptance and popularity with audiences who have never heard of John Florio or Gabriel Harvey, testifies to the existence in it of sufficient and interesting virtues apart from its putative topical satire. It is with those virtues specifically, with some attention to the play's literary topicality, that this study will chiefly be concerned.

Critical History

We know from the title page of the 1598 Quarto that Love's Labour's Lost was performed for Elizabeth, and also that it was revived in 1604 for Queen Anne; at that time it was described

by Burbage, according to Cope, as "an olde one . . . which for wytt & mirthe he says will please her excedingly."[17] Robert Tofte, in 1598, also reports having seen a performance, but he was too concerned with himself and his mistress to tell us very much.[18] From this regal high point the play's reputation began a three-century plunge, from which it is only in the last thirty years recovering. The Addisonian disparagement of the pun hastened its decline. Dr. Johnson (whose full comment is quoted at the beginning of the next chapter) felt that it was extremely typical of Shakespeare, that it had brilliant flashes, but that as a whole it wouldn't do, and such salaciousness ought not to have been offered before a Virgin Queen anyhow.

Hazlitt began his remarks by saying, "If we were to part with any of the author's comedies, it should be this." But he went on to except from this judgment almost every character in the play, and eventually relents, "So that we believe we may let the whole play stand as it is."[19]

Coleridge, who believed Love's Labour's Lost was Shakespeare's first play, thought well enough of it:

> Yet if this juvenile drama had been the only one extant of our Shakespeare, and we possessed the tradition only of his riper works, or accounts from writers who had not even mentioned the Love's Labour's Lost, how many of Shakespeare's characteristic features might we not discover, tho' as in a portrait taken of him in his boyhood.[20]

Coleridge's comment takes away something at the same time, of course--Love's Labour's Lost is valued partly because of

its premonitions of later, "better" plays. But the play is not simply, as we shall see, a dress rehearsal for Much Ado or All's Well.

For a great while, then, the tendency of critics was either to dismiss the play as apprentice-work or to admire it as apprentice-work, both of which attitudes are condescending and unfair. All of the early plays have suffered from this attitude as well. Love's Labour's Lost is not King Lear, but it is no less interesting in its own way, and deserves better treatment than it has received.

Critics have generally found fault with one of two things in the play. The first of these is its complex language, to which the next chapter is devoted; the style and language are generally felt to be too clever, too convoluted, too difficult. The second area of complaint is aptly described in the words of the Epilogue to The Roaring Girl (1611):

> Some perhaps do flout
> The plot, saying; 'tis too thin, too weak, too mean.

With varying degrees of sophistication, the same thing is still repeated about Love's Labour's Lost. Rupert Taylor (1932), for example, notes that the play,

> makes little pretense to extensive plot. It really should not be considered a play in the same sense in which, say, Merchant of Venice is to be considered a play, with a well-connected plot and action. . . . A large part of Love's Labour's Lost was not intended to have much connection with a well-developed story. It is really an Elizabethan equivalent of the modern revue, and its chief concern is not with a narrative plot but with the things ridiculed, parodied, mocked, or otherwise reflected.[21]

H. B. Charlton (1938) borrows the same phrase, in a harsher

estimate of the play:

> Love's Labour's Lost is more like a modern revue, or a musical comedy without music, than a play. It is deficient in plot and in characterisation. There is little story in it. Its situations do not present successive incidents in an order plot. Holofernes and Nathaniel could drop out, and yet leave intact the story of the aristocratic lovers. So, too, Armado, although he is allowed to purchase a specious entry at the price of his moral character: his liaison with Jaquenetta brings him into the plot. Even Costard could disappear, for his employment as a bungling postman is a convenient rather than a necessary way of exposing Biron's misdemeanours; equally easily, a supernumerary with a staff could replace Constable Dull. There remain as essential persons for the conduct of the story only the king and his associates and the princess and her ladies.[22]

Baby, bath-water, bassinet--everything is thrown out the window here, all in the name of an ordered plot. The mind boggles at that "supernumerary with a staff." James L. Calderwood (1965) looks at the same basic phenomenon from a much more interesting angle:

> The evolution of action and plot is reduced to a series of verbal events: vows made and broken, games of wit and wordplay, penned speeches, songs, epistolary sonnets, and finally "sentences" pronounced upon the scholars by the ladies. . . . The play seems almost an experiment in seeing how well language, spun into intricate, ornate, but static patterns, can substitute for the kinetic thrust of action in drama.[23]

A number of critics, then, have noted the apparent lack of a well-ordered plot of causal connections--the device of the disputed debt is not, in their eyes, much of an impetus, and nothing much is ever done with it. All of which is quite true. The trouble is that this descriptive statement is usually also a sub rosa normative statement, and Love's Labour's Lost is, once again, condemned for not being what it does not

try to be. This sort of criticism, by critics still seeing through exclusively neo-Aristotelian filters, has not illuminated but has rather belittled the play. The interesting thing is precisely that Shakespeare appears to be trying something new in Love's Labour's Lost. In contrast with Errors, Two Gentlemen, and Shrew, he does not in this play take over a familiar dramatic model with a highly patterned plot, but experiments with quite a different structure.

The play has not totally lacked for sympathetic friends. Granville-Barker had many reservations about it, but he did write a preface to it, and perceptively noted that "it asks for style in the acting. The whole play, first and last, demands style."[24] Geoffrey Bullough called it "an intellectual fantasy, the nearest to a play of ideas that Shakespeare ever wrote, except perhaps Troilus and Cressida."[25] In this spirit, and especially since a fine article on the play by Bobbyann Roesen in 1953,[26] recent critics have been more generous and hence more helpful, though traces of the old disdain are still heard.

All of the early plays share a common liability in their earliness. "Maturity" is not generally allowed to Shakespeare until some indefinite time around Dream, sometimes not even then. To call Love's Labour's Lost "apprentice" work is the critical kiss of death. It and the other plays really deserve to be measured on their own. Apprentice he may have been, but the best evidence indicates that Shakespeare was 29 or 30 years old when he wrote this play, hardly a callow youth warbling

untutored woodnotes. A. C. Hamilton has suggested a more fruitful approach to the early Shakespeare:

> Presumably, he was incapable of writing Lear in 1590; yet the apparent fact is that he did not try. He seems not to have attempted what he could not succeed in doing. It appears worthwhile, then, to explore the hypothesis that each of the early works is perfect in its kind. I see the early Shakespeare as a sophisticated literary craftsman.[27]

"Sophisticated" is the key word here, and it is from such an assumption that this study proceeds.

The Place of the Play

One of our tasks will be to try to place the play in relation to the other early plays, chiefly the comedies. It appears to me to be a play of pivotal importance, a radical departure from the three earlier comedies, all of which imitated some pre-existing dramatic model. Love's Labour's Lost is exploratory, almost experimental, and its concern with the nature of poetry and the imagination link it in some ways more closely to A Midsummer Night's Dream than to the earlier plays. There are dissenters from this conception of Shakespeare's development, as we would expect. Charlton, for example, still thinking chiefly in terms of plot, feels that,

> Love's Labour's Lost has small importance in establishing the line along which Shakespeare's comic genius grew. Its value is rather biographical. It lies mainly in what is revealed of Shakespeare's gifts, of his interests and of his aptitudes when he first thrust himself onto the London stage.[28]

This is now an isolated opinion, and just as we no longer see

the play as "biographical" in this sense, so we no longer believe it to be Shakespeare's first play, but rather his third or (probably) fourth comedy.

The first chapter of this study will discuss at some length the play's literary topicality: its place in the historical development of the language itself, its place in stylistic evolution, its implicit attitude toward what had gone before it. A later chapter will discuss structural (as distinct from "plot") innovations, particularly the habitual use of schematic dualisms. The play's affinities with Dream will become obvious.

Critical Approach

Love's Labour's Lost has in the past been subjected chiefly either to a microscopic or to a telescopic view. Typical of the first approach is T. W. Baldwin's William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke (1944), a very useful study which explains any number of allusions in investigating Shakespeare's probable education and knowledge of the classics. Typical of the telescopic approach is any of several books on all or most of Shakespeare's comedies, one chapter of which is devoted to each play. C. L. Barber's study of Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (1959) is the finest example of this, and his chapter on Love's Labour's Lost is still the best writing on the play. The problem with these lengthier studies, however, is that the particular flavor, the finer nuances, of the play are often lost in the study of the larger

common patterns. H. B. Charlton's study is an example of the worst kind of "pattern" distortion, while Northrop Frye's approach exemplifies a much more fruitful but still confining perspective.

In any case, it seems to me that a more eclectic and less doctrinaire approach from a kind of middle distance is necessary, a close reading of the entire play with an eye toward the larger patterns it is concerned with, and its relation to Shakespeare's development as a dramatist. Recent articles by Greene, Westlund, Calderwood, McLay, and Agnew, among others, have begun on this track.

I believe Love's Labour's Lost can profitably be read as a débat on the right use of rhetoric, poetry, and the imagination, the play being to a certain extent self-referential and, in the last songs, finally exemplifying what has only been discussed before. The term débat is justified by Shakespeare's use of the medieval conflictus between Spring and Winter at the end, but it also suggests a principle of structure of the play as well. We shall find that one of the most typical methods of structuring a speech or an entire scene is through a juxtaposition of opposites, a kind of literary counterpoint, usually in the form of obvious dualisms, such as Spring and Winter, or Nature and Art; a recurring "concentric circle" structure, as in the sonnet-reading scene, is a more complex form of the dualisms. There may be three, four, even five different levels, each more inclusive than the previous one, instead of just two logical opposites.

We might, in fact, take this image of concentric circles as a controlling metaphor of structure: a dual or multiple-level situation is asserted and its implications worked out only to be subverted at some later point. Each chapter will illustrate this principle further, but it is useful now to emphasize it as a metaphor for the shape of the entire play.

Six chapters will each focus closely on a separate aspect of the play, while at the same time attempting to forward the debate on poetry and the imagination. The first chapter concentrates on the language and style of the play, beginning with a brief survey of the play's place in linguistic history. The attitudes and styles of speaking of the six low characters, who form a small commedia dell'arte troupe, are closely examined. The play suggests a wide range of potential attitudes, from a view of words as symbols for things to words as entities in themselves. For the poet, the primacy of the word is seen as foremost, but there are other, conflicting demands on him at the same time.

The second chapter concentrates on different theatrical styles exemplified in the play, and in particular on three scenes which have the status of obvious metaphors for the play as a whole, plays-within-the-play. These are the sonnet-reading scene (4.3), the Masque of Muscovites (5.2), and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies (5.2). We shall see in each of these scenes a sophisticated use of the principle of concentric circles of awareness, of the juxtaposition of opposites, all of which appears aimed at educating or train-

ing the audience in certain kinds of aesthetic response. There is no clearer example of the play's self-consciousness and concern for its own structure than these scenes.

A third chapter considers, through the several poet-figures, the examples of "poetry" within the play. The different levels of imagination are examined in the fourth chapter, from the erratic phantasy of Armado, to the mere cleverness of Boyet, to the genuine transforming power of Berowne at his best. The chapter also considers the idea of transformation as a unifying theme for the entire play, from the legendary great men transformed by love to the heightened sensibilities of the lover-poets here, with the final analogy to the power of art to transform "reality."

The fifth chapter concentrates on the structural composition of the play as a whole, especially the use of the "concentric circle" as a shaping pattern. One of the special cases of this pattern is the traditional Art-Nature dualism, a concern which dominates Love's Labour's Lost in imagery, language, and rhetoric. It will become evident that such dualisms are continually being dissolved and qualified, just as the schematic device of the concentric circles of awareness is no sooner affirmed than it collapses.

The study concludes, in the sixth chapter, with a consideration of the final songs, the dialogue between Spring and Winter. They may be seen, not only as the finest poetry in the entire play, but as an emblem for that dialectical blend between Art and Nature only theoretically debated else-

where, the purest example of "praise" and verse in the play --in short, the definition or example towards which the play's debate had all along been moving. The debate on poetry and the imagination is not resolved by logic or theory, just as there is never a clear-cut victor in the *conflictus* between Spring and Winter. Rather, the formal *débat* itself is the resolution, the exemplum and triumph, of the issues and concerns of the rest of the play. It is the final evidence of Shakespeare's sophistication and craft, a virtuoso and convincing coda. The songs of Apollo are indeed sweet after the words of Mercury.

Notes to Introduction

[1]Fifth Edition (London, 1956). See the Arden and Cambridge, ed. John Dover Wilson, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1962), discussions for further textual matters. Quotations from the rest of Shakespeare's plays and poetry are from The Complete Pelican Shakespeare, General Editor, Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, 1969). When quoting from other sources, I have when appropriate silently altered "u" to "v," "v" to "u," "vv" to "w," and "-" to "n."

[2]For a full discussion of this famous problem, see the summaries in the Arden (pp. xxi-xxiii) and Cambridge (pp. 116-24) editions, and H. B. Charlton's pivotal article in The Library, 8 (1917), p. 355. An alternative and much less probable solution to this problem was offered by H. D. Gray, The Original Version of "Love's Labour's Lost" (Stanford, 1918).

[3]Arden, pp. xxxi-xxxii; Cambridge, pp. xxi-xxii, 124-6.

[4]E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare (2 vols. Oxford, 1930), I, 334.

[5]Frances A. Yates, A Study of Love's Labour's Lost (Cambridge, 1936), p. 2.

[6]Chambers, I, 335.

[7]Gray, p. 15.

[8]Chambers, II, 332.

[9]Arden, p. 1; David also discusses A. K. Gray's article, "The Secret of Love's Labour's Lost," PMLA, xxxix (Sept., 1924), 581-611.

[10]See Arden discussion, pp. xxxii-xxxvi.

[11]Eva Turner Clark, The Satirical Comedy Love's Labour's Lost (New York, 1933), p. 11.

[12]For a partial listing of other nominations, see Chambers, I, 337, the discussions in the Arden and Cambridge editions, and especially the New Variorum edition, edited by H. H. Furness (New York, 1964; rpt. of 3rd ed., 1904).

[13]Arden, pp. xliv-xlvi.

[14]See the Arden summary, pp. xxxix-xliv.

[15]Yates, p. 26.

[16]Walter Raleigh, ed., Johnson on Shakespeare (London, 1925), p. 87.

[17]Chambers, II, 332.

[18]Variorum, pp. 329-30.

[19]Variorum, p. 357.

[20]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespearean Criticism, ed. T. M. Raysor (2 vols. London, 1960), I, 83.

[21]Rupert Taylor, The Date of Love's Labour's Lost (New York, 1932), p. 70.

[22]H. B. Charlton, Shakespearian Comedy (London, 1938), p. 270.

[23]James L. Calderwood, "Love's Labour's Lost: A Wantoning with Words," SEL, V (Spring, 1965), p. 329.

[24]Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare (2 vols. Princeton, 1947), II, 423.

[25]Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare (6 vols. New York, 1961), I, 427.

[26]Bobbyann Roesen, "Love's Labour's Lost," Shakespeare Quarterly, 4 (October, 1953), 411-26.

[27]A. C. Hamilton, The Early Shakespeare (San Marino, Calif., 1967), p. 5.

[28]Charlton, p. 270.

CHAPTER I

SWEET SMOKE OF RHETORIC

> Suffer not our Shakespear, and our Milton, to become two or three centuries hence what Chaucer is at present, the study only of a few poring antiquarians, and in an age or two more the victims of bookworms.
>
> Thomas Sheridan, British Education, 1756.

To the lamentably small degree that Love's Labour's Lost has escaped the general fate of Shakespearean drama feared by Sheridan, credit must be given to those very elements which, paradoxically, make the play so difficult today: the great energy of its language and style. The play is a virtuoso performance, with all stops pulled out. It suddenly seems that Shakespeare can and will do anything with words. Dr. Johnson's comment is revealing, as usual, and represents a fairly typical first reaction to the play's language:

> In this play, which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of our Poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages mean, childish, and vulgar; and some which ought not to have been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden queen. But there are scattered, through the whole, many sparks of genius; nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of Shakespeare.[1]

The style of the play, the uses of language in it, clearly excited Johnson, and seemed especially typical of Shakespeare; the style also excited, however, a condemnation of excesses,

an almost moral judgment that a too great preoccupation with words rather than things was both dangerous and reprehensible. In the Preface, Johnson made the analogy to a "fatal" Cleopatra. Similar comments are still heard. "Entrancing as the play may be to anyone who is himself touched with its trouble," one recent critic notes,

> the compulsiveness of the play's logosophy may still strike him as somewhat neurotic. To others, such an impression may seem anachronistic and certainly over-solemn. But that it is not altogether malapropos, and even that linguistic disease may be an intended motif of the play, may be supported by some Elizabethan opinions on Elizabethan linguistic fashions, and by Shakespeare's own words.[2]

The play's obscurities and its satire on obscurities, then, have always made it a fascinating but frustrating critical problem. It has often been a success on the stage, and seems to be produced now more than ever; audiences which have been unable to decipher every pun (who could?) have thoroughly enjoyed it. This suggests that critics may have been partially misled by even more "fatal" preoccupations of their own; at the least, it may prove useful to examine the play from some middle distance, since neither the microscopic nor the broadly general approaches have much illuminated its style and special texture.

To begin with, one must emphasize styles rather than a single style. It is often remarked that Love's Labour's Lost is "a parody of Euphuism."[3] The inadequacy of this kind of generalization is evident by glancing at the variety of almost any page of the play--euphuism is certainly parodied,

but so too are Arcadianism, Petrarchanism, sonneteering, current lesser known court fashions, inkhornism, Nashe's idiosyncratic pamphlets, and whatever species of style it may be said Gabriel Harvey produced. There is truly an embarrassment of riches here. The "theme" of the play has been not inaccurately described as "the overwhelming event of the English language and all that had been happening to it in the last twenty years or so."[4]

Theories of style and language inevitably suggest theories of poetry and art, and there is a great deal of talk in the play about what makes a good poem and a good play. A direct discussion of these issues will be postponed to later chapters; the task at hand here is to look more closely at the various styles and parodies of style, and at general attitudes toward language expressed or exemplified in the play.

We might begin by glancing at those "last twenty years or so" before the putative composition date of Love's Labour's Lost. The history of this period of the language has been very thoroughly documented in a number of places.[5] Suffice it to say that Shakespeare was the right man at the right time. The real potentials of the language were just being explored, many important battles for the vernacular had been won by the 1580s, and the vocabulary had been significantly expanded. The English language was beginning to be taken seriously, by the English at least, though Bacon, hedging his bets, elected to preserve his thought in the traditional amber of Latin as well as English. Perhaps most important of

all, native writers, in the 1580s and early 1590s, had begun to write in individual, often experimental styles.

Sidney was, of course, master of an elegant prose style, and his influence was widespread. In a noisier and more boisterous fashion, Martin Marprelate and friends had demonstrated some flashy and effective mannerisms, and the seed of invention had been planted and precociously sprouted in that "gallant young Iuvenall," as Meres put it, Tom Nashe.[6] The sheer number and variety, during these twenty years, of poets, dramatists, sonneteers, controversialists, pamphleteers, emblematists, biographers, and historians, ranging from poetaster and hack to genius, from aristocratic amateurs to professional playwrights in questionable parts of town, from (perhaps most dramatic of all) Nashe and Greene to Sidney and Spenser, all of them thriving and producing at the same time--this variety gave a tremendous impetus to the exploration and development of the language. Affected and excessive drivel and sublime genius were alike snapped up and read by an eager and rapidly maturing public. The Nashe-Harvey flyting conveniently symbolizes the energy (with more than a hint of anarchy) informing the language at this time.

The period c. 1592-6 seems to have been an especially significant one in the development of the language. Pierce Penilesse, for example, appeared in 1592, Greene died in the same year, and the Nashe-Harvey quarrel began to heat up. Midas, another of Lyly's exquisite prose plays, appeared in the same year (following by one year Endimion). Marlowe's

blazing star had already made its appearance, and all of his plays, with the possible exception of Dr. Faustus, had appeared by 1592. The language was never the same after Marlowe, and his final creation, Faustus, learns among other things the magical, even deadly power of words in the form of oaths, curses, and invocations.

New forms were opening up, old ones developed. Jonas Barish describes one which includes Love's Labour's Lost:

> By a parallel process that may be more than coincidence, prose and linguistic satire flourish and collapse together in Elizabethan drama. The flowering time lasts roughly from 1595 to 1614, or from Armado and Holofernes to Adam Overdo and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy.[7]

M. C. Bradbrook has described three phases to the development of learned comedy,

> which roughly correspond to a general development of the language itself. First comes the practical work of schoolmasters and students of language, in academic plays which are half disputes and half farce, but where the drama is closely related to educational ends, linguistic or moral. Then in the eighties comes the period of innovation and experiment by poets in general, represented in the comedy by the virtuosity of Lyly. Finally the free work of the nineties, when the 'high style' of the eloquent is both practised and mocked, when instead of following a single prescription, dramatists were able to produce special effects for a special audience.[8]

G. D. Willcock echoes this description, and concludes, "The more closely we look into the dying sixteenth century, the more sensitive we make our register of its vicissitudes, the more clearly we see from all angles that the years 1595-6 are crucial years."[9] It is quite relevant, then, that the

probable dates of composition of Love's Labour's Lost are 1593-4, with some revision later, probably 1595-7.[10] There is considerable topical point in the linguistic satire and parody; the play seems to have been written at or near a turning point in the development of the language, and to have reflected that turning point.

Love's Labour's Lost is also suggestive as a turning point of some importance in the development of the Shakespearean canon. The play is in almost every way unique in comparison with the other early plays--in its attitude towards and use of language, in its lack of a classically defined plot, in its lack of obvious sources and classical models, in its very topicality. The various Arden editors conclude that The Comedy of Errors and The Two Gentlemen of Verona were earlier than Love's Labour's Lost, and the accepted dating of The Taming of the Shrew places it at roughly the same time, probably earlier.[11] Intuition is in accord with the scholars. Love's Labour's Lost seems more sophisticated than these other comedies, yet less successful and less mature than A Midsummer Night's Dream, usually dated 1595. It feels right to see Love's Labour's Lost as the fourth of the comedies, representing an important stage before the first wholly mature and successful of the comedies. In terms of language and style, this play appears to go far beyond anything attempted in the earlier comedies, but it is not as consistently effective as Dream.

Style is of such central importance to Love's Labour's

Lost that even the characters in the play discuss it. The following passage occurs after Dull has entered with Costard, bearing a letter with him at the same time:

> King. A letter from the magnificent Armado.
> Berowne. How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words.
> Longa. A high hope for a low heaven: God grant us patience!
> Berowne. To hear? or forbear hearing?
> Longa. To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately; or to forbear both.
> Berowne. Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause to climb in the merriness.
> Costard. The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta.
> (1.1.189-99)

Later in the play, after listening to the second of Armado's letters, there is this exchange,

> Boyet. I am much deceiv'd but I remember the style.
> Princess. Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile.
> (4.1.95-6)

The pun style-stile as used here is particularly appropriate in describing Armado.[12] As the first quotation makes clear, the men are expecting linguistic indecorum from Armado's letter: "high words," the highest style, no matter how "low" the subject "matter." This is exactly what is heard in each letter, and it is both times richly comic. The pun is also interesting because it makes something physical of a theoretical mode, something which has to be scaled or descended, even a possible hurdle for the audience. It is now something to be "gone over," as the Princess puts it, and in so doing it will cause us to "climb" in the merriness.

It is a good description of the use of style and language

throughout the play; rampant linguistic excesses and abuses are comic, sometimes with more serious overtones. As in the epigram about the fly and the hammer, high style is often used to commit rhetorical overkill. Conversely, there is a strong reductive counter-strain in the play, usually represented by Costard or the series of "greasy" sexual puns and innuendoes, which subvert decorum from the other direction: low words for high(er) matter. As in the plays of Ben Jonson, linguistic characteristics are often identical with dramatic character, though the link is never so firm here as it usually is in Jonson. All of this is possible only because of a tacit understanding and bond with the audience; the humor of excess derives from a common knowledge of the mean. The fact that audiences today still find these passages funny for the same reasons is perhaps an indication that the doctrine of the three levels of style and the theory of decorum associated with them still survive in some skeletal form. The audience need not wholly accept this theory, but it must know it.

The certainty displayed in the lords' anticipation of the language of Armado is not often possible in Love's Labour's Lost. Perhaps the central fact about language in the play is its radical instability. Words and their meanings are transmuted, subverted, even totally reversed through puns, wit-play, and simple misunderstandings. It is a frankly and self-consciously exploratory play, and the chief means of exploration and unsettling norms, of defeating our settled

expectations, is through the dislocation of language and the subversion of style and decorum. A number of benefits are attendant on this instability. There is a tremendous freedom in creation, to begin with; even the lowest and dullest characters can consider themselves wordsmiths, can coin phrases and riddles. Berowne at times seems to soar into an autonomous region of pure invention and association, following his imagination and the sounds of words wherever they lead him. Once again the play appears accurately to mirror the historical development of the language itself. A. C. Baugh points out that in the Renaissance, English

> was much more plastic than now. Men felt freer to mould it to their wills. Words had not always distributed themselves into rigid grammatical categories. Adjectives appear as adverbs, or nouns, or verbs, nouns as verbs,--in fact, any part of speech as almost any other part.[13]

This plasticity is fully evident in Love's Labour's Lost. There is an exhilaration throughout the play, a sheer delight in freedom and manipulation, a concern for and love of words in themselves, distantly akin to Joyce or Nabokov.

There is a negative corollary to this instability and freedom, which the play does not avoid; it is made clear that linguistic solipsism sometimes defeats communication, and that the social order depends to a large extent on shared understandings of words. A comment by Sigurd Burckhardt on this problem is most suggestive, and I will quote it at some length:

> The pun is one--I would say the second most primitive--way of divesting a word of its meaning. Where

> writers find so primitive a method especially appealing, we may suspect that they feel the need to create a true medium, and so to rebel against a token language, with particular intensity. . . . The pun gives the word as entity primacy over the word as sign.
>
> In doing so it gives the lie direct to the social convention that is language. Punning fell into disrepute in the eighteenth century and has only recently recovered its poetic respectability. Is not perhaps the reason that it is, by its very directness, revolutionary and anarchic? It denies the meaningfulness of words and so calls into question the genuineness of the linguistic currency on which the social order depends. It makes us aware that words may be counterfeits.[14]

C. L. Barber describes the liberating (subversive) effect of the witty pun in similar terms:

> When wit flows happily, it is as though the resistance of the objective world had suddenly given way. One keeps taking words from "outside," from the world of other systems or orders, and making them one's own, making them serve one's meaning as they form in one's mouth.[15]

It is important to realize that both the spirit of liberation and exhilaration and the spirit of judgment and social decorum are simultaneously present in the play; both voices find expression throughout. The standard reading of Love's Labour's Lost today tends to emphasize the latter of the two voices over the former, and to conclude with the more somber tones of judgment, as heard in the final scene. In an essay derivative from Barber, James L. Calderwood comments,

> As the characters move toward a vision of language as an instrument, not of self-expression nor of social attack, but of social communion, so the play as a whole moves through lyric and satire toward the comic vision which reconciles both. For the comic form of literary experience leads toward the acceptance of the isolated individual into a society purged of harshness and discord.[16]

That the poet often thrives on the boundaries of society, in his own isolation, as well as in its center, is too often forgotten in such "social" criticism. The liberty of language, once felt and experienced, whether heard on a stage or written in private, is never wholly forgotten, never finally "put in its place." The dualism as expressed by Calderwood continually breaks down, and Love's Labour's Lost reflects throughout, not the final victory of the one voice over the other, but the creative tension between them, the dominance of one voice immediately being subverted and qualified by the other.

One of the ways in which the play questions its own statements and subverts fixed meanings is by repetition of key words in different contexts with different meanings; the pun in this case becomes a wholly justified and serious poetic tool. An example of this may be seen in the use of the word "fame." The play opens with these impressive lines:

> Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
> Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,
> And then grace us in the disgrace of death.
> (1.1.1-3)

It is a noble sentiment, and we perhaps think of various legendary heroes who have achieved some form of immortality. We may pause at the self-conscious cleverness of the "grace-disgrace" line, but the audience would undoubtedly have approved of the ideas expressed here, and again later when the idea of the "academe" is mentioned.[17] Our first impression is thus generally favorable.

As we learn more about the men, however, as we learn of the triviality and foolishness of their gesture, we may notice also a similar trivializing of the concept of "fame." Berowne says,

> These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
> That give a name to every fixed star,
> Have no more profit of their shining nights
> Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
> Too much to know is to know nought but fame:
> And every godfather can give a name.
> (1.1.88-93)

"Fame" here is more nearly "report" or "rumor." Either they know only what other authorities have said in books, or they know so much that they have achieved a reputation. In either case, the "fame" of line one is denigrated slightly. In Act Two, the Princess inquires after the men:

> . . . good Boyet,
> You are not ignorant all-telling fame
> Doth noise abroad Navarre hath made a vow.
> (2.1.20-2)

Again, "fame" is simply rumor, as in the prologue to II Henry IV, "full of tongues," making "noise." Finally, in Act Four, the Princess delivers what must be considered a direct reply to Navarre's opening speech:

> And out of question so it is sometimes,
> Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,
> When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,
> We bend to that the working of the heart.
> (4.1.30-3)

Spurning the ease of false praise, the Princess demonstrates that her vainglory is considerably less than that of the men; "fame" in this last occurrence seems almost cheap, and we have long since recognized the equivalent value in the men's

scheme. In the final act the image becomes physically grotesque, when Rosaline tells Berowne,

> the world's large tongue
> Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks.
> (5.2.832-3)

The course of the word "fame" in the play parallels our recognition of the men's foolishness.

The use of the term "light" in the play nearly defies description--there are twenty-four separate occurrences, the most famous of which occur in a single dazzling passage stuffed with puns and lightning-quick associations. The King has replied to Berowne's quibbling that

> These be the stops that hinder study quite,
> And train our intellects to vain delight.

Berowne replies,

> Why! all delights are vain, but that most vain,
> Which with pain purchas'd doth inherit pain:
> As, painfully to pore upon a book
> To seek the light of truth; while truth the while
> Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look:
> Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
> So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
> Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
> Study me how to please the eye indeed,
> By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
> Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed,
> And give him light that it was blinded by.
> (1.1.72-83)

"How well he's read," remarks Navarre when the passage is finally completed after another ten lines of the same sort of thing. The effect is hypnotic: the heavy use of alliteration, the repetition of terms within a single line (vain-vain, pain-pain, truth-truth, light-light), the careful use of chiasmus in lines 71-2 and 78-9, the balancing effect of

line against line, the driving rhythm. If we are particularly acute listeners, we may even notice that the last fourteen lines (80-93) of the twenty-two line passage form--what else?--a sonnet. Aside from the sheer ingenuity of the passage and the liveliness of the wit (much admired by the other academics), we might notice particularly the attitude towards language as sound in it. The physical qualities of the words are nearly primary--delight-light, vain-pain, and so on. As the puns depend on the physical attributes of a word, the aural interrelationships within lines and sentences, they tend, in Burckhardt's phrase, to

> corporealize language, because any device which interposes itself between words and their supposedly simple meanings calls attention to the words as things.[18]

The effect of this use of language in the play is to create, as Calderwood phrases it,

> verbal relations that are in themselves aesthetically pleasing, to create a "great feast of languages" where everyone banquets in a spirit of joyful community.[19]

One must counter this idea of "community," though, with the self-sufficiency and autonomy of Berowne in his special verbal universe.

It is important to notice, too, that the "light" passage is not non-sense, that every pun is functional and can be related to a significant idea or passage in the rest of the play if we work hard enough. Berowne's true genius lies as much in the transforming power of his wit as in his ability simply to manipulate sounds. M. M. Mahood, for example,

after considering the range of meanings of "light" ("at least ten") in the play, concludes that,

> the word's range of meaning, between levity and sparkle on the one hand and intellect or even sagacity on the other, is expressive of a dramatic contrast or conflict.[20]

One of the most extravagant examples of wit and verbal licentiousness is to be found, appropriately enough, in the use of the word "wit." There are some 47 occurrences of "wit," "wits," and "witty" in the play; if not a record, still impressive. The meanings range from "joke" or "witticism" to "intellect" and the "imagination"; Ellis has even suggested an obscene connotation.[21]

Alongside of Berowne's "light" speech we might set for comparison another which relies even more heavily on sound, Holofernes's extemporal epitaph:

> The preyful princess pierc'd and prick'd a
> pretty pleasing pricket;
> Some say a sore; but not a sore, till now
> made sore with shooting.
> The dogs did yell; put 'ell to sore, then
> sorel jumps from thicket;
> Or pricket sore, or else sore'll the people
> fall a-hooting.
> If sore be sore, then 'ell to sore makes
> fifty sores--O--sorel!
> Of one sore I an hundred make, by adding
> but one more l.
> (4.2.57-62)

A "rare talent" which can "claw," we are told. It is this sort of thing, and its analogies with the other speeches, which usually prompts disgust for the play. There are a number of disturbing similarities between Berowne's speech and Holofernes's lines, and the difference between them seems to

be one of degree and not of kind. One would be hard put to find the exact dividing line, but most of us would probably agree that Berowne's speech, though quite affected, is less extravagant, more relevant to the play and, in the fruitful complexity of its puns, more truly imaginative than Holofernes's poem. Berowne's great "Promethean fire" speech, usually singled out as the finest "poetry" in the play, is not so different from his "light" speech in many ways. In all three of the speeches mentioned, at any rate, there is a common attitude towards words: they have a physical existence and it is a sign of great "wit" to use the sounds in as many ways as possible. If this seems trivial, as it does with Holofernes, it can also be magnificent, as in the complexities of the "Promethean fire" speech. The difference, we may say, is not between different attitudes toward words, but between the quality and conditions of the minds which are using those words; that is, between true wit and false wit. The available devices are the same.

Many nineteenth century critics of the play, such as W. W. Lloyd, felt that there was little true wit of any sort in the play:

> In truth, there seems, to a reader of the present day, to be the essential weakness in the execution of the play, that it contains too much of the very faults it would expose; he becomes weary of the quaint verbalism, the strained affectation of phraseological acuteness, etc.[22]

Lloyd exemplifies what he criticizes, but Hazlitt described the effect better and more colorfully:

> It is as if the hand of Titian had been employed to give grace to the curls of a full-bottomed periwig, or Raphael had attempted to give expression to the tapestry figures in the House of Lords.[23]

Shakespeare, nevertheless, appears to have distinguished between more and less legitimate forms and displays of wit, and it is worth looking more closely into this. Attitudes toward language must be closely linked with any theory of wit, wit is the mother of invention, and invention (imagination), as we shall see later, is the father of poetry.

Before we attempt to judge Shakespeare, however, and to distinguish his alleged narcissism from that of his parody, it will prove useful to examine the handy examples of unquestionably false wit provided by the play itself--the six low comic characters.

The Commedia dell'Arte Troupe

> Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech.
> Ben Jonson, Timber[24]

It is, to begin with, especially appropriate that a great bulk of the linguistic satire in the play emanates from the "low" characters who form, in effect, a small commedia dell'arte troupe somewhat distinct from the courtly figures of the rest of the play.[25] Berowne once refers to Boyet as

> Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany
> (5.2.463)

and Shakespeare shows in several other plays a thorough familiarity with the terms, stock figures, and scenarios of the commedia. The key reference in Love's Labour's Lost to the low figures occurs when the King and Berowne are engaged in one of several strange disputes in the play about numbers and addition; Berowne insists that there are five, not four actors in the Pageant of the Nine Worthies and, since Dull has by this time dropped out of the play, the original six low characters are in fact now five. He lists the familiar stock types:

> The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool, and the boy.
> (5.2.536-7)

It is also of note that the Quarto uses commedia "type" names for several of the speech ascriptions: Armado is "Braggart," Moth is "Page" and "Boy," Costard is "Clown," Dull is "Constable," Holofernes is "Pedant," and Nathaniel is "Curate." This may or may not be evidence of revision, but it is certainly evidence of the probable origin (or one of them) of these characters.

A standard feature of all commedia humor was linguistic satire of all sorts. In a typical company,

> Most of the characters were supposed to be natives of a particular city and spoke the local dialect. Pantalone was a Venetian merchant; the dottore, a native of Bologna; Arlecchino and Brighella hailed from Bergamo; Scaramuccia and Pulcinella were sons of Naples. The babble of dialects only heightened the farcical elements of the play.[26]

Verbal lazzi, quick-witted pages, slow-witted rustics, dottores spouting macaronic Latin in comic dialects: Shakespeare

had a ready-made background against which to work with his own little troupe and create an unique babble of voices. It is difficult to resist finding a pun in "The Nine Wordies."

In any event, with respect to language, the troupe represents another trouvee transformed into something peculiarly Shakespearean.

Anthony Dull: A Constable

"Silence is Golden"

We may as well begin at the bottom. Like lampblack, Dull absorbs light without reflecting any. All of the verbal ammunition in the play makes little impact on him, save in 4.2 when he tries his tired old riddle on Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel. Unfamiliar with the string of synonyms offered up by Holofernes, the solution is finally explained to him. For some reason, Armado commends Dull as "a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation." (1.1.257) His main function in the play, however, seems to be to serve as a reminder to us that silence has its virtues. He is an unreflecting mirror of the verbal pyrotechnics, a mute in Babel. One imagines him standing with his mouth open through most of the play; he stands completely silent through the first 144 lines of Act Five, Scene One, and when Holofernes notices and says, "thou hast spoken no word all this while," Dull answers for many of us, "Nor understood none neither, sir."[27] Nevertheless, he is willing to take part in the fun and offers to "make one in a dance, or so; or I will play on

the tabor to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay." (5.1.147-9)

Dull's name, as indicated, is self-defining (like Bottom in Dream). His share of the linguistic fun is necessarily a small one--"he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book./ He hath not eat paper," we are told by Sir Nathaniel. (4.2.24-5) Aside from his reticence, Dull is noted also for his malapropisms, the first of a series of such Shakespearean characters, best exemplified in Dogberry. The tradition of such mis-taking characters in English comedy did not begin with Shakespeare, but there were few predecessors. According to R. F. Hill,

> T. M. Parrott has pointed out that both Respublica (1553) and Misogonus (c. 1560) contain numerous malapropisms, and that in the latter especially the device is not peculiar to one actor and was evidently used by the author to provoke laughter.[28]

O. J. Campbell points out that Dull has a prototype in the commedia, and that the stupid magistrate was one of Francesco Andreini's favorite roles.[29] Dull certainly belongs in this play, at any rate, along with the similarly mis-taking Costard, and we can perhaps forgive him many of his howlers. Words are tricky things, after all, and they slip through one's mouth all too easily.

Dull has difficulty pronouncing "Armado" at 1.1.186, and has "reprehend" for "represent" at 1.1.182. In 4.2, he displays a dogged literal-mindedness which suggests a very primitive approach to language. He apparently hears Holofernes's "haud credo" as "awd (old) grey doe," (4.2.11n.)

and insists throughout the rest of the scene that what was seen was a pricket. He is quite correct. What is interesting about his error is that Dull is revealed as one of the very few characters in the play who cannot understand or even conceive of a pun, much less a foreign language. Dull knows only one language: a native Anglo-Saxon. He is occasionally capable of a Latinate "commends," but the effort appears to exhaust him, and he falls back in disarray before "Dictynna . . . Phoebe . . . Luna." (4.2.36-8) All sounds, in whatever language, are translated into English. The inability to hear puns or to grasp the principle of synonymy (Holofernes's favorite figure), in which there is more than one sound attached to an object, places Dull in a special category: he represents the worst kind of audience, the one which cannot follow wit (a word which Dull uses only once in the play). His speech represents language at its most primitive, we should say, where each object has only one word attached to it, and words can have only one meaning.

Because his attitudes are primitive they are not necessarily wrong, however. In fact, Dull is usually correct about the facts involved. It <u>was</u> a pricket, it was the moon. He is occasionally a breath of earthy fresh air in an overheated scene. Perhaps his (unintentionally) wittiest moment comes after he has sprung his riddle, and Holofernes solves it, saying,

> The allusion holds in the exchange.
> <u>Dull</u>. 'Tis true indeed: the collusion holds
> in the exchange.

Hol. God comfort thy capacity! I say the allusion holds in the exchange.
Dull. And I say the pollution holds in the exchange . . . (4.2.42-5)

Everyone is right. The "pollution" of language remains remarkably constant, and this is one of the best examples of Dull's manipulation of strange (usually Latinate) sounds. There is a "collusion" between everyone in the play which leads to endless complications, as here. Yet it is important to notice that Dull is, again, essentially correct. Holofernes's "allusion" means, broadly, "pun" or "riddle" while "exchange" refers to the substitution of the name of Adam for that of Cain. (4.2.42n.) "Collusion," which follows, is not nonsense, though; the O.E.D. defines one meaning as "a trick or ambiguity, in words or reasoning." Literally, then, the "pollution" has held in the "exchange"--the passage is also self-referential. This is the way of language in Love's Labour's Lost.

Dull is unaware of all of this. Enough for him that it was, in fact, a pricket shot by the Princess. He remains an extremely minor but likable character, perhaps because so much of the audience must share his befuddlement at times. One of our last views of him is going off to dinner with Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel. As he silently follows the two learned men (having said nothing during the previous 100 lines of dialogue), he is admonished by Holofernes, in one of the most superfluous commands in all of literature, "pauca verba."

Costard: The Fool

> Some people if they spy but a hard word are as much amazed as if they had met with a Hobgoblin.
> Edward Philips, The New World of English Words, 1658

Costard is on the stage more than anyone else in the play. He appears in every scene except 2.1, the first encounter of the men and women of the court. Another odd thing about him, although perhaps too much should not be made of this, is that in the eight scenes in which he appears, Costard enters each scene well after it has begun. A scene is set, a situation described and under way, and then Costard enters, almost always with someone else; only twice does he come on the stage alone. What these facts indicate about Costard's function in the play is fairly clear: Costard is a "reflective" character and his main business, like Touchstone's in As You Like It, is to encounter other people, and serve as a contrast of some sort. Singly or with others, Costard is shuffled through nearly every possible permutation of encounters in the course of the play.

One might go beyond "reflective" and specify that Costard's function in most scenes is "reductive." He, in himself, deflates pretensions and pricks hypocrisies. In the first scene, after the foolish plan for the academy has been established, Costard is brought in by Dull, and is a living refutation of the denial of the flesh just theoretically espoused. It is also Costard, in the last scene, who reveals that Jaquenetta is pregnant by Armado. In structural terms, Costard balances scenes; one of Shakespeare's favorite meth-

ods seems to be to juxtapose opposites, to bring them into some dramatic conflict. Here, in a comedy, Costard serves always to remind us of the foibles of the flesh and other "down-home" virtues or facts about life. We would expect his language to mirror this general function, and it usually does.

G. D. Willcock has warned that, "It is a mistake to try to unify the mental processes of a Costard into a consistent character. Such clowns are walking word-games. They are alternately stupid and clever."[30] However that may be, it is nonetheless worth looking at Costard's language in some detail. To begin with, he is more aware of the possibilities of language than Dull is. He even has some small gift for wordplay (witness the puns he makes on his own name), and occasionally satirically reflects the games of the men. At 1.1.202-211, for example, Costard reaches for an elegance in schematically ordering his defense according to the legal phrase "In manner and form following." In The Unfortunate Traveller, Nashe also mocks the use of this phrase in the welcoming speech of the orator at Wittenberg.[31] Costard is not very good at this, though, as he resorts to barnyard puns on "manor" and "farm" and the triumphant symmetry of his construction collapses in a tautological heap at the end: "for the form,--in some form." Costard concludes with an oath appropriate to a trial by combat. It has not been an overwhelming performance--the master of this sort of thing is still Armado, as in his letter at 4.1.62-92. Nevertheless, Costard

makes his mark as a punster and manipulator of language of some note, and his efforts continue throughout the play.

There are many more malapropisms in Costard's mouth than in Dull's. Textual difficulties always leave some ambiguity with respect to errors of usage, but it is probably safe to assume that most of the errors are Costard's rather than Ralph Crane's. His first words are, after all, an announcement that the "contempts" (1.1.188) of Armado's letter concern him. He makes a number of other errors in the play, but one of the most interesting has been altered by all of the major editors of the play (and without any comment by the Arden editor) to "Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh." (1.1.215) H. A. Ellis, though, points out that the actual Quarto reading is "sinplicitie," and that a pun may be intended here.[32] Most readers of Love's Labour's Lost have praised this gnomic utterance of Costard's as a piece of unalloyed folk wisdom, the voice of "reality" adjusting our response to the various foolishness here. It is quite typical of Costard to make such an error, though; as we shall see, many if not all of his attempted quotations come out garbled. At any rate, the play on "sin," considering the circumstances of the letter and the actions it describes, is too good to pass up, and preserving it preserves that delightful blend in Costard of insight and ignorance. He possesses some native wit, but little learning.

Of especial interest is Costard's fondness for aphorisms, a habit shared by all the rest of the commedia figures. In

the first scene, after receiving Armado's letter, the following passage, just mentioned, occurs:

> King. Will you hear this letter with attention?
> Berowne. As we would hear an oracle.
> Costard. Such is the sinplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.
> (1.1.212-215)

Costard is the comic "oracle," delivering bits of wisdom in mangled form which, like that of the real oracles, must be translated and deciphered by his listeners. In this case, the message of the oracle is double-edged, cutting both hearers and speaker. At the end of the same scene we have:

> . . . and therefore welcome the sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and till then, sit thee down, sorrow!
> (1.1.296-8)

This is remembered and mockingly echoed by Berowne:

> Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the foola sid . . .
> (4.3.4-5; the Qto. reads "foole sayd")

In Act One, Scene Two, Costard speaks of "the merry days of desolation" which he has seen, and concludes,

> It is not for prisoners to be too silent in their words, and therefore I will say nothing: I thank God I have as little patience as another man, and therefore I can be quiet.
> (1.2.153-56)

Aside from the great humor of these aphorisms, it is worth noting the habit itself, Costard's inordinate respect for linguistic and traditional authorities. He tries very hard to sound as learned as the others, but it just doesn't work. His use of "manner and form" in 1.1 is awkward, his quotations inaccurate, his malapropisms all too numerous, his attempts

to use logical forms hopeless.

A corollary to this simultaneous respect and ineptitude seems to be a primitiveness (or literal-mindedness) which links him with Dull. All languages are one to Costard. In the third act, he hears the mysterious words "enigma" and "l'envoy." The usual reading of this misunderstanding is that "Costard supposes that, in calling for a 'l'envoy', Armado is offering him some kind of salve to heal his broken shin."[33] Ellis, however, has come up with a more suggestive reading of the lines to complement the usual one:

> Costard, apparently dreading some sort of enema, confuses salve 'ointment' with salve or salvo 'a discharge of firearms'. . . . Perhaps the form of the envoy suggested to Costard the dreaded clyster pipe.[34]

Whatever the reading of the line, the effect is familiar: a confusion of sounds has led to confusion in meaning, and words begin to take on a wholly different life of their own. The physical attributes are again primary. By 3.1.100-02, "l'envoy" has become "a fat goose" and, at line 120, a pun on goose leads to the equation "l'envoy"="prostitute." It has been a long way around. Along the way, Costard has also managed to hear "enfranchise" as "one Frances." The whole sequence ends, so to speak, with Costard's scatological joke, "now you will be my purgation and let me loose," (3.1.124-5) presumably the very thing he had feared before.

One of the most interesting episodes in the play now follows. Armado has given Costard a "remuneration," and Costard marvels at it:

> Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration! O that's the Latin word for three farthings: three farthings, remuneration. 'What's the price of this inkle?' 'One penny': 'No, I'll give you a remuneration': why, it carries it. Remuneration! why it is a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word.
>
> (3.1.134-140)

A few moments later, Costard receives a "guerdon" from Berowne:

> Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration; a 'leven-pence farthing better. Most sweet gardon! I will do it, sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration!
>
> (3.1.166-69)

Costard has known the bliss of the lexicographer, the Adamic power of giving names. There could be no clearer picture, as Costard holds the coin in his hand and pronounces the magic sounds associated with it, of the origins of language. The scene suggests the equation, already hinted at before in Costard's various errors, of sound=thing. There is very little abstraction here, though there is great pretense of it; the sound becomes a word, a concept, a thing, because of the proximity of the object designated. As that big, heavy, impressive word rolls off of Costard's lips, the sound becomes an entity as well. Like the "fat goose," it magically comes alive.

At the opposite pole of linguistic theory might be the idea of the totally arbitrary symbolic link between words and things; with Costard, though, the link is direct and concrete. His attitude might be seen as a primitive rejoinder to the Academy of Learning, not of Navarre, but of Swift's Lagado, where

> An Expedient was therefore offered, that since Words

> are only Names for Things, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them such Things as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on. . . . for short Conversations a Man may carry Implements in his Pockets and under his Arms, enough to supply him, and in his House he cannot be at a Loss.[35]

The requisite proximity to the object is similar, but Costard shows that, unlike Swift's theoreticians, he values the sound of the word in itself nearly as much as the coin. In both cases, the heavier the better.

Costard's role in the Pageant of the Nine Worthies will be considered later. Suffice it for now to note that, aside from a hint that he is to have a comic northern accent (echoed, perhaps, by Berowne at 4.3.4), Costard's main contribution to the running linguistics debate is his primitive attitude toward words.

Sir Nathaniel: The Hedge-Priest

Sir Nathaniel fancies himself an authority on the church fathers and a by no means inelegant raconteur. Nevertheless, he knows when he has met his match, and stands in great awe of Holofernes. He attaches himself so carefully to the great scholar that there can be little doubt of Nathaniel's ancestor, the classical parasite; Campbell finds a clear connection with the commedia as well, with "the affamato, who only in the Commedia dell'Arte is attached to the Pedant."[36]

Our greatest source of interest in Nathaniel is his style of speech--unlike Dull and Costard, Nathaniel lives in almost total folly, and his speech reflects it, as well as

his attempts to echo Holofernes. He has a great fondness, for example, for that spurious oratorical profundity associated with politicians and divines. As he enters the play in 4.2, saying,

> Very reverend sport, truly: and done in the testimony of a good conscience.
> (4.2.1-2)

we may perhaps catch a proleptic whiff of Jonson's Zeal-of-the-Land Busy:

Very likely, exceeding likely, very exceeding likely. This is still some twenty years off, and Jonson will develop it to a much greater extent, but it is clear that the two playwrights must have had a common source in a wide-spread, usually Puritan habit.[37] In that same brief opening speech of Nathaniel's, we might note a few other recurring traits. There is a pun in "reverend"--referring both to the sport in itself (as worthy of honor) and as "a sport in which a reverend gentlemen might participate with a good conscience."[38] There is also a near-symmetrical balance to the sentence, several words of obvious Latinate origin, and a self-satisfied allusion to a well-known Biblical text. In thirteen words, Shakespeare sets up most of the important linguistic habits of the good parson.

Foremost among Nathaniel's stylistic devices is his fondness for parataxis and especially asyndetic phrases. Here is his description of Dull:

> Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book.
> He hath not eat paper, as it were; he hath not

> drunk ink: his intellect is not replenished;
> he is only an animal, only sensible in the
> duller parts;
> And such barren plants are set before us, that
> we thankful should be,
> Which we of taste and feeling are, for those parts
> that do fructify in us more than he;
> For as it would ill become me to be vain, indis-
> creet, or a fool,
> So were there a patch set on learning, to see him
> in a school.
> (4.2.24-31)

This is a strange passage: the second half of a couplet in sixteeners, three lines of asyndetic prose, then two more couplets in sixteeners, in relentless pursuit of the central metaphor from "fed" to "eat" to "drunk," "replenished," then up the chain of being from "animal" to "plant," and finally to a human being, just barely. The effect of this is a wacky sententiousness, a determination to impress with erudition, no matter the effort.

The best example of Nathaniel's efforts comes in 5.1, as the little group returns from the dinner with the father of Holofernes's pupil:

> I praise God for you sir: your reasons at
> dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant
> without scurrility, witty without affection,
> audacious without impudency, learned without
> opinion, and strange without heresy.
> (5.1.2-6)

Nathaniel's description of Holofernes's speaking ability is impossible to believe, of course, but it sounds impressive, and is in fact an almost perfect specimen of parisonic prose. Dr. Johnson's comment on this passage is even more interesting than usual:

> I know not well what degree of respect Shakespeare

> intends to obtain for this vicar, but he has here put into his mouth a finished representation of colloquial excellence. It is very difficult to add any thing to this character of the schoolmaster's table-talk, and perhaps all the precepts of Castiglione will scarcely be found to comprehend a rule for conversation so justly delineated, so widely dilated, and so nicely limited.[39]

Johnson gives himself away by echoing, in his final sentence, the very qualities for which he is commending the prose of Nathaniel: a happy coincidence. Johnson also appears to beg the question of context, professing not to know the "degree of respect" to be given to Nathaniel, a character who is consistently foolish throughout the play; the passage is simply complimented in itself. It is significant that Johnson's comments did not apparently apply to the entire passage, which continues,

> I did converse this quondam day with a companion of the King's, who is intituled, nominated, or called, Don Adriano de Armado.
>
> (5.1.6-9)

Suddenly the "elegance" collapses under the weight of foppish affectation ("quondam") and a "sweetly varied" string of synonyms, two Latinate for the one more than adequate native word. In a play filled with erratic stylists, Nathaniel practises his own special blend. When we hear him trying to match Holofernes's Latinisms,

> Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge; so it shall please you to abrogate scurrility.
>
> (4.2.53-4)

we know that he is beyond help. Rochester's description of one of the "Whitehall blades" seems peculiarly appropriate

for Nathaniel:

> In this, as well as all the rest,
> He ventures to do like the best,
> But wanting common sense, th' ingredient
> In choosing well not least expedient,
> Converts abortive imitation
> To universal affectation.
> Thus he not only eats and talks
> But feels and smells, sits down and walks,
> Nay looks, and lives, and loves by rote,
> In an old tawdry birthday coat.
> Rochester, "A Ramble in St. James's Park," 11.53-62[40]

The idea of "abortive imitation," we shall see later, is a crucial concept in the play.

Costard's bungled aphorisms find a more elevated parallel in Nathaniel. If the rest of the characters are devoted in various ways to the primacy of words, Nathaniel is devoted to the primacy of The Word, as expressed in the words of Holy Writ and the writings of the Church Fathers. Virtually everything he says has a Biblical or patristic allusion lurking near the surface.[41] The idea of Authority is important in the play, and it is nowhere better exemplified than in Nathaniel, who can scarcely breathe without including "as a certain father saith" or "saith the text." The text and the fathers are equivalent to Holofernes's rhetoric books, Costard's folk sources, or Armado's chivalric and military heroes. Nathaniel's devotion to the Word in addition seems a distinct parody of the traditional awe felt for John 1:1, a passage which Elizabethan poets seem to have taken to heart; the magic power of words, of making and creation, derives from this cosmic and religious source. Michael Roberts re-

minds us that, in the Renaissance especially,

> Both the human world--intellectual, spiritual, and social--and the external physical world . . . are linked together by language because both are expressions of a single overarching Logos, whether that is understood in its Christian or classical sense.[42]

But for Nathaniel and most of the other characters in Love's Labour's Lost, that link has been sundered, the magic has vanished, and everything is trivialized. The Word becomes only another collection of quotable quotes, the Logos is evident only as logorrhea.

In Nathaniel's case, at least, quoting authority is a good substitute for thinking. After his commentary on the insensible Dull, he concludes in stupendous vacuousness:

> But, omne bene, say I; being of an old father's mind,
> Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.
> (4.2.32-3)

The irrelevance of this bit of folk wisdom is patent; those with empty heads have the most to say. The omne bene is especially good as a mindless filler (we learn later, in addition, that Nathaniel's Latin is a little scratched when he is corrected by Holofernes). In matters of learning distinct from religion, Nathaniel shows extreme deference to Holofernes, even going so far, after one of Holofernes's most extravagant lists of synonyms, to copy one of them down in his commonplace book with the commendation, "A most singular and choice epithet." (5.1.16) In a play about language and affected fashions, Nathaniel is the most slavish of the imitators with the worst results.

Holofernes: The Pedant

Holofernes is Nathaniel's master, the comic pedant of the commedia dell'arte, the dottore whose erudition masks his ignorance of life. His antecedents are everywhere: in the commedia, in Rhombus of Sidney's Lady of May, in Pedantius, in Rabelais's Holofernes, in college classrooms. Holofernes represents the fag-end of one of the great Humanist ideals, formulated earlier by Erasmus, Ascham, Cheke, and others. Samuel Daniel, perhaps anachronistically, expressed the traditional view in his Musophilus (1599):

> Powre above powre, O heavenly Eloquence,
> That with the strong reine of commanding words,
> Dost manage, guide, and master th' eminence
> Of mens affections, more then all their swords:
> Shall we not offer to thy Excellence
> The richest treasure that our wit affords?
> . . . . . .
> Or, who can tell for what great worke in hand
> The greatnesse of our stile is now ordain'd?
> What powrs it shall bring in, what spirits command,
> What thoughts let out, what humours keep restrain'd,
> What mischiefe it may powrefully withstand,
> And what faire ends may thereby be attain'd.[43]

"O heavenly Eloquence." A long and noble tradition of education through the study of rhetoric is summed up in that phrase, and in this one: "'Nihil est aliud eloquentia nisi copiose loquens sapientia': eloquence is nothing else but wisdom speaking copiously."[44] If the power inherent in language, and in particular the "eloquence" cultivated by the study of rhetoric, could be so overwhelming for Daniel and others, then it is a measure of the distance from that ideal when we can find the abuse of it so ludicrously funny in Holofernes. His "wisdom" is nothing but folly speaking cop-

iously. The immense power inherent in language is not being mocked; but the traditional means of access, through the rhetorical training of the schools, is.

It is hopeless to try to discuss everything that Holofernes says and does. It can be taken on faith that virtually every "vice" of language listed by Puttenham may be found illustrated somewhere by Holofernes: "soraismus," "cacemphaton," "pleonasmus," "bomphiologia," "solecismus," "cacozelia." The list is a long one. Lest the reader be always asking, "What is the figure? what is the figure?" the exact specification and illustration of each vice will be left to those sources which have already done the job.[45] We shall also leave until later a close look at Holofernes's judgments about poetry, and examine here his style and his attitude towards language.

Like everyone else in Love's Labour's Lost, Holofernes has aphorisms and sententiae flowing like tap water; sufflaminandus erat, as Jonson said of Shakespeare. "His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too."[46] It is interesting that Holofernes seems to make an error in two of his aphorisms:

> Facile precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra
> Ruminat, and so forth.
>
> (4.2.92-3)

As numerous editors have pointed out, the correct first word is "Faustus," and this is a quotation which every schoolboy would know by heart, one very recently bandied back and forth by Nashe and Harvey; it appears that Holofernes is obsessed

with the idea of "Facile" and "facility" (mentioned at 4.2.56,121), or perhaps there is some topical joke on the omission of "Faustus" from the well-known phrase. At any rate, a moment later Holofernes apparently gets the musical gamut wrong (4.2.98) and, though he is quick to "smell false Latin" in Costard (5.1.75), it is possible that Holofernes has himself given the wrong cases for "sanguis" and "coelo." (4.2.3-5)

Aphorisms derive from authorities, and Holofernes, like the others, has his own little pantheon of "Worthies" on whom to base all action and thought. "Good old Mantuan," (4.2.93) Lyly's Latin Grammar, Priscian (5.1.29), Horace (4.2.100), we can be certain of Quintilian though he is not mentioned, and above all "Ovidius Naso." (4.2.122) These figures are all important to his concept of poetry, as will become evident. There are also a huge number of authorities, mostly traditionalist rhetoricians, who stand behind Holofernes's judgments on etymology and pronunciation. By the early 1590s they are mostly out of date, as we might expect, and the battles Holofernes is still fighting were long since lost. Nevertheless, he sticks to his authorities, to what he has read and himself been taught, rather than to what people are saying. That Shakespeare didn't is also evident.

Among Holofernes's favorite devices of style is "Sinonimia, or the Figure of store."[47] It is considered by him the highest mark of wit and inventiveness to give the greatest possible number of synonyms for a simple word, preferably

in more than one language. Thus:

> coelo, the sky, the welkin, the heaver; (4.2.5)
> terra, the soil, the land, the earth; (4.2.6-7)
> Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; (4.2.103)
> He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd,
> as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it;
> (5.1.13-15)
> The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is liable,
> congruent, and measurable for the afternoon.
> (5.1.86-7)

And so on. Nathaniel, who echoes his master ("A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon"--4.2.39) is always impressed by this facility of the pedant:

> Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets [synonyms]
> are sweetly varied, like a scholar at the least.
> (4.2.8-9)

It is truly "copious invention" to a fault. A particularly egregious example of this sort of thing in real life was unearthed by G. K. Hunter; it is from Lord Berners's Preface to his translation of Froissart's Chronicles (1523-5):

> What condign graces and thanks ought men to give to the writers of histories, who with their great labours have done so much profit to the human life? They show, open, manifest and declare to the reader, by example of old antiquity, what we should enquire, desire, and follow, and also, what we should eschew, avoid, and utterly fly: for when we (being unexpert of chances) see, behold, and read the ancient acts, gests and deeds, how and with what labours, dangers, and perils they were gested and done, they right greatly admonish, ensigne and teach us how we may lead forth our lives.[48]

The disease of synonymy was apparently highly infectious; Hoskins, writing in 1599, uses the schoolmaster as a stock example of the abuse of "accumulation," which

> is heaping up of many terms of praise or accusing, importing but the same matter without descending to any part; and hath his due season after some

> argument of proof. Otherwise it is like a schoolmaster foaming out synonymies, or words of one meaning, and will sooner yield a conjecture of superfluity of words than of sufficiency of matter.[49]

The effect of these lists, this great "store" of nouns and adjectives, is narcotizing on both the reader and (especially) the speaker. Compiling such lists demands a minimum of wit, a modicum of cleverness, and a large vocabulary of Latinate and Latin words--in short, erudition devoid of wisdom, the special province of the pedant. The beauty of the method is that, while it is not truly imaginative, it is usually impressive to those who have smaller vocabularies. The lulling rhythm of such lists, the "superfluity of words," the steady and pleasing drone of one's own voice placing sounds next to one another, is an agreeable substitute for thought. If for Costard words are physically attached to things, very nearly identified with them to an extent, then we see nearly the opposite condition in Holofernes. He comes perhaps closest to existing in a totally solipsistic world; the fact that most of his words do have recognizable referents links him tenuously with the rest of us. Bacon was clearly astonished and depressed at this sort of inventiveness, for when the wit and mind of man, he said,

> work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.[50]

Holofernes also considers himself an expert philologist. Ben Jonson reminds us in Cynthia's Revels just how common

such pretensions were:

> Hedon. But why Breeches, now?
> Phantaste. Breeches, quasi beare-riches; when a gallant beares all his riches in his breeches:
> Amorphus. Most fortunately etymologyz'd.[51]

Etymologizing evidently became something of a national sport during the great Inkhorn controversies, and a lively interest was taken in all strange words. In all fairness, Holofernes's derivations are more accurate and plausible than Phantaste's; but they are pursued to a fault. Virtually every speech of his depends upon a thorough knowledge of Latin; a typical example is to be found in 4.2:

> Most barbarous intimation! yet a kind of insinuation, as it were in via, in way of explication; facere, as it were replication, or, rather, ostentare, to show, as it were, his inclination, --after his undressed, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed fashion--to insert again my haud credo for a deer.
> (4.2.13-20)

"Intimation"="thrusting inwards"; "insinuation"="insertion"; "explication"="explanation"; "replication"="reply."[52] The frozen syntax of this passage (through a series of six "un-" synonyms and an "or rather . . . or ratherest" construction) serves as a handy frame on which to hang all those heavy words.

Like most of Holofernes's speeches, this one is chopped up into a number of small phrases--endless repetitions, qualifications, refinements. His mind moves in fits and starts, stumbling through a darkened warehouse filled with trivia and choking dust. There are precious few sentences

in which Holofernes is able to string together more than six or seven words without a qualification or interruption of some kind. His mind works by association alone; as one item is mentioned, a string of synonymic relatives is produced. In the passage quoted above, it is worth noting that no phrase or clause contains more than five words except the final main verb clause. The six lines before it form one gigantic noun phrase and, as Francis Christensen notes, "The very hallmark of jargon is the long noun phrase."[53] The whole passage is held together by a number of schematic formulas and fillers: "as it were" (three times--the Latin quasi is used at 4.2.82), "or rather," and the mindless continuity of the "un-" adjectives. Holofernes also has a habit, common among politicians, of turning verbs into nouns, thus freezing language even more.[54] A word-count of Holofernes's speeches would find a higher percentage than normal of words ending in "-tion."

The point of treating Holofernes's speech at such length is to suggest one of the ways in which Shakespeare has made dramatic speech reflect a mental condition. As Ben Jonson noted, language is the image of the mind. The mind behind Holofernes's language is a sterile and pedantic--and therefore comic--one. He conceives of language as fixed and static; his devotion to Latin and his use of words in their original meanings suggests a devotion to authority by now familiar to us. His speech is studded with technical and rhetorical jargon and bits and scraps of famous quotations.

In his theories of pronunciation (another of those already-lost battles still being fought with fanatic intensity), however, we see him at his most rigid and literal-minded. Every letter which is written down must be pronounced, no fashionable variations are allowed, no common-sense simplifications tolerated. Words are to be pronounced so as to emphasize their Latin origins (even if they don't have any);[55] thus "abhominable" from "ab-homo" (an incorrect though common derivation, as it turns out). That almost everyone in England already said "det" for "debt" does not deter his zeal.[56] Practise and custom mean nothing; authority everything.

To be fair, Holofernes's ideas about language are not an isolated aberration, nor are they confined only to pedants through the ages. A desire to fix the language is a recurring phenomenon, and Swift's Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue is typical of Restoration and eighteenth century thinking on the subject:

> But what I have most at Heart, is, that some Method should be thought on for Ascertaining and Fixing our Language for ever, after such Alterations are made in it as shall be thought requisite. For I am of Opinion, it is better a Language should not be wholly perfect, than that it should be perpetually changing.[57]

Holofernes possesses none of Swift's reasonableness, however, and simply wants no deviation from the original source. He observes a pedantic and sycophantic devotion to authority so extreme that deviations in others insinuateth him of insanie.

It is worth noting, in conclusion, that Holofernes does

not display much "wit" in the sense of punning word-play. He is skilled in manipulating syntactical constructs, even better at devising lists of synonyms; he considers himself a highly qualified judge of other people's rhetoric and poetry. But his attitude towards language appears to have stifled his ability to pun; a pun is, as we have seen, anarchic, a subversive threat to the kind of order and fixed meanings he seeks. In a pun, etymologies mean nothing, meanings are deliberately scrambled, and (worse!) pronunciations are changed or forced for the sake of spurious identification. If anything is certain about a pun, it is that the words which make it have not remained stable and fixed.

The exception to this, which proves the rule, is Holofernes's miserable attempt in the "extemporal epitaph" on the "pretty pleasing pricket," an effort so bad that it is difficult to discuss. It is ingenious, as we have seen, and it can all be worked out to mean something, if we try hard enough (who will?). It depends on a punning combination of sounds; there is even an unabrogated scurrility behind it, mindlessly evident in the staccato alliteration (almost "illiteration") and the heavy-handed use of "pricket." But the whole thing is sterile, lifeless. Far from arguing "facility," it is a mechanical exercise; there are puns, but they do not impress those who have heard Moth or Berowne in action.[58] They deform rather than transform the language. In sum, Holofernes's attitude towards language stands as a barrier against the free play of the imagination.

Armado: The Braggart

We are told that Armado is "a refined traveller of Spain" (1.1.162) and his suggestive name aids the identification, but we may be pardoned if we suspect that a few detours have been taken along the way. Armado must be a successful character, since no one has ever managed to specify a single source for him. Sir Thopas from Lyly's Endimion, Capitano Spavento from the commedia, the miles gloriosus of Plautine comedy: all are obvious possibilities, not to mention Gabriel Harvey, Sir Walter Ralegh, or even Don John of Austria, the allegorists's nominees. What is beyond doubt is the strangeness (in every sense) of Armado.

Comic expectations about Armado are aroused from the beginning; it is from him that a "high" style for low matter is anticipated. He is a more elegant and "refined" ancestor of scruffy Pistol, in whom the world of romance and bombast has fallen on harder times. In Armado, though, Shakespeare seems to have found the perfect representative of a bygone era of knights, chivalric romances, and "high words." He is a man "in all the world's new fashion planted," full of "complements," a comic soldier and energetic linguist. The young men have imported him for a special reason:

> King. This child of fancy, that Armado hight,
> For interim to our studies shall relate
> In high-born words the worth of many a knight
> From tawny Spain, lost in the world's debate.
> . . . . . .
> Longa. Costard the swain, and he, shall be our sport,
> And so to study three years is but short.
> (1.1.168-79)

He is supposedly a fabulist, then, a teller of old stories; "I will use him for my minstrelsy," the King affirms.

Given this sort of background and buildup, Armado's linguistic excesses are (almost) predictable: an overblown high style, a good deal of rhetorical posturing, stilted invocations, fashionable words and phrases, an excessively Latinate diction, scraps of old legends and romances, above all a great deal of what was known as "fancy." Even those near him catch the disease, and we have already heard the King and Berowne using archaisms like "hight" and "wight."

Armado's two letters reveal him at his most formal, his most copious. He and Holofernes share a love for what they would call sinonimia and which we could condemn as pleonasmus. Armado begins the first letter with five high epithets for Navarre:

> Great deputy, the welkin's viceregent, and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's God, and body's fostering patron.
> (1.1.216-18)

"Welkin" reflects Armado's fondness for Chaucerisms, a habit which Sidney could not allow even in Spenser, and condemned again later by Puttenham under the vice cacozelia.[59] Armado, oblivious, goes on to "ycleped" (1.1.234) and "hight." (1.1.247)

The rest of the first letter betrays Armado's most typical mannerism: an expandible but basically rigid syntactic structure, often modeled on some structure of logic, which would have been familiar to courtly readers of the past

twenty or thirty years:

> . . . the time when? About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which? which, I mean, I walked upon: it is ycleped thy park. Then for the place where? . . .
>
> (1.1.230-35)

The who-what-where approach, as has been pointed out by several editors and critics, was recommended by Wilson's Art of Rhetorique (1553), and used by Harvey and others; it is also, according to Richard David, the standard form for a legal indictment. (1.1.230n.) If it is appropriate to the particular situation, it is no less typical of Armado's usual method of thought. The habit is shown in an even more extreme form in his second letter, to Jaquenetta, as he spins out the permutations of "veni, vidi, vici" in illustration of the old ballad of King Cophetua (himself) and the beggar Zenelphon (Jaquenetta):

> . . . he came, one; saw, two; overcame, three. Who came? the king: why did he come? to see: why did he see? to overcome. To whom came he? to the beggar: what saw he? the beggar: who overcame he? the beggar. . . .
>
> (4.1.70-4)

The effect of such manipulation is, indeed, "heart-burning." (1.1.263)

His passion for such logical and schematic construction continues throughout the play. He has a special fondness for the figure auxesis, or "the Avancer."[60]

> I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which

> is basest, doth tread.
>
> (1.2.157-9)

A few lines later we see him locked into another associative progression (a false syllogism, incidentally):

> Love is a familiar; Love is a devil; there is no evil angel but Love.
>
> (1.2.162-3)

In his first encounter with Holofernes, Armado sews his narration together with a string of four strategically placed "let it pass" constructions. (5.1.90-112) David (5.1.95n.) calls this a "common colloquialism," but Sister Miriam Joseph believes it to be a parody of the rhetorical figure paralipsis, and hence an attempt at elevation on Armado's part.[61]

Whatever the case, our conclusions remain the same. At his most typical, at his most extravagant, Armado's speech and letters reveal him as quite distinct from Holofernes as a stylist. In marked contrast with the staccato phrases and usually shapeless copiousness of the pedant, the automatic heaping on of synonyms, Armado's prose is more notable for a schematic and rigid formalism, an intricate but completely predictable set of patterns (though he is also fond of synonymy, too). The elaborate rhetorical figures employed by Armado serve as the bones and connective tendons of a rigid exoskeleton; in the spaces between the joints, one can perhaps invent a few synonyms, insert an apostrophe to the stars or an aside. But it is the immutable form which counts. It is, again, an easy substitute for more

rigorous or creative thought. Once one of the series is started, as in base-baser-basest, everyone (but especially the nervous speaker) knows where it will end up, and there is a security in that.

There are a few more characteristics of Armado to be mentioned briefly. First is his fondness for elaborate invocations, a hangover from whatever chivalric romance he has just come from. We have already seen his address to Navarre in the first letter. In 3.1, after Moth leaves, he begs,

> By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face.
> (3.1.65)

and a moment later,

> . . . the heaving of my lungs provokes me to ridiculous smiling: O, pardon me, my stars!
> (3.1.74-6)

Like the creaking syntax, this sort of thing serves to remind us continually of an older era and an older literature. Armado is a walking anachronism, not as broken-down and disreputable as Pistol, but nevertheless distinctly musty. More precisely, Armado's prose must at times remind us of an older, more courtly group of writers: Harvey, Lyly, and especially Sidney (as in the apostrophes). There are echoes of each of them strewn throughout the play, but they are probably most concentrated in Armado's letter to Jaquenetta. (4.1.62-92)

It is all familiar, or would have been to a courtly audience, from the casual "Arcadianism" (4.1.69n.) of

> . . . which to annothanize in the vulgar (O base and obscure vulgar!) . . .

to the question-and-answer internal dialogue used by Harvey to the whole series of echoes of plays and novels by Lyly. The letter smacks of Lyly in particular, especially in the pleonastic pairs ("magnanimous and most illustrate," "pernicious and indubitate"). The high Latinate diction is familiar. The tedious "comparison" to an old ballad, of which "the world was very guilty . . . some three ages since," (1.2.105-6) is a final evocation of the fairy-tale world of high romance.

Armado follows his letter with one of the "sonnets" he had promised at the end of Act One, but the "whole volumes in folio" promised there have shrunk to six lines of antiquated "high" style, a passage which Warburton concluded must be "a quotation from some ridiculous poem of that time."[62] Ridiculous it is, but it is Armado's. The Princess enjoys it too, and laughs, "Did you ever hear better?" Boyet's reply to her is interesting:

> I am much deceiv'd but I remember the style.
> Princess. Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile.
> (4.1.95-6)

Boyet means primarily that he has heard Armado before (though they have not been on the stage together--Bradley might have made something of this), but it is a safe bet that most of the audience would also "remember the style" of the courtly prose of the 1580s, even up until the time of the performance itself. Boyet goes on to identify Armado as a Spaniard (a sure sign of romance and verbal foppery) and a "Monarcho,"

a precise reference which dates Armado firmly in the late 1570s or early 80s. (The full import of this allusion will be discussed in the fourth chapter.)

One final note on Armado: like everyone else, he is obsessed with the idea of authority, and he too has his own pantheon of worthies--in his case, the real Worthies. His first words in the play suggest his interest in the past:

> Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?
> (1.2.1-2)

He looks for a "sign" from the past, and goes on to link himself, ludicrously, with the great heroes of the past, other warriors who have fallen in love.

> Comfort me, boy. What great men have been in love?
> (1.2.61-2)

He cries to Moth for "More authority, dear boy, name more." He will have the old ballad of the King and the Beggar "newly writ o'er, that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent." (1.2.109-10) A precedent for "digression" is rather far from a genuine respect for authority.

We may leave Armado for the moment by recalling an early comment on him by Navarre. Armado was, he said, "a refined traveller of Spain," stuffed with the latest fashions, chosen as a court minstrel, one

> That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
> One who the music of his own vain tongue
> Doth ravish like enchanting harmony.
> (1.1.164-6)

In this casual allusion to the Orpheus legend there is delicious irony, as we eventually realize in the course of the

play; for Armado is, at best, only a solipsistic Orpheus. He ravishes himself, not wild beasts or other people, with his own "vain" tongue. As such, he is an extreme version of the solipsistic tendencies of the other men, high and low, in the play. His prose is an accurate reflection of this narcissism, for nothing seems so admirable to him as the drone and surge of his own voice.

Moth: The Boy

A most acute juvenal; voluble and free of grace!
(3.1.64)

Moth is wit. He is the personification of a quality of mind much discussed, little seen. Like Ariel, he is all fire and air. Even his name is a witty pun--several of them, in fact. The obvious play is on mote, by analogy to the pun on note-ing in the title of Much Ado About Nothing.[63] Moth is first of all like the winged insect, flitting around various sources of "light," darting in and out of their haloes; he is a kind of pest, as Armado finds out. Moth is also a mote. He is extremely small, a particle; he is presumably the only one of the commedia group to have been played by a boy actor. There are several comic references in the play to his size, and it is he who is selected to portray the mighty Hercules in the Pageant, though "in minority," as Holofernes will have it. Moth is also perhaps the mote in the mind's eye of Matthew vii.3 and Luke vi.41; he pricks with ease the illusions cherished by Armado and Holofernes,

reminding us, if not them, of their folly. Moth is "quick in answers" (another nice pun there) and "heat'st" Armado's blood. (1.2.30)

This irritation corresponds with Moth's reductive functions in the play; he is there partly to show up pretensions and to cut through rhetorical posturing if possible. The metaphor of incision is deliberately chosen, for his wit is variously described as "sharpe," "acute," or piercing. After Moth has made a fool of Holofernes, Armado congratulates him:

> Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterraneum, a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit! snip, snap, quick and home! it rejoiceth my intellect; true wit!
>
> (5.1.56-8)

The language of fencing is no doubt to be expected from Armado, with his fashionable "Spaniard's rapier," but it is also a good description of the way Moth usually works. Another possible pun on mote fits in here: the O.E.D. also has "Mote, sb.[4] . . . Motion (of a heavenly body)." If we leave off the "heavenly," the idea of motion is certainly apt.

There is still a third pun on "Moth," and that is mot, French (and English) for "word." Neither Ellis nor Kökeritz considers this possibility.[64] There is one place in Dream where the pun seems analogous to its use here:

> Theseus. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.
> Hippolyta. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus. I hope she will be brief.
> Demetrius. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisby, is the better.
>
> (5.1.307-11)

"Mote" in the sense of "speck" is clear enough, given the idea of a balance; but Thisby's "passion" (her speech of passion) may be a "long one," but will hopefully "be brief." Demetrius then puns, a mere "word" will turn the balance.

All this may seem a long way around a small obstacle, but "mot" is a splendid pun and very useful for Love's Labour's Lost. It is hardly a surprising pun, given Moth's character and the fact that this is a "French" play for a courtly (French-speaking?) audience. Shakespeare shows later in All's Well that he can pun on another French word for "words"--Parolles. (AW 5.2.34-9) Like the other possible meanings, "word" fits Moth's role in the play nicely. As Costard says to him, "I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word." (5.1.40-1)

Moth's prose style reflects the various connotations of his name. It is quick, witty, lively; he speaks in short syntactic bursts of cleverness, usually spinning off what someone else has said. Consider this speech:

> Armado. What wilt thou prove?
> Moth. A man, if I live; and this, by, in, and without, upon the instant: by heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by her; in heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her; and out of heart you love her, being out of heart that you cannot enjoy her.
> (3.1.39-44)

It is an extremely clever reply to Armado's gullible question, perhaps even more clever when we learn, as T. W. Baldwin tells us, that Moth is making a "punning division upon the signs of the ablative case, by, in, and without," as in

the school-grammars of the time.[65] This is exactly the sort of thing that Costard was trying to do with "manner" and "form," and we see in Moth's playful superiority in invention that he is both more skilled and less foolish--a rare combination in this play. As he works out the joke, inventing the details as he goes, all of this after he has twisted the meaning of "prove," we notice that the speech occurs in short bursts, with the clauses gradually lengthening until the final one, the longest, which rounds off the "set."

More typically, though, Moth's speeches are shorter, one- or two-line replies. He is to an extent a reflecting character, since he depends on the speech of others to set up his best witticisms. He is particularly fond of what Puttenham called "Antanaclasis, or the Rebounde":

> Ye have another figure which by his nature we may call the Rebound, alluding to the tennis ball which being smitten with the racket reboundes backe againe, and where the last figure before played with two wordes somewhat alike, this playeth with one word written all alike but carrying divers sences.[66]

Moth is skilled at this sort of exchange, as witness the speech just quoted above:

> Moth. And out of heart, master; all those three
> I will prove.
> Armado. What wilt thou prove?
> Moth. A man, if I live.
> (3.1.36-9)

Puttenham's use of the analogy with tennis is suggestive; Love's Labour's Lost abounds with suggestions of games and play, as Barber demonstrates. At one point, after a great contest of wit, the Princess commends Rosaline and Katharine,

> Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.
> (5.2.29)

This is the same game that Moth plays, and he is probably the best in the play at it. Self-conscious virtuosity is standard for him, and his supposed "master" (whom, in a total reversal, he calls his "negligent student"--3.1.34) provides a continuously gullible audience, a parody (or reflection?) of our own attempts to follow Moth. Moth is simply too "quick" for him, and Armado sighs in helpless admiration, "A most fine figure!" (1.2.52)

Like Costard (with whom he has close sympathy, as in 5.1.37-44), Moth deflates pretensions. His prose easily punctures the puffery of Armado, and he vanquishes with little difficulty Holofernes on their first meeting. He is not afflicted with vanity or self-delusion, and so is available as an instrument against those who are. There is also a good deal of bawdy lurking behind Moth's oh-so-innocent puns, and he seems fully aware of the "sinplicity" of man. Moth is also, in line with this, the only one of the low characters, indeed in the whole play except for Berowne, who has a special relationship with the audience. He is privileged to make asides to us, to allow us to hear his punch lines, to laugh with him at Armado. He addresses us directly:

> These are complements, these are humours, these betray nice wenches, that would be betrayed without these; and make them men of note (do you note, men?) that most are affected to these.
> (3.1.20-4)

Moth's question, in the form of a clever chiasmus, will keep

us alert, and insure some measure of sympathy with him.

There remains to be considered the putative identification of Moth with Thomas Nashe. This is one case where historical allegory seems nearly plausible or useful. The two references by Armado,

> . . . my tender juvenal; (1.2.8)
> A most acute juvenal, (3.1.64)

have often been cited as referring to Nashe, as Meres did in 1598:

> As Actaeon was wooried of his owne hounds: so is Tom Nash of his Isle of Dogs. Dogges were the death of Euripedes; but bee not disconsolate, gallant young Iuvenall.[67]

Citations to Greene's Groatsworth of Wit and Chettle's Kind-Harts Dreame, both in 1592, are also given for the epithet. There are also the supposed echoes of Pierce Penilesse (1592) in 4.2. A recent writer on Nashe, however, reviewing the external evidence, concludes,

> I can see no real parallel between Shakespeare's light, tricksy creation and the truculent pamphleteer who had made such a stir at the time. Nor, I believe, did Nashe see any resemblance. Had he done so, he would almost certainly have made some kind of literary capital out of it somewhere.[68]

There is internal evidence, too, I believe. Moth's usual style is unlike Nashe's most typical expression--the quick rejoinders, the turning of phrases, the economy of the language, are all different from Nashe's most typical prose. Nashe was just as "quick," but more "voluble," much more copious. When Nashe's voice is heard in the play, as it once very clearly is, it is unmistakable:

> Armado. How meanest thou? brawling in French?
> Moth. No, my complete master; but to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humour it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometime through the throat as if you swallowed love with singing love, sometime through the nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling love; with your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes; with your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket, like a man after the old painting; and keep not too long in one tune, but a snip and away. These are complements, these are humours, these betray nice wenches, that would be betrayed without these; and make them men of note (do you note, men?) that most are affected to these.
> (3.1.8-24)

Hibbard also mentions Biondello's description of Petruchio's horse (Shrew, 3.2.42-68) and the many echoes in the two parts of Henry IV. These are unmistakably the sound of Nashe; but the passage above is not typical of Moth, in fact the only thing of such length he says in the play. It is too long, too syntactically different (a flexible curt style); it is a set-piece, one of many in the play, a different brand of wit from the "quick venue" so often heard. It is the difference between a moth and some more violent bird, between the rapier-thrust and the hammer blow.

Conclusions

It is difficult to sum up our feelings about the low characters, they are so various and so strange. There is a great range of linguistic satire present, and it is hard to see how the clowns, Costard and Dull, "emerge unscathed from

the play," as one critic believes,[69] or how anyone else, for that matter, can be singled out for unqualified approval as a model. Of the six commedia figures, all but possibly Moth exemplify false wit and foolishness in various degrees. No doubt every sixteenth-century "vice" of language may be found in the play. The mocking of false wit goes considerably beyond using condemned figures of speech, though; folly is the prime mover, and none of the characters are wholly untouched by it. Costard is down-to-earth and commonsensical, but it isn't immediately obvious that his linguistic habits and attitudes are suitable for imitation. His is one possible response to language of many.

Moth is an exception. While we can say with certainty that virtually every line spoken by Armado or Holofernes is foolish, pompous, and funny, Moth is neither foolish nor pompous. There seem to be elements of real wit in his speeches, a wit which is lively, quick, not motivated by vanity or folly, a wit which occasionally transforms rather than deforms language. His wit is parasitic, it is true, and it tends to be mostly witticism, but it is still the closest thing among the low characters to the real thing; it is also more like that of the "high" characters than anyone else in the commedia group. Moth's special position with respect to the audience makes him a mediator in some scenes--though he loses his stature (figuratively speaking) by the end of the play.

With the court figures, it is infinitely more difficult

to distinguish true and false wit or, from another angle, Shakespeare from his own parody. There are obvious enough cases of false wit, over-cleverness and the like. Berowne's speech at 1.1.72-93 ringing the changes on "light" is a set piece, and the other men comment on its cleverness:

> How well he's read, to reason against reading!
> (1.1.94)

Boyet, in a remarkable speech in 2.1 to be discussed in detail later, soars to strange heights of linguistic playfulness, and everyone notices it:

> Princess. Come to our pavilion: Boyet is disposed.
> . . . . . .
> Maria. Thou art an old love-monger, and speak'st skillfully
> (2.1.250-4)

In 5.2, Rosaline and the Princess have this exchange, referring to the noblemen:

> Rosaline. Well-liking wits they have; gross, gross; fat, fat.
> Princess. O poverty in wit, kingly-poor flout!
> (5.2.268-9)

Here the "king" pun, which in performance might be accentuated by Rosaline, is picked up very quickly, judged, and placed into an even wittier line by the Princess; the two lines manage to be self-referential comments on the nature of wit at the same time. Or consider this exchange:

> Berowne. . . . you are not free,
> For the Lord's tokens on you do I see.
> Princess. No, they are free that gave these tokens to us.
> Berowne. Our states are forfeit: seek not to undo us.
> Rosaline. It is not so. For how can this be true,
> That you stand forfeit, being those that sue?
> Berowne. Peace! for I will not have to do with you.
> Rosaline. Nor shall not, if I do as I intend.
> (5.2.422-9)

A glance at the different editions of the play on this passage and at Ellis's list of puns is instructive and exhausting. No one in the audience could be expected to follow these twisting puns, rebounds, lightning-quick associations. Even Berowne is staggered, and he speaks for all of us in the next line:

Speak for yourselves: my wit is at an end.

Passages such as these are like recitativi, little solo virtuoso sections rounded off by a summarizing coda. There are a great number of them in Love's Labour's Lost. My point is that the self-conscious cleverness of the characters, their (often punning) confessions of having gone too far, are vitally important to the dialectic of the play's debate on wit, and Shakespeare goes out of his way to call our attention to it.

Such passages are analogues to the stylistic exuberances of the low characters, and suggest an interesting paradox. If we are Baconians or positivists we will naturally condemn all of this as nonsense; if we are verbally licentious (poets) we might revel in it. If, however, we are a sympathetic and sophisticated audience, we probably will experience both impulses at once, since the play offers them simultaneously. Even in cases of obviously false wit, in Armado's letters or Berowne's deliberately blatant sophistries, though we condemn them on moral or social grounds, the sheer fun of it all, the exuberance and unleashed intellectual energy, takes us along with it in spite of ourselves.

That Berowne is really too much, we say, shaking our heads in disapproval and at the same time leaning forward to catch the next line.

If in cases such as these Shakespeare has marked himself off from the characters clearly, there are others where we are not sure from whence the cleverness issues. Costard, for example. In some scenes he seems to have an ironic awareness, in others he is merely a "rational hind." When Armado tells him he is setting him free, "enfreedoming thy person," Costard replies,

> True, true, and now you will be my purgation and let me loose.
> (3.1.124-5)

Given all the talk about salves and enemas, Costard is probably making the joke himself. But it is difficult to tell. A clearer example was seen in the allusion-collusion-pollution exchange between Dull and Holofernes. The wordplay there is clearly beyond the capacity of Dull.

There are thus, as we would expect, passages where Shakespeare appears to have gone over the heads of the characters and, as sophisticated as some of them are, inserted puns or ironies shared only with the more alert members of the audience. A good example of this occurs in Berowne's great speech in 4.3:

> For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,
> In leaden contemplation have found out
> Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
> Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?
> (4.3.317-20)

The association of "leaden" as "heaviness" and "lack of

value," with contemplation is a familiar piece of iconography; the allusion to Saturn inherent in connection with contemplation also suggests melancholy.[70] Fire, the lightest of the four elements, is carefully juxtaposed to "leaden" in the form of "fiery numbers," and thus the obvious contrast set up by Berowne takes on an unexpected and subtle richness. The heightening of sensibility caused by the influence of "women's eyes" is carefully expanded in its connotations. Such a subtlety and allusiveness is unobtrusive, perhaps unnoticed by the audience.

It may be futile to try to make such distinctions between author and characters, and in many cases it is to no particular purpose, but the play forces us to make distinctions, to judge and to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious. We are offered a full spectrum of examples of wit, ranging from the most tedious and obvious malapropisms to the subtlest allusions. The kind of wit, as we have seen, depends on the attitudes toward language and, in the low characters, each is given a distinctive prose style which is an accurate reflection of his linguistic attitudes. The whole thing is so complex that one quickly loses or should lose whatever truisms he brought to the play, and this is apparently one of the play's strategies. As so often happens in Shakespeare, our normal orientations are upset in some way.

While every conceivable attitude and example of wit and language seem represented in the play, and any conclusions must remain tentative, it does appear that, in the action of

the play, elaborate schemes are consistently mocked, while tropes of language are less often subjects of scorn. This assumes the traditional distinction between tropes, which involve a change of meaning in a word (as by a metaphor), and schemes, which include the external manipulation of language (including the patterning of sentences or whole paragraphs). Love's Labour's Lost has the most fun with elaborate or old-fashioned schemes. Consider, for example, the use of chiasmus in the play (not old-fashioned, admittedly, but decidedly "artificial"). Here is Boyet's first speech in the play, to the Princess:

> Be now as prodigal of all dear grace
> As Nature was in making graces dear
> When she did starve the general world beside,
> And prodigally gave them all to you.
> (2.1.9-12)

To show us that she is made of sterner stuff than other women, the Princess launches into a seven-line denunciation of Boyet's overly clever way of speaking:

> Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
> Needs not the painted flourish of your praise.
> (2.1.13-4)

A few moments later, Navarre himself makes this appeal to the Princess regarding her father's claim:

> Dear princess, were not his requests so far
> From reason's yielding, your fair self should make
> A yielding 'gainst some reason in my breast,
> And go well satisfied to France again.
> (2.1.150-3)

Though the Princess doesn't comment directly on Navarre's style, she is not pleased with him, and the tinkling echo of Boyet's "painted flourish" has not completely died away.

We have noticed in Navarre a fondness for such devices from the very first lines of the play; his first two lines describing fame are impressive, but the third line is a clinker:

And then grace us in the disgrace of death.

The punning repetition and the intertwined alliteration strike us as perhaps a bit glib, a bit too polished and ready-at-hand. Our suspicions are soon confirmed.

It should be noted too that most of the fun with Armado comes from laughing at his incredible use of schemes, both ancient and modern. Such devices, as used earlier by Harvey, Sidney, Lyly, or further back in the Ciceronians, would be easily recognized by the audience in the bizarre form here, and just as easily picked up for the purposes of parody by the dramatists. Dr. Johnson's praise of Sir Nathaniel's speech is a momentary congruence of interest, for the Elizabethan audience would most likely have heard an echo of Lyly or perhaps Harvey in it. (5.1.3n.) The least attentive member of the audience would recognize at least an old-fashioned (even in 1594-5) ring to these structures. If Love's Labour's Lost was written for and performed before a courtly or sophisticated audience, an arena in which Lyly and Sidney had made the greatest impression and Spenser was still active, then the delight in recognition would be even greater.

It would seem that parody of schemes occurs for purely theatrical reasons as well. Such schemes are very easy to hear, and if anything they are more obvious spoken aloud than they are read. A pun, involving a play on meaning, can be

more difficult to follow; a really difficult pun, playing on three or four different meanings, may go unappreciated. Elaborate schemes, on the other hand, are heard immediately and are funny in themselves even if you don't know where they come from. They involve a manipulation of sound ("pretty pleasing pricket") or compositional unit ("In manner and form following") which is obvious. Elaborate tropes and far-fetched metaphors are by no means accepted en bloc in the play (we shall have more to say about the bejeweled garment of style in the fourth chapter), but the schemes are given a rougher time. The play appears to work towards a distinction between simple manipulation and genuine transformation. Alliteration, for example, is easily susceptible to abuse and less likely to afford an opportunity for imaginative expression in itself; a complex pun, though, one which plays on two or three levels and is functionally related in some way to the rest of the play, can be applauded as an instance of genuine wit, one which has in some fruitful way changed the life or shape of a word into something else. Holofernes never achieves this, though he thinks he does; Berowne, we should say, more often achieves the heights.

Love's Labour's Lost, as we have said, echoes and parodies an extremely wide range of styles. We recognize the styles by a combination of their syntax--most often, their use of formal schemata--and their diction. The Latinisms of the pedant, which are continually run together into strings of synonyms, mark a distinctive trait that is easily captured

and reproduced; other authors have done as much, including Sidney with Rhombus. In Armado's elaborate rhetorical patterns, archaic diction, and tedious repetition, a number of older, broadly "euphuistic" and "arcadian" devices are singled out and parodied. In the staccato abruptness of Moth we hear once or twice the increasingly popular stile coupe, the curt style later used so effectively by Jonson. This style is heard very clearly again in Berowne:

> The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch,--pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the foola sid, and so say I, and I the fool: well proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: it kills sheep, it kills me, I a sheep: well proved again o' my side! I will not love; if I do, hang me; i'faith, I will not.
> (4.3.1-9)

Here, a modified curt style is used exactly as it was intended: to reflect the actual processes of thought.[71] Note also, by the way, the two fallacious syllogisms in the passage, recalling that of Armado mentioned earlier. Berowne's disturbed internal monologue is perfectly captured; in other places, the curt style will be deliberately evoked to recall some specific use of it. There could scarcely be a greater contrast with the carefully formed balance of Sir Nathaniel's Lylyian compliment of Holofernes.

The traditional social association of prose with the "low" characters is enhanced in Love's Labour's Lost in that these characters are the vehicle for the parody of courtly linguistic fashions. It is also appropriate since the pre-

dominant styles being parodied are prose styles: Harvey, Lyly, Sidney, perhaps the earlier Greene. Arthur H. King has described the transition in style during the 1590s as one from "copie" to "sentence," or from schemes to tropes.[72] "Copie" is the aim and result of inventive uses of schemes such as periphrasis or synonymy, and Love's Labour's Lost seems situated squarely in the center of this transition, however oversimplified King's description of it is. For the play, while continually mocking the old schemes, also gropes in exploration for sounder models and examples, and it finds some of the more fashionable tropes and conceits equally lacking.

We have as yet said nothing of some of the more obvious stylistic echoes: that of the sonneteering craze, and Petrarchan fashions, for example, practised even by Armado for his wench. Distinctions are particularly difficult to make here. When Berowne steps forth to "whip hypocrisy," he carefully echoes Navarre's sonnet (a piece actually 16 lines long):

> Good heart! what grace hast thou, thus to reprove
> These worms for loving, that are most in love?
> Your eyes do make no coaches; in your tears
> There is no certain princess that appears.
> (4.3.151-4)

Berowne makes fun of the habit ("Tush! none but minstrels like of sonneting") but has a trick of the rage himself. It is important to recall that, at approximately the same time as Love's Labour's Lost Shakespeare had probably also written "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" and other anti-Petrarchan poems, and Donne was probably beginning his poems

at the same time. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that, in 1599, William Jaggard included the sonnets of Berowne, Longaville, and Dumain in his collection, The Passionate Pilgrim. The latter's sonnet was also included, a year later, in England's Helicon. Navarre's sonnet is the only one not included in any collection; this reader, however, can find little to distinguish the sonnets, and it is doubtful that Navarre's is singled out. The parody, if there is any, must arise from the context and the attitudes fostered by the play, since Jaggard and readers who liked this sort of thing, even in 1600, apparently accepted the sonnets. A good many of the pieces in The Passionate Pilgrim (which was, after all, passed off as wholly Shakespeare's) could be easily exchanged with the sonnets in Love's Labour's Lost.

Beneath the games of wit and the parodies of style lie various fundamental assumptions about language and what should be done with it. We have seen, again, a variety of possible attitudes suggested in the play. To claim, as Ralph Berry does, that the play finally asserts the validity of the concept of words as "symbols of reality," or "symbols for things," or as "counters," is to oversimplify. Berry does allow, in Holofernes alone (who he says, incredibly, "has his passion for words under control," p. 76), that the idea of "words as things in themselves" is allowed by the play to stand. The test of language, nevertheless, is still for Berry its relation to "reality" or "things," and if there is no clearly perceived relationship, then it is condemned,

supposedly by the play, as frivolous, escapist, self-deceiving.

This is essentially a Baconian position, and while there is a grain of truth in it, it rests on a false dualism between matter and words, res and verba.[73] It makes style into mere ornament. The locus classicus of this concept is Bacon's statement of the first distemper of learning:

> . . . when men study words and not matter . . . for words are but the images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture.

And again, "words are symbols of notions."[74] (Note the blending of "matter" with subject "matter.") Bacon, we must admit, had many legitimate targets to attack in the Ciceronian mode whose growth he described in The Advancement of Learning. And though he doesn't mention Shakespeare, one can imagine his reaction to a performance of Love's Labour's Lost, full of sound and apparently signifying nothing. Furthermore, Bacon expresses irritation that "the condition of life of pedantes [Holofernes?] hath been scorned upon theatres," and reminds us that, however much they deserved it, still the "ancient wisdom" of the best times had some good things to say.[75]

It is tempting to conclude, as we now share Bacon's materialism, that at the end of Love's Labour's Lost Shakespeare, with Berowne, forswears "taffeta phrases" and so forth. That this is simply not so will be evident later; for now it is enough perhaps to recall the discussions above,

to remember the impressive range of possible attitudes toward language expressed in the play, no one of which is wholly sufficient in itself.

The attitudes in the play encompass both ends of a continuum: from words "as symbols of things," the Baconian position, to words solely "as things in themselves," the solipsist's (punster's) position. If the play seems to affirm only one or the other of these, then the fault is in our perception.

The ideal Bacon aims toward is a perspicuous, presumably transparent language, with no ambiguities. Swift's parody of the Academy theory (we should recall how Swift had picked up Bacon's phrase, "words are only names for Things") had many real-life counterparts, as R. F. Jones has shown, culminating in the bathos of John Wilkins's Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language (1668) in which, Jones notes, Wilkins

> attempted to classify everything in the universe, and then by a combination of straight lines, curves, hooks, loops, and dots, to devise for each thing a symbol which would denote its genus and species. For those creations of the imagination, such as fairies, which lie beyond the realm of nature, he frankly made no provision, claiming that since they did not exist, they should not be represented in language.[76]

In the chilly company of Hobbes, Wilkins, and the Royal Society extremists, in a wholly referential language, there is no room for ambiguity, for the play of imagination. This is a possibility barely conceived in Love's Labour's Lost, much less affirmed.

At the other end, we have Costard tossing his "remuneration" in the air, very nearly a total identification between name and thing, in the very impressive sound of the word; there is little or no abstraction. The punsters treat words as things, as we have seen: words are rhymed, twisted, jostled next to one another, taken apart and reassembled in intricate patterns. The most important result is the "dislocation" Burckhardt mentioned, the creation of that nagging and fruitful ambiguity so necessary to the poet. Words can be slippery things, as Bacon well knew:

> Yet even definitions cannot cure this evil in dealing with natural and material things; since the definitions themselves consist of words, and those words beget others.[77]

A vicious circle in which scientists squirm and poets thrive; the mystery of words, the uncanny energy which seems to issue from within them, which causes one word to "beget" another, always in transformation, never remaining still--if the play asserts anything, it is just this power. A comment in Mandelstam's short essay, "The Morning of Acmeism," (1919) is apposite here:

> To be--that is the artist's greatest pride. He desires no other paradise than existence, and when he hears talk of reality he only smiles bitterly, for he knows the endlessly more convincing reality of art. When we see a mathematician produce the square of a ten-figure number without thinking about it we are filled with a sort of astonishment. But too often we fail to see that a poet raises a phenomenon to its tenth power, and the modest exterior of a work of art often misleads us concerning the monstrously condensed reality that it possesses. In poetry this reality is the word as such.[78]

This play thrives on the assumption that words have a life of their own somehow, that they are not only symbols of "reality" in the material sense but of something else as well, and that they are alive. The energy of language in Love's Labour's Lost reminds us that poetry is almost always language used for its own sake as well as language used referentially: not an absolute polarity, but a kind of double exposure. The "two voices" mentioned earlier--of play and judgment, of solipsism and society, of words as things and words as signs--constitute a dialectic. The play is a "great feast of languages" in the best sense.

When we discuss the language of Love's Labour's Lost, we are nearly always stunned by the sheer joy of it all, so evident in every line. Various affectations are parodied, it is true, but they seem almost worthwhile in the excitement. What the men come to learn, it seems to me, is not solely that words must be used as symbols of things, but that there is a time and a place when different attitudes are required or licensed; the occasion of the play itself is justification for release and plenitude. As we shall see, what the men and the audience "learn" primarily is the principle of decorum.

Notes to Chapter I

[1]Johnson on Shakespeare, p. 89.

[2]William Matthews, "Language in 'Love's Labour's Lost,'" Essays and Studies (1964), p. 9.

[3]"Euphuism" is a term often too loosely used with reference to the parody in this play. For a very specific imitation of euphuism, cf. Falstaff in I Henry IV, 2.4.380-4.

[4]Gladys D. Willcock, Shakespeare as Critic of Language, The Shakespeare Association, Vol. 18 (1934), pp. 8-9.

[5]See works listed in bibliography by Willcock, Baldwin, G. K. Hunter, Doran, Joseph, and Mahood.

[6]G. Gregory Smith, ed., Elizabethan Critical Essays (2 vols. Oxford, 1904), II, 324. Hereafter cited as Smith.

[7]Jonas Barish, Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 280.

[8]M. C. Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy (London, 1955), pp. 35-36.

[9]Willcock, p. 26.

[10]Most scholars and editors accept these dates, though there are some interesting aberrations. Eva Turner Clark holds out for 1579, but then she thinks the plays were written by the Earl of Oxford.

[11]The Comedy of Errors, ed. R. A. Foakes (London, 1962), pp. xvi-xxiii (c. 1590-3); The Two Gentlemen of Verona, ed. Clifford Leech (London, 1969), pp. xxi-xxxv (c. 1592-3); E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 327 (c. 1594).

[12]This is a common pun in Shakespeare; another typical occurrence is in Much Ado:

> Margaret. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?
> Benedick. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it. (5.2.3-6)

[13]Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language, 2nd ed. (New York, 1957), p. 303.

[14]Sigurd Burckhardt, Shakespearean Meanings (Princeton, 1968), pp. 24-5.

[15]C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (Princeton, 1959), p. 100.

[16]James L. Calderwood, "Love's Labour's Lost: A Wantoning with Words," p. 330.

[17]See Frances A. Yates, The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century (London, 1947), for the widespread currency of the idea.

[18]Burckhardt, p. 28.

[19]Calderwood, p. 318.

[20]M. M. Mahood, Shakespeare's Wordplay (London, 1957), pp. 51-2; cf. H. A. Ellis, "Shakespeare's Punning in Love's Labour's Lost," Diss. North Carolina 1963, pp. 68-9.

[21]Ellis, pp. 122-30.

[22]Variorum, p. 359.

[23]Variorum, p. 357.

[24]Ben Jonson, Works, eds. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (11 vols. Oxford, 1947), VIII, 625.

[25]For background, see works listed in bibliography by K. M. Lea, O. J. Campbell, Kennard, Winifred Smith, McKee, and pp. xxxv-xxxvi of the Arden edition.

[26]Kenneth McKee, Scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte, trans. Henry F. Salerno (New York, 1967), p. xv.

[27]David, in the Arden edition, silently alters the "vnderstoode" of the Quarto to "understand."

[28]R. F. Hill, "Delight and Laughter: Some Aspects of Shakespeare's Early Verbal Comedy," Shakespeare Studies, Vol. 3 (1964), p. 2.

[29]O. J. Campbell, "Love's Labour's Lost Re-Studied," in Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne (New York, 1925), pp. 42-3.

[30]Willcock, p. 17.

[31]Thomas Nashe, Works, ed. R. B. McKerrow, rev. F. P. Wilson (5 vols. Oxford, 1958), II, 248.

[32]Ellis, p. 33.

[33]J. A. K. Thomson, Shakespeare and the Classics (London,

1952), p. 74; cf. Arden, 3.1.70n.

[34]Ellis, pp. 65-6.

[35]Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1959), pp. 185-6.

[36]Campbell, p. 34.

[37]See Barish, pp. 197-204.

[38]T. W. Baldwin, William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke (2 vols. Urbana, Ill., 1944), II, 627.

[39]Johnson on Shakespeare, p. 88.

[40]David M. Vieth, ed., The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (New Haven, 1968), p. 42.

[41]See Baldwin's compilation, II, 627-43.

[42]Michael A. Roberts, "Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study of Verbalism in the Drama," Diss. Yale 1969, p. 64.

[43]Samuel Daniel, Complete Works, ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (5 vols. London, 1885-6), I, 255-6.

[44]Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Madison, Wisc., 1954), p. 30.

[45]See especially George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, eds. Gladys D. Willcock and Alice Walker (London, 1936), Book III, chapters xxi and xxii; in addition to Renaissance rhetoricians themselves, see Baldwin and Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York, 1947).

[46]Jonson, VIII, 584.

[47]Puttenham, p. 214.

[48]G. K. Hunter, John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 262-3.

[49]John Hoskins, Directions for Speech and Style, ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton, 1935), p. 24.

[50]Arthur Johnston, ed., Francis Bacon (New York, 1965), p. 37. Hereafter cited as Bacon.

[51]Jonson, IV, 113.

[52]Thomson, p. 68.

[53]Quoted in Virginia Tufte, Grammar as Style (New York, 1971), p. 41.

[54]One thinks of Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" and, more recently, Norman Mailer's dissection of Lyndon Johnson's prose in Cannibals and Christians.

[55]See Willcock, Thomson, Matthews, Baldwin, and Helge Kökeritz, Shakespeare's Pronunciation (New Haven, 1953) for more on this subject.

[56]Kökeritz, pp. 296-7.

[57]Jonathan Swift, A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue, ed. Herbert Davis with Louis Landa (Oxford, 1957), p. 14.

[58]Holofernes's poem may have reminded the audience of another infamously bad rhyming poem, Pugna Porcorum per P. Porcium Poetam, by a friar, Joannes Leo Placentius. It was published c. 1530 (Hoskins, p. 69) and kept in print throughout the sixteenth century. Every word of the 250 lines began with the letter P. Hoskins's term for the poem was--naturally--"swinish."

[59]Puttenham, pp. 251-2.

[60]Puttenham, p. 216; cf. Touchstone in AYLI, 5.1.46-52.

[61]Joseph, p. 139.

[62]Variorum, p. 122.

[63]Kökeritz, p. 320.

[64]After writing this, I discovered that Hunter, p. 339, had also pointed out the pun.

[65]Baldwin, I, 570.

[66]Puttenham, p. 207.

[67]Smith, II, 324.

[68]G. R. Hibbard, Thomas Nashe (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 121.

[69]Ralph Berry, "The Words of Mercury," Shakespeare Survey 22 (1969), p. 75.

[70]See Erwin Panofsky's study of melancholy in his The Life and Art of Albrecht Durer (Princeton, 1955), pp. 156-71.

[71]Barish, p. 50.

[72]Arthur H. King, The Language of Satirized Characters in Poetaster (Lund, 1941), p. xxxiii.

[73]See A. C. Howell, "Res et Verba: Words and Things," ELH, 13, No. 2 (1946), pp. 131-42, rpt. in Seventeenth Century Prose: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Stanley E. Fish (New York, 1971), pp. 187-99.

[74]Bacon, pp. 36, 81.

[75]Bacon, p. 31.

[76]R. F. Jones, "Science and Language in England of the Mid-Seventeenth Century," Seventeenth Century Prose: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Stanley E. Fish (New York, 1971), p. 104; rpt. from JEGP, xxxi (1932), 315-31.

[77]Bacon, p. 91.

[78]Osip Mandelstam, "The Morning of Acmeism," Russian Literature Triquarterly, 1 (Fall, 1971), p. 150.

CHAPTER II

PAGEANTRY

Theatrical styles are no less important in Love's Labour's Lost than verbal ones, and the play provides us with an equally wide range of models and parodies of actors and audiences. There is nothing new in claiming that a Shakespearean comedy is concerned with its own theatricality; in this case, predominantly through a brilliant play-within-a-play. Few of the other early plays, however, are as insistent about exploring their own roots, or as self-consciously "artificial" and "theatrical," as Love's Labour's Lost. In addition to the usual allusions to the stage, common enough in Shakespeare, the play contains within it no fewer than three sections so clearly set off and emphasized that each of them may be termed a play-within-the-play: the sonnet-reading scene (4.3), the Masque of Muscovites (5.2), and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies (5.2).

The reason for such an assortment is clear enough. This is an exploratory play. In the previous chapter, we saw that the play considered the widest range of linguistic attitudes and responses, and was at times patently self-

referential. The same thing happens as well in the use of theatrical metaphors and inset theatrical scenes. Each of the three theatrical sections in Love's Labour's Lost is not simply a distorted emblem of the play as a whole--the traditional function of such scenes. The three sections are also crucial elements in defining and shaping the larger play, ways of clarifying the entire play's own theatricality. The interrelationships are complex, not simple, and the best description of the effect may be "synergetic," the effect of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. The audience's probable responses and sympathy are also transformed with each succeeding scene, and we find ourselves being moved between "engagement" and "detachment" throughout the play.[1] It is this careful modulation of the theatrical image, paralleled by the subtle interplay of linguistic styles, which makes Love's Labour's Lost so effective and so impressive an accomplishment, and sets it off from the three comedies before it.

The Sonnet-Reading Scene (4.3)

This scene (from ll. 1-210) provides us with the clearest possible image of multiple audiences. Berowne begins the scene, reading from a sonnet he is writing for Rosaline. A moment later the King enters with one of his sonnets, and Berowne steps aside--or rather, as the speeches seem to indicate, he climbs into a tree, from which he watches the rest of the scene.[2] Longaville then enters "with several

papers," and the King steps aside. The "mess" is completed when Dumain enters, also reading, and Longaville steps aside. There are at this point three hidden audiences watching Dumain--or four, counting the real audience, five, counting the author. The ultimate audience in the play is now Berowne, who is conscious of his special position:

> Like a demi-god here sit I in the sky,
> And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'er-eye.
> (4.3.77-8)

If, as seems likely, Berowne is literally clinging to a tree on the stage, then his "demi-god" situation is obviously ludicrous. At the same time, our knowledge is nearly coincidental with his, and our awareness in the play is also usually that of a "demi-god."

There is an elegant formalism in this scene, and its schematic pattern is not concealed, but intensified. If verisimilitude is destroyed with these improbabilities, there is a compensation in the sudden focusing of issues which had been previously vague. In this case Shakespeare explores the nature of the play's relationship with its own audience(s). The exaggeration of the scene increases our detachment from it and invites us to consider some of its implications. One of the most obvious conclusions is that multiple awareness can be easily and carefully controlled. A good example of this occurs at line 187 of this scene, just as we are beginning to warm up to Berowne's exposé of his comrades. If we have been attentive, we will remember throughout 4.3 that Costard and Jaquenetta are on their way with Berowne's son-

net from 4.2.145. Still, as we are drawn into the sonnet-reading scene--as artificial as it is--and into Berowne's denunciation, we tend to forget what has happened before. Berowne winds up to a greater and greater pitch, and his rhetoric becomes more feverish:

> When shall you hear that I
> Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye,
> A gait, a state, a brow, a breast, a waist,
> A leg, a limb--?
>
> (4.3.181-4)

Suddenly Costard and Jaquenetta enter, Berowne is deflated, a rhetorical and dramatic balance is restored. The effect is like that of a governor on a steam engine--when it winds up to too great a speed, from too much hot air, and threatens to explode, a countervailing force is automatically engaged and everything slows down and begins to change direction. Something similar happens here. The absurdities and folly of each "actor" are qualified by the comments of the immediate unknown "audience," which are in turn qualified by the next. A similar effect in A Midsummer Night's Dream has been termed "concentric circles of awareness,"[3] but it is nowhere more clearly and schematically emphasized than in Love's Labour's Lost. An analogous scene in Troilus and Cressida (5.2) is less rigorously patterned.

One of the conclusions implicit in the sonnet-reading scene is that the almost inevitable effect of such a multiple awareness is reductive--illusions and rhetoric which are sustained on one level are subverted or qualified by the next more inclusive circle. Dumain is at the center here;

Longaville steps forth and comments on his hypocrisy and sentiment. Then comes the King, who chides them both for their behavior and their language, and quotes their extravagant, Petrarchan lines back at both of them:

> I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion,
> Saw sighs reek from you, noted well your passion:
> Ay me! says one; O Jove! the other cries;
> One, her hairs were gold, crystal the other's eyes:
> You would for paradise break faith and troth;
> And Jove, for your love would infringe an oath.
> (4.3.137-42)

Berowne steps forth next, or perhaps drops from the tree, mocking the King's hypocrisy and, with sarcastic echoes, his verses too:

> Good heart! what grace hast thou, thus to reprove
> These worms for loving, that art most in love?
> Your eyes do make no coaches; in your tears
> There is no certain princess that appears:
> You'll not be perjur'd, 'tis a hateful thing:
> Tush! none but minstrels like of sonneting.
> (4.3.151-6)

With Costard's entrance, Berowne's facade collapses. (We have already heard Holofernes's judgment of his poem, for what it's worth, at 4.2.118-26.) It is interesting to note that one of the least aware characters in the play reveals the folly of the most aware. The "reductionism" thus works in every direction; both "low" and "high" circles of awareness may qualify one another.

It is important, too, to note the close connection with the rhetorical excesses mentioned above. Something like a musical counterpoint is created by the multiple levels of the sonnet-reading scene. Consider the following passage, with Berowne punctuating Dumain's romantic folly, clearly a

matter of diction as well as perception:

Dumain. O most divine Kate!
Berowne. O most profane coxcomb!
Dumain. By heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!
Berowne. By earth, she is not, corporal; there you lie.
Dumain. Her amber hairs for foul have amber quoted.
Berowne. An amber-coloured raven was well noted.
Dumain. As upright as the cedar.
Berowne. Stoop, I say;
Her shoulder is with child.
Dumain. As fair as day.
Berowne. Ay, as some days; but then no sun must shine.
(4.3.81-9)

Next follows a passage in which each of the four levels is expressed and then qualified in turn:

Dumain. O! that I had my wish.
Longaville. And I had mine!
King. And I mine too, good Lord!
Berowne. Amen, so I had mine.

Berowne then mocks the others, and emphasizes, in an aside to the audience, the artifice of the situation:

Is not that a good word?
(4.3.90-2)

This kind of counterpoint occurs throughout the play, most notably in Moth's puns and asides, Berowne's mocking, in the "greasy" innuendoes of Boyet, and especially in Costard, as in this passage in which high and low diction are carefully contrasted (the King is reading Armado's letter accusing Costard):

King. . . . there did I see that low-spirited swain,
that base minnow of thy mirth,--
Costard. Me?
King. that unlettered small-knowing soul,--
Costard. Me?
King. that shallow vassal,--
Costard. Still me?
King. which, as I remember, hight Costard,--
Costard. O! me.
King. sorted and consorted, contrary to the estab-

> lished proclaimed edict and continent
> canon, which with--O! with--but with
> this I passion to say wherewith,--
> Costard. With a wench.
> King. with a child of our grandmother Eve, a
> female; or, for thy more sweet under-
> standing, a woman.
> (1.1.240-54)

How "sweet" it is. Little is left to our own resources in such passages. It is obvious, by placing extremes of diction next to one another, that Armado's usage is ludicrous, Costard's more nearly the truth.

The sonnet-reading scene provides us with an analogous contrast in both language and behavior--in this case on four or five levels instead of two. Our response to the various forms of folly is not permitted to remain simple; it is continually being qualified in the entire play, and most schematically here. The structure of concentric circles of awareness clearly functions like the multiple levels of language. The single-minded folly of Dumain or Costard, or even of Berowne, is not allowed to stand unqualified. In a perceptive comment distinguishing between "dry" and "sly" humor, Maynard Mack reminds us that the pun,

> is a voluntary effect with language, as malapropism is involuntary. Instead of single-mindedness, pun presupposes multiple-mindedness; instead of preoccupation with one's present self and purposes, an alert glance before and after; and instead of loss of intellectual and emotional maneuverability, a gain, for language creatively used is freedom.[4]

In structure as well as language, then, Love's Labour's Lost continually leads us from the narrow to the broader, from the single to the multiple, from folly to clarification.

If in 4.3 Shakespeare for a moment telescopes the problem of audience response--with three on-stage audiences--and provides us with an emblem of balancing and qualifying responses, it is doubtful that we are supposed to forget, in the rest of the play, what we have seen here. The dramatist does the work for us now, in the most schematic way, with the implication that we should do it for ourselves elsewhere.

We are guided through the scene carefully, partly by the formal structure of gradual revelation, but also by a handy commentator--Berowne. As we noted in the previous chapter, Berowne has a special, privileged relationship with the audience. It is partly responsible for the apparent "contradictions" in his behavior--noted by those critics who insist on a psychological consistency. In the first scene of the play, for example, Berowne lucidly criticizes the proposed "academe" and points out the absurdity of the ascetic oath, then suddenly drops his arguments and signs the oath himself. One non-psychological explanation for this can be made in terms of structural function: Berowne must be both <u>detached</u> commentator and <u>engaged</u> participant at the same time, he must mock folly and yet partake of it, simultaneously wise and foolish, in order for the play to work the way it does. Our response to him is correspondingly complex, and Berowne is, as almost everyone agrees, the most attractive character in the play.

This engagement-detachment tension in Berowne's char-

acterization is equally evident in the sonnet-reading scene. He enters as his three comrades later do, reading from a love-sonnet he has written for Rosaline:

> The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself.
> (4.3.1-2)

His long interior monologue, partially quoted in the previous chapter as an example of the curt style, now follows. We soon realize, if we haven't already, that Berowne is "defiled" with the same pitch that everyone else is:

> By heaven, I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy.
> (4.3.12-3)

Worse, Berowne's speech is beginning to take on the stilted and affected quality of Armado's, as in the lines that follow:

> Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady!
> (4.3.15-7)

The use of the comparative progression is a familiar trick, and we saw its abuse in the previous chapter. Berowne's sonnet to Rosaline, read at 4.2.104-17, also uses the same sort of hyperbolic diction and forced comparisons as those of the other infatuated noblemen. Once again, Armado can be seen as a parody of the courtly lovers, and especially of Berowne, an extreme version of what they are all becoming under the influence of what they call "love."

If Berowne is deeply "engaged" in 4.3--if he acts and even sounds like Armado--it does not last long, and it is the same Berowne, the self-aware one, who later mocks the

lords and says,

> Tush! none but minstrels like of sonneting.
> (4.3.156)

This Berowne is the instrument of linguistic and dramatic counterpoint, the master of low diction:

> Proceed, sweet Cupid: thou hast thumped him
> with thy bird-bolt under the left pap.
> (4.3.22-4)

This is the same Berowne who subverts Longaville's sentimentality with a delightfully "greasy" joke:

> O! rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid's hose:
> Disfigure not his shop.
> (4.3.58-9)

The "critic" Berowne is our commentator-guide for the rest of this section, a "demi-god" suspiciously resembling, in his awareness of folly, the playwright himself (he has, he says, witnessed a "scene" of foolery). "Are we betray'd thus to thy over-view?" (4.3.173) the King asks later, and all of us must answer yes.

It is important to recall that we have heard <u>two</u> voices throughout this scene, and that they have been emphasized both structurally and linguistically: a spirit of participation and a spirit of judgment. They are the same as the two impulses for and against verbal licentiousness described in the first chapter. The effect, in both cases, is of a fruitful tension, of a dualism continually being asserted and then broken down. In the sonnet-reading scene, the conflict is set out in its very structure, and in the characterization of Berowne, himself a contradiction.

The Masque of Muscovites (5.2)

The Masque of Muscovites, even more obviously than the sonnet-reading scene, is a concentrated and suggestive theatrical emblem. It is imbued with a different but equally strong formality, an emphasis on its artifice, actors given parts to memorize, rehearsals, a hidden audience (Boyet), a more intelligent and more knowledgeable but still unsympathetic audience (the ladies), and an array of masks and disguises. It is "drama" on an elementary level, to be sure, but it is unmistakable.

There are obvious parallels between the Pageant and the sonnet-reading scene. The lords have recruited Moth to be their herald, and they intend to play the part of Muscovites. They have already had an unseen audience, though; Boyet reports to the ladies that he has,

> . . . overheard what you shall overhear:
> That, by and by, disguis'd they will be here.
> Their herald is a pretty knavish page,
> That well by heart hath conn'd his embassage:
> Action and accent did they teach him there;
> "Thus must thou speak, and thus thy body bear."
> (5.2.95-100)

There is considerable dramatic irony when the lords actually enter, thus, and all the acting lessons go for naught. As in 4.3, but less schematically, there are different levels of awareness onstage, with predictably comic results. The unsympathetic audience there (Berowne) is paralleled here in the ladies, who plan to destroy the intended masque by a refusal to participate in dramatic illusion, to offer the nec-

essary sympathy to sustain the idea of a "role":

> Princess. Nor to their penn'd speech render we no grace;
> But while 'tis spoke each turn away her face.
> Boyet. Why, that contempt will kill the speaker's heart,
> And quite divorce his memory from his part.
> Princess. Therefore I do it; and I make no doubt
> The rest will ne'er come in, if he be out.
> There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown,
> To make theirs ours and ours none but our own.
> (5.2.147-54)

This carefully prepared retaliation is not evident later during the Pageant of the Worthies, when the Princess counters the King's testy rejection of the intended Pageant:

> Princess. Nay, my good lord, let me o'er-rule you now.
> That sport best pleases that doth least know how,
> Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
> Dies in the zeal of that which it presents;
> Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,
> When great things labouring perish in their birth.
> (5.2.511-16)

This is still far from the sympathy Theseus grants the play of Pyramus and Thisby,

> Theseus. I will hear that play,
> For never anything can be amiss
> When simpleness and duty tender it.
> (Dream, 5.1.81-3)

But there is a clear difference in the ladies in the two scenes. Where the Princess and her ladies are scornful and unresponsive in the Masque, they are the best of the audience for the Pageant, and the lords the worst.

The structural device of the receding circles of aware-

ness suggests that it may be ill-advised to take an overly-condescending attitude towards "naive" art. Unknown, more aware audiences seem the rule rather than the exception in Love's Labour's Lost, and in any case Berowne makes the uncomfortable parallel between Masque and Pageant clear when, following the Princess's speech to the King quoted above, he says, "A right description of our sport, my lord," (5.2.517) referring to their Masque. All three of the theatrical sections are concerned in similar ways with the relation of audience and play, the question of dramatic illusion, and they are openly and repeatedly linked together.

A "masque" means too that the participants wear masks and possibly other disguises; in 5.2, both audience and actors assume disguises, with masks and exchanged "favours" concealing the ladies. The men are coming as "Muscovites, or Russians," a disguise which probably suggested to the audience little more than the exotic or strange.[5] In any event, their reception is befittingly cold:

> Princess. . . . ladies, we will every one be mask'd,
> And not a man of them shall have the grace,
> Despite of suit, to see a lady's face.
> (5.2.127-9)

"Grace" (l. 128) is exactly what will also be denied to their "penn'd speech" (l. 147), and which the men in turn deny to the Worthies. The women go on to change favours and thus totally confuse their outward identities. Boyet, who is not involved directly and whose identity is not in question, goes without a mask.

The section (ll. 158-265) in which all eight lords and ladies are on stage with visors and exotic costumes is extraordinarily suggestive, and can hardly fail to be visually effective in production. It is only fitting that all faces are now covered, since there has previously been little but confusion and deception between the four couples. The problematical relationship between appearance and reality is conveniently epitomized by this use of masks. Berowne, at least, comes to realize this later, when it dawns on him how their Masque was anticipated:

> . . . our intents . . . once disclos'd,
> The ladies did change favours, and then we,
> Following the signs, woo'd but the sign of she.
> (5.2.467-9)

It is apparent to the audience, of course, that the men have been wooing little more than the "sign" of the women all along, a false image of the nature of woman, a case of "pure, pure idolatry" of the most self-deceiving kind. They have misunderstood and underestimated the women from the very beginning, and we are privy to a dramatic irony which permeates the play: the men unaware of the distinction between sign and thing signified (the connection with their linguistic abuses is obvious here), the women manipulating the distinction to their own advantage.

The exotic masks which cover the faces of the men suggest their perceptual difficulties, then. Their "faces" have long since been dis-covered by the women, but they don't know it. It is no coincidence that Moth's "penn'd

speech" first founders on the word "eyes," which the ladies refuse to turn to the men. Berowne and his friends have difficulty with eyes and vision throughout, and we hear rather often echoes from Berowne's paradoxical "light" speech:

> Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
> So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
> Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
> (1.1.77-9)

This has already happened to the lords with respect to their ladies, and it takes them most of the play to learn it. The irony, again, runs throughout the play, as the men continually use Petrarchan conceits about eyes and light without self-recognition.

The question of "light" receives a final twist in Berowne's fashionable simile and the replies to it:

> Berowne. Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,
> That we, like savages, may worship it.
> Rosaline. My face is but a moon, and clouded too.
> King. Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do!
> Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars, to shine,
> Those clouds remov'd, upon our watery eyne.
> (5.2.201-6)

The equation "cloud"=mask is especially apt, as it suggests just how the dazzling light beneath the surface is hidden from the men. Later, before the lords return without their disguises, Boyet tells the ladies to change favours back again and un-mask:

> Fair ladies, mask'd, are roses in their bud:
> Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,
> Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.
> (5.2.295-7)

The link with roses about to bloom and angels letting con-

cealing clouds drop away is, again, exactly right for the women. The pun in "damask" works in nicely.

The mask conceals identity on both sides. The men assume the mask as a disguise but it fails completely because the women have seen through their roles already and because the men have unwittingly been revealed by a hidden audience. The situation is reversed with the women, from the lords' point of view. The women are masked, but are apparently identified by their favours; the men think they "know" them, but don't, not in any sense. Berowne and the King are begging, in fashionable terms, for an un-veiling of their faces, a literal dis-covery of their identity, while a much more general and more profound revelation is what is really needed here.

In a more general sense, the men have been playing a certain kind of role throughout the play, and the Masque is only the most literal example of it, a specifically theatrical occasion with rehearsals and costumes. Playing the role of love-sick wooer, afflicted with melancholy, requires a certain type of rhetoric and vocabulary, as we have seen. In one dazzling passage in the Masque, the problem is neatly summarized:

> Katharine. What! was your visor made without a tongue?
> Longaville. I know the reason, lady, why you ask.
> Katharine. O! for your reason; quickly, sir; I long.
> Longaville. You have a double tongue within your mask,
> And would afford my speechless visor half.
> Katharine. Veal, quoth the Dutchman. Is not veal a calf?
> Longaville. A calf, fair lady!
> Katharine. No, a fair lord calf.

> Longaville. Let's part the word.
> Katharine. No, I'll not be your half.
> (5.2.242-9)

This is as complicated as anything in the play. An attempted paraphrase: Longaville has remained silent so far, and Katharine asks if his "visor" or face can speak. He answers briefly, and she asks his reason. The Arden note explains that such a mask, which they all wear, was made of black velvet (said to be of "taffeta" at l. 159), which

> covered the entire features and was kept in place by a tongue, or interior projection, held in the mouth.
> (5.2.245n.)

The "double tongue" thus has a literal reference, as well as the figurative sense of "ambiguous" or "quibbling." Katharine is in the process of demonstrating this very quality: her speech just before this one ended with the word "long" and her next one begins "Veal," thus making the identification of Long-Ville. In addition, "veal" puns on "viel"= Dutch for "plenty" (response to Longaville's "half"); "veal"="calf," or fool; and "veil"=mask. Longaville responds by asking to part the word "calf," and "ca-" equals Katharine. She refuses to be his "'alf," or wife. And so it goes. A weary nineteenth century editor concluded of all this,

> Shakespeare in this scene is but too true to the insipid chaffing carried on under the mask at carnival and masquerade. One party insinuates by puns and allusions that he knows who the other is, in spite of his disguise.[6]

The point of this passage, which continues for another six lines of permutations of "calf" to "ox" to the inevitable

groaner about "horns," is that the whole thing is set up by the allusion to the mask's construction. Both Katharine and Longaville confirm the interpretation of "double" as "quibbling," and the whole set-piece is thus, as so often in the play, self-referential. It is also to be noted, though, that the mask has its own "tongue," and that anyone wearing one has a "double tongue." The broader implications of this are interesting. As the mask has its own tongue, so does the role played by the wearer of the mask, the actor, have its accompanying "tongue," or rhetoric. The lords have lately been playing the fashionable role of the melancholy poet-lover, and have fallen into a syrupy combination of diction and hyperbolic conceit, a dialect much abused in the 1590s. Everyone else in the play is afflicted with some other rhetoric implicit in his role, and the implication is that to play a role, to wear a mask, literal or figurative, is necessarily to adopt another language or dialect as well. The mask-role provides its own "tongue," in this case one which literally fits in the mouth of the wearer.

The connection with the discussion of style in the first chapter is obvious. Each of the traditional commedia dell' arte types were known as "masks" (defined as a stock type or role), and identified by their exaggerated costumes and masks, which were invariably the same. Each stock figure had a particular dialect or linguistic habit associated with it, and the six low figures in Love's Labour's Lost, we saw, are clearly delineated in their separate varieties of linguistic

folly. The mask-tongue metaphor links the high and the low figures even more closely, and suggests that the linguistic folly of the lower group is only a more extreme version of the glib wit of the high group.

There is ample justification, finally, in having the low figures wear the traditional commedia masks in production, perhaps with "English" rather than "Italian" clothing to suggest the brilliant blend of the native and the continental traditions in them. The link with the high characters would be all the more apparent in such a production, and the "double tongue" reference not as isolated as it may seem. The ubiquity of the mask-role motif would be evident, and the visual effect of seeing, at one time or another, fourteen of the seventeen principal characters wearing some sort of a mask would be powerfully suggestive, an emphatic reminder of the theatricality of the play.

Boyet functions throughout the scene as an ironic Presenter of the Masque. He has been an unseen audience to the boyish preparations of the lords, offers during the Masque itself a series of mocking observations, and single-handedly puts Moth out of his part. At one point he sums up for us, chorus-like, what we have seen:

> The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen
> As is the razor's edge invisible,
> Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen;
> Above the sense of sense; so sensible
> Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings
> Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter things.
>
> (5.2.256-61)

Boyet is a different kind of commentator than Berowne was in 4.3, however, because he remains completely detached. Boyet wears no mask and is sexually uninvolved with the ladies, however greasy his puns, because he cannot, as Rosaline puts it, "hit it." (4.1.125)

The very essence of the court masque was the graceful and harmonious fusion of poetry, song, and dance, perhaps shattered for a time by an anti-masque, but only to be reasserted at the end. Form and grace were emphasized, and the audience usually participated in some way. The courtly, and in two cases regal, audience of Love's Labour's Lost had doubtless participated in such masques before, as actors and audience-participants. The disruption of the Masque of Muscovites would have had all the more force, then, as Boyet does not act as a good presenter should, and the ladies refuse to play along with the usual expectations. The men have planned the traditional:

> Boyet. Their purpose is to parle, to court and dance;
> And every one his love-feat will advance
> Unto his several mistress.
> (5.2.122-4)

But the Princess insists, "to the death we will not move a foot," and Rosaline changeably plays with the men:

> Rosaline. Play, music, then! nay, you must do it soon.
> Not yet?--no dance: --thus change I like
> the moon.
> . . . . . .
> Since you are strangers, and come here by
> chance,
> We'll not be nice: take hands: --we will
> not dance.
> (5.2.211-12, 218-9)

The Masque of Muscovites, like much of the rest of the play, is marked by thwarted expectations--form and symmetry are asserted only to be subverted time and again. The traditionally harmonious fusion of actors and audience fails to occur at the end of the Masque just as, at the end of the play, the traditional comic conclusion fails to come about. In both cases, common expectations of dramatic structure are not satisfied, while the innovative dramatist goes on to give a different shape and form to his material. As Barber perceptively notes,

> In breaking off the dance before it begins, Rosaline makes a sort of dance on her own terms, sudden and capricious; and clearly the other ladies, in response to her nodded signals--"Curtsy, sweet hearts"--are doing the same pirouette at the same time.[7]

The movement initiated by the Masque is finally completed in a kind of instant replay, when the lords return without their disguises and the ladies have dropped their masks (ll. 310-483). The dramatic irony remains strong, for each lord thinks that the "sign" and his "she" correspond. There has been an uncovering of faces, but no discovery. The ladies make jokes, before the lords' return, about this:

> Princess. Will they not, think you, hang themselves to-night?
> Or ever, but in visors, show their faces?
> This pert Berowne was out of countenance quite.
> Rosaline. O, they were all in lamentable cases!
> (5.2.270-3)

"Cases" equals both "situation, state" and "mask" or face. In the second part of the Masque, both these conditions re-

main true.

This second part is parallel with the Masque itself, except that no (obvious) masks are worn. The men enter, expecting to woo and be well received, and the women again refuse to participate in their illusion or accept their rhetoric:

> King. All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!
> Princess. Fair in all hail is foul, as I conceive.
> King. Construe my speeches better, if you may.
> (5.2.339-41)

This sort of thing continues as the women play with the increasingly confused men, until Rosaline reveals their game:

> Rosaline. Which of the visors was it that you wore?
> Berowne. Where? when? what visor? why demand you this?
> Rosaline. There, then, that visor; that superfluous case
> That hid the worse and show'd the better face.
> (5.2.385-8)

Rosaline's witty reversal implies that the outer, "superfluous" face was preferable to the one he wears now. "Superfluous" means here literally "on the surface," but also suggests "unnecessary." Berowne is playing almost as elaborate and exotic a role now as when he was a "Russian," but Rosaline has seen through both of them.

Berowne's famous forswearing of "taffeta phrases" (to be discussed in detail later) now follows, and the men recognize how they were betrayed. Berowne preserves the theatrical metaphor:

> I see the trick on't: here was a consent,
> Knowing aforehand of our merriment,
> To dash it like a Christmas comedy.
> (5.2.460-2)

He sadly admits that they all "are again forsworn, in will and error." (l. 471) In the next moment Costard enters to announce the Pageant of the Nine Worthies.

The Masque of Muscovites and its sequel cover over 300 lines of 5.2 and their importance in the play is apparent. They continue and expand the theatrical concerns established in the sonnet-reading scene and lead nicely into the Pageant. The use of the mask, in particular, as an emblem of disguise and discovery, both of self-deception and self-knowledge, is especially effective; and when in the next moment we see the Worthies, dressed in "ancient" costumes and quite possibly wearing masks themselves, we find the connection between the two sections all the more compelling.

The Pageant of the Nine Worthies (5.2)

The Pageant of the Nine Worthies is the third of the large "theatrical" sections, and the most important of them. It is far from being any more sophisticated a dramatic offering than the Masque, though, and would have seemed much less fashionable to the audience. The Pageant is the brainchild of Holofernes, and an unhappy birth it is. A brief survey of the tradition of the Nine Worthies might be helpful here.[8]

The first recorded appearance of the Nine Worthies is apparently c. 1312, in Jacques de Longuyon's "Les Voeux du Paon." His list became the traditional grouping. Three pagans: Hector, Alexander, and Caesar. Three Jews: Joshua,

David, and Judas Maccabaeus. Three Christians: Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon. The Worthies appear rather frequently in diverse works: The Parlement of the Thre Ages (c. 1352-70), Gower's "In Praise of Peace," (c. 1390-1400) and Lydgate's "The Assembly of Gods," (c. 1420) among others. Caxton's preface to "Kyng Arthur" (1485) claims that,

> it is notoyrly knowen thorugh the unyversal world that there been ix worthy.[9]

It is difficult to tell how literally to take this, but there are numerous appearances in the 1500s, among them Barclay's "Ship of Fools," (1509) Stephen Hawes's The Pastime of Pleasure (1509, reprinted 1554-5), and John Rolland's Treatise callit the Court of Venus (1575). Other examples can be given up to the date of Love's Labour's Lost, including Richard Lloyd's poem, published 1584, "A briefe discourse of the most renowned actes and right valiant conquests of those puisant Princes, called the Nine Worthies."[10]

In their appearances in these "medieval" narratives, the Worthies usually served as illustrations for an ubi sunt or contemptus mundi theme, as in Gower's poem:

> See Alisandre, Ector and Julius,
> See Machabeu, David and Josue,
> See Charlemeine, Godefroi, Arthus,
> Fulfild of werre and of mortalite.
> Here fame abit, bot al is vanite;
> For deth, which hath the werres under fote,
> Hath mad an ende of which ther is no bote.[11]

They are linked with "fame," though eventually defeated by Time or Death. In many poems, the Nine Worthies are intro-

duced or accompanied by the allegorical figure Fame, who asserts her power to elevate heroes and glorify them. In the thoroughly "medieval" poems, Fame is usually superseded by Time or Eternity; but in the sixteenth century one finds this less and less inevitably, and Fame often stands alone as the only means of defeating mutability. In either case, the Nine Worthies are the supreme exemplum, and their appearance on any stage would doubtless trigger a complex of traditional associations of this sort.

A parallel tradition of the Nine Worthies is to be found in the traditional pageants and welcoming-shows of the time. Theseus, in A Midsummer Night's Dream, describes his experiences with them to Hippolyta:

> Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
> To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
> Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
> Make periods in the midst of sentences,
> Throttle their practised accents in their fears,
> And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
> Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
> Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome,
> And in the modesty of fearful duty
> I read as much as from the rattling tongue
> Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
> Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
> In least speak most, to my capacity.
> (Dream, 5.1.93-105)

His experience with official welcomes must certainly have been familiar to the sovereigns whom we know saw Love's Labour's Lost. At any rate, pageants appear to date back nearly as far as the "medieval" tradition, and they seem to have grown steadily in popularity. "Pageant," according to Alice Venezky, meant to the Elizabethans literally,

> a particular feature of the public celebration--the decorative, symbolic devices incorporating actors, properties and setting, and mounted upon city gates, landmarks, or temporary structures.[12]

Ben Jonson, in describing these symbolic devices, complained that it was not becoming,

> or could it stand with the dignitie of these shewes (after the most miserable and desperate shift of the Puppits) to require a Truch-man, or (with the ignorant Painter) one to write, This is a Dog; or, This is a Hare: but so to be presented, as upon the view, they might, without cloud, or obscuritie, declare themselves to the sharpe and learned: And for the multitude, no doubt but their grounded judgements did gaze, said it was fine, and were satisfied.[13]

The pageants had something for everyone, then, and as Jonson's snide allusion suggests, the "multitude" enjoyed primarily the spectacle. A sophisticated audience could be expected to feel itself above the simplicities of "This is a Dog," and possibly also above "I, Pompey, am."

In the typical pageant or Lord Mayor's Show, the Nine Worthies might be painted on a conduit or gate, complete in battle gear with blazons, and with identifying verses somewhere near. More often, though, there were actors playing the Worthies, who would then announce their identities. J. H. Roberts has shown that the typical speech, as in Love's Labour's Lost, began "I, David, am" or "I, Josue, am."[14] Crawley has demonstrated the obvious, that Shakespeare is parodying the stilted diction and awkward metrics of such speeches;[15] most of the Worthies in Love's Labour's Lost speak in an ambling dog-trot, presumably an attempt at Poulter's measure. Here is a more polished sample, from Coventry

in 1456, of the typical welcoming speech:

> I, Julius Cesar, soverayn of knyghthode
> And emperour of mortall men, most hegh and myghty,
> Welcum you, princes most benynge and gode;
> Of quenes that byn crowned so high non knowe I.
> The same blessyd blossom, that spronge of your body,
> Shall succede me in worship. I wyll it be so;
> All the landis olyve shall obey hym un-to.[16]

It isn't all that bad until the final line, but one can imagine what even more amateurish writers or, worse yet, schoolmasters could come up with.

Unlike the "medieval" tradition, the somber figures of Time, Eternity, or Death rarely contradicted Fame's introduction of the Worthies in pageants or city shows. An extensive iconography supported these tableaus, and its richness is suggested in a description of the House of Fame (following Chaucer) in Jonson's The Masque of Queenes (1609), which Inigo Jones designed:

> First for the lower Columnes, he chose the statues of the most excellent Poets, as Homer, Virgil, Lucan, &c. as beeing the substantiall supporters of Fame. For the upper, Achilles, Aeneas, Caesar, and those Heroes, w^ch^ those Poets had celebrated. All w^ch^ stood, as in massy gold. Betwene the Pillars, underneath, were figurd Land-Battayles, Sea-Fights, Triumphes, Loves, Sacrifices, and all magnificent Subiects of Honor: In brasse, and heightend, w^th^ silver.[17]

Given this traditional association of Fame with the Worthies and other ancient heroes, it would be difficult to maintain, as some critics have done, that the Pageant was an afterthought in Love's Labour's Lost, or that it is somehow "detached" from the rest of the play. Given the first words of the play, "Let fame . . . / Live register'd upon our brazen

tombs" and the traditional associations, it is almost inevitable that the Worthies themselves will sooner or later appear.

The low characters, except for Dull, are the actors in the Pageant, and they have been previously discussed as constituting a commedia dell'arte troupe. Accordingly, we might expect to find scenarios or other evidence that the Nine Worthies figured in the commedia. There is apparently no such evidence, however.[18] The Labors of Hercules, on the other hand, which Holofernes in some confusion inserts into the Pageant, was often performed by commedia troupes.[19] In any event, Shakespeare's audience would probably not have been surprised to see the troupe present the Worthies and the Labors, though the confused combination of the two might have seemed unusual. At the same time, it is well to recall that the low characters, while of unquestionable Italian descent, are also thoroughly English, and the native pageant tradition is probably a more important context here. As usual, Shakespeare has it both ways, and utilizes every possibility of this remarkable conflation of dramatic traditions--both broadly "popular."

The solemnity of this discussion of traditions is inevitably shattered by the ludicrous reality of the Pageant itself as it is enacted in Love's Labour's Lost, where little sanctity is observed. As we would expect, the tradition of the Nine Worthies had already suffered inevitable debasement. There was an early tendency to substitute local favorites as

a ninth or tenth Worthy, usually for Godfrey of Bouillon.[20] Guy of Warwick was an understandable favorite ninth, but Bertrand du Guesclin as a tenth is less worthy of the honor.[21] Nashe mentions "Salomon" and "Gedeon"[22] and Greene "Scipio"[23] as alternates. Henry VIII[24] and even Henry VI[25] were also substitutions. This sort of thing quickly led to bathos, the substitution of more and more minor officials, as in Richard Johnson's poem of 1592, "The Nine Worthies of London." As described by Venezky, it

> depicted the allegorical figures of Fame and Clio calling upon the deceased ancient worthies of the city to rise from an Elysian bank, where they rested arm-in-arm, to stand forth, identify themselves, and deliver their stories in verse. Johnson included Walworth as a representative of the Fishmongers' guild, while other worthies represented the Grocers, Vintners, Merchant Taylors, Mercers and Silk Weavers.[26]

It is interesting to recall that Richard Lloyd, the schoolmaster, had published his traditional account of the Nine Worthies only a few years earlier, indicating that the orthodox tradition continued to flourish simultaneously.

The debasement of the Nine Worthies is also, I think, to be associated with the increasing popularity of romances and chivalric epics with the reading public. Anthony Munday's translations, in the mid-1590s, of the Palmerin romances were popular, and Heywood's The Four Prentices of London (c. 1600) marks a high (or low) point. The Knight of the Burning Pestle (c. 1608-9), the Beaumont-Fletcher parody of Heywood, reminds us that there were many who had had enough of this kind of apotheosis of the middle classes. The Lord

Mayors' Shows, and especially those written by Middleton and Heywood, carried the process a step further and unabashedly portrayed the local Skinners, Grocers, and Cobblers as the equals of Caesar and Alexander. Johnson's poem, in 1592, is the rule rather than the exception. Huizinga describes an early manifestation of a conceit that became all too common:

> At the funeral service of Charles the Bold at Nancy, his conqueror, the young duke of Lorraine, came to honour the corpse of his enemy, dressed "in antique style," that is to say, wearing a long golden beard which reached to his girdle. Thus got up to represent one of the Nine Worthies, he prayed for a quarter of an hour.[27]

Parody is another sure sign of debasement and Molinet is reported to have composed an early parody, "the nine worthies of gluttony."[28] Shakespeare's Pageant thus had numerous parodic predecessors.

The Pageant of the Nine Worthies in Love's Labour's Lost is first suggested as a subject by Holofernes, a recommendation which should give us pause. As his linguistic theories are dated, so is his choice of dramatic material. The audience would probably have thought of it as an "old" subject, like the play of Pyramus and Thisby in Dream,[29] one of those moldy old tales Shakespeare so often resuscitated. The performance does nothing to alleviate suspicions of disaster.

Holofernes has a great deal of trouble casting the Pageant, to begin with. All of the characters are hung up on the issue of decorum. The diminutive Moth--the only one of the low characters to be played by a boy actor--is chosen

for the role of Hercules, traditionally one of the "Giants" in pageants. They realize that Moth is too small for the part, so he is to portray Hercules "in minority," strangling a snake, complete with explanatory apology. Armado's objection to Moth,

> Pardon, sir; error: he is not quantity enough for that Worthy's thumb: he is not so big as the end of his club.
>
> (5.1.126-8)

suggests the dogged literal-mindedness we have mentioned before with respect to style. The decorum the actors are concerned with here is a sheerly physical one: they are determined to present a literal imitation of the Worthies. Costard is selected to play Pompey the Great because of his (Costard's) "great limb or joint," whatever anatomical curiosity that may be. Sir Nathaniel is put out of his part as Alexander the Great when Boyet tells him his nose is "too right," alluding to Alexander's legendary manner of holding his head twisted to the side (5.2.560n.), and Armado-Hector is disconcerted by mockery about his "leg" and "calf"(=fool) being the wrong size.

The narrator in Nabokov's Bend Sinister makes the snide observation that "devices which in some curious new way imitate nature are attractive to simple minds," and that same fascination is evident in the preparations for the Pageant of Worthies, as it is when Bottom suggests opening the window to let the moon into their play, only to be countered by Quince's suggestion that someone be chosen "to disfigure,

or to present, the person of Moonshine." (Dream, 3.1.52-3) The least important sense of decorum, as both plays demonstrate, is the physical. The directors of these plays-within-the-play assume that because they haven't the imagination to overcome certain physical obstacles, the audience doesn't either. The first chapter ended with the suggestion that what the lords in Love's Labour's Lost learn most of all is a sense of decorum in style; the Pageant seems both to focus and distort this concern, making it very specifically a question linked with artistic intention and effect.

Costard is the only actor in the Pageant who understands the difference between his role and himself. When Nathaniel asks the loaded question,

> Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?
> (5.1.120-1)

Holofernes and Armado are not bashful in offering themselves. Each will play several of the Worthies, and Moth exclaims sardonically of Holofernes, "Thrice-worthy gentleman!" (5.1.138) During the Pageant itself, most of the actors take themselves, and their roles, too seriously and too literally and are thus easily flustered by the mockery. Costard, on the other hand, knows that he is only to "parfect one man in one poor man, Pompion [Pumpkin] the Great." (5.2.499-500) He carefully distinguishes himself from his role:

> It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompey the Great: for mine own part, I know not the degree of the Worthy, but I am to stand for him.
> (5.2.502-4)

At the end of his speech, Costard replies to the Princess's praise,

> 'Tis not so much worth; but I hope I was perfect. I made a little fault in "Great."
> (5.2.554-5)

Such an awareness of his assumed role and of his own "worth" is virtually unique in Love's Labour's Lost, and Berowne is correct that in one sense, at least, "Pompey proves the best Worthy." (5.2.556) The contrast with the behavior of the lords in the Masque of Muscovites is striking--there, the mask is the face.

The Pageant of the Nine Worthies never really has a chance to get started. Like the women earlier in the Masque, the men of the court are not disposed to be properly sympathetic as an audience, and as each of the Pageant figures steps forth, he is ragged unmercifully and forced to retreat. As in the Masque, a dramatic effort fails because of a misjudgment of the audience and, here, a misconception of the requisite "verisimilitude" of the theater. The actors strive for a literal imitation and the lords mock the inevitable failure. Costard berates Nathaniel:

> O! sir, you have overthrown Alisander the conqueror. You will be scraped out of the painted cloth for this: your lion, that holds his poll-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax: he will be the ninth Worthy.
> (5.2.568-72)

Scatological puns to the side, Costard assures us that Nathaniel, like his other commedia friends no doubt, is a good neighbor and "a very good bowler," but he is, alas, "a little

o'erparted." (5.2.576-8) Such is the case with all the Pageant actors and, by implication, with the lords as well, who have throughout the play been confusing role and self, mask and "mask."

It is curious that the four lords mock the Worthies' performances so uncharitably, considering that they were themselves the victims of a similar scourging in the Masque of Muscovites. Berowne himself, we say, made one clear parallel between the two performances. (5.2.517) Other parallels are also evident: in the Masque, Moth was mocked out of his prologue by Boyet, just as the Pageant figures are by Boyet and the lords. In both cases, the intended audience refuses to sympathize properly, and the planned effects go awry--the women won't dance, the Worthies aren't allowed to finish their speeches. Both times, a more sophisticated and knowledgeable audience looks down on the amateurish theatrical effort offered up to it.

If we have learned anything from the sonnet-reading scene and the Masque of Muscovites--from the vertiginous array of receding circles of awareness, from the plethora of concealed or more knowledgeable audiences--it is that a certain charity or sympathy is required of the audience if dramatic illusion is to be sustained, and at the least we should have learned that dogmatic certainty or inflexibility, on the stage or in the audience, will sooner or later be subverted. Unlike 4.3 or the Masque of Muscovites, the Pageant of the Nine Worthies has no authorial-commentator to guide us

through the scene--that role, by implication, has been bequeathed to the actual audience. We have been prepared for it by the two earlier "theatrical" scenes, which debated most of the problems now concentrated in the Pageant. We should have been "educated" by now, even if no one in the play is.

Tracing out the significance of the Pageant as a play-within-the-play is thus like following the curve of a Möbius strip: the inside and the outside, one soon discovers, are the same surface, topologically indistinguishable. As an audience, we should by now be wary. Holofernes's lament in the midst of the mockery--"This is not generous, not gentle, not humble" (5.2.621)--rings true and serves to check our wilder responses, even though his moving plea is, as usual, subverted in the next instant by a Chaplinesque pratfall as he stumbles in the growing darkness. Each of the three large theatrical sections has shown the audience that audiences must be responsible and sympathetic.

The same attitude prevails with respect to verbal style. Love's Labour's Lost uses the wittiest, most "conceited" and (presumably) up-to-date language to mock and qualify an older and now less fashionable rhetoric. A too-easy dismissal of older poetic styles and subjects, one assumes, should now be checked by an awareness of the possible limitations of the witty and conceited style presently in vogue. Whether the courtly audience of 1597-8 reacted in this way is a matter of speculation, but the structure of the play seems to demand

it of us. Imagination, sympathy, patience: the requisite virtues of the audience are also those of the playwright. Our responses to the play-within-the-play have a way of becoming reflexive perspectives on ourselves. It seems that one of the strategies of the play is to lead us as an audience into a response to the Pageant similar to that of the lords', with only the briefest reminders, other than our own sophistication, to suggest that this is an inadequate response to the play as a whole. It is a built-in caveat for all future audiences of the play--judge it for itself, not its antiqueness; for its own style, not the styles it contains.

Conclusions

Granted the differences, there are an astonishing number of similarities among the three theatrical sections: most obviously, the continuing concern for the relationship between author and audience, audience and play, actor and role. The very nature of the dramatic experience and its connection with the world outside are principal concerns.

Each of the three sections is also thematically concerned in some way with the question of "praise" and "worth," two terms often linked together. Nathaniel's question,

> Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?
>
> (5.1.120-1)

turns out to be one of the most important in the play. Most of the characters have a false sense of their own worth and

are poor judges of others'. Each of the lords' sonnets, for example, is a model of hyperbole and excessive rhetoric. Early in the play, the Princess had rebuked Boyet's overly-clever and sophistical praise of her, using these terms:

> Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
> Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:
> Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye,
> Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues.
> I am less proud to hear you tell my worth
> Than you much willing to be counted wise
> In spending your wit in the praise of mine.
> (2.1.13-19)

In Berowne's sonnet we heard this:

> Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,
> Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
> Celestial as thou art, O! pardon love this wrong,
> That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.
> (4.2.114-7)

The hyperbole of the sonnet-reading (4.2.114-7) punctuated by the reductive puns of this same Berowne, but he soon takes flight himself, in a witty and paradoxical speech as extravagant as any in the play:

> O! but for my love, day would turn to night.
> Of all complexions the cull'd sovereignty
> Do meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek;
> Where several worthies make one dignity,
> Where nothing wants that want itself doth seek.
> Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues,—
> Fie, painted rhetoric! O! she needs it not:
> To things of sale a seller's praise belongs;
> She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot.
> (4.3.230-8)

There are a number of parallels with the Princess's speech to Boyet, just quoted above, even to the terms used: "painted," "flourish," and "praise." The "worthies" in her cheek suggest another link with the Pageant itself.

The Masque of Muscovites is preceded by the ladies' discussion of the men's sonnets, and in particular their tendency towards false praise and false evaluations of worth. Rosaline declares of Berowne's verses,

> The numbers true; and, were the numbering too,
> I were the fairest goddess on the ground:
> I am compar'd to twenty thousand fairs.
> O! he hath drawn my picture in his letter.
> Princess. Any thing like?
> Rosaline. Much in the letters, nothing in the praise.
> (5.2.35-40)

Katharine and Maria make similar complaints about Dumain and Longaville's efforts. Boyet reports that the men have encouraged Moth, "making the bold wag by their praises bolder." (5.2.108) In the Masque itself, the ladies rebuff all of the traditional gambits of wooing, including Moth's salutation, "All hail, the richest beauties on the earth!" which is answered by Boyet, "Beauties no richer than rich taffeta," in reference to the masks they are wearing. (5.2.158-9)

When the men return without their masks, Berowne attacks Boyet for possessing virtually the same qualities that the lords have aspired to throughout the play:

> This fellow pecks up wit, as pigeons pease,
> And utters it again when God doth please.
> He is wit's pedlar, and retails his wares
> At wakes, and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs;
> And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,
> Have not the grace to grace it with such show.
> (5.2.315-20)

As the pot calls the kettle black, we may hear an echo of "grace-disgrace" from 1.1.3, or perhaps from Longaville's lines:

> Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.
> (4.3.65)

Shakespeare has the Princess echo this infatuation with "grace" later:

> . . . folly, in wisdom hatch'd,
> Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school
> And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.
> (5.2.70-2)

Her tone is possibly sardonic, at least mocking, with a possible pun "grace"=grease. At any rate, Berowne's use of the words is, by this point in the play, suspicious. When he goes on to call Boyet "honey-tongu'd," it appears that Boyet represents only a more foppish version of Berowne himself.[30] What Berowne criticizes is Boyet's glibness, the very thing we have just heard in the speeches and poems of the noblemen. The women go on to chide the men even more thoroughly. Rosaline says that the Princess gives "undeserving praise," that the Russians were in fact foolish. (5.2.366) In the rest of this section, the women one by one report the sweet nothings the lords had uttered (to the wrong ladies), and the men are confounded.

The Nine Worthies themselves are similarly linked with the idea of false praise. The debasement of the tradition described earlier meant that the Worthies were something of a joke by 1598. They appear to have become for many, through a gradual vulgarization, emblems of exaggerated or false praise, venerated relics from the past being misused in the diminished present. In Pierce Penilesse (1592), Nashe had complained that,

> ther is not that strict observation of honour,
> which hath beene heeretofore. Men of great

> calling take it of merite, to have their names eternizde by Poets; & whatsoever pamphlet or dedication encounters them, they put it up in their sleeves, and scarce give him thankes that presents it. Much better is it for those golden Pens to raise such ungratfull Peasants from the Dung-hil of obscuritie, and make them equal in fame to the Worthies of olde, when their doting selfe-love shall challenge it of dutie, and not onely give them nothing themselves, but impoverish liberality in others.[31]

And again in The Unfortunate Traveller (1594), the orator of the university at Wittenberg makes a lengthy Ciceronian speech, not out of ostentation, it is claimed,

> but to shew the extraordinarie good will they bare the Duke (to have him stand in the raine till he was through wet): a thousand quemadmodums and quapropters he came over him with; every sentence he concluded with Esse posse videatur: through all the nine worthies he ran with praising and comparing him; Nestors yeeres he assured him off under the broade seale of their supplications, and with that crowe troden verse in Virgil, Dum iuga montis aper, hee packt up his pipes and cride dixi.[32]

And Burton writes in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), under the heading of "Pride and Vain-Glory," complaining about such exaggerations:

> All this madness yet proceeds from ourselves; the main engine which batters us is from others, we are merely passive in this business, from a company of parasites & flatterers, that with immoderate praise, & bombast epithets, glozing titles, false elogiums, so bedaub & applaud, gild over many a silly & undeserving man, that they clap him quite out of his wits. . . . And who is that mortal man that can so contain himself, that, if he be immoderately commended, and applauded, will not be moved? Let him be what he will, those Parasites will overturn him: if he be a King, he is one of the Nine Worthies, more than a man, a God forthwith . . . If he be a soldier, then Themistocles, Epaminondas, Hector, Achilles, twc thunder-bolts in war, the triumvirate of the world, &c., and the valour of

> both Scipios is too little for him, he is most invincible, most serene, adorned with many trophies, a lord of Nature, although he be a hare in armour, indeed a very coward, a milk-sop, and as he said of Xerxes, last in battle, first in flight, & such a one as never durst look his enemy in the face. If he be a big man, then is he a Sampson, another Hercules: if he pronounce a speech, another Tully or Demosthenes.[33]

And so on for another two pages, through every conceivable example. Doll Tearsheet had consoled Falstaff in just such terms:

> Ah, rogue! i'faith, I love thee. Thou art as valorous as Hector of Troy, worth five of Agamemnon, and ten times better than the Nine Worthies. Ah, villain!
>
> (2 Henry IV, 2.4.202-5)

Beaumont and Fletcher, as we should expect after seeing Ralph the Grocer in The Knight of the Burning Pestle, have a number of similarly disparaging references to the Worthies, as in The Double Marriage (1620):

> Martia. Thou despis'd fool,
> Thou only sign of man, how I contemn thee!
> Thou woven Worthy in a piece of arras,
> Fit only to enjoy a wall! Thou beast,
> Beaten to use![34]

A frenzied climax of sorts is achieved by Touchstone when his apprentice Golding in Eastward Ho! (1605) has been elected Master Alderman's deputy for the ward, and his master rises to a prophetic ecstasy:

> Worshipfull Sonne! I cannot containe my selfe, I must tell thee, I hope to see thee one o' the Monuments of our Citty, and reckon'd among her worthies, to be remembred the same day with the Lady Ramsey, and grave Gresham: when the famous fable of Whittington, and his Pusse, shalbe forgotten, and thou and thy Actes become the Posies for Hospitals, when thy name shall be

> written upon Conduits, and thy deeds plaid i' thy life time, by the best companies of Actors, and be call'd their Get-peny. This I divine. This I Prophecie.[35]

One of the last entries in the O.E.D. under "worthy" has as its definition "Applied colloquially or facetiously to any person, esp. one having a marked personality." From military hero of epic legend to local eccentric: it is quite a decline, and Love's Labour's Lost stands near the middle of it, taking note of the phenomenon and also helping it along. When the diminutive Moth is chosen for the role of Hercules, one of the traditional pageant "Giants," parody can go little further, and "reductionism" is literal. Hercules' diminution is all the more appropriate when we learn that he was thought of not only as a strongman but also as a type of the orator, a warrior in words.[36] In this Pageant, though, Hercules is completely silent.

In the Pageant itself, the speaker's traditional "praise" for the sovereign onlooker is transformed to this:

> And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance
> And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.
> (5.2.549-50)

In the final moments of the play, however, Armado asks the King,

> . . . will you hear the dialogue that the two learned men have compiled in praise of the owl and the cuckoo?
> (5.2.875-7)

What we find there, as we shall see later, is something quite different from what we might have expected, a "praise" which is not false or awkward but exactly right.

We should note, too, that the traditional vehicle by which "worth" is "praised" is verse, as in the final songs or the lords' sonnets. Extravagant rhetorical hyperbole is thus analogous to casting Moth as Hercules, or having the local yokels put on the Pageant of the Nine Worthies at all. Again we find a provocative analogy in the treatment of style and that of the Pageant. Just as Love's Labour's Lost works toward a re-definition of style, so too the play explores different versions of the dramatic experience.

One of the sources of unity in the play, then, and especially among the three theatrical sections, is to be found in this concern for praise, and its connection with the theme of "worthiness." Most of the characters, we saw, have their own versions of "authority," of what is worthy, and they each worship different little pantheons of worthies, from the church fathers to Horace, Priscian, and Ovid. There is an astounding number of other legendary heroes mentioned in the play as well, in addition to the ones that actually appear in the Pageant: Caesar, Joshua, and Achilles (all three from the traditional Nine Worthies), Salomon, Nestor, Timon, Hannibal, Ajax ("a-jakes"; the "ninth Worthy," 5.2.572), not to mention St. George. Cupid, more powerful than any other figure in the play, is virtually a tenth worthy himself. Asked to name other "great men" who have been in love by the love-sick Armado, Moth mentions only Hercules and Samson (1.2.63,67), but the list could go on.

In 2.1, the Princess protests Boyet's praise of her

"worth" (2.1.17), and Katharine reports of Dumain,

> . . . much too little of that good I saw
> Is my report to his great worthiness.
> (2.1.62-3)

In this same scene, the question of the debt between the Princess's father and Navarre is raised, and the King claims that his part of Aquitaine is "not valued to the money's worth." (2.1.137) A moment later, he bids the Princess,

> . . . receive such welcome at my hand
> As honour, without breach of honour, may
> Make tender of to thy true worthiness.
> (2.1.169-71)

At the end of this scene, Boyet tells the Princess that Navarre revealed himself through his eyes as being in love with her:

> Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,
> As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;
> Who, tend'ring their own worth from where they were glass'd,
> Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd.
> (2.1.242-5)

So it goes throughout the play, from the "several worthies" in Rosaline's cheek (4.3.233), to Nathaniel's crucial question, "Where will you find men worthy enough" (5.1.120) to the most famous single word in the entire logorrhetic play, "honorificabilitudinitatibus," (5.1.42) which is translated by Dover Wilson as "the state of being loaded with honours" or (with Malvolio), to "crush" this a little, "worthy." This is going too far, perhaps, but "worthy" and "worthiness" echo throughout the play. The appearance of the actual Worthies on stage in the final scene is a foregone conclusion--they have long since been called into metaphorical life.

The play is partly an exploration of what is and is not "worthy" in rhetoric, drama, and human behavior, and the question is worked from every conceivable perspective.

The three theatrical sections, so carefully linked together, are a unifying force in the play. Each explores the nature of the dramatic experience--acting, audience, choice of subject. Each is linked, too, to the rest of the play through conventional thematic and imagistic patterns--the idea of "praise" and the theme of "worthiness." The pageantry in Love's Labour's Lost simultaneously emphasizes and questions the theatricality of the play as a whole. It does not evade its own artificiality, as the actors try to in offering a "literal" imitation of the Worthies. It would be difficult to find another early Shakespeare play which is as persistently and effectively concerned with itself, with the constructs of the imagination.

Notes to Chapter II

[1]The terms are Maynard Mack's, "Engagement and Detachment in Shakespeare's Plays," Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig, ed. Richard Hosley (Columbia, Mo., 1962), pp. 275-96.

[2]Or he may have climbed to an upper stage.

[3]The term is David Young's, Something of Great Constancy: The Art of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (New Haven, 1966), pp. 91-7.

[4]Mack, p. 289.

[5]See Arden discussion, pp. xxx-xxxi, of possible sources.

[6]Variorum, p. 253.

[7]C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, p. 94.

[8]For background on the Worthies, see The Parlement of the Thre Ages, ed. Israel Gollancz (London, 1897); John Hawley Roberts, "The Nine Worthies," MP, xix (1921-22), 297-305; Thomas Francis Crawley, "Love's Labour's Lost and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies," Diss. Nebraska 1969; the Arden note at 5.1.113; and the Variorum notes, pp. 282-4.

[9]William Caxton, The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton, ed. W. J. B. Crotch (London, 1928), p. 92.

[10]Described in Abel Lefranc, Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare"(2 vols. Paris, 1918-19), II, 24ff.

[11]John Gower, The English Works of John Gower, ed. G. C. Macaulay (2 vols. London, 1900-01), II, 489.

[12]Alice S. Venezky, Pageantry on the Shakespearean Stage (New York, 1951), p. 90.

[13]Ben Jonson, Works, VII, 91.

[14]Roberts, pp. 298-300.

[15]Crawley, pp. 32-6.

[16]Hardin Craig, ed., Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, 2nd ed. (London, 1957), p. 113.

[17]Jonson, VII, 313.

[18]George Cary, The Medieval Alexander (Cambridge, 1956), says "the Nine Worthies were unknown to Italian writers," though he acknowledges the paintings and verses found at the castle of La Manta in Piedmont. (p. 262)

[19]K. M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy (2 vols. New York, 1962), II, 406-7, and E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, II, 90, discuss earlier references to the Labors of Hercules in both English and Italian shows.

[20]The Arden editor errs in his note at 5.1.113 when he says that Guy was the standard ninth Worthy, not Godfrey; the reverse is the case.

[21]Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (London, 1955), p. 61.

[22]Thomas Nashe, Works, II, 253.

[23]Robert Greene, The Life and Complete Works, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (15 vols. London, 1881-1866), IX, 49.

[24]John G. Nichols, ed., The Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary (London, 1850), p. 79.

[25]Venezky, p. 108.

[26]Venezky, pp. 104-5.

[27]Huizinga, p. 301.

[28]Huizinga, p. 61.

[29]See Young's discussion, pp. 32-59.

[30]Meres in 1598 had called Shakespeare himself "mellifluous and hony-tongued," (Smith, II, 317) so the epithet is presumably not wholly negative.

[31]Nashe, I, 159.

[32]Nashe, II, 246-7.

[33]Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York, 1927), p. 257.

[34]Beaumont and Fletcher, Works, ed. A. R. Waller (10 vols. Cambridge, 1905-1912), VI, 384. Cf. also The Prophetess, V, 369, and Thierry and Theodoret, X, 29.

[35]Jonson, IV, 588.

[36]E. M. Waith, The Herculean Hero (New York, 1962), p. 65.

CHAPTER III

POETS

> Berowne. Necessity will make us all forsworn
> Three thousand times within these three years' space;
> For every man with his affects is born,
> Not by might master'd, but by special grace.
> (1.1.148-51)

Berowne has only articulated what everyone in the audience already knew: that every man is, more often than not, ruled by his "affects," his "affections" or passions, rather than by his reason. In the first few lines of the play, Navarre had described the ascetic effort of the four noblemen in similar terms:

> King. Therefore, brave conquerors--for so you are,
> That war against your own affections
> And the huge army of the world's desires--
> Our late edict shall strongly stand in force:
> Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
> Our court shall be a little academe,
> Still and contemplative in living art.
> (1.1.8-14)

When Navarre predicts a civil "war" within each man--his will and reason against his "affections"--we know that the latter will inevitably triumph since, as Berówne puts it, only a special grace can conquer them and no one in Love's Labour's Lost is so blessed. The King's confident tone--he says

"shall" three times, as if simply declaring a desire will also fulfill it--and his glib use of alliteration in the last four lines makes us suspect that he is not fully aware of the difficulty of what he proposes. The inevitable defeat of the lords' "war" is anticipated immediately in Costard's confession of love for Jaquenetta, and his declaration that the "sinplicitie" of man is to hearken after the flesh. (1.1.214) A moment later, the "soldier" Armado, a hero in other wars, confesses that he too has lost the skirmish with his own affections and desires. Continuing the metaphor of warfare, he couches his admission in medieval and courtly terms:

> Armado. I will hereupon confess I am in love; and as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base wench. If drawing my sword against the humour of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and ransom him to any French courtier for a new-devised courtesy.
> (1.2.54-60)

Armado's is a futile "if," to be sure, since all the men in Love's Labour's Lost are ruled by the humour of affection--by their natural condition as fleshly beings, and by their particular passions.

This word "affection" keeps recurring throughout the play, and it will reward us to pay some attention to it. In the next few lines, for example, Armado says of Samson's love,

> He surely affected her for her wit.
> (1.2.84)

And a moment later, in soliloquy, he confesses his love for Jaquenetta:

> I do affect the very ground, which is base,

> where her shoe . . . doth tread.
> (1.2.157-9)

In the next scene, Boyet tells the Princess that Navarre is "infected," as if by disease, "With that which we lovers entitle affected." (2.1.230-2) Later, Moth tells Armado how those men may become "men of note" who "most are affected" to his advice. (3.1.23) In another passage which implies that the individual has self-control over his desires, Holofernes declares that he will "affect the letter," as if he could do anything else. (4.2.55) In the fifth act, Armado tells Holofernes,

> Sir, it is the King's most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate the princess at her pavilion . . .
> (5.1.82-3)

And Berowne begins his Promethean Fire speech with this call:

> O! 'tis more than need.
> Have at you then, affection's men-at-arms.
> (4.3.286-7)

There is considerable irony, by this time, in Berowne's use of the word. The characters in the play have assumed a variety of definitions for "affection," ranging from the irrational forces ruling all men to the "rational" choice of, say, alliteration. At the beginning of the play, the men were at war with their affections; by 4.3, they are "men-at-arms," working in consort with them. This is a good sign in itself, for the noblemen had been seriously deluding themselves. The Renaissance recognized a dangerous, dark side to the affections, aptly described by the Friar in Chapman's Bussy d'Ambois:

> You know besides, that our affections' storm,
> Rais'd in our blood, no Reason can reform.[1]
> (2.2.186-8)

Bacon, of course, is distrustful of the irrational:

> Numberless in short are the ways, and sometimes imperceptible, in which the affections colour and infect the understanding.[2]

Again, the conjunction with "infect," as if the affections were in themselves evil, a disease. Cicero had defined affectio as "an unstable condition, literally a sudden change in mind or body owing to some cause . . . such as joy, desire, fear, annoyance, illness, weakness."[3] Shylock sums up,

> . . . for affection,
> Master of passion, sways it to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes.
> (Merchant, 4.1.50-2)

In a darker world, it is but a short step to Leontes's confused anguish:

> Affection, thy intention stabs the center!
> Thou dost make possible things not so held,
> Communicat'st with dreams--how can this be?
> With what's unreal thou coactive art,
> And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent
> Thou may'st co-join with something; and thou dost,
> And that beyond commission, and I find it,
> And that to the infection of my brains
> And hard'ning of my brows.
> (Winter's Tale, 1.2.138-46)

In addition to the range of meanings mentioned above, "affection" is here clearly linked with, very nearly a synonym for, the imagination.[4] It is associated with "dreams," with the "unreal," with "nothing": in short, all those forces which Theseus so confidently dismisses in Dream. Note, too, the familiar conjunction with "infection."

Renaissance critics, with analogies to formal rhetoric,

often described the special function of poetry as working on the affections of man, of moving him. "How wonderfully shall" the poet's words, said Peacham, "pearce into their inward partes."[5] This sort of power alarmed Puritan critics like Gosson, who remarked that poets,

> by the privy entries of the eare sappe downe
> into the heart, and with gunshotte of affection
> gaule the minde, where reason and vertue
> shoulde rule the roste.[6]

This is analogous to what has happened to Leontes, with tragic consequences; the reason is overcome by the affections, the unfettered imagination runs wild.

This idea of "affection" is by way of demonstrating, in the terms provided in Love's Labour's Lost, the truth in Theseus's famous pronouncement:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact.
> (Dream, 5.1.4-8)

The noblemen are poets, of course, and they each spin out a thoroughly conventional Petrarchan love sonnet (Dumain prefers pastoral). The variety of connotations in "affection," though, enables us to draw even closer parallels between the behavior of the noblemen--their dress, their style of speech, their intellect--and the poetry which they produce. We begin to see that the way in which one deals with one's affections is roughly analogous to the way in which one writes poetry; disorder or foppery in one is reflected in the other. As Jonson said, language most shows a man.

Language does not, however, similarly reveal the women in this play. The word "affection" is never used by the ladies, perhaps in indication that in the women the affections are securely balanced by cool reason. In any event, the women are clearly the moral center of the play, the "teachers" of the still immature noblemen.[7] The women's language and wit are if anything sharper than the men's, and they consistently beat them at their own games. The women do not attempt to write poetry, but rather in themselves exemplify a grace and harmonious beauty which is aesthetically pleasing. Their refusal to engage in the requisite sympathy for the shenanigans of the men seems fundamentally right in the play's context; it is impossible, in any event, to construe them as killjoys or total opponents of the "festive release." It is of course the men who consistently violate propriety and decorum, and the women who must guide them to the right path. If there is less of the men's anarchic linguistic energy in the ladies' speech, there is little diminution in wit and brilliance. Shakespeare saves the women from any threat of dullness by making them all preternaturally perceptive and self-possessed. They always have the last, best, word.

We can approach the male characters from a different direction through the word "affection" when we realize that it is--no surprise here--also a pun. "Affection" was a contracted form of "affectation," and "affect," as verb or noun, could also mean affectation. The point here is that, as Fielding reminds us in his Preface to Joseph Andrews, the

only source of the true Ridiculous is affectation. In Love's Labour's Lost, almost all of the male characters are ruled by their affections, in one sense or the other--by their passions, natural inclinations, or, as Fielding would have it, by their vanity or hypocrisy. When Berowne describes his colleagues as "affection's men-at-arms," there may be a touch of irony in it. They are no less ruled by affectation now than at the beginning of the play.

In any event, in his carefully balanced and highly affected speech in 5.1, Sir Nathaniel praises Holofernes's dinner speech as being "witty without affection," (5.1.4) a judgment we know must be ludicrously inaccurate. We are proven correct when Holofernes replies in the next instant, even picking up Nathaniel's words. Armado's behavior, he says, is,

> vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.
> (5.1.13-15)

Holofernes is quite correct, to be sure, but he is also unwittingly describing his own language. Berowne seems to echo Holofernes's very terminology later when, in his famous renunciation speech in 5.2, he forswears,

> Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
> Three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affection,
> Figures pedantical . . .
> (5.2.406-8)

"Spruce affection" is itself a spruce affection. Nathaniel, Holofernes, and Armado, and to a lesser extent the four noblemen, are guilty of affectation--in their immature love, child-

ish behavior, foppish style--throughout the play. Only toward the end do the noblemen begin to mature.

The idea of affectation, by way of a pun, thus indicates another sense in which the lunatics, the lovers, and the poets are parallel, and suggests as well another principle of unity in the play. The power of "affection" (passions, love) gone too far will lead inevitably to "affection" (affectation) in behavior. Affectation in terms of love can lead to folly and self-deception, and eventually to bad poetry; affectation in poetry results in bad sonnets, over-elaborate invention, "compliment," and pretty pleasing prickets. Theseus's pronouncement is again confirmed, as Love's Labour's Lost suggests that loving and writing poetry are, in many respects, similar acts of the imagination.

That lovers are poets is no news. What is interesting in Love's Labour's Lost is the way in which the various parallels between high and low characters, between the lovers and lunatics, confounding geometry, continually intersect and interact. It suggests that there is a complex thematic equivalent to that neo-Aristotelian logic and unity which, critics forever tell us, are so lacking in the play. If Love's Labour's Lost is a play mostly about poetry and the imagination, as I believe it is, very much concerned with its own processes and structure, then it will repay us to examine in some detail those lunatics and lovers in the play who are also explicitly poets.

> Armado. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme, for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio. (1.2.173-5)

> Berowne. Tush! none but minstrels like of sonneting. (4.3.156)

Berowne's easy condemnation of the literary efforts of his fellow academics is also a judgment on his own literary taste, since his own sonnet, which we have already heard before in 4.2, will momentarily be brought in by Costard. It should be noted that the date of Love's Labour's Lost, c. 1593-7, coincides with the height--and the first waning--of the Elizabethan craze for sonnets and sonnet-sequences, at least those of the older, conceited type, loosely termed "Petrarchan." If the qualitative high point of this movement came, in 1591, with the publication of Sidney's Astrophel and Stella (then already several years old), the quantity was still on the increase, as J. W. Lever notes:

> During the four years that followed the appearance of Astrophel and Stella in 1591, more sonnets saw the light than in all the decades since Wyatt made his first renderings from Petrarch.[8]

Shakespeare, too, was probably beginning to write his own sonnets at this time. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to be a nutshell-king of the finite space of fourteen lines.

Still, there were dissenting voices to be heard at the same time. Shakespeare's sonnets were hardly conventional, "nothing like the sun" of Petrarchan brilliance that Sidney

had produced. There were a mistress and a male rival, of course, but somehow the interrelationships had gotten reversed for a time. Donne, also probably beginning his Songs and Sonets at this time, wrote no regular sonnets among his at times shocking anti-Petrarchan lyrics. Ben Jonson was to write only one regular sonnet, and made a joke about it at that. The most discerning poets, Lever concludes, would learn,

> that Sidney's achievement was in essence a culmination, not, as they thought, a fresh start.[9]

The noblemen of Love's Labour's Lost, in any event, are gallant young sonneteers in the more general sense of the term --only two of their four poems are regular sonnets, and Berowne's is in alexandrines. Three of the four were collected in The Passionate Pilgrim (1599) and Dumain's also in the pastoral collection, England's Helicon (1600), an indication that the audience would not have considered them in any sense avant-garde.[10]

Berowne.

Berowne's misdelivered sonnet is read by Nathaniel in 4.2:

> If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?
> Ah! never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd;
> Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove:
> Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bow'd.
> Study his bias leaves and makes his book thine eyes,
> Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend.
> If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;

> Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend;
> All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
> Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire.
> Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,
> Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
> Celestial as thou art, O! pardon love this wrong,
> That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.
> (4.2.104-17)

Like the others, Berowne's sonnet is well-integrated into the rest of the play. In particular, it anticipates many of the ideas and images of Berowne's Promethean Fire speech in the next scene. The opposition of "study" and "eyes" and the familiar paradoxes of "forsworn" yet "faithful" will soon be amplified. The primary purpose of these sonnets is to "praise" the mistress, and we recall the widespread use of this theme. Here, it is also self-reflexive praise of Berowne that he admires Rosaline's beauty.

All of the usual Petrarchan cliches are evident in the poem: a fascination with the lady's "eyes," her imperious nature (the "dreadful thunder" of her voice), the mistress described as "celestial" and linked with "heaven." As Bacon noted in his essay, "Of Love,"

> It is a strange Thing, to note the Excesse of this Passion; And how it braves, the Nature, and value of things; by this, that the Speaking in a perpetuall Hyperbole, is comely in nothing, but in Love.[11]

Hyperbole is certainly at the heart of the Petrarchan conceit, as Berowne's poem demonstrates. As Bacon says, it "braves" the value of things--false praise, ultimately a false or unperceptive poetry, by implication. It is specifically this quality which the women object to, as we saw in the previous

chapter. Rosaline's comment on Berowne's poetry is clear:

> Rosaline. Nay, I have verses too, I thank Berowne:
> The numbers true; and, were the numbering too,
> I were the fairest goddess on the ground:
> I am compar'd to twenty thousand fairs.
> O! he hath drawn my picture in his letter.
> Princess. Anything like?
> Rosaline. Much in the letters, nothing in the praise.
> (5.2.34-40)

The reference to "fairs" suggests she has seen a different poem from the one in 4.2, but they were surely similar. The meter ("numbers") is correct, but nothing else--the idealized deification is rejected.

Holofernes's comments on Berowne's effort (to be discussed in detail later) echo Rosaline's:

> Holofernes. You [Nathaniel] find not the apostrophus, and so miss the accent: let me supervize the canzonet. Here are only numbers ratified; but, for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, caret. . . .
> . . .
> I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention.
> (4.2.118-21,156-8)

Holofernes concedes, with Rosaline, that the poem is metrically correct--that the lines have "a correct ratio of feet and syllables."[12] This in spite of the fact that Nathaniel hasn't read the poem properly, according to Holofernes.[13] More seriously, though, he feels the poem lacks "elegancy," with which we can all agree, and especially it lacks "facility" (or "invention" as he also says). We saw in the first chapter Holofernes's idea of "facility": great heaps of synonyms. He goes on to a more interesting criticism when he says that the poem is merely an imitation. We shall re-

turn to this in a moment, but it is apparent that Holofernes finds nothing original in the poem.

Berowne himself disparages his own poetry at the start of the great sonnet-reading scene. He enters reading a paper, apparently his next sonnet (the one Rosaline comments on?) and, with his usual blend of participation and witty detachment, declares himself a conventional lover:

> Berowne: By heaven, I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady!
>
> (4.3.12-17)

We never see much of his melancholy, but his one example of rhyme, and his countless examples of "wit," can lead us to only one conclusion: that Berowne is fashionable, clever, glib, that he excels in paradoxes--but not, alas, a very good poet. Holofernes's judgment is correct (though his reasons are wrong). Berowne's saving grace as a character, the quality in him that wins us over to his side and to his special view of things, is that he at least knows when he is mediocre.

Navarre.

Navarre seems to need a reminder of his mediocrity. He enters 4.3 next, sighing, with his 16-line sonnet:

> So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not
> To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,
> As thy eye-beams when their fresh rays have smote
> The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows:
> Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright
> Through the transparent bosom of the deep,

As doth thy face through tears of mine give light[:]
  Thou shin'st in every tear that I do weep:
No drop but as a coach doth carry thee;
  So ridest thou triumphing in my woe.
Do but behold the tears that swell in me,
  And they thy glory through my grief will show:
But do not love thyself; then thou will keep
My tears for glasses, and still make me weep.
O queen of queens! how far dost thou excel,
No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell.
(4.3.25-40)

This is the only one of the four sonnets in the play not collected elsewhere; if it is inferior to the others, it is only a question of small degree. Navarre's poem also relies on hyperbole ("queen of queens," "nor tongue of mortal") but its main feature is the extended conceit of the tears--a device faintly like Donne's image in "A Valediction: Of Weeping." The differences here are instructive: the compression and complexity of Donne's language and imagery, a quality often attained in many of Shakespeare's own sonnets, are completely lacking in Navarre's poem. We have instead a flaccid syntactical structure which leisurely presents parallel similes: "So-As"; "Nor-so-As"; "No-So." The line, "No drop but as a coach doth carry thee," approaches the Donnian wit, but the tedious periphrases of "night of dew" and "transparent bosom of the deep" have already spoiled the poem.

The King comments mockingly on the poems of Dumain and Longaville, but he is himself exposed by Berowne, who mocks Navarre's very language:

Berowne. Good heart! what grace hast thou, thus to reprove
These worms for loving, that art most in love?
Your eyes do make no coaches; in your tears
There is no certain princess that appears:

> You'll not be perjur'd, 'tis a hateful thing:
> Tush! none but minstrels like of sonneting.
> (4.3.151-6)

Berowne has singled out for scorn the most "conceited" elements of the poem, especially the "eye" imagery. Later, the Princess remarks that Navarre has sent, along with diamonds,

> . . . as much love in rhyme
> As would be cramm'd up in a sheet of paper,
> Writ o' both sides the leaf, margent and all,
> That he was fain to seal on Cupid's name.
> (5.2.6-9)

Like the others, Navarre doesn't know when to stop; hyperbole and excess are infectious.

Longaville.

Longaville follows the King in 4.3, entering "like a perjure, wearing papers" stuck in his hat. (4.3.46) Sighing with tremendous gusts of melancholy, "Ay me! I am forsworn," Longaville worries,

> I fear these stubborn lines lack power to move.
> O sweet Maria, empress of my love!
> These numbers will I tear, and write in prose.
> (4.3.55-7)

Disregarding for the moment Berowne's salacious rejoinder to this sentiment, we should note that while these verses are primarily intended as vehicles of praise for the beloved, they are also, like all verse, supposed to "move" the listener. Renaissance theoreticians would have agreed. According to Giraldi Cinthio, the essence of a poem or an oration is

> nothing else . . . than that force and that power of the work whence the affections enter into the heart of the reader, as if a living voice were speaking.[14]

The point, then, is to "stir" the affects, or affections, of the listener, to excite in him certain emotions which will lead him to emulate, say, a heroic action, or in this case, to respond in kind to the lover.[15]

Longaville has something rather more literal and trivial in mind, and the allusion to the traditional doctrine seems ironic. His lines remain "stubborn," moving no one:

> Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
> 'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
> Persuade my heart to this false perjury?
> Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
> A woman I forswore; but I will prove,
> Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:
> My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;
> Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.
> Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is:
> Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth doth shine,
> Exhal'st this vapour-vow; in thee it is:
> If broken then, it is no fault of mine:
> If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
> To lose an oath to win a paradise?
> (4.3.58-71)

This is probably the best of the poems so far, also the densest and wittiest, the most "Petrarchan." The mistress is "heavenly," a "goddess," the "fair sun." She has total power over the poet. Her "eye" controls him. In a series of reversals, he claims she has forced him, with her beauty, to perjure himself. The "heavenly rhetoric" of her eye is a nice anticipation of Berowne's Promethean Fire speech, and the final rhetorical question,

> . . . what fool is not so wise
> To lose an oath to win a paradise?

foreshadows a similar but more complex comment from Berowne later:

Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.
(4.3.358-9)

And yet Longaville's sonnet is quite ordinary--many of the same ideas find a more interesting expression in "prose," as he himself predicted, in Berowne's speech. The poem depends on a number of glib oppositions: heavenly-earthly, sun-earth, truth-perjury, fool-wise, and that old stand-by, grace-disgrace. We sense, not a perception of truth in these dualisms, but mere manipulation. Berowne's immediate comment on the poem focuses on its hyperbolizing:

Berowne. This is the liver vein, which makes flesh a deity;
A green goose a goddess; pure, pure idolatry.
God amend us, God amend! we are much out o' th' way.
(4.3.72-4)

"Idolatry" and deification--false evaluations, false praise --are at the very heart of these poems; take them away and one is confronted with a much different vision of things, and a much different poetic form and diction. The two are inseparable.

Dumain.

Dumain enters next, making the fourth, and, in a passage quoted in full in the previous chapter, his sighing exclamations are punctuated by Berowne's reductive echoes:

Dumain. O most divine Kate!
Berowne. O most profane coxcomb!
Dumain. By heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!
Berowne. By earth, she is not, corporal; there you lie.
(4.3.81-4)

Her love is a "fever" which "reigns" like a queen in his

blood; Berowne's suggestion to "let her out in saucers," a "sweet misprision" for which he congratulates himself, destroys any possible romantic sentiment.

Dumain's "ode" was collected in both The Passionate Pilgrim and England's Helicon. In the latter, it was titled "The passionate Sheepheards Song" and was transformed into even more of a pastoral: the "lover" of line 105 became a shepherd, lines 113-4, which tie the poem more closely to the play, were omitted, and there were other minor changes. Dumain's poem, in any event, has a different tone from the other three:

> On a day, alack the day!
> Love, whose month is ever May,
> Spied a blossom passing fair
> Playing in the wanton air:
> Through the velvet leaves the wind,
> All unseen can passage find;
> That the lover, sick to death,
> Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
> Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
> Air, would I might triumph so!
> But alack! my hand is sworn
> Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
> Vow, alack! for youth unmeet,
> Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
> Do not call it sin in me,
> That I am forsworn for thee;
> Thou for whom Jove would swear
> Juno but an Ethiop were;
> And deny himself for Jove,
> Turning mortal for thy love.
>
> (4.3.99-118)

This is in a quieter vein, more akin to Herrick than Donne. Though Dumain proposes to send, in addition to this poem, "something else more plain," the poem's simplicity is attractive. The last four lines reach too far, though, and jar the sentiment(ality) of the first part of the poem. It is in a

different key from the others, but still undistinguished.

Dumain is surprised by Longaville, then Navarre, who mocks both of them, and their poems, at the same time:

> King. Come, sir, you [Longaville] blush; as his [Dumain] your case is such;
> You chide at him, offending twice as much:
> You do not love Maria! Longaville
> Did never sonnet for her sake compile,
> Nor never lay his wreathed arms athwart
> His loving bosom to keep down his heart.
> I have been closely shrouded in this bush,
> And mark'd you both, and for you both did blush.
> I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion,
> Saw sighs reek from you, noted well your passion:
> Ay me! says one; O Jove! the other cries;
> One, her hairs were gold, crystal the other's eyes:
> You [Longaville] would for paradise break faith and troth;
> And Jove, for your [Dumain] love would infringe an oath.
> (4.3.129-41)

Navarre satirizes their affected melancholy, their sighs, their very language (though neither of their poems actually contains images of golden hair and crystal eyes). Speaking specifically of the poems Dumain has sent her, Katharine terms them,

> Some thousand verses of a faithful lover;
> A huge translation of hypocrisy,
> Vilely compil'd, profound simplicity.
> (5.2.50-2)

The love-sonnets of the four noblemen may have been anthology-favorites of the day, but the context of the play repeatedly demonstrates their limitations. We hear the same complaints, even from those who write the poems, over and over again: the poems are too long, too hyperbolical, too exaggerated. They make flesh a deity, they are idolatry, and they are only imitations. They are, in short, exactly

the sort of thing that slightly immature, self-deceived academics of the day would probably be writing. The noblemen are not poets, but poetasters.

Moth.

> Armado. Sing, boy: my spirit grows heavy in love.
> (1.2.115)

As Armado's page, one of Moth's functions is to sing for his master, to help relieve his melancholy. Armado bids him, "make passionate my sense of hearing," (3.1.1) and Moth obliges with "Concolinel," which the Arden editor tells us was probably the title of an Irish song. Earlier, Moth sings this song:

> If she be made of white and red,
> Her faults will ne'er be known,
> For blushing cheeks by faults are bred,
> And fears by pale white shown:
> Then if she fear, or be to blame,
> By this you shall not know,
> For still her cheeks possess the same
> Which native she doth owe.
> (1.2.93-100)

The play on cosmetics and blushing will be discussed in the fifth chapter, and we shall only note for the moment that this song is unlike anything that Moth says elsewhere in the play: his prose style would not lead us to this song. Yet it is appropriate for him, as it offers a light amalgam of the sophisticated and the "natural," just the sort of thing for a courtly audience. The simplicity of the verse-form and diction may be set against the point of view of the speaker, which is sophisticated: the perception of the art-

nature opposition, the undercurrent of witty cynicism. It is the sort of poem, in another play, that Touchstone might produce.

Armado.

We saw in the first chapter that Armado is meant as an anachronism, a musty figure from romances of the 1570s. He has been brought to the court to entertain the academics during their three years. Navarre has described him as,

> One who the music of his own vain tongue
> Doth ravish like enchanting harmony.
> (1.1.165-6)

He is a latter-day Orpheus who swoons at the sound of his own voice, one of the earliest known specimens of auto-erotic art. The "child of fancy" is to relate

> In high-born words the worth of many a knight
> From tawny Spain, lost in the world's debate.
> (1.1.171-2)

As it turns out, we never hear any of these stories, but the promise is perhaps enough. Armado is to be a court bard, a teller of fabulous stories. Navarre concludes,

> How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;
> But I protest I love to hear him lie,
> And I will use him for my minstrelsy.
> (1.1.173-5)

Thus the old play on the word "lie"--poets not only imitate, they also "feign," or "counterfeit," hence "lie." Considering the degree of exaggeration and hyperbole which is expected from Armado, "lie" is probably more accurate in its connotations than "feign," anyhow. The noblemen are expect-

ing tall tales of the "world's debate" while, here in the court, we are witnessing the smaller but utterly futile war of each man against his own affections. The debate on poetry soon takes precedence over the world's debate. Armado is a link, however tenuous, with the larger world outside the court, with a different time.

Before he can produce his celebrated "lies," however, he falls in love with Jaquenetta and everything changes. Armado, we quickly see, is the archetype-stereotype of the melancholic lover, as he himself announces in his first speech:

> Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?
>
> (1.2.1-2)

The little that we do learn of Armado's literary taste is, as we would expect, that it is suitably old-fashioned, as in this inquiry:

> Armado. Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?
> Moth. The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages since; but I think now 'tis not to be found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for the writing nor the tune.
> Armado. I will have that subject newly writ o'er, that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent.
>
> (1.2.103-110)

Neither the language nor the meter of the ballad are appropriate now, according to Moth, but Armado is undaunted--he will rework the subject, just as Shakespeare himself reworked so many moldy tales. The result of Armado's labor, though, as found in his second letter, is indeed depressing:

> The magnanimous and most illustrate king Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and

> indubitate beggar Zenelophon, and he it was
> that might rightly say, veni, vidi, vici; which
> to annothanize in the vulgar (O base and obscure
> vulgar!) videlicet, he came, saw, and overcame:
> he came, one; saw, two; overcame, three. Who
> came? the king . . .
>
> (4.1.66-71)

Earlier, we recall, Armado has promised to "turn sonnet":

> Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am for whole
> volumes in folio.
>
> (1.2.174-5)

The "volumes" turn out to be a total of six lines appended to the letter to Jaquenetta:

> Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar
> 'Gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey;
> Submissive fall his princely feet before,
> And he from forage will incline to play.
> But if thou strive, poor soul, what art thou then?
> Food for his rage, repasture for his den.
>
> (4.1.87-92)

We share the Princess's astonishment:

> What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?
> What vane? what weathercock? did you ever hear better?
>
> (4.1.93-4)

Armado's poem is wonderfully bad, a piece of Marlovian huff most notable for its vanity--in the analogy, Armado associates himself with the Nemean lion, and so with Hercules--and for the clumsiness of its inversion, "Submissive fall his princely feet before," for the sake of the rhyme. It is an old style, one that Boyet and the audience have heard before. As Moth would say, it serves neither for the writing nor for the meter.

Later, Armado tells Holofernes,

> the king would have me present the princess,
> sweet chuck, with some delightful ostentation,
> or show, or pageant, or antic, or firework.

> Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal, to the end to crave your assistance.
> (5.1.105-12)

If it comes as a surprise to us that the "child of fancy" needs such assistance, the time-tested Pageant that Holofernes suggests is no surprise at all.

Holofernes.

"Imitari is nothing."

Holofernes's contribution to the "poetry" of the play is --how shall we put it?--a disappointment. The "extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer" has been examined in unfortunate detail in the first chapter. As he promised, Holofernes did indeed "affect the letter," and we are overwhelmed with the alliteration. Holofernes's claim is that it argues "facility" in the poet, a word of some importance to him. What this word means is not always clear, but the Arden editor suggests for its second occurrence, "fluency." (4.2.121n.) More specifically, it also means fluency in the use of rhetorical schemes and figures, Holofernes's stock-in-trade as a schoolmaster. Unable to see Moth's joke in the fifth act, he asks him,

> What is the figure? what is the figure?
> (5.1.61)

and he compliments Costard's pun,

> a good lustre of conceit in a turf of earth.
> (4.2.86-7)

With his own predilection for synonymy, for figures, for "wit," his mouth stuffed with scraps of schoolboy grammars and Latin poets, Holofernes's practising conception of poetry is fairly simple: poetry is something to be learned from rhetoricians like Sherry or Peacham or Erasmus. It is marked by a witty and easy use of rhetorical figures, primarily alliteration of all sorts, synonymy, "compliment," and proverbs and sententiae.

Holofernes's theoretical pronouncements are not always clear, however, and they are of some importance in the play. At 4.2.81, Jaquenetta and Costard enter with Berowne's misdelivered sonnet and give it to Nathaniel to read. While he is doing so, Holofernes hums to himself and peeks over his shoulder:

> Facile precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra Ruminat, and so forth. Ah! good old Mantuan. I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice:
>
> Venetia, Venetia,
> Chi non ti vede, no ti pretia.
>
> Old Mantuan! old Mantuan! who understandeth thee not, loves thee not. Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa. Under pardon, sir, what are the contents? or, rather, as Horace says in his--what, my soul! verses?
>
> (4.2.92-101)

After Nathaniel reads Berowne's sonnet, Holofernes confidently delivers his judgment on it:

> You find not the apostrophus, and so miss the accent: let me supervize the canzonet. Here are only numbers ratified; but, for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, caret. Ovidius Naso was the man: and why, indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention? Imitari is nothing; so doth the hound his master, the ape

> his keeper, the tired horse his rider.
> (4.2.118-26)

Holofernes then assures Nathaniel that he

> will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention.
> (4.2.157-8)

What does all this mean for the play's debate on poetry? Possibly very little: Holofernes garbles the familiar schoolboy quotation, makes an error in the musical gamut, and makes other mistakes in his Latin elsewhere in the play. Still, he mentions Mantuan, Horace, and Ovid; along with Virgil, these are the central poets studied in the grammar school, the locus classicus for the study of figures, the "flores rhetorici" or "odoriferous flowers of fancy." Holofernes claims that Berowne's sonnet is mechanically correct, but that the essence of poetry is missing. With this we can agree. This essence Holofernes identifies with Ovid; Berowne fails where Ovid triumphed.

J. A. K. Thomson makes a curious observation about this criticism by Holofernes:

> Now the verses which Holofernes regards as 'unlearned' are really very much in Shakespeare's earlier manner, though the metre is one which he does not greatly affect. They have a good deal of 'the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy'. They also contain some 'jerks of invention'. They are in fact distinctly Ovidian--or let us say Neo-Ovidian, Renaissance-Ovidian. Holofernes is such an ass that he does not recognize the Ovidian qualities when he meets them. He simply parrots the critical chatter of the day without understanding in the least what it means.[16]

This is a strange comment. It seemed indisputable that the sonnets of the noblemen are essentially "Petrarchan" in style and diction: eye imagery, idealization of the mistress, the use of hyperbole and periphrasis--everything that we historically understand by the cliché. When an "Ovidian" note is sounded, as in Moth's little song at 1.2.93, a different voice is clearly present.

Holofernes's comments are still before us, however. Thomson says that Holofernes is simply wrong. It seems to me on the contrary that Holofernes is right, but that because of his (not Shakespeare's) conception of Ovid we must take his remarks in two different ways. First of all, for Holofernes --for the pedant, for those who think poetry is to be learned from the rhetoricians--the Ovid of Erasmus's Copia was a supreme example of "copy" in poetry. This Ovid was copious in a very specific way; as L. P. Wilkinson notes,

> 'Copy' of words was the faculty of varying the same sententia . . . it depended, of course, on richness of vocabulary, in which of all poets Shakespeare stands supreme. 'Copy' of things was nurtured on the topics of dialectic.17

In short, Holofernes's unfavorable comparison of Berowne with Ovid concerns not what we might term the essence of the poem --involving some transformation or metaphor--but its lack of "copy." And, contrary to Wilkinson's additional comment on Shakespeare's copy (which he is only paraphrasing from Baldwin, II, 195), Holofernes's comments must here be strictly construed. The schoolmaster is summoning up a narrow version of Ovid in order to criticize Berowne for not writing the kind of poem

that he, Holofernes, approves of.

Keeping Holofernes's special viewpoint in mind, we can now approach his next comment: "Imitari is nothing." On the face of it, this is an astonishing thing for any literary critic of the 1590s to be saying. A quotation from Puttenham's Arte is typical of the whole orthodox tradition, from Sidney to Jonson:

> And neverthelesse without any repugnancie at all, a Poet may in some sort be said a follower or imitator, because he can expresse the true and lively of every thing is set before him, and which he taketh in hand to describe: and so in that respect is both a maker and a counterfaitor: and Poesie an art not only of making, but also of imitation.[18]

Both Sidney and Puttenham make a distinction between the lower kind of imitation, which captures only the external and no more, and the better kind which describes the universal or inner qualities through the external. But all agree that "imitation" in some form is crucial.

T. W. Baldwin tells us that Holofernes's criticisms rest firmly on the theoretical ground of Quintilian, including his "four inimitable virtues." In particular, Quintilian's words on imitation are cited:

> the greatest qualities of the orator are beyond all imitation, by which I mean, talent, invention, force, facility and all the qualities which are independent of art.[19]

Quintilian, Baldwin notes, goes on to insist that imitation may even be an evil thing; anyhow, only the mechanical things are imitable. The best things are not. But Quintilian's views are surely not in the mainstream of Renaissance critical

thinking about imitation, as it derives from Ascham and the Ciceronians; Ascham said of Quintilian's writings on the subject,

> Quintilian writeth of it, shortly and coldlie for the matter, yet hotelie and spitefullie enough agaynst the Imitation of Tullie.[20]

Puttenham's seems more nearly the standard view on the subject, then.

The point is that, even if there is some classical precedent for his comment, Holofernes's remark still goes further than Quintilian. It would have sounded shocking, I think, for the audience was accustomed to hearing just the opposite. Recalling Holofernes's literal-mindedness, his inability to go beyond the surface, and his hound-master, ape-keeper, horse-rider analogies, we can construe his comment to mean primarily that Berowne has only copied a fad, that his sonnet is only a barren replica, which should have been more gaily festooned with "jerks" and "flowers" of his own--that is, like those of Ovid. Holofernes, in short, contradicts himself, offering as models Mantuan, Horace, and especially Ovid at one moment, denying something similar to Berowne in the next, while commending his own favorite. We said in the first chapter that Holofernes comes closest to living in a totally solipsistic world of words, and the probable pun "nothing"=note-ing suggests that for Holofernes there can be no coherent relationship to the world around him. If imitation involves noting, then the schoolmaster will remain forever blind.

It was suggested earlier that there were at least two ways of looking at Holofernes's comments on Ovid and imitation. The first, then, is that from an extremely literal, pedantic point of view Holofernes's comments are essentially correct: Berowne's sonnet is an imitation, and it is not Ovidian. The second way of approaching his words is from the point of view of irony: the very mention of Ovid, even in Holofernes's narrow sense, inevitably reminds us at the same time of everything else Ovid meant to the Elizabethans, and to Shakespeare in particular.

As Thomson later points out, Shakespeare himself was repeatedly linked with Ovid:

> Shakespeare was regarded by his contemporaries as the most brilliant master in a school of classical art. He was the new Ovid--one of the new Ovids--of his time.[21]

Everyone is familiar with Francis Meres's description, in 1598, of Shakespeare:

> As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare, witnes his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c.[22]

This sentiment is echoed again and again in surviving documents. One of the more interesting examples is in the First Part of The Returne from Parnassus (c. 1599-1600) when Ingenioso gives Gullio imitations of verses in the style of Chaucer, Spenser, and then one in "Mr Shakspeares veyne," to palm off as his own:

> Faire Venus, queene of beutie and of love,

> Thy red doth stayne the blushinge of the morne,
> Thy snowie neck shameth the milke white dove,
> Thy presence doth this naked worlde adorne,
> Gazinge on thee all other nymphs I scorne.
> When ere thou dyest slowe shine that Satterday,
> Beutie and grace muste sleepe with thee for aye.[23]

The anonymous author of this parody assumed that his audience --admittedly an academic, probably non-Globe attending one-- would recognize as most typically Shakespearean an obviously Ovidian tone. It is just this sort of thing which is missing from the sonnets of the noblemen, but present in Moth's song. Holofernes's evocation of Ovid would surely have reminded the audience of all that Ovid could mean beyond being the standard exemplum of copy.

Love's Labour's Lost is permeated with reminders of Ovid: from the echo of tempus edax rerum in "cormorant devouring time" to the imagery of love's warfare and hunting, to the whole theme of transformation, Ovid--this Ovid, Shakespeare's Ovid--stands behind the play. It is unnecessary to document here the general influence of Ovid on Shakespeare, or the numerous specific references and echoes in the early plays (especially Shrew, Titus, Two Gentlemen). The famous reference in As You Like It is relevant, however:

> Touchstone. I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.
> Jaques. (aside) O knowledge ill-inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatched house!
> Touchstone. When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.
> Audrey. I do not know what poetical is. Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?

> Touchstone. No, truly; for the truest poetry is the most faining, and lovers are given to poetry, and what they swear in poetry may be said, as lovers, they do feign.
>
> (AYLI, 3.3.5-18)

Holofernes uses the right words--Ovid, imitation--with too narrow a meaning. The rest of us should understand how poetry lies, how "the truest poetry is the most feigning," how the poetry of the noblemen in Love's Labour's Lost fails by this criterion. The Masque of Muscovites and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies are aesthetic failures for the same reason: they are not artificial enough, they do not "feign" enough. They pretend instead to the kind of literal imitation which Holofernes commends, and so collapse, their illusions shattered. Once again, Holofernes seems to represent a constricting force, thwarting the imagination. The "lies" which Armado never tells, albeit silly and old-fashioned, would no doubt have more nearly succeeded. The advice to follow Ovid is ironically the right advice.

In addition, the self-consciousness of Touchstone's carnal desires, acknowledged through puns, is exactly what is missing from the conceited sonnets of the noblemen: they have not yet faced the reality of that desire, comically personified in Costard. On a very basic level, the loosely "Ovidian" impulse in the play, towards the flesh, works against the circumlocuitous hyperbolization of the noblemen's sonnets. They remain naive. The sexuality of the suitors, as T. M. Greene points out in a recent article,

> is visual, not to say voyeuristic. Their obsession

> with the eye transcends the Petrarchan cliché; it betokens their callow and adolescent virginity. It is symptomatic that the most sleazy joke the gentlemen permit themselves has to do with looking; when the ladies' talk is bawdy, they refer to the more relevant organs. Their ribaldry is the cleaner.[24]

The difference between the Ovidian and the Petrarchan impulses, if they may so be styled for a moment, is partially a matter of perception ("eyes" again), but mostly a question of self-knowledge. Holofernes, I think, unwittingly reminds us of another way of looking, another kind of poetry, toward which the play is gradually moving--the final songs.

The Poetry of the Pageant

Holofernes selects, as the subject for entertaining the court, the Pageant of the Nine Worthies, a choice which would probably have brought a smile to the face of the courtly audience. We assume that Holofernes, with some help from Nathaniel, wrote the lines for the various actors. He certainly wrote an "apology" for Moth-Hercules' diminutive size, which runs as follows:

> Holofernes. (dressed as Judas)
> Great Hercules is presented by this imp,
> Whose club kill'd Cerberus, that three-headed canus;
> And, when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp,
> Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus.
> Quoniam he seemeth in minority,
> Ergo I come with this apology.
> (5.2.581-6)

This may be a sample of Holofernes's own ideas about "copy": a line-filling, rhyme-completing epithet for Cerberus (and if the Quarto "canus" is right, Holofernes's spelling is wrong)

and four varied "epithets" for child. Not to mention the clumsiness and affectation of the four Latin words. The rest of the verses in the Pageant are not any better, the low point coming perhaps in Costard-Pompey's,

> And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance
> And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.
> (5.2.549-50)

Virtually every discussion in this study ends in a reference to the final songs, and this one is no exception. At the end of the play we are left with a range of poetic moods: archaic (Armado, Worthies), topical (Petrarchan sonnets, "wit") and "Ovidian." None of these satisfy like the "dialogue" between Spring and Winter which, Armado says, "should have followed in the end of our show." (5.2.877-8) The songs are verse in "praise" of the owl and the cuckoo, and they don't seem to echo any immediately recognizable style from elsewhere in the play. As still another poetic prototype, one which has been unanimously praised by critics of the play, it is my contention that the final songs are in a sense the exemplum towards which the play has been working. At the end of this study we shall see in detail how the songs work. Enough for now to note that Apollo's songs are the best "poetry" in a play filled with minor poets.

Notes to Chapter III

[1]George Chapman, Bussy D'Ambois, ed. Nicholas Brooke (Cambridge, Mass., 1964).

[2]Francis Bacon, p. 88.

[3]Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art, p. 219; cf. John Davies, "Nosce teipsum," pp. 376-8, in Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century, ed. Gerald Bullet (New York, 1947).

[4]See discussion of this passage in the Arden and Variorum editions of The Winter's Tale.

[5]Quoted in Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947), p. 182.

[6]Stephen Gosson, The School of Abuse (London, Shakespeare Society Reprint, 1841), p. 22.

[7]A few critics, such as Philip Edwards, Shakespeare and the Confines of Art (London, 1968), p. 45, claim that the women are at fault as well as the men.

[8]J. W. Lever, The Elizabethan Love Sonnet (London, 1956), p. 92.

[9]Lever, p. 143.

[10]A list of the other authors included in England's Helicon --Sidney, Spenser, Drayton, Greene, Lodge, Breton, Peele, Surrey, Dyer, Marlowe--suggests that the editor looked, with evident nostalgia, chiefly at the earlier generation of Elizabethan lyricists.

[11]Bacon, p. 111.

[12]T. W. Baldwin, William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke, II, 392.

[13]There is some dispute whether Holofernes is correct here --see Arden, 4.2.117n.

[14]Quoted in Doran, p. 243.

[15]Cf. Longaville's comment when he observes Berowne's recognition of his own mis-delivered sonnet:

> It did move him to passion, and therefore let's hear it. (4.3.200)

[16]J. A. K. Thomson, Shakespeare and the Classics, p. 187.

[17]L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge, 1955), p. 412.

[18]George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, p. 3; cf. Sidney (G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 158) and Ben Jonson's Timber:

> The third requisite in our Poet, or Maker, is Imitation, to bee able to convert the substance, or Riches of an other Poet, to his owne use.
>
> (Jonson, VIII, 638)

[19]Quoted in Baldwin, II, 234; see his entire discussion, II, 233-5.

[20]Smith, I, 13.

[21]Thomson, p. 155.

[22]Smith, II, 317.

[23]J. B. Leishman, ed., The Three Parnassus Plays (London, 1949), p. 192 (lines 1191-7).

[24]Thomas M. Greene, "Love's Labour's Lost: The Grace of Society," Shakespeare Quarterly, 22 (Fall, 1971), p. 320.

CHAPTER IV

PHANTASTICAL IMAGINATIONS

The wide variety of prose styles, the different attitudes toward language, the range of poetic prototypes: virtually all of the differences among the characters of Love's Labour's Lost that we have discussed arise from differences in the imaginations of the characters. The poets, lovers, and lunatics of this play are "of imagination all compact," to be sure, but there are important distinctions to be made. In Dream, Theseus offers his own rather unsympathetic analysis:

> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:
> That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> Such tricks hath strong imagination
> That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
> It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
> Or in the night, imagining some fear,
> How easy is a bush supposed a bear!
> (5.1.9-22)

Granting the differences, the common denominator of all the avatars of the imagination is simple: it is a question of

perception, of "seeing." In the first five lines quoted above, we note "sees"-"sees"-"eye"-"glance," a list which would also serve well for Love's Labour's Lost. The things seen vary--"devils," "beauty," "the forms of things unknown" --but the fact of vision, of transformation through vision, is constant.

As Theseus's tone suggests, "imagination" or phantasy was not always viewed with delight. Samuel Johnson's well-known distrust of the imagination had ample precedent in the Renaissance. The power described by this term,

> was the same power which, allied to the appetites, passions, temperaments, and humours, was prone to false reports concerning the external world, responsible for bad behavior, and as likely to fabricate monsters and delusions as perfect heroes and ideal Commonwealths.[1]

John Davies called the Phantasie (usually synonymous in its operations with what we call the imagination, but sometimes distinguished from it in physiological theory) "wits looking glasse." Evidently there were distortions in the mirror often enough to alarm moralists, Baconians, and Puritans, among others.

The power of the phantasy is described by Davies in his "Nosce Teipsum." (1599) The outer sense organs, he says, transmit their images to an "inward Sense," which in turn transmits all the forms it receives to "a higher region of the brain":

> Where Fantasy, near handmaid to the mind,
> Sits and beholds, and doth discern them all;
> Compounds in one thing divers in their kind;
> Compares the black and white, the great and small.

> Besides, those single forms she doth esteem,
> And in her balance doth their values try;
> Where some things good and some things ill do seem,
> And neutral some, in her fantastic eye.
>
> This busy power is working day and night;
> For when the outward senses rest do take,
> A thousand dreams, fantastical and light,
> With fluttering wings do keep her still awake.[2]

She also stores forms in the Memory. Burton describes the same process more colorfully:

> Phantasy, or imagination, . . . is an inner sense which doth more fully examine the species perceived by common sense, of things present or absent, and keeps them longer, recalling them to mind again, or making new of his own. In time of sleep this faculty is free, and many times conceives strange, stupend, absurd shapes, as in sick men we commonly observe. His organ is the middle cell of the brain; his objects all the species communicated to him by the common sense, by comparison of which he feigns infinite others unto himself. In melancholy men this faculty is most powerful and strong, and often hurts, producing many monstrous and prodigious things, especially if it be stirred up by some terrible object, presented to it from common sense or memory. In Poets and Painters imagination forcibly works, as appears by their several fictions, anticks, images: as Ovid's House of Sleep, Psyche's Palace in Apuleius, &c. In men it is subject and governed by reason, or at least should be; but in brutes it hath no superior, and is the reason of brutes, all the reason they have.[3]

The sticking-point in such theories, of course, is just how the "reason" does govern, but govern it must, as Bacon repeatedly insisted, lest madness reign.

In any event, poets and critics in the Renaissance regularly distinguished, in theory, between the controlled and uncontrolled phantasy, between a "good" and a "bad" imagination. Unfortunately, the same terms--"phantasy" or "phantasticall" --were used to describe both good and bad aspects. In the

latter case, for example, Puttenham complains of a flagrant abuse of alliteration,

> in truth it were but a phantasticall devise.[4]

Drummond reports Ben Jonson saying of himself, that he was

> oppressed with fantasie, which hath ever mastered his reason, a generall disease in many poets.[5]

Yet in Timber, Jonson compliments Shakespeare,

> Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent Phantsie; brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein hee flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd.[6]

What is given with one hand may be taken away with the other.

Some critics did make verbal distinctions as well between these two aspects of the imagination's power. Sidney is clear on this point:

> For I will not denie but that mans wit may make Poesie (which should be Eikastike, which some learned have defined, figuring foorth good things) to be Phantastike: which doth, contrariwise, infect the fancie with unworthy objects.[7]

Again, the idea of "infection." But, Sidney continues, "shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious?" A question well worth asking in Love's Labour's Lost. Echoing Sidney's distinction, Puttenham does admit that lunatics and poets are of phantasy all compact, as he describes its various operations:

> as the evill and vicious disposition of the braine hinders the sounde judgement and discourse of man with busie & disordered phantasies . . . so is that part being well affected, not onely nothing disorderly or confused with any monstruous imaginations or conceits, but very formall, and in his much multiformitie uniforme, that is well proportioned, and so passing cleare, that by it as by a glasse or mirrour, are represented unto the soule

> all maner of bewtifull visions, whereby the inventive parte of the mynde is so much holpen, as without it no man could devise any new or rare thing.[8]

It is interesting that Puttenham uses the analogy of the mirror, as Davies does, and even returns to it for further emphasis:

> And this phantasie may be resembled to a glasse as hath bene sayd, whereof there be many tempers and manner of makinges, as the perspectives doe acknowledge, for some be false glasses and shew thinges otherwise than they be in deede, and others right as they be in deede, neither fairer nor fouler, nor greater nor smaller. There be againe of these glasses that show thinges exceeding faire and comely, others that shew thinges very monstruous & illfavored. Even so is the phantasticall part of man (if it be not disordered) a representer of the best, most comely and bewtifull images or apparances of thinges to the soule and according to their very truth.[9]

If the Phantasy is disordered, it breeds "Chimeres & monsters"; such men are to be termed, Puttenham concedes, phantastici. But the other kind, of the ordered phantasy, should be termed euphantasiote:

> of this sort . . . are all good Poets, notable Captaines stratagematique, all cunning artificers and enginers, all Legislators Polititiens & Counsellours of estate, in whose exercises the inventive part is most employed and is to the sound & true judgement of man most needful.[10]

We can see immediately how these theoretical distinctions help illuminate the characters in Love's Labour's Lost. Each of the major characters represents a different refraction of that mirror, Phantasy, from the fun-house distortions and chimeras of Armado to the "most comely and bewtifull images" of the final songs.

Armado is, perhaps most obviously, the possessor of a diseased phantasy: "this child of fancy" ravishes only himself. His affections have overcome his reason, producing affectation in his behavior and poetry. Holofernes knows, if nothing else, exactly how to characterize this Spanish fop:

> Novi hominem tanquam te: his humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it . . . He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasimes, such insociable and point-devise companions; such rackers of orthography. (5.1.10-20)

This is the sort of thing Nathaniel loves--in fact, he commends Holofernes's "most singular and choice epithet," "peregrinate," and writes it down. What began by praising Armado, we should note, soon becomes an attack on his affectation and verbosity, and he is properly labeled a "phantasime." Holofernes's attack then degenerates into an exhibition of his orthographical theories.

Earlier, after Armado's letter to Jaquenetta was read aloud, Boyet offered this description of him to the ladies:

> This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court;
> A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport
> To the prince and his book-mates.
> (4.1.97-9)

The reference to the Monarcho, next to "phantasime," is interesting. As noted in the first chapter, this allusion clearly certifies Armado as a walking archaism. The Monarcho, we learn from the Arden and Variorum notes, was an actual

court hanger-on from the mid-1570s, dead by 1580. The real Monarcho was apparently quite vain and more than a little mad. Meres (Wits Commonwealth, pr. 1634) confirms the vanity:

> As a Chamaelon is fedd with none other nourishment, then with the ayre, and therefore shee is alwayes gaping: so popular applause dooth nourish some, neither doe they gape after any other thing but vaine praise and glorie: As in times past Herostratus and Manlius Capitolinus did: and in our age Peter Shakerlye of Paules, and Monarcho that lived about the Court.[11]

His madness is manifest in his claim that he was "soveraigne of the world," and he was said, like Thrasibulus, to be of "melancholike humor."[12] Thomas Churchyard wrote an epitaph, published in 1580, entitled "The Phantasticall Monarkes Epitaphe." After some preliminaries, Churchyard says,

> Come poore old man that boare the Monarks name,
> Thyne Epitaphe shall here set forthe thy fame.
> Thy climyng mynde aspierd beyonde the starrs,
> Thy loftie stile no yearthly titell bore:
> Thy witts would seem to see through peace and warrs,
> Thy tauntyng tong was pleasant sharpe and sore.
> And though thy pride and pompe was somewhat vaine,
> The Monarcke had a deepe discoursyng braine;
> . . . . . .
> His forme of life who lists to look upon,
> Did shewe some witte, though follie fedde his will.[13]

The point to be noted here, it seems to me, is the precision of Shakespeare's allusion: the Monarcho was widely known, as Nashe and Meres make plain, even 20 and 30 years after his death, as exceptionally vain, a seeker of praise, a "phantasticall" character, fond of a "loftie stile," and somewhat mad. This not only describes Armado, but it connects with the rest of the play as well, as in the concern for praise and glory. And it makes clear the kind of diseased phantasy Armado has,

though there is no lack of supporting evidence. Twice called a "phantasime," Armado marches to his own crazily distorted tune. His private inner vision--of a world still peopled by knights errant and damsels--corresponds to little outside of his own turbulent imagination. Jaquenetta becomes his Enchanted Dulcinea del Toboso; though her garlic breath is not emphasized, still Shakespeare makes it clear that this "wench" undergoes a transformation in Armado's phantasy nearly as remarkable as Alonza Lorenzo did in Don Quixote's.

Holofernes's mind (I use the term loosely) represents a spectacularly oblique refraction of Phantasy's mirror. To begin with, virtually everything that Holofernes says about Armado can be taken to apply to himself as well; still, Holofernes objects specifically that Armado hasn't enough matter for his verbosity--he has drawn the thread finer than the staple allows. Holofernes would never admit to the same flaw, though we can accuse him of it. On the contrary, he considers himself literally bursting with imagination, ingenuity, and wit.

When Holofernes disdains imitation, it is tempting to think that he is advocating some freer, more liberal use of the imagination, but such is not the case. We have seen that his sense of "invention" implies a more specific rhetorical meaning, as in the sonnet:

> Fair, kind, and true is all my argument,
> Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words;
> And in this change is my invention spent.
> (Sonnet 105)

"Invention" is linked with "variation": in short, "copy,"

or amplification, as it was also called.- The role of the imagination is strictly limited. Murray W. Bundy has shown in detail the metamorphosis of the term "invention," from its place in the Trivium through its gradual evolution into a synonym for "imagination."[14] He notes that the pejorative connotations of the phantasy were a concern to poets and critics:

> The Renaissance thus reached a kind of impasse in its thought about the poetic imagination or phantasy. Ronsard, Puttenham, and Sidney had tried to find one way out by their identification of 'imagination' and 'phantasy' with rhetorical 'invention.'[15]

In Holofernes, we see, this association has not yet taken place; needless to say, while Shakespeare used the term in its older sense, as in the sonnet, he was not confined to it.

Untroubled by the inhibitions of conventional modesty, Holofernes is good enough to give us a complete description of his own mind (this after his alliterative epitaph):

> This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions: these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of pia mater, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.
> (4.2.66-72)

This is an extraordinary description, what with its complex physiology, its sexual metaphor, and of course a most impressive string of synonyms--a virtuoso demonstration of the very power which Holofernes is in the act of describing. The metaphor of gestation and birth is fairly common in Shakespeare, and is found elsewhere in Love's Labour's Lost.[16] In most

instances, wit is "sharp," "piercing," or "cutting"; hence, masculine. Holofernes says that the forms and figures which swirl about in his brain are begotten _in_ the ventricle, presumably _by_ his wit.

We should note, though, that Holofernes has not really given us a physiology of the _imagination_, but rather a description of another faculty. Bundy has summarized the traditional, textbook psychology of the brain:

> The brain was divided into three cells or ventricles: in the foremost were common sense and imagination; in the middle, fantasy and judgment; and at the rear was memory.[17]

We recall that Davies and Burton, too, clearly separated the function and location of the Phantasy from that of Memory. Such forms as Phantasy no longer sees, Davies said,

> To Memory's large volume she commends.
>
> The ledger-book lies in the brain behind,
> Like Janus' eye, which in his poll was set;
> The layman's tables, storehouse of the mind,
> Which doth remember much, and much forget.
>
> Here Sense's apprehension end doth take;
> As when a stone is into water cast,
> One circle doth another circle make,
> Till the last circle touch the bank at last.[18]

Holofernes's mind is exactly such a "storehouse," crammed full of arcane words, dusty ledgers, and pedantic trivia. His power depends not so much on the imagination or phantasy, then, but on the Memory, on a large vocabulary which may be summoned up for "variation," but not for anything that we might fairly term a genuine transformation effected through language.

The rest of the characters in Love's Labour's Lost can be similarly positioned before the mirror of Phantasy and their special refractions studied. With the exception of Berowne, none are so obviously delineated as the extremes represented by Holofernes and Armado. Nor are all of the characters so schematically arranged as this discussion might suggest. Nevertheless, most of the characters in the play can be arrayed along a continuum of sorts, with the ladies in every case occupying the middle ground.

Transformation

Any discussion of poetry and the imagination--and especially one that has touched on Ovid--will include the concept of transformation or metamorphosis as well. As we will see, this idea becomes another source of thematic unity in Love's Labour's Lost, like the idea of "worthiness." Here, there are two distinct but related senses of transformation to be mentioned. One is the effect some power--love, the "affections"--has on a person; the second is the power of art, which makes words into poetry and unpromising subjects into beauty. The two are closely related.

The theme of great heroes transformed by the power of love is announced in the second scene with Armado's question:

> Comfort me, boy. What great men have been in love? (1.2.61-2)

Moth mentions only Hercules and Samson here, but the play is filled with other allusions: "mad" Ajax, Jove "turning mor-

tal," Achilles, Solomon, and others. We should take special note of the comic potential of this theme. The Hero, as Ernst Curtius notes, was usually known specifically for his self-control, and Cupid is traditionally the only force that can conquer him.[19] Sidney takes up the famous case of Hercules:

> so in Hercules, painted with his great beard and furious countenance, in woman's attire, spinning at Omphales commaundement, it breedeth both delight and laughter. For the representing of so strange a power in love procureth delight: and the scornefulnes of the action stirreth laughter.[20]

Burton, as we might expect, dwells more on the "scornefulnes" and especially on the loss of self-control which mark the Hero's undoing (self-discipline and control, we recall, are the very things the noblemen in Love's Labour's Lost are asserting in their edicts of abstinence and denial):

> The major part of Lovers are carried headlong like so many brute beasts, reason counsels one way, thy friends, fortunes, shame, disgrace, danger and an ocean of cares that will certainly follow; yet this furious lust precipitates, counterpoiseth, weighs down on the other; though it be their utter undoing, perpetual infamy, loss, yet they will do it, and become at last void of sense; degenerate into dogs, hogs, asses, brutes; as Jupiter into a Bull, Apuleius an Ass, Lycaon a Wolf, Tereus a Lapwing, Callisto a Bear, Elpenor and Gryllus into Swine by Circe.[21]

This more terrifying sense of transformation is largely absent from Love's Labour's Lost, and the comic is emphasized instead. To begin with, a physical transformation--or deformation--is evident in the Pageant of the Nine Worthies from the very beginning; Moth, after all, must play Hercules "in minority." Berowne, alluding to this tradition of the Hero,

mocks his three comrades, in similar terms, when he has discovered them to be in love:

> O! what a scene of foolery have I seen,
> Of sighs, of groans, of sorrow, and of teen;
> O! me with what strict patience have I sat,
> To see a king transformed to a gnat;
> To see great Hercules whipping a gig,
> And profound Solomon to tune a jig,
> And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,
> And critic Timon laugh at idle toys!
> (4.3.161-8)

It is a brilliant passage which achieves its own verbal transformations--perhaps echoing Rabelais's comic underworld. In any case, the allusions to great heroes serve as an ironic foil to the less-than-mythic men of Navarre.

Armado, as usual, functions as a flagrant parody of the four noblemen; he is actively looking for "some mighty precedent" with which to justify his own transformation and, in his soliloquy (with false syllogism), he succeeds with little effort:

> Love is a familiar; Love is a devil: there is no evil angel but Love. Yet was Samson so tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit. Cupid's buttshaft is too hard for Hercules' club, and therefore too much odds for a Spaniard's rapier.
> (1.2.162-7)

Self-justification apparently knows no bounds. That final collection of phallic weapons notwithstanding, Armado makes a good case, and our response is complex. We laugh at those who claim love will not touch them, and also laugh at those whom it has already touched, and thus altered. In both cases, the power of the force itself is greater than anyone can es-

timate. If Cupid can conquer Hercules, then Berowne and Armado are small challenge, and the fun of the play comes in seeing what form the inevitable defeat of the mortals will take. In his very first scene, Armado demonstrates beyond doubt that he has a terminal case of folly. That of the noblemen is nearly as serious, if less grotesque. Armado's transformation of Jaquenetta also serves as a parody of the lords' misconception of the ladies, still another confusion between sign and thing signified.

Love effects subtler transformations as well as those broadly comic ones. The four noblemen certainly experience internal change, and Boyet notices it in Navarre immediately. After the first meeting of the lords and ladies, Boyet tells the Princess that Navarre is "infected"-"affected" with love; his evidence is "the heart's still rhetoric," as disclosed through Navarre's eyes:

> Boyet. Why, all his behaviours did make their retire
> To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire:
> His heart, like an agate, with your print impress'd,
> Proud with his form, in his eye pride express'd:
> His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,
> Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be;
> All senses to that sense did make their repair,
> To feel only looking on fairest of fair:
> Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,
> As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;
> Who, tend'ring their own worth from where they
> were glass'd,
> Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd:
> His face's own margent did quote such amazes,
> That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.
> I'll give you Aquitaine, and all that is his,
> An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.
> (2.1.234-49)

This is an astonishing speech, and the ladies are quite right

to suspect that "Boyet is dispos'd" to playfulness, and that he is himself an "old love-monger." The eight couplets, mostly with eleven-syllable lines, contain a number of remarkable conceits. The passage begins with a metaphor of a castle: his "behaviours" crowd together inside the fortress, peeping out for a view. All his senses are said to be composed into his eyes, "as jewels in crystal," and presumably just as helpless to get out and express themselves. Then his face and eyes are likened to a book, as in the famous passage in Romeo and Juliet (1.3.86ff.) Throughout the passage there is a great emphasis on "eyes" and vision. What Boyet describes are the effects of some striking internal change, presumably for the good. In the final scene, Berowne uses a similar image in a speech to Rosaline:

> Studies my lady? mistress, look on me.
> Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,
> What humble suit attends thy answer there.
> (5.2.827-9)

In both cases, the appeal is through the eyes, to the "heart's still rhetoric," not the tongue's tinkling eloquence. Whether these are the desired transformations remains to be seen.

The most celebrated moment in Love's Labour's Lost occurs in the sonnet-reading scene when, after all of the noblemen have been discovered and exposed, Berowne makes his Promethean Fire speech. The first thing to be noted about it is that it is intended to be sophistical, witty, and paradoxical. It is a justification:

> King. . . . good Berowne, now prove
> Our loving lawful, and our faith not torn.

Dumain. Ay, marry, there; some flattery for this evil.
Longaville. O! some authority how to proceed;
Some tricks, some quillets, how to cheat the devil.
Dumain. Some salve for perjury.
(4.3.281-6)

Given this introduction, it is difficult to construe, as some readers have done, the speech that follows as Shakespeare's own voice. Still, it does seem to sum up a great deal of the spirit of the play. For reference, it is quoted in its entirety, omitting the shorter section (lines 293-314) which appears to have been revised and expanded in the rest:

O! 'tis more than need.
Have at you then, affection's men-at-arms:
Consider what you first did swear unto,
To fast, to study, and to see no woman;
Flat treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth.
Say, can you fast? Your stomachs are too young,
And abstinence engenders maladies.
. . . .
O! we have made a vow to study, lords,
And in that vow we have forsworn our books:
For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,
In leaden contemplation have found out
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain,
And therefore, finding barren practisers,
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil;
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain,
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye;
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd:
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails:
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste.
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods

Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs;
O! then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
(4.3.286-346)

If Berowne's logic is somewhat shaky, and depends too much on quirky associations, his choice of language is subtle and often exquisite:

. . . as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair.

This is the kind of elegant line that the noblemen have been reaching for, and missing, in their own verse. A line like "When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd" carries both a sense of precise realism and at the same time an extraordinary suggestiveness, while the love-sonnets did neither. Here, finally, is a genuinely poetic transformation through language. Berowne's description of Love's powers--his use of an increasingly inventive list of attributes, culminating in Cupid's personification--becomes by the end a self-evident demonstration of Apollo's power as well. The descriptions tend to become self-referential--the poet himself seems to have a "double power," as he ranges through all of the senses, hearing the lowest sounds, his feeling more soft and sensible, subtle as sphinx, sweet and musical, and, in the person of Berowne, still climbing trees after mythical fruits.

At the same time, though, there is evidence that Berowne hasn't forgotten his special audience. If, for example, the "fiery numbers" of line 319 refer, as seems likely, to the love-sonnets the men have just read aloud, then we may legi-

timately suspect some irony in Berowne's tone. So, too, with the possible double-entendres in "the tender horns of cockled snails." And Berowne's description of Love as "a Hercules,"

> Still climbing trees in the Hesperides,

may remind us of Berowne's own ascent a few moments before. These are admittedly slight hints, but the speech was intended as, and in fact is, a great deal of fun. It is full of "tricks" and "quillets," as requested, and it will simply not support an over-solemn exposition of theory. What Berowne says is in itself unexceptional--in fact, he continues to play on Petrarchan conceits dealing with eyes, light, fire, and so forth. It is how Berowne reformulates and revivifies the clichés, through verbal transformations, that engages our attention.

We should note once more the link, made explicit in the speech, between love and poetry. The conventional idea of love as an inspirational force is augmented by the notion that there is a preternatural heightening of sensibility at the same time. Calderwood notes that Berowne's speech,

> does not regard love as a social phenomenon between man and woman but as a vivifying inner event, an intensification of sensory powers.[22]

To the extent that it is not "social," Calderwood sees this experience as needing some correction. It would be difficult to reject the charm of the speech, though, and especially its suggestion that in some instances the creation of quite beautiful poetry arises from this private intensification.

"Bright Apollo's lute" is heard in the very words of the speech itself. And when, in lines 341-6, Berowne paraphrases the myth of Orpheus, the father of poets, we are impressed with the seriousness of this power. We may recall, too, the ironic reference to Orpheus in Armado, and note the difference here. Earlier, Rosaline had said of Berowne's power of speech,

> . . . his fair tongue (conceit's expositor)
> Delivers . . . such apt and gracious words
> That aged ears play truant at his tales,
> And younger hearings are quite ravished;
> So sweet and voluble is his discourse.
> (2.1.72-6)

The recurrence of "ravish" suggests that these passages are to be compared; the result is an indication of the lyric, "poetic" potential in Berowne, emphasized in his great speech. With the play lacking the conventional marriages at the end, the only "ravishing" done (aside from Jaquenetta) is through language.

If the speech touches on serious issues--and especially on the play's debate on the nature of poetry and art--it does not long remain there, for as Berowne continues, the speech becomes ever more rhetorical, consciously clever, until the final outrageous paradox:

> From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
> They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
> They are the books, the arts, the academes,
> That show, contain, and nourish all the world;
> Else none at all in aught proves excellent.
> Then fools you were these women to forswear,
> Or, keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
> For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,
> Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men,

> Or for men's sake, the authors of these women,
> Or women's sake, by whom we men are men,
> Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,
> Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.
> It is religion to be thus forsworn;
> For charity itself fufils the law;
> And who can sever love from charity?
> (4.3.347-62)

Again, there is an interesting mixture of tones here. "Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves"--this rings true on the deepest level; the movement of the entire play has been towards this self-discovery. Yet this self-discovery is also a self-justification, and therefore its sincerity is suspect, especially after the elaborate patterning and repetition of the "Or" construction. The next few lines, with the clear echo of Romans, are just short of being blasphemous, and yet we enjoy the wit which brought us to this point (without necessarily believing it). Barber aptly describes the tone of these last lines:

> [Shakespeare] has turned the word "fool" around, in the classic manner of Erasmus in his Praise of Folly; it becomes folly not to be a fool. After reciprocally tumbling men and women around (and alluding to the sanctioning fact of procreation), the speech concludes with overtones of Christian folly in proclaiming the logic of their losing themselves to find themselves and in appealing from the law to charity. But Berowne merely leaps up to ring these big bells lightly; there is no coming to rest on sanctities; everything is in motion.[23]

What we have, then, is virtuosity. Wooing the ladies of France becomes, through sleight-of-hand, identified with Christian charity, Navarre's edicts become Mosaic law, and it seems the most natural thing in the world when Berowne argues that that law exists only to be superseded. Our reac-

tions to this, as usual, must be complex. On the one hand, our comic expectations have all along been that this foolish law will eventually be broken, that it should be broken; on the other hand, the manner of breaking of that law--the sophistry and cleverness of Berowne's speech--indicate that, though the oath is lost, the young men have yet to find themselves. Throughout its length, Berowne's great speech continually moves toward various truths of human nature, but, because of its parabolic irony, it never quite reaches them.

Somewhere during the speech, possibly at line 334, "love" is no longer simply an abstract force, an affection, but also becomes "Love," or Cupid. The personification takes on greater and greater life (like Costard's "one Frances") until, when Berowne's speech is over, his full metamorphosis is revealed by Navarre:

> King. Saint Cupid, then! and, soldiers, to the field!
> Berowne. Advance your standards, and upon them, lords!
> Pell-mell, down with them! but be first advis'd,
> In conflict that you get the sun of them.
> (4.3.363-6)

Cupid has, in fact, been the most impressive "Worthy" in the play, from the militant conqueror of Samson, Solomon, and Hercules, to the paradoxical but powerful opponent of Berowne's soliloquy in 3.1:

> O! and I forsooth in love!
> I, that have been love's whip;
> A very beadle to a humorous sigh;
> A critic, nay, a night-watch constable,
> A domineering pedant o'er the boy,
> Than whom no mortal so magnificent!
> This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,
> This signor junior, giant-dwarf, dan Cupid;
> Regent of love rhymes, lord of folded arms,

> The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,
> Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,
> Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,
> Sole imperator and great general
> Of trotting paritors: O my little heart!
> And I to be a corporal of his field,
> And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!
> (3.1.170-85)

The wit of this passage is brilliant: the ascending metaphors of royalty, the references to love's war, the comic use of alliteration, the juxtaposition of the regal and the carnal. The description of "Love" throughout the play, in fact, whether the abstract force or the personification, rather resembles in its paradoxes and effects the power of poetry. And here again, as in the inventive lists in the Promethean Fire speech, Berowne achieves powerful poetic transformations. In lines 170-4, Berowne creates a list of his own roles--beadle, critic, constable, pedant--which correspond, interestingly, with at least three of the commedia figures in the play.[24] In lines 175-85, he goes on to a list of characterizations of Cupid, comparable to the list at 4.3.324-46 quoted earlier. "Still climbing trees in the Hesperides," the "king of codpieces" comes alive through Berowne's language, undergoes Protean changes of shape, and becomes himself an emblem for effecting change. Metamorphosis as a power of love is analogous to, and at times indistinguishable from, the transformations of art effected by the imagination through language.

In any event, Cupid becomes a Saint and ally at the end of Berowne's speech, the exemplification of the religion of

Love, of the "liver vein." The result is, in Berowne's terms, "pure, pure idolatry." This attitude, along with the heavy sexual overtones of the "standards" of lines 364-6 (with the inevitable pun "sun"=son), severely qualifies any sense in which the Promethean Fire speech might be taken directly as Shakespeare's own words. Berowne's speech impresses us, above all, with how much can be done with language while simultaneously reminding us, in its self-consciousness and its reference to Apollo's lute, that even more might still be done.

Conclusions

What of the "poetry" in the play, then? There is a wide and interesting range, from the clumsy to the glib, from the archaic to the topical. Finally, though, none of the examples we have so far discussed seems "worthy" of being termed the prototype of the play, or "Shakespearean," in the sense that the play moves toward such a model. These distinctions are reserved for the final songs alone, I think. Only in them will we find true, not false praise, a genuine transformation of "reality" into art.

The metamorphosis of Berowne and his comrades being as yet incomplete, so necessarily is their poetry not yet fully satisfying. The men, during the play, are in the process of change, however gradual. As Berowne says at the end,

> Your beauty, ladies,
> Hath much deform'd us, fashioning our humours
> Even to the opposed end of our intents;
> And what in us hath seem'd ridiculous,--

> As love is full of unbefitting strains;
> All wanton as a child, skipping and vain;
> Form'd by the eye, and therefore, like the eye,
> Full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms,
> Varying in subjects, as the eye doth roll
> To every varied object in his glance:
> Which party-coated presence of loose love
> Put on by us, if, in your heavenly eyes,
> Have misbecom'd our oaths and gravities,
> Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,
> Suggested us to make.
> (5.2.746-60)

Berowne tries to blame the vagaries of his own imagination--"full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms"--on the fact that the ladies came into his line-of-sight and prompted some of these phantasms. But the Princess, quite rightly, rejects the specious argument. Berowne's lack of responsibility here, his cleverness, his puns and alliteration--above all his at best only partial understanding of the workings of his own imagination--demonstrate that he and his friends are not yet "worthy" of the ladies, that they are still too fantastical, too much like Armado. After assigning Berowne to a hospital for his year-long trial, Rosaline says,

> . . . if sickly ears,
> Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
> Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
> And I will have you and that fault withal;
> But if they will not, throw away that spirit,
> And I shall find you empty of that fault,
> Right joyful of your reformation.
> (5.2.853-9)

It is no coincidence that Rosaline answers Berowne's admission of being "deform'd" (l. 747) with a look toward his eventual "reformation," (l. 859) because Love's Labour's Lost as a whole is vitally concerned with "formation" in all

its aspects: with the metamorphosis of personality, with the education of the noblemen, with the transformation of "reality" into art. There are a series of puns, in fact, on words which have to do with "formation" and the imagination. "Form" itself, usually as a verb, has the sense of "shape" or "create"; in Berowne's speech above, he has it twice:

> Form'd by the eye, and therefore, like the eye,
> Full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms.

And Holofernes has described his "foolish extravagant spirit" as "full of forms, figures, shapes." (4.2.67) As verb or noun, thus, it is associated with the active power of the imagination. But it is also trivialized, as the word "fame" was, as in Berowne's complaint about Boyet:

> This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice.
> (5.2.325)

Holofernes is horrified at Dull's appearance: "O! thou monster Ignorance, how deform'd dost thou look." (4.2.23) And it becomes nonsensical in Costard's "In manner and form following." (1.1.202)

Something similar happens to the word "fashion." In its active sense, it could mean "to create" or "shape," as in Spenser's intention to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline," or in Berowne's "fashioning our humours." (5.2.747) Most often, though, the verb has frozen into a noun. Armado is,

> A man in all the world's new fashion planted.
> (1.1.163)

And,

A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.
(1.1.177)

Berowne boasts that Rosaline's dark "favour"

. . . turns the fashion of the days.
(4.3.259)

Still another parallel is to be found in the use of the word "figure." Holofernes's spirit is "full of forms, figures, shapes," and "figures," the Arden editor tells us, here means "imagination," more or less. (4.2.67n.) But the word usually is deadly literal, referring to the specific figures of rhetoric. ("What is the figure?")

There seems to be a kind of trivialization of the imagination in evidence, then, in the male characters of the play. It is physically and dramatically represented in the persons and poetry of Holofernes, Armado, and to a lesser extent in the four noblemen. The commedia figures are themselves "deformations" of the legendary Nine Worthies, comically reduced in scale. But this trivialization is also evident in the language of the play: the forms of the imagination of the past have become mere formalities, forms of etiquette or dead convention; the figures of the mind have congealed into figures of rhetorical invention to be memorized. The play's interest in archaic forms of style, diction, and poetry seems aimed at this goal: to contrast static forms with active formation. The noblemen themselves, in their adopted roles as melancholy-lovers, are merely the apes of form, acting an old part no longer very interesting, and no longer as relevant in the presence of such superior women. The men--and

their poetry--are clearly "deformed." What is needed, as Rosaline makes clear, is a genuine re-formation. Much of Love's Labour's Lost is thus a prelude to the eventual, genuine metamorphoses of the noblemen and their language. Both will presumably take place during the year of separation and penance but we are given, thankfully, an immediate example of the best use of language in Berowne's inventive lists and in the final songs. The rest is too long for a play.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1]Murray W. Bundy, "Fracastoro and the Imagination," PQ, XX (1941), pp. 238-9.

[2]John Davies, "Nosce teipsum," Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century, p. 377.

[3]Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, pp. 139-40. Cf. Burton's "common sense" here and Berowne's question,

> Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense? (1.1.57)

Also:

> When mistresses from common sense are hid. (1.1.64)

[4]George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, p. 15.

[5]Ben Jonson, Works, I, 151.

[6]Jonson, VIII, 584.

[7]G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 186; see also Bundy, "Fracastoro," pp. 244-5.

[8]Puttenham, pp. 18-9.

[9]Puttenham, p. 19.

[10]Puttenham, pp. 19-20

[11]Quoted in Thomas Nashe, Works, IV, 155-6.

[12]Arden, 4.1.98n.; Nashe, IV, 339.

[13]Variorum, p. 124.

[14]See Murray W. Bundy, "Fracastoro and the Imagination," and also his "'Invention' and 'Imagination' in the Renaissance," JEGP, xxix (1930), 535-45.

[15]Bundy, "Fracastoro," p. 239.

[16]Earlier, Moth invokes "My father's wit and my mother's tongue assist me!" (1.2.90) Rosaline says of Berowne, "His eye begets occasion for his wit." (2.1.69)

[17]Bundy, "'Invention'," p. 537.

[18]Davies, p. 377.

[19]Ernst Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1953), p. 167.

[20]Smith, I, 200.

[21]Burton, p. 737.

[22]James L. Calderwood, "Love's Labour's Lost: A Wantoning with Words," p. 327.

[23]C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, p. 92.

[24]Northrop Frye, "Shakespeare's Experimental Comedy," Stratford Papers on Shakespeare, 1961 (Toronto, 1962), p. 7, makes a similar point.

CHAPTER V

ART AND NATURE

The movement and very structure of Love's Labour's Lost appear to be in the form of an expansion: from the inner to the outer of a ring of concentric circles, from the less to the more inclusive, from "artifice" and "illusion" to "reality." The play begins in Navarre's mind, as his opening speech details his plan for defeating time with a "little academe." The constricted world of the academe is forcibly expanded, however, by the arrival of the women, and the setting moves to the park, away from the court itself. The introduction of the various low comic characters contributes to a continuing sense of expansion as the play progresses, and there are more and more reminders of time and death, even in the Pageant of the Nine Worthies. The Princess's embassy reminds us of another world outside the court, another dimension where wars are fought, debts must be settled, old men sicken and die. With the entrance of Marcade in the last scene, death itself enters the play, and whatever remained of the plan for an ascetic academe completely vanishes. The various levels of reality so schematically out-

lined in the sonnet-reading scene are obviously mirrored in the larger structure of the entire play, then. We move from the innermost circle or level, in the opening speech, to something like the outermost circle with Marcade's entrance and the imposition of the year-long penances. There is a great deal of fun along the way, but that the play has serious concerns cannot be doubted.

Recent critics of Love's Labour's Lost are virtually unanimous in their appraisals of the meaning and implications of this outward movement. It represents, in its broadest terms, what is often called the "victory" of "reality" over "illusion," of "nature" over "art." This verdict is made all the easier by the extraordinary vitality and complexity of the play's language; it is easier to call it "affected" or "artificial" than to understand what it is doing. One critic rather baldly sums up the consensus attitude:

> The play retains its elusiveness, but is today generally regarded as a delicate and controlled movement towards an acceptance of reality. 'Reality' is a term that (however unsatisfactory philosophically) critics agree upon as a convenient designation for the target of the play's probing. The word is not susceptible to exact definition, but it designates all those phenomena of life that are symbolized by the entry of Mercade. That entry is the key fact of the play . . . the final Act makes sense only as a reversal of the first Act: the themes of light-darkness, folly-wisdom, fantasy-reality are initiated and resolved in the exposition and conclusion.[1]

These themes are "resolved" on only one side, according to Berry (and others), who concludes that this "movement towards reality" is

> the best way of describing what happens in Love's Labour's Lost. And we can as readily see it as a set of reversals, refutations of the untenable positions taken up in Act I--just as, perhaps, the logic of the final Winter-song refutes Summer.[2]

In another version of this interpretation, Madeleine Doran sees,

> the victory of nature and experience over pedantry, rigid discipline, and the affectations of art . . . the victory of Berowne's spirit over the spirit of Holofernes and Armado. It would be strange if the unbookish Shakespeare had not leaned towards Nature, who had given him so free-flowing a pen.[3]

That last sentence gives away the game, of course, for we are suddenly thrown into Dowdenesque biographical speculations. A number of interpretations of the play, it turns out, are founded on a pre-conception of Shakespeare dating back to Jonson's Elegy. This is the Shakespeare of Nature, the clown of the "Prologue to Julius Caesar" (attributed to Dryden):

> His excellencies came and were not sought;
> His words like casual atoms made a thought,
> Drew up themselves in rank and file and writ,
> He wond'ring how the devil it were such wit.
> Thus, like the drunken tinker in his play,
> He grew a prince and never knew which way.
> He did not know what trope or figure meant,
> But to persuade is to be eloquent;
> . . . .
> Those then that tax his learning are to blame;
> He knew the thing, but did not know the name.[4]

Maybe, but Christopher Sly was hardly capable of the sophisticated manipulations of the Art-Nature theme which we see in this play.

If there is agreement on the movement of the play, not everyone is agreed on the precise turning-point of Love's

Labour's Lost. For one thing, the theme of death runs throughout the play, from the opening words of Navarre; but death is finally embodied in Marcade, no longer merely a verbal allusion. The build-up is gradual, from witty allusions to disease or a "death's-face in a ring" (5.2.605), to the movement, in stage-time, in the fifth act from early afternoon to the gathering darkness of twilight, in which Holofernes-Judas stumbles. Philip Parsons, though, sees a critical movement earlier, just after the Masque of Muscovites:

> Berowne's forswearing of 'three-pil'd hyperboles' for 'russet yeas and honest kersey noes' is a turning to reality that helps prepare for the harsh intrusion of death into the summer enchantment.[5]

Other critics have other favorite turning-points, but most see Marcade's entrance, quite properly, as a chilling dramatic high-point in the play. It never fails to shock in performance.

The outward movement described above is undeniably the essential structure of Love's Labour's Lost. But too many readers of the play seem to have forgotten that Marcade's entrance is not the end of the play, that there are some 200 lines yet, and that the play actually ends, not with a chilling note of death or with a harsh penance, but with a much more complex tone, in a highly artificial debate, or "dialogue." Schematic structures--rhetorical schemes, dualisms and concentric circle figures--are continually being subverted throughout the play, outer circles suddenly become inner circles, an exclusive point of view is forcibly ex-

panded. I suggest that there is a similar qualification made at the end of Love's Labour's Lost, after Marcade's entrance.

A basic principle of construction in the play is this use of multiple levels, possibly extending to infinity, but usually thought of as stopping with the dramatist, who occupies the outermost ring, the primum mobile who turns the universe of the play, with the elements near the center (Dull, Costard) slower and heavier than those near the edges (Moth, the ladies). Another form of this repeated structure is found in Shakespeare's usual way with dualisms, a special case of the multiple-level idea. In the first chapter, we saw a number of stylistic examples of this: high and low diction alternating, one prose style clashing with another. Jonas Barish finds that Shakespeare's habitual syntactical arrangement, in prose, is disjunctive in a similar way:

> What we find in Shakespeare and in writers like him is a tendency to insist on the points of disjunction, to hold up the two pieces of the sentence side by side, in full view, to symmetrize them and brandish them in their matched antagonism.[6]

In the second chapter we saw a similar juxtaposition of dramatic styles, and in the third, of poetic styles. The counterpointing of scenes with high and low characters, the ubiquity of Costard's entrances, the tick-tack witplay of the lovers: all this and more can be seen as arising from the same basic habit.

The final "dialogue" or debate between Hiems and Ver serves as an extremely suggestive emblem of the basic struc-

tural principle of Love's Labour's Lost: two opposites literally brought on stage to contend in mock-struggle, each making claims for itself, each tending to exclude the other. This "dialogue," or better, dialectic, is conducted throughout the play on a number of levels. Love's Labour's Lost is a "debate" on the nature of poetry and the imagination in just this sense, that two (or more) conflicting attitudes and examples are again and again placed in opposition, where the contrary claims can be more easily studied and evaluated. A list of all such dualisms in the play would be lengthy, but the following seem especially crucial in the play:

Spring	vs.	Winter
Learning	vs.	Experience
Rhetoric	vs.	Simplicity
Affectation	vs.	Self-Knowledge
Wearing a Mask	vs.	Revealing Oneself
Playing a Role	vs.	Being Oneself
Style	vs.	Matter
Words	vs.	Things
Form	vs.	Content
Mind	vs.	Body
Paradox	vs.	Common Sense

And so on. In the very beginning, Navarre's edicts are premised on a Mind-Body dualism which is quickly shaken, and Navarre describes Armado as a man, "Whom right and wrong / Have chose as umpire of their mutiny." (1.1.167-8) One of the first and most important things Navarre has to learn is that experience is not so easily categorized; it can be argued that his concept of the academy, otherwise a respected idea in the Renaissance, founders just because it is based on such a naive assumption.

If recent criticism of Shakespeare's comedies has taught

us anything, surely it is that these plays are more complex than we at first suspect, that Shakespeare's structures and, yes, even his ideas are not simple-minded. All the more surprising, then, to find virtually unanimous agreement among readers of Love's Labour's Lost that the play clearly affirms the "victory" of the right side of this list over the left, of russet and honest kersey over taffeta and silk, of Winter-Reality over Spring-Illusion. Of, most inclusively, Nature over Art. At its worst, this traditional reading of the play finds Shakespeare wholly in Berowne, renouncing gimmickry and artificiality. But Shakespeare too had much more than just "a trick / Of the old rage" left in him, judging by Dream, not to mention the late plays.

It will be helpful here to backtrack to the "dialogue," the emblem of all the dualisms in the play. The debate or conflictus is in itself an archaic, remarkably artificial device, dating back at least to the ninth century, founded on the rhythm of Nature itself. It is at least as venerable as the Pageant of the Nine Worthies, but unlike the Pageant is not at all comic or ludicrous here. On the contrary, the songs are one of the magical moments of the play. Madeleine Doran conveniently summarizes the medieval tradition of the débat:

> The familiar medieval literary débats are generally organized to set forth opposing lines of equally persuasive argument, and decision is often evaded either by being left to the reader or by some adventitious device. In debate on such favorite themes as the relative merits of the owl and the

> nightingale, winter and summer, water and wine, no conclusion is possible, for these contraries are only conventional symbols of familiar oppositions in experience, and if these can be reduced to genuine issues for debate they admit only of practical decision in the course of living, not of theoretical and absolute conclusion. . . . It is the airing of the issues that has been important, not the conclusion.[7]

Another analogue might be found in the rhyming contests between pastoral shepherds, in which both sides usually win some prize. The point is that--as in Love's Labour's Lost--neither one side nor the other is usually declared a clear victor. In Shakespeare's version, Winter's song comes after Spring's, but there is no evidence in the text that one song is superior to the other. Catherine McLay, in an otherwise interesting article on the songs, concludes (with Berry),

> Like the Song, the play too moves from spring to winter, from art to nature, from illusion to reality. And the movement in the Song from the folly of the cuckoo to the wisdom of the owl has its counterpart in the handling of the several strands of the play's action, of its plots and subplots.[8]

This does justice neither to the play nor to the songs. The play is more complex than this; the songs do not work in this manner. In those débats, festivals, and fertility rituals in which one side is declared a victor over the other, moreover, it is Spring or Summer, not Winter, whose victory is celebrated. No such either-or decision is made in Love's Labour's Lost. As an emblem of structure, it is the dialectic between the dualistic forces which is primary; the stress in the play may be now to one side, now to another, but there is never a complete dominance of one side--though the entrance of Marcade

comes close.

So too with all the other dualisms described on the list above. To stress only the right side of the list--Matter, Things, Experience--is naive, not to say materialistic. It is a curious ontology (and meteorology) which allows "reality" and "nature" to be totally identified with "winter," as McLay does. To stress only the left side of the list, however--Learning, Style, Words--is perverse, if not decadent. Shakespeare was neither of these things. It is not difficult to find theoretical proponents in the Renaissance of one side or the other, of course, from Chapman, say, to Montaigne.[9] But in Love's Labour's Lost, dualisms are suspect; they are flourished and emphasized, consciously examined. Differences between the opposites almost always turn out to be less than we thought. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the most important opposition in the play, Art vs. Nature.

Art and Nature

Armado tells Navarre that he discovered Costard and Jaquenetta,

> north-north-east and by east from the west
> corner of thy curious-knotted garden . . .
> (1.1.239-40)

One thinks immediately of Milton's disclaimer, that in Eden there are

> Flours worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
> In Beds and curious Knots, but Nature boon
> Powrd forth profuse . . .
> (P.L., IV, 241-3)

We never actually see Navarre's garden, but it isn't difficult to imagine the carefully sculpted labyrinths and mazes which "nice Art" has created. There is obviously a strong family resemblance between Navarre's garden and his rhetoric. When Milton wishes to initiate a distinction between Art and Nature, the garden is already a handy conventional emblem, as it was for Shakespeare. The hand that created each of these gardens --divine, in one case, courtly, in the other--was in both cases that of an artist.

The Art-Nature problem is manifestly of crucial importance in any discussion or débat of the role of the imagination, or the function and role of the artist. Everything depends on which side of the dualism you come down on--the imagination may be severely circumscribed if "Nature" is held morally superior to "nice Art." The ideal relationship is usually a balance or dialectic: Art supplies what Nature lacks, the two work in harmony, they complement one another.[10] Puttenham, after describing Art first as "an ayde and coadiutor to nature," then as "an alterer . . . and in some sort a surmounter" of nature, then as "a bare immitatour of natures works," concludes with a look at still a further power of Art:

> But for that in our maker or Poet, which restes onely in devise and issues from an excellent sharpe and quick invention, holpen by a cleare and bright phantasie and imagination, he is not as the painter to counterfaite the naturall by the like effects and not the same, nor as the gardiner aiding nature to worke both the same and the like, nor as the Carpenter to worke effectes utterly unlike, but even as nature her selfe working by her owne peculiar vertue

> and proper instinct and not by example or meditation or exercise as all other artificers do, is then most admired when he is most raturall and least artificiall. And in the feates of his language and utterance, because they hold aswell of nature to be suggested and uttered as by arte to be polished and reformed. Therefore shall our Poet receave prayse for both, but more by knowing of his arte then by unseasonable using it, and be more commended for his naturall eloquence then for his artificiall, and more for his artificiall well desembled, then for the same overmuch affected and grossely or undiscretly bewrayed, as many makers and Oratours do.[11]

This is a rich passage, and we should note at the least that Puttenham resolves while simultaneously affirming the Art-Nature dualism, terming this right use of Art "even as nature her selfe," while a misuse is "unseasonable." We can already hear Polixenes's claim, in The Winter's Tale, that "the art itself is nature." If it seems surprising to claim this kind of sophistication also applies to such an early play of Shakespeare's, that is the result of decades of patronizing criticism. The sophistication and complexity of Love's Labour's Lost can probably best be demonstrated by a closer examination of two special cases of the Art-Nature problem: the idea of the garment of style, and the concept of ut pictura poesis.

The Garment of Style

> Others for Language all their Care express,
> And value Books, as Women Men, for Dress:
> Their Praise is still--The Stile is excellent:
> The Sense, they humbly take upon Content.
> . . . .

> Expression is the Dress of Thought, and still
> Appears more decent as more suitable;
> A vile Conceit in pompous Words exprest,
> Is like a Clown in regal Purple drest;
> For diff'rent Styles with diff'rent Subjects sort,
> As several Garbs with Country, Town, and Court.
> (Essay on Criticism, 305-8, 318-23)

Pope's lines remind us, if we have forgotten, of one of the enduring clichés of aesthetic theory--the garment of style, the metaphor of dress.[12] The metaphor is ubiquitous in the Renaissance, and scarcely less so today, so commonly used as to be virtually unconscious. Heywood, for example, uses the metaphor casually:

> but after them Sophocles and Euripides clothed
> their tragedies in better ornament.[13]

Puttenham, quite addicted to the metaphor, sums it up with references to allied arts as well (an echo of Holofernes is heard here too):

> This ornament we speake of is given to it by
> figures and figurative speaches, which be the
> flowers as it were and colours that a Poet
> setteth upon his language by arte, as the
> embroderer doth his stone and perle, or
> passements of gold upon the stuffe of a
> Princely garment, or as th'excellent painter
> bestoweth the rich Orient coulours upon his
> table of pourtraite.[14]

Puttenham goes on to make further analogies between the good use of these allied arts and ornament in poetry.

When there is no such good use, the results are predictable. Dame Rhetoric, often described in medieval allegories as a stately woman dressed in "jewels" and "colours," the figures of speech, is transformed (in Sidney) into a fallen woman of the night:

> Now, for the out-side of it, which is words, or (as I may tearme it) Diction, it is even well worse. So is that honny-flowing Matron Eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a Curtizan-like painted affectation: one time with so farre fette words, they may seeme Monsters.[15]

The clothes metaphor is equally important throughout Love's Labour's Lost. After the ladies have described the noblemen, the Princess marvels,

> God bless my ladies! are they all in love,
> That every one her own hath garnished
> With such bedecking ornaments of praise?
> (2.1.77-9)

Other such "ornaments" are common in the play. Holofernes's judgment of Armado also relies on the clothes metaphor:

> He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.
> (5.1.17-8)

After Marcade's entrance and Navarre's fumbling condolences, Berowne tries to explain things to the ladies in "Honest plain words," but the Princess's reply is sharp:

> We have receiv'd your letters full of love;
> Your favours, the ambassadors of love;
> And in our maiden council, rated them
> At courtship, pleasant jest, and courtesy,
> As bombast and as lining to the time.
> (5.2.767-71)

A style full of "bombast" is one literally (over)stuffed with wool padding.

The most famous use of the clothes metaphor in the play occurs in Berowne's supposed renunciation. After confessing and revealing himself to the "sharp wit" and "keen conceit" of the ladies, Berowne's great speech concludes:

> O! never will I trust to speeches penn'd,

Nor to the motion of a school-boy's tongue,
Nor never come in visor to my friend,
Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song,
Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
Three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affection,
Figures pedantical; these summer flies
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation:
I do forswear them; and I here protest
By this white glove (how white the hand, God knows),
Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express'd
In russet yeas and honest kersey noes:
And, to begin: Wench,--so God help me, law!--
My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.

Rosaline trips him up immediately--"San 'sans', I pray you"--and Berowne confesses,

Yet I have a trick
Of the old rage: bear with me, I am sick;
I'll leave it be degrees.
(5.2.402-18)

More sheer nonsense has been written about this speech than of any other part of the play. It is often said to be Shakespeare's own renunciation of false rhetoric; it is seen as the turning-point of the play from illusion to reality. But Berowne has much more than just "a trick" of the old madness; he is still of the "wooing mind," still witty and paradoxical, still a poseur. The last fourteen lines of his speech (ll. 402-15) form a regular "Shakespearean" sonnet, for one thing, hardly a "natural" form for a renunciation to take. The speech is liberally sprinkled with the very ornaments and "figures pedantical" which Berowne is in the act of forswearing. "Maggot ostentation" is still a maggot ostentation, an overblown metaphor far more powerful and grisly than necessary. And Berowne is a master of the clothes metaphor, forswearing "Taffeta," "silken," "Three-pil'd," and

"spruce" terms--all of the elegant flowers of poetry. But what else is "three-pil'd hyperboles" if not a three-pil'd hyperbole? The "old rage" rages on.

If "Art" is represented by fine silk and taffeta, elaborate dress of the body and language, its logical opposite "Nature" should be represented by nakedness, by poor, bare, forked man. But the metaphor doesn't work this way in practise, and herein the schematic dualism between the terms collapses. There <u>is</u> no and there can be no unadorned verse. The metaphor is flawed to the extent that it suggests an absolute distinction between form and content, between style and matter. To call a speech or a poem "natural" in the Renaissance, or now, is to say no more than that it exhibits a different kind of artifice, not that it wholly lacks artifice. Berowne is still wearing his "white glove," and we still don't know "how white the hand" is underneath it, because there is no absolute stripping away.

Berowne forswears taffeta and silk, not for nakedness, but for "russet" and "honest kersey." He will substitute a low style for his previous high style; we see the change immediately when he uses the homely native word, "Wench," instead of some Latinate synonym. Berowne tries to become more like Costard--who counters Armado's "child of our grandmother Eve, a female" with "wench" at 1.1.252--than Armado, whom he most resembles in his immaturity. Berowne has not done away with style, only changed it. Yet the theoreticians of the Renaissance and the critics of today continue to speak as if

Nature, devoid of attributes, was something one could know. Puttenham is an isolated exception, as he tries to qualify his own use of the clothes metaphor:

> Even so cannot our vulgar Poesie shew it selfe either gallant or gorgious, if any lymme be left naked and bare and not clad in his kindly clothes and colours, such as may convey them somewhat out of sight, that is from the common course of ordinary speach and capacitie of the vulgar iudgement.[16]

It is of course only a convention that a low style is considered more "natural" than a high one. There is an equally conscious--and hence artificial--choice behind the use of either style, when it is a courtly speaker who makes the choice. The low style in Love's Labour's Lost is often very effectively used to balance or to puncture the principal affectation of the play, an overblown high style. But the low style can also be an affectation. Berowne is still of a "wooing mind," note, and his stylistic excesses are a symptom, not a cause, of that state of mind. He affects for a moment a pastoral, "low" style to express the same thoughts. We have seen a similar pastoral or "low" posturing, affecting a complete distinction between Art and Nature, elsewhere in the play. Costard is a "swain" who, in his rustic rudeness, is an obvious contrast with the affected mannerisms of Armado. We must be careful what we make of such oppositions, however. Ms. McLay, carried away in her eagerness to schematize the entire play, flatly says,

> the Clown is the complete embodiment of the natural and uninhibited response to life, as Armado is of the egoistic and pedantic.[17]

Shakespeare, of course, is considered by her to be wholly on Costard's side.

Affected pastoral is one of Berowne's favorite devices, as it turns out. In defending his mistress, he resorts to the usual hyperbole:

> Who sees the heavenly Rosaline
> That, like a rude and savage man of Inde,
> At the first opening of the gorgeous east,
> Bows not his vassal head, and strooken blind,
> Kisses the base ground with obedient breast?
> (4.3.218-22)

In his Promethean Fire speech, Berowne says that a poet should not write until he has been touched by Love:

> O! then his lines would ravish savage ears,
> And plant in tyrants mild humility.
> (4.3.345-6)

And in the last act, Berowne begs Rosaline,

> Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,
> That we, like savages, may worship it.
> (5.2.201-2)

All of these uses of the "savage" idea are, to quote Berowne himself, pure, pure idolatry.[18] They are an affectation of exactly the same sort as the famous decision to use russet and kersey. Berowne's toying with this facet of the Art-Nature dualism is extremely sophisticated, extremely "artificial" in itself. His manipulations of the dualism (as distinct from Shakespeare's) suggest that he is still playing, still a <u>poseur</u>. The question then arises whether it is possible <u>not</u> to play or pose, as the dualism suggests, or whether it is rather a matter of choosing the best role among many.

The clothes-metaphor finds an obvious and very effective

corollary in the elaborate costumery the play demands. The dress of the high characters, and especially those who use the highest style, would be equally elaborate and elegant, adorned with jewels and bright colors. This sort of clothing is what we would expect of the court, and even it is exceeded at times by their rhetoric. Armado, as an authentic fantastico and anachronism, should have the wildest costume of all. Holofernes would be similarly overdressed. On the other hand, the "swain" Costard, Jaquenetta, Dull, and the Forester would have "low" clothing, as befits their station in life and their typical level of style. If this matching of costumes and style seems overly obvious, it is perhaps an indication of the ubiquity and familiarity of the clothes-metaphor. It is only "natural," we say, that the style of aristocrats is higher than that of rustics. But it isn't; it is more conventional.

A more subtle instance of correlative costumery is found in the use of masks in the play. When the Masque of Muscovites enters, Moth greets the ladies, "All hail, the richest beauties on the earth!" to which Boyet sardonically replies, "Beauties no richer than rich taffeta." (5.2.159) The masks worn in the play are made of "taffeta" (or silk), the same material which Berowne later forswears for "honest kersey." Recalling the discussion of the mask in Chapter Two, we can see the richness of the analogy at once. Masks (or roles) cover and disguise the face (the real, "natural" self) just as rhetoric and ornament cover the "matter" of speech or po-

etry (in the orthodox reading of the metaphor). Stephen Gosson seizes on this image as a symbol of deceit and trickery in poets (as it is in fact intended to be in the Masque of Muscovites), and concludes,

> pul off the visard that poets maske in, you shall disclose their reproch, bewray their vanitie, loth their wantonnesse, lament their folly, and perceive their sharpe sayinges to be placed as pearles in dunghils, fresh pictures on rotten walles, chaste matrons apparel on common curtesans.[19]

What Gosson implicitly desires, what the metaphor, literally read, demands, is a dis-covery, an un-masking, the ornament stripped off--in short, something like Bacon's ideal, a completely perspicuous language, no ornament, no "style," just abstract counters and symbols. This is impossible. The Art-Nature "dualism" is not, like the shirt of Nessus, a burning question; it is rather, like the shirt of Armado, nonexistent. It is certainly not worth fighting over. The "naked truth," though, is that Armado wears

> none but a dishclout of Jaquenetta's, and that a' wears next his heart for a favour. (5.2.702-4)

There is always some "clothing," some garment, however seedy.

Ut Pictura Poesis

> Some to Conceit alone their Taste confine,
> And glitt'ring Thoughts struck out at ev'ry Line;
> Pleas'd with a Work where nothing's just or fit;
> One glaring Chaos and wild Heap of Wit:
> Poets like Painters, thus, unskill'd to trace
> The naked Nature and the living Grace,
> With Gold and Jewels cover ev'ry Part,
> And hide with Ornaments their Want of Art.

> True Wit is Nature to Advantage drest,
> What oft was Thought, but ne'er so well Exprest,
> Something, whose truth convinc'd at Sight we find,
> That gives us back the Image of our Mind.
> (Essay on Criticism, 289-300)

Pope is describing the abuse of a second great critical cliché, but the terms are similar to the first one.[20] The analogy with the clothes-mataphor is nearly exact. A literal reading of the metaphor (as in Pope's ll. 294-6) again seems to imply a form-content dichotomy: "style" is like color, smeared onto a "subject" as to a canvas. The poet thus deceives: he covers up the ugly or plain beneath a pleasing facade, "fresh pictures on rotten walles," as Gosson said. It is a naive and crude vision of the function of art, and it is based on analogies which are to a certain extent flawed in themselves. Miss Tuve sums up the problems in the painting-metaphor:

> These results seem to me implied in the dictum only in case we think of painting as 'a decorative and hence pleasing copy of the external qualities of a real (usually pleasing) object.' In other words, painting as not even a good representational painter would define it. It is not at all certain that Renaissance poets so thought of painting and hence so understood the comparison.[21]

Indeed, both the metaphor itself and the rigid interpretation of the metaphor are problems.

"Painting," by extension, almost automatically included the use of cosmetics as well, and Renaissance writers loved to argue the merits of a woman painting herself. On the side of Nature, Thomas Kyd's translation of Tasso (1588) is typical:

> And truely as a woman of discretion will in no

> wise marre her naturall co(m)plexion, to recover
> it with slime or artificiall coullered trash,
> so ought the husband in no sort to be consenting
> to such follies.[22]

Kyd has plenty of distinguished company, including Gosson, Burton, the Shakespeare of the Sonnets. At the other end, on the side of Art (and in league with Ovid), Jonson's Truewit is exemplary:

> I love a good dressing, before any beautie
> o'the world. O, a woman is, then, like a
> delicate garden; nor, is there one kind of
> it: she may varie, every houre; take often
> counsell of her glasse, and choose the best.
> If shee have good eares, shew 'hem; good
> haire, lay it out; good legs, weare short
> cloathes; a good hand, discover it often;
> practise any art, to mend breath, clense
> teeth, repaire eye-browes, paint, and professe
> it.[23]

Striking a balance in the center is Herrick, in an epigram entitled "Painting Sometimes Permitted":

> If Nature do deny
> Colours, let Art supply.

This takes us back to Puttenham's summary of the functions of Art with respect to Nature and the conventional idea that Art and Nature are complementary, fitting together like an Escher jigsaw.

A great deal is made in Love's Labour's Lost of "painting" as ornament or cosmetic, as we would expect. Armado claims his love is "most immaculate white and red," to which Moth responds,

> Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked
> under such colours.
> (1.2.87-8)

The "colours" which mask Armado's impure thoughts are presum-

ably the "red" in the cheeks.[24] A false, "painted" blushing is metaphorically equivalent to wearing a mask, concealing the "maculate" reality beneath. The truth of Moth's comment is evident later in Jaquenetta's pregnancy. "Colours" may also be "poetic ornaments" here, though the hint is slight. The "colours" red and white are themselves colours (ornaments), though, and Moth's comment becomes a punning reference to the power of rhetorical ornament to conceal.

A moment later, Moth sings his song, worth quoting again:

> If she be made of white and red,
> Her faults will ne'er be known,
> For blushing cheeks by faults are bred,
> And fears by pale white shown:
> Then if she fear, or be to blame,
> By this you shall not know,
> For still her cheeks possess the same
> Which native she doth owe.
> (1.2.93-100)

Moth suggests that the appearance of things is no longer a reliable guide to moral qualities. The natural blush of a maiden is now artificially created by the painting of cosmetics, and her cheeks are always ("still") the same colors, beneath which maculate thoughts may well lurk, though no one is able to tell. What she owned "native" has been supplanted by man, and something is clearly lost. The scene continues ironically when Jaquenetta enters and Armado says, "I do betray myself with blushing." (1.2.124)

The Princess, as we have already seen, is firm on the subject of undeserved praise, and she finds something lacking in Boyet's flashy stylistic devices:

> Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,

Needs not the painted flourish of your praise.
(2.1.13-4)

This is the conventional distrust of "painting," paradoxically uttered in a speech no less elaborately (only differently) patterned than the one she is criticizing. The tone is light, however, and it is apparent that the Princess enjoys such sparring. Boyet's role is to offer such praise, the Princess's to reject it, and neither would have the rules changed. With the Forester later, the Princess is in a jovial mood, and trips him up:

Princess. What, what? first praise me, and again say no?
O short-liv'd pride! Not fair? alack for woe!
Forester. Yes, madam, fair.
Princess. Nay, never paint me now:
Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.
(4.1.14-7)

The playfulness modulates into a more serious reflection on the search for fame and glory, and the echoes of Navarre's opening speech affirm the Princess's position as a moral guide. In that capacity, she rejects undeserved praise, and a certain kind of hyperbolic compliment, as false painting.

By far the most complex and self-conscious use of the painting-metaphor occurs in the sonnet-reading scene. Longaville exposes Dumain's hypocrisy, saying to him:

Longaville. You may look pale, but I should blush, I know,
To be o'er heard and taken napping so.
King. (advancing) Come, sir, you blush; as his your case is such . . .
. . . for you both did blush.
(4.3.127-9, 136)

With the pun on "case," we see even a hierarchy of blushing. If this seems a trivial instance, the idea is quickly devel-

oped in the next lines. Defending his dark mistress, Berowne boasts,

> Of all complexions the cull'd sovereignty
> Do meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek;
> Where several worthies make one dignity.
> (4.3.231-3)

Inspired, he begs assistance:

> Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues,--
> Fie, painted rhetoric! O! she needs it not:
> To things of sale a seller's praise belongs;
> She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot.
> (4.3.235-8)

His mistress needs no painting, therefore he won't use any in his rhetoric. Yet we know that her "native" complexion is like painting, and Berowne clearly still uses rhetoric himself. In the nice reversal which follows, her beauty is such that it "doth varnish age, as if new-born," and is presumably not varnished itself, though we know it is.

Navarre is unimpressed. Rosaline is dark, he says in a famous passage, pretending shock at Berowne's sophisms:

> King. O paradox! Black is the badge of hell,
> The hue of dungeons and the school of night;
> And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well.

Berowne has only begun, though, and he now produces his greatest paradox:

> Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light.
> O! if in black my lady's brows be deck'd,
> It mourns that painting and usurping hair
> Should ravish doters with a false aspect;
> And therefore is she born to make black fair.
> Her favour turns the fashion of the days,
> For native blood is counted painting now:
> And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,
> Paints itself black, to imitate her brow.
> (4.3.251-62)

This passage is a triumph of complexity, in a play noted for

such moments. Associating hell, in an echo of Corinthians, with light rather than dark, as Navarre had done, Berowne laments that some "doters," otherwise unidentified, will be deceived by cosmetics and wigs. On the other hand, and this seems acceptable to him, Rosaline's darkness (which seems confined mostly to her hair and eyes) will inspire a whole new set of imitators. In a complete reversal of the Art-Nature dualism, "native blood"--a flushed or naturally red complexion--is now considered painted, or artificial. Rosaline's complexion now seems "natural" by contrast. (Our modern equivalent is the chemical lotion which, applied indoors, produces a "natural-looking" suntan.) Berowne has completed the reveral implicit in Moth's song--one can no longer tell the distinction between Art and Nature in this respect. Berowne would maintain, in his argument, that his mistress is dark by "nature," while the others are dark by "painting"; as Moth's song suggests, though, the effect is the same on the viewer in any case. Only the hairdresser knows for sure. The implications for the larger Art-Nature question are fascinating, for it is suggested that there is always some sort of painting, that even the "natural" may be considered artificial, or at least indistinguishable from it.

This interchange continues in a lower vein, as the other noblemen comment on Rosaline's darkness:

> Dumain. To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.
> Longaville. And since her time are colliers counted bright.
> King. And Ethiops of their sweet complexion crack.

Dumain. Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.
Berowne. Your mistresses dare never come in rain,
For fear their colours should be wash'd away.
(4.3.263-8)

As the conversation spirals on down into boyish naughtiness ("O vile!"), we recognize a familiar pattern in the structure of this little set-piece: the whole section is built on paradoxes and dualisms. From Berowne's "to make black fair," to his "O wood divine," to his reversal of the Art-Nature problem, virtually every line depends on a semantic or intellectual paradox, a confusion of normal opposites. We recall, too, that a rarefied discussion ("O wood divine") punctured by a contrast in diction and sentiment "(what upward lies / The street should see as she walk'd overhead") is a recurring pattern in the play as a whole.

The painting metaphor finds literal expression in Love's Labour's Lost in, not surprisingly, the cosmetics which would be worn by the actors. A more important analogue, however, would be the masks worn, which, as in the clothes-metaphor, serve as a clear parallel. The masks are dark, probably black, and there are a number of references to them as "clouds" concealing light.[25] Navarre's exposure of Dumain and Longaville,

Come, sir, you blush; as his your case is such,
(4.3.129)

puns on "case"=situation=face, and by implication, mask. We recall Rosaline's reversal here:

. . . that superfluous case
That hid the worse and show'd the better face.
(5.2.387-8)

As it turns out, the mask is one of the richest, most complex images in the play.

The clothes- and painting-metaphors should not be read literally, then. The metaphors are imprecise at a crucial point. A comment by Sigurd Burckhardt is relevant here:

> All other artists have for their medium what Aristotle called a material cause: more or less shapeless, always meaningless, matter, upon which they can imprint form and meaning. Their media become media proper only under their hands; through shaping they communicate. As artists they are uniquely sovereign, minting unminted bullion into currency, stamping their image upon it. The poet is denied this creative sovereignty. His "material cause" is a medium before he starts to fashion it; he must deal in an already current and largely defaced coinage. In fact it is not even a coinage, but rather a paper currency. Words, as the poet finds them, are tokens for "real" things, which they are supposed to signify--drafts upon a hoard of reality which it would be too cumbersome to put into circulation. Not merely is the poet denied the creative privilege of coining his own medium; his medium lacks all corporeality, is a system of signs which have only a secondary, referential substance.[26]

"Style" and "technique"--terms which we see must include a sense of imaginative vision and transformation--are all the poet has, and that is considerable. They are not simply applied with metaphorical needle or figurative brush.

Decorum

In his passage on the garment of style, Pope says nothing about the possibility of an "un-dressed" thought. He understands the metaphor in a broader, less literal sense:

Expression is the Dress of Thought, and still

> Appears more decent as more suitable;
> A vile Conceit in pompous Words exprest,
> Is like a Clown in regal Purple drest:
> For diff'rent Styles with diff'rent Subjects sort,
> As several Garbs with Country, Town, and Court.
> (Essay on Criticism, ll. 318-23)

There are different styles suitable for different subjects: "several" (separate) styles are required for low (Country), middle (Town), and high (Court) subjects. In short, decorum as a function of judgment is crucial. (Pope contradicts this, however, in his section on the painting metaphor, when he mentions "naked Nature" at l. 294 and thus takes the analogy completely literally.) The overflowing of an exuberant wit (in both Pope's and Berowne's sense of the word) must be checked or channeled into an adherence to the rules of decorum. It is an automatic, irrefutable theoretical requirement of Renaissance authors, as indicated in this early play:

> In comedies the greatest skill is this: rightly to
> touch
> All things to the quick, and eke to frame each person so
> That by his common talk you may his nature rightly know.
> . . . .
> So correspondent to their kind their speeches ought to be.
> Which speeches, well-pronounc'd, with action lively
> framed--
> If this offend the lookers on, let Horace then be blamed,
> Which hath our author taught at school, from which he
> doth not swerve,
> In all such kinds of exercise decorum to observe.
> Richard Edwards, Prologue to
> Damon and Pithias.[27]

Others have shown just how deeply this concept--taken as applying to choice of subject, audience, style, manner of treatment, genre, and the matching of character and action--penetrated all of Renaissance literature, how naturally and effortlessly authors and critics nodded respect to the theory,

and yet how many arguments arose over individual examples.[28] Miss Tuve reminds us, however, that

> It was the demand that decorum be observed which was inflexible, not the definition of decorum.[29]

A glance at Love's Labour's Lost will quickly indicate how decorum--in its broadest and narrowest senses--is at the heart of the play. We saw in the first chapter that a large part of the linguistic fun depends on assumptions of decorum and the levels of style--these must first be recognized for their violation to be significant. In the second chapter, we saw how the concept of dramatic decorum was investigated through the three theatrical scenes; again, the humor in the Masque of Muscovites and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies depends on a literalistic misconception of decorum by the actors involved. The Pageant characters worry about the physical correspondence (or discrepancy) between actor and Worthy, and in the process forget all about the more important imaginative correspondence. Their concern for literal imitation (which should be compared with Holofernes's dictum on imitation) destroys all hope of imitation in a more general sense, and there remains no possibility of a genuine dramatic moment.

In the third chapter, we saw the crowd of poet-figures in the play writing the kind of conventional poetry which is expected of them--Petrarchan clichés from the lovers, huffing bombast from the romance figure, sterile pedantry from the pedant. Shakespeare carefully observes decorum in the con-

struction of his characters, even when they are violating it; the characters themselves confuse the important and the trivial. The young noblemen, in particular, have chosen a specific role--ascetic academics, and then romantic, melancholy lovers--which jars with their own capabilities, breaks the decorum of occasion and audience; their poetry and rhetoric follow suit.

We can see this interest in decorum throughout the text, in addition to the broader concerns just mentioned. Armado selects an "epitheton" (synonym) which is perfectly "congruent" in its application (1.2.13), and later Holofernes loudly congratulates Armado on another of his choices:

> Holofernes. The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is liable, congruent, and measurable for the afternoon: the word is well culled, chose; sweet and apt, I do assure you, sir; I do assure.
> (5.1.86-9)

Holofernes, as usual, pompously demonstrates the very thing he is praising in another--seven "choice" epithets for a single idea. The minor characters seem obsessed with the need for observing rules, and decorum is the most important of them. Armado knows his behavior is wrong, on grounds of hierarchy, but he tries to make it decorous with "base":

> I will hereupon confess I am in love; and as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base wench.
> (1.2.54-6)

He spends most of his time seeking a "mighty precedent" for his digression. Later, Moth puns on his own role as messenger for Armado:

> A message well sympathized: a horse to be
> ambassador for an ass.
> (3.1.49-50)

Nathaniel, in a vicious irony, claims,

> it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet,
> or a fool,
> (4.2.30)

when he is already all of these things. A moment later, Holofernes describes his "foolish extravagant spirit," in which his synonyms are best "delivered upon the mellowing of occasion," at the most suitable moment. (4.2.70-1)

In this low comic world, everything must be apt, congruent, becoming, well culled, well sympathized. The most affected characters in the play are fussily concerned about decorum and the rules of polite behavior and poetry, and ironically they turn out to be the grossest violators of what was earlier called "imaginative" decorum. The low characters, in this respect, again serve as a distorted analogue of the noblemen, all of whom are continually violating decorum of manner.

Maria, for example, had described Longaville as "A man of sovereign parts . . . / Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms," a latter-day Worthy, in effect. She continued, though,

> Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.
> The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,
> If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,
> Is a sharp wit match'd with too blunt a will;
> Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills
> It should none spare that come within his power.
> (2.1.44-51)

Dumain, too, has too blunt a will and no sense of propriety, as Katharine reports; he is well accomplished, but has,

> Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill,
> For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,
> And shape to win grace though he had no wit.
> I saw him at the Duke Alencon's once;
> And much too little of that good I saw
> Is my report to his great worthiness.
> (2.1.58-63)

Of great potential, these men are both naive and innocent ("least knowing ill"), and crude ("too blunt a will"). They are indeed students who need education, though in a far different sense than they originally proposed. Rosaline goes on to describe "another of these students," Berowne:

> His eye begets occasion for his wit;
> For every object that the one doth catch
> The other turns to a mirth-moving jest.
> (2.1.69-71)

As we have seen, there is a great deal of charm and excitement associated with the licentious wit and blunt wills of the noblemen; in Berowne's case, even something poetic. But the women early on identify the concurrent problems. The Princess at first fears she too may be breaching decorum ("To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me"--2.1.108) but it proves to be the only way in which the men will learn anything.

Berowne is simultaneously more and less sensitive to propriety than his comrades. He recognizes folly in others and sometimes himself, but persists nonetheless. His jest is "too bitter" when exposing his friends, and he is quickly discovered himself. Berowne is particularly associated, in this respect, with imagery of Nature. He notes the mind-body dualism implicit in the idea of the ascetic academy, and describes the rules as "barren tasks." (1.1.47) The "neces-

sity" of the flesh will force them to break their oaths. (1.1.148) Sure enough, when all the noblemen are exposed, Berowne makes this appeal:

> Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O! let us embrace.
> As true we are as flesh and blood can be:
> The sea will ebb and flow, heaven show his face;
> Young blood doth not obey an old decree:
> We cannot cross the cause why we were born;
> Therefore, of all hands must we be forsworn.
> (4.3.211-6)

The appeal is to the catch-all, "Nature," but also to decorum: it is more fitting, more appropriate for them to woo, in accordance and harmony with their innate desires (affections). Earlier, Navarre had accused Berowne of thwarting Nature in his gibes and witticisms:

> King. Berowne is like an envious sneaping frost
> That bites the first-born infants of the spring.

Berowne's reply is unequivocal, and he describes a natural rhythm, the force that through the green wits drives, which must be obeyed:

> Berowne. Well, say I am; why should proud summer boast
> Before the birds have any cause to sing?
> Why should I joy in any abortive birth?
> At Christmas I no more desire a rose
> Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows;
> But like of each thing that in season grows.
> So you, to study now it is too late.
> Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate.
> (1.1.100-09)

In spite of his profound insight into the cyclical rhythm of Nature, Berowne continues to err throughout the play in violating decorum. In his attempt to prove that "black is fair" in 4.3, he wishes no less than to reverse all conventional propriety. "O paradox!" Navarre bellows, in mock-astonishment

at such audacity.

At the very end of the play, after Marcade's message, the men do not appear in a good light. Navarre stumbles along in a clumsy, last-ditch appeal:

> King. The extreme parts of time extremely forms
> All causes to the purpose of his speed,
> And often, at his very loose, decides
> That which long process could not arbitrate:
> And though the mourning brow of progeny
> Forbid the smiling courtesy of love
> The holy suit which fain it would convince;
> Yet since love's argument was first on foot,
> Let not the cloud of sorrow justle it
> From what it purpos'd.
>
> (5.2.730-9)

Admitting his breach of decorum, Navarre goes on to urge still another, and the Princess does not understand his intention. Berowne, turning to a plain style again, says "Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief," and tries to explain. (5.2.743) If we have learned anything in Love's Labour's Lost, it is that words are never wholly honest or plain, that words, as Bacon said, "beget" other words, that connotations cannot be repressed. Still, Berowne tries, and begins to lay much of the blame for his own actions to the beauty of the ladies. He notes that "love is full of unbefitting strains," that the ladies' love-infected fancies have warped their behavior into folly:

> Which party-coated presence of loose love
> Put on by us, if, in your heavenly eyes,
> Have misbecom'd our oaths and gravities,
> Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,
> Suggested us to make.
>
> (5.2.756-60)

"Unbefitting," "misbecom'd": the noblemen have put on the

wrong garments (literally, in the Masque), affected a foolish style, made errors in tact and propriety. The fool's "party-coated" motley now seems out of place to them. That they recognize this is a necessary prelude to their reformation.

The famous punishments at the end of the play are aimed at teaching the academics the nature of decorum, in addition to observing a suitable time of mourning. The Princess sends Navarre to "some forlorn and naked hermitage," where he should mature. In a cluster of images of vegetation, taking us back to the exchange between Navarre and Berowne in 1.1, the Princess once again links the rhythms of Nature and the idea of propriety:

> Princess. If this austere insociable life
> Change not your offer made in heat of blood;
> If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds,
> Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love,
> But that it bear this trial and last love;
> Then at the expiration of the year,
> Come challenge me . . .
> (5.2.789-95)

It is significant, too, that there will be "hard lodging" instead of a fashionable court, "thin weeds" instead of the sumptuously elegant costume he is now wearing. Navarre is being required to live in low style for a change, to learn the full range of possibilities of style.

Berowne fares even worse. Rosaline accuses him in terms similar to those used by Maria and Katharine of their wooers in 2.1:

> Rosaline. Oft have I heard of you, my lord Berowne,
> Before I saw you, and the world's large tongue
> Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;
> Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,

> Which you on all estates will execute
> That lie within the mercy of your wit:
> To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
> And there withal to win me, if you please,
> Without the which I am not to be won,
> You shall this twelve month term from day to day,
> Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
> With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
> With all the fierce endeavour of your wit
> To enforce the pained impotent to smile.
> (5.2.831-44)

In the shorter, presumably earlier version of this speech (ll. 807-12), Rosaline said that Berowne needed to be "purged," implying that he was infected-affected, and that his sickness could be cured only by confronting the physically sick. Berowne, quite naturally, is horrified at the prospect:

> Berowne. To move wild laughter in the throat of death?
> It cannot be; it is impossible:
> Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.
> Rosaline. Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,
> Whose influence is begot of that loose grace
> Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools.

Rosaline goes on to explain decorum of behavior, which involves a due consideration of one's audience:

> A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
> Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
> Of him that makes it: then, if sickly ears,
> Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
> Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
> And I will have you and that fault withal;
> But if they will not, throw away that spirit,
> And I shall find you empty of that fault,
> Right joyful of your reformation.
> (5.2.845-59)

This is strong medicine, indeed. We should take note, though, that Rosaline (and the other ladies) is not trying to stamp out Berowne's wit, she is not a killjoy attempting to suppress his exuberance and vivid imagination. She is only try-

ing to educate him in the right use of his gifts. Her targets are specific: he is a mocker, "wounding" others, with a "gibing spirit," begot of "loose grace," full of "idle scorns." Worst of all, Berowne is indiscriminate: the scattergun of his wit sprays everyone who approaches, "all estates" are vulnerable, nothing is sacred. The "world's large tongue" can barely keep up with the reputation of Berowne's wit. His "fruitful brain," admired by all, has a small element of "wormwood" which must be "purged." That fruitful brain is the source of Berowne's energy, the power in him which continually delights and surprises us, and which Rosaline elsewhere speaks of admiringly. (2.1.64-76) It is the abuse which must be corrected, in the same way that his rhetoric must be redirected, re-formed.

The women are the perfect emblem of that reforming force. They are themselves completely fluent masters of rhetoric and decorum, superior to the noblemen at their own games; when they attempt to educate the men, there can be no simplification of the Art-Nature problem. The women do not represent Nature alone, any more than they do Art; in fact, they suggest in themselves the most cunning and attractive blend of artifice and nature in the play, with the possible exception of the final songs. The women, fittingly, are associated with fertility in general, and with vegetation imagery in particular. Boyet flatters the Princess in urging her sympathy for Navarre:

Be now as prodigal of all dear grace

> As Nature was in making graces dear
> When she did starve the general world beside,
> And prodigally gave them all to you.
> (2.1.9-12)

Though she rejects the facileness of the compliment, she does not deny the truth of the statement, and a moment later she says of Longaville,

> Such short-liv'd wits do wither as they grow.
> (2.1.54)

At the end of the play, as she tells Navarre the penance he must endure, she uses the same kind of image (with a pun on "weeds"):

> If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds,
> Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love . . .
> (5.2.791-2)

The voice of "Nature" in the play, perhaps, but no less that of civility and sophistication--of Art.

It is the Princess, after all, who makes this comment on decorum:

> That sport best pleases that doth least know how.
> Where zeal strives to content, and the contents
> Dies in the zeal of that which it presents;
> Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,
> When great things labouring perish in their birth.
> (5.2.512-6)

This passage could stand as an epigraph to the play itself. Love's Labour's Lost is also marked by "form confounded" in its unconventional ending, its breach in comic decorum; and yet it, too, makes "most form in mirth." The "great things" refers primarily to the impending Pageant of the Nine Worthies here, but it also suggests the plan of the "academe" and similar schemes, and echoes Berowne's "Why should I joy in any

abortive birth?" (1.1.104) It indicates at the same time one case, at least, in which we should "joy." "Form confounded" gives rise, in Love's Labour's Lost, to another kind of form, something unexpected, fresh, seemingly spontaneous--"even as nature her selfe." The sport best pleases that least shows that it knows how, that is the most feigning. "Zeal" is necessary but not sufficient, as both Pageant actors and naive academics discover.

The "living art" of the proposed academe, "still and contemplative," turned out to be sterile, infertile.[30] The "barren practisers," the young noblemen, "Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil." (4.3.322-3) But as the men come to realize (and the audience long before them), the women are an exemplum of "living art," an art which is fruitful, judicious, not separated from Nature but indissolubly wedded to it. The "harvest" must be postponed a year, but there is no doubt that fruition will eventually come.[31] We do not usually think of Love's Labour's Lost in terms of irony, but there is a dazzling reversal in the play's movement from a false, sterile "art" to a genuine "living art," one which is not less artificial but more so. The women are irresistible. They were to become even more so when Rosaline became Rosalind, then Viola.

Conclusions

Almost all of us are instinctively on the side of Nature,

rather than Art. There have never been many anti-primitivists around, and today they are an endangered species. In an argument, or in theory, we tend to side with Perdita rather than Polixenes. So too in the Renaissance. In doing so, however, we trap ourselves in a paradox: for the very perception of a dualism, or the possibility of one, between Art and Nature, places us in the camp of "Art." Self-consciousness and sophistication are not attributes of even the noblest savage; malaprops cannot consciously make a good pun. Thus the theoretical positions taken by Perdita and Polixenes in The Winter's Tale are reversed in their practical behavior in the next moment. We prefer Nature to Art but to say so is in effect to admit that we exist more in Art than in Nature. A contemporary manifestation of this paradox is found in the current advertisement for a popular shampoo which, a breathless voice tells us in thrilling redundancy, is made from "organic, natural compounds"--available, it seems, complete with preservatives, in a plastic tube.

Shakespeare, in Love's Labour's Lost, insists on the paradox. The opposition of Art and Nature, as well as the other opposites associated with them, is suggested only to be dissolved. The clothes- and painting-metaphors are a case in point. A literal reading of these analogies--a reading which takes the analogy in place of the idea--creates a form-content opposition. It is the kind of reading that Holofernes would make.

We learn two things from this. First, that all dualisms

are suspect, that there is not an opposition but a continuum between the terms, that the relation between Art and Nature is necessarily not static but dynamic. One thinks of Blake: Without Contraries is No Progression. The difference is that, unlike Blake, in Shakespeare there is a constant effort at reconciliation. The noblemen in Love's Labour's Lost--and the audience--come to learn what a "living art" really is. They learn that to deny either of the two terms in the concept is to falsify and destroy it: the noblemen, at the beginning, have denied what is "living"; the critics of the play, with few exceptions, have denied the "art." The women, and the songs, embody and exemplify both.

The concept which mediates between Art and Nature is decorum. It has been used very broadly to refer to living in general, to some natural rhythm, and to a specific poetic requirement. Approaching the play from the standpoint of its views on society, one critic sums up:

> Virtually all the men in the play violate, each in his peculiar way, the values of "civility", which meant at once civilization, social polish, government, courtesy, decorum, manners, and simple human kindness.
>
> Of these various participant values, the play lays particular stress on the virtue of decorum, which becomes here a sense of the conduct appropriate to a given situation.[32]

Decorum means all this and much more for the play. In particular, the play forwards the debate on poetry by affirming a principle of poetic decorum. This can be narrowly construed as simply the process of matching social level with stylistic level, and the play has great fun with this. It can also in-

clude the broader suitability of poetic subject for a particular audience (Berowne's penance) or, reversed, the suitability of a poetic subject for a particular artist (the low characters present an imitation of the Nine Worthies). In its broadest sense, poetic decorum is elusive, undefinable; it is only suggested by analogy with other kinds of decorum. Puttenham's twenty-third chapter, entitled "What it is that generally makes our speach well pleasing & commendable, and of that which the Latines call Decorum," contains this description of "comeliness" or "convenient proportion":

> This lovely conformitie, or proportion, or conveniencie between the sence and the sensible hath nature her selfe first most carefully observed in all her owne workes, then also by kinde graft it in the appetites of every creature working by intelligence to covet and desire: and in their actions to imitate & performe: and of man chiefly before any other creature aswell in his speaches as in every other part of his behaviour. And this in generalitie and by an usuall terme is that which the Latines call <u>decorum</u>.[33]

Nature herself observes decorum; this decorum has been ordered in Nature by some active force. "Decorum" is the proportion observed in Nature; "Nature" is the well-proportioned and decorous. Man has an inner "appetite" which tries to imitate this proportion. "Art" is the well-proportioned, the decorous. And so on, in circles. In Puttenham, as in <u>Love's Labour's Lost</u>, to say "Nature" is another way of saying "decorum," and vice versa. The real contrary to Art is "Un-decorum."

At the end of the play, the verbal "debate" ceases and

the actual principle of decorum, of "imaginative" not literal decorum, must simply be exemplified and observed. The women represent the "living art" brought about through decorum in its social and intellectual form, as well as verbal; the final songs, we shall see, represent "living art" as it applies to poetry in particular. That "grace" which Navarre and Boyet so glibly (and ignorantly) refer to again and again is living in the art of the women and the songs.

At the beginning of this chapter the larger structure of Love's Labour's Lost was described as in the form of an expansion, a gradual intrusion of the outer world into the small, closed academe, that "curious-knotted garden" of the mind which the men are trying, without success, to nurture to growth through denial of the principle of fertility. This movement climaxes with the entrance of Marcade. The play does not end with that entrance, however, nor does it end with the imposition of the year-long penances. Love's Labour's Lost ends in self-consciousness, with insistent reminders of artifice, of the playwright's skill and limitations:

> Berowne. Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
> Jack hath not Jill: these ladies' courtesy
> Might well have made our sport a comedy.
> King. Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,
> And then 'twill end.
> Berowne. That's too long for a play.
> (5.2.864-8)

The larger concentric-circle structure is finally subverted, just as it was in the sonnet-reading scene, just as all the other dualisms in the play are qualified. One critic has done full justice to the complexity and brilliance of this

exchange between Berowne and Navarre:

> Biron's observation is nearly our own and reminds us that we are still in the presence of artifice, an artifice which has the strength to call attention to itself, and that this same artifice has been brought remarkably close to the real, the natural. The gap disappears, and one comic marriage--the marriage of art and reality--takes place at the expense of some others.[34]

The final songs, the most perfect "marriage" of opposites in the play, take us still a step further away from the harsh "reality" of Marcade, toward a realm where dualisms vanish and death is transformed into art. This realm is the ideal form of which the ascetic academy was only a grotesque parody, a realm where art, if only for a moment, on a stage, lives.

Notes to Chapter V

[1]Ralph Berry, "The Words of Mercury," p. 69.

[2]Berry, p. 69.

[3]Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art, p. 63.

[4]John Dryden, The Poetical Works of Dryden, ed. George R. Noyes, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 912.

[5]Philip Parsons, "Shakespeare and the Mask," Shakespeare Survey 16 (1963), p. 122.

[6]Jonas Barish, Ben Jonson and The Language of Prose Comedy, pp. 27-8.

[7]Doran, p. 311; see also the discussions of the debate form in The Owl and the Nightingale, ed. John E. Wells (Boston, 1907), pp. liii-lxiv, and in The Owl and the Nightingale, ed. J. W. H. Atkins (Cambridge, 1922), pp. xlvii-lv.

[8]Catherine M. McLay, "The Dialogues of Spring and Winter: A Key to the Unity of Love's Labour's Lost," Shakespeare Quarterly, 18 (Spring, 1967), p. 121.

[9]See Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (2 vols. New York, 1950); Edward Tayler, Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature (New York, 1964); Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art, pp. 54-70; and Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, passim.

[10]Cf. Cervantes in The Adventures of Don Quixote, trans. J. M. Cohen (Baltimore, 1967):

> Let me say also that the natural poet who makes use of art will improve himself and be much greater than the poet who relies only on his knowledge of the art. The reason is clear, for art is not better than nature, but perfects her. So nature combined with art, and art with nature, will produce a most perfect poet. (p. 569)

[11]George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, p. 307; my emphasis.

[12]See Tuve's chapter, pp. 61-78.

[13]Thomas Heywood, An Apology for Actors (London, Shakespeare Society Reprint, 1841), p. 32.

[14]Puttenham, p. 138.

[15]G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays, I, 201-2.

[16]Puttenham, pp. 137-8.

[17]McLay, p. 125.

[18]Cf. Tayler:

> R. H. Pearce's extensive study of travel literature clearly documents the conclusion that the greater number of Elizabethans viewed the Savage Man with contempt and distaste. Far from placing him in the golden world, most Elizabethan accounts of the Savage Man emphasized his brutishness, irrationality, excess, and lack of true religion. (p. 84)

[19]Stephen Gosson, The School of Abuse, p. 10.

[20]See Tuve's chapter, pp. 50-60.

[21]Tuve, p. 50.

[22]Quoted in Tayler, p. 14.

[23]Ben Jonson, Works, V, 167-8.

[24]Cf. Two Noble Kinsmen:

> Emilia. O vouchsafe
> With that thy rare green eye, which never yet
> Beheld thing maculate, look on thy virgin.
> (5.1.143-5)

[25]Cf. Romeo and Juliet:

> These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows,
> Being black puts us in mind they hide the fair.
> (1.1.228-9)

[26]Sigurd Burckhardt, Shakespearean Meanings, pp. 22-3.

[27]J. Q. Adams, ed., Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas (Boston, 1924), p. 572.

[28]See Tuve, pp. 192-247, and Doran, pp. 77-9, on decorum.

[29]Tuve, pp. 230-1.

[30]See Arden note (1.1.14n.) on the relation between "living art" and the Stoic concept, ars vivendi.

[31]Philip Edwards's doubt (in Shakespeare and The Confines of Art, p. 48)--"there may be weddings at the end of a year" --is a lonely exception.

[32]Thomas M. Greene, "Love's Labour's Lost: The Grace of Society," p. 318.

[33]Puttenham, p. 262.

[34]David P. Young, Something of Great Constancy, p. 147.

CHAPTER VI

HIEMS AND VER

Spring. When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughman's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

Winter. When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,

> When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
> Then nightly sings the staring owl,
> Tu-whit;
> Tu-who, a merry note,
> While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.
> (5.2.884-919)

The final songs contain everything in the play. Though they are presented almost as an afterthought, Love's Labour's Lost is incomplete, and unimaginable, without them. There is virtually unanimous praise for these songs, even (or especially) from critics who dislike the rest of the play.[1] The songs represent a magic moment in Love's Labour's Lost, a moment which seems of a different quality, of a higher level, than what has come before it.

And yet the songs explicate what has come before them and are themselves best explicable in those terms. In the first chapter, we found that in the range of stylistic parodies encountered in the rest of the play there seemed no obvious center of value, no voice which could be relied upon. That voice is heard, triumphantly, in the final songs themselves. Greene says we must think of them,

> as rhetorical touchstones by which to estimate the foregoing funny abuses of language . . . the songs are artificial in the good old sense, but in their freshness and freedom from stale tradition, they blithely escape the stilted modern sense.[2]

This is on the right track, but it does not take us nearly far enough. The songs are touchstones in a much deeper sense: they are not simply a standard by which to measure abuse but of course an exemplum and model for one (not the only) right use of language.

The songs are not simple or "natural," in the usual sense, but are perhaps the most carefully crafted things in the entire play; they represent for us, not the rejection of Art for Nature, but the rejection of bad art for good art. Thus we find the following devices of style being used in the songs: rhyming, inverted word order, rather frequent alliteration, punning ("To-it" and "to-wit"), low to middle diction, and an insistent if uncomplicated syntax ("When"-"Then," with a modified loose style of "And" connectors which carries us along effortlessly). The meter is a carefully regulated ground-tone of iambic tetrameter, and the planned irregularities--the spondee "Mocks married men" and the anapestic surprise of "When icicles hang by the wall"--are strikingly effective.

The point, as in the first chapter, is that to say anything one has to use a common body of rhetorical constructs and devices (though some schemes, such as periphrasis, seem suspect from the start). Love's Labour's Lost in effect debates the use of such devices, and the parody and exaggeration in the play show us how we ought not to use them; the final songs (and the play as a whole, of course) show what can be done. The rhetorical devices are essentially the same in both cases; the imagination which uses them makes the difference.

That the songs seem a moment out of or beyond the play we have just seen is their triumph. They are still in the play, in the realm of the imagination, without seeming to be.

The play proper, we think, ended some moments ago and this is simply being tacked on. But it isn't. Where the three earlier theatrical sections were self-consciously emphasized, the songs are introduced on a more casual note. It is crucial that they follow immediately upon Berowne's comment, "That's too long for a play." As the play begins to turn back to artifice, away from the harshness of Marcade's outer world, the songs are given, themselves the perfect fusion of Art and Nature, inner and outer. And, as Shakespeare announces that his materials are too long for the traditional dramatic model, he concludes his play with one of the most traditional of all dramatic models, the medieval conflictus.

The third and fourth chapters, describing the range of poetry and imaginations in the play, found, like the first chapter, that though there are fine moments in Berowne's great speech and the ladies' talk, still there is no unmistakable poetic voice, a touchstone which suddenly rings true and inevitable. The body of the play discusses and displays a variety of poetic voices and finds them wanting. A true voice is heard most clearly in the final songs. They are thus also the exemplum of poetry towards which the play's debate had been moving. They are, in a play self-consciously filled with abuses, the best example of "praise," a word which, when Armado uses it a final time at 5.2.876, has taken on a special and complex resonance.

I think it is essential that we feel great surprise when we first hear the songs. Consider Armado's introduction:

> Armado. But, most esteemed greatness, will you hear the dialogue that the two learned men have compiled in praise of the owl and the cuckoo? it should have followed in the end of our show.
>
> (5.2.874-8)

Given time to consider this offer, we might recall that the best Holofernes or Nathaniel have been able to produce so far is the extemporal epitaph on the pretty pleasing pricket and the awkward embarrassments of the Pageant of the Nine Worthies. We have every right to expect a disaster in these songs but instead, to our delight, we witness a small miracle, one that could not have been predicted. Shakespeare has previously given us the topical, the old-fashioned, the witty and conceited: all kinds of styles that failed to satisfy. The songs are attributed to the two learned men, but the audience knows whose voice is being heard.

The fifth chapter of this study adopted the songs as an emblem of structure, the conflictus in which both sides of a dualism present their arguments, yet neither is finally victorious over the other. The very presentation of the issues leads to their resolution. It seems fair to claim, moreover, that the songs represent the reconciliation of all opposites, the perfect marriage of Art and Nature, the best example of the transforming power of the imagination in the play.

Cormorant Devouring Time

Above all, the songs climax the play's concern with Time. Love's Labour's Lost begins with a scheme to defeat Time, to

reverse or at least halt the process of mutability. This is a comedy, so we laugh at Navarre's plan, but we are never allowed to forget "cormorant devouring time" during the course of the play. The sickness of the King of France, the dead heroes of the past, the touching story of Katharine's dead sister, the "death's face in a ring" Berowne describes: the pressure of Time never fully relents, and it is grimly victorious with Marcade's message--for the moment, that is.

The play begins with a conditional--"Let fame"--which becomes "may" at line 5 and "shall" in line 6. "Let fame" is a fiat which aims for the super-human and falls far short. The Word has become empty words because Navarre has no sense of his own limitations, which are distinctly finite. The fiat fails not because it is "rhetorical" but because Navarre and his lords do not know what is possible and what is not, what ought to be and what ought not to be. In John 1:1, everything is possible; in the kingdom of Navarre, which is bounded by finite time, much less. Self-deception makes fruitful creation of any sort impossible.

What the noblemen intended was an evasion of Time, which is impossible, and so their penance must also involve enduring a ritual length of Time. As an ironic analogue to their futile efforts we have the Nine Worthies to consider. The Worthies have achieved true fame and so to that extent have defeated Time; they appear in pageantry and on the stage centuries later. Armado reminds us, though, that their victory is not a literal one:

> The sweet war-man is dead and rotten; sweet chucks, beat not the bones of the buried; when he breathed, he was a man.
> (5.2.651-3)

Their victory is, rather, an imaginative one. The Worthies live only through art, which remains the best means of defeating or dealing with Time. The Pageant of the Nine Worthies, as it appears in Love's Labour's Lost, is a joke: the Worthies are scarcely alive, smothered under rustic naivete and foolishness. The parallel with the noblemen, attempting to achieve the same sort of fame as the Worthies, is striking. They think they are sophisticated, but they do no better than the rustics. A sophisticated, skilled art is the only solution in both cases: one that avoids simplistic dualisms of all sorts, denials of the flesh or the mind, and accepts what is given--one that trusts the imagination, not one that remains literal. The songs, alone, do this.

Love's Labour's Lost insists on a distinction between timeliness and timelessness. In seeking the latter the noblemen have scarcely achieved the former. The play fancies its own topicality, it revels in the au courant. The chic tastes of the courtly audience are thoroughly gratified--but the play insists on going on to qualify and subvert this mere timeliness. We laugh at the parody of older poetic styles. Once aware of the structure of concentric circles, though, one hesitates to laugh too loudly.

Navarre's final request shows how little the men have yet learned about "the extreme parts of time" and why a pen-

ance of "a twelvemonth and a day" is necessary:

> King. Now, at the latest minute of the hour,
> Grant us your loves.

The Princess's reply is unequivocal:

> Princess. A time, methinks, too short
> To make a world-without-end bargain in.
> (5.2.777-9)

This is the heart of the issue: minutes and hours on the one hand, a "world-without-end" conception of Time on the other. The parallel with the play's debate on the nature of poetry is manifest--it is a question of the topical or the timeless.

The final songs completely pull the rug out from under us. After all, what could be more old-fashioned, more archaic, than the debate between Spring and Winter? Yet what could reach more deeply? Like Armado, Shakespeare takes a subject familiar "some three ages since," and gives it to us "newly writ o'er." (1.2.103-10) Unlike Armado's ballad, though, or the Pageant, Shakespeare's songs are brilliant. The oldest subject in the world is suddenly fresh, transformed anew, and timeless. The most fashionable device in the play--the Masque of Muscovites--was a miserable failure, because there was not enough "feigning," not enough art in it. The songs succeed because there is just enough. It is exactly this kind of rich and tantalizing complexity which is so characteristic of the late plays in particular, not to mention the rest of Shakespeare's best work.

Cormorant devouring Time represents all that is most unbearable for man: his own ultimate decay and death. "For

your fair sakes have we neglected time,"- Berowne tells the ladies. (5.2.745) But Time has not neglected them. Nor has Shakespeare neglected Time, as we see at the end of the play. The final scene is masterfully done, as stage-time and real-time coincide and merge: the growing shadows of late afternoon, which cause Holofernes to stumble, are both figurative and actual. The play ends neither in light nor in darkness, but in a twilight world where the two are delicately balanced. One thinks of the balance of the songs here. Marcade, who mars Arcadia,[3] enters the play from that outer world of darkness, and his message is shocking and brutal.

Yet we are left not with Marcade's revelation, but with an emphasis on artifice. Marcade is, after all, an actor, dressed in a black costume, no doubt; he enters an incredibly stylized play at its most melodramatic moment, and all in all is rather a poor choice to symbolize the total victory of Nature over Art.[4] For Art <u>is</u> the victor, in one sense at least: Berowne's comments about the play in which he exists and the final songs take us away from Marcade's world--in fact they transform the threat posed by time and death into something more bearable; even, in the songs, enchanting.

The final songs, above all, re-establish a sense of time as cyclical, not linear and therefore hopelessly irretrievable. Consider too the basic syntax of the songs. The "When-Then" construction assures us, in its logical format, that it is describing something "natural" and inevitable. It suggests that there is a clearly defined time and place for certain

activities, as in the normal cycle of the seasons. "Time" is transformed in the songs: here, "merry larks" serve as "clocks" for the ploughman. "Time" is not outside of Nature, as Navarre supposed, but part of it. The emphasis on the cycle of the seasons reminds us that time has its own proportion and decorum:

> Why should I joy in any abortive birth?
> At Christmas I no more desire a rose
> Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows;
> But like of each thing that in season grows.
> (1.1.104-7)

At the end of the play we see Christmas and May literally on the stage, in debate, each putting forth his own mixed claim. The songs offer us a cliché, but it is a profound one. Winter is inevitable, but so is Spring. So too with Art and Nature and the other antitheses.

Living Art

The songs seem merely to be describing the rhythm of nature and various rustic activities, but they reflect a skillful artifice. Virtually every word or image can be traced back to some precedent or echo in the body of the play.[5] The famous "simplicity" of the songs needs to be seen in its proper perspective. Consider the relation between the painting-metaphor, discussed in the previous chapter, and this section of Spring:

> When daisies pied and violets blue
> And lady-smocks all silver-white
> And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
> Do paint the meadows with delight . . .

Note that the very names of the flowers are progressively revelatory of the power of art: from "daisies" to "lady-

smocks," from a simple name to a metaphor. The "delight" is both the flowers' and the meadows', the painters' and the painteds'--and ours. Here, the art itself, as Polixenes would say, is nature. But it is also, and finally, art, and the old distinctions seem to collapse. These lists of people and their rustic activities are analogous to the inventive lists Berowne created as well.

Spring's song seems less definite, less concrete, than Winter's. It simply describes activities which take place outside: it moves from the colorful vegetation in the first stanza up to human and animal activites in the second. It is the kind of landscape seen in "L'Allegro":

> While the Plowman near at hand,
> Whistles o'er the Furrow'd Land,
> And the Milkmaid singeth blithe,
> And the Mower whets his scythe,
> And every Shepherd tells his tale
> Under the Hawthorn in the dale.[6]

Here, there is also a poet-figure ("shepherds pipe on oaten straw") who seems as "natural" as anything else; his activity is also creative, an analogue to the general sense of fertility. The figures in Spring's landscape, like Milton's, are somewhat idealized; they live and work in harmony with Nature. Winter's song, on the other hand, is an "Il Penseroso" vision: it is literally darker and it takes place indoors rather than outdoors. The imagery is more specific and concrete than in Spring: here, the shepherds and maidens have names, their activities seem less idealized, and Nature is less friendly. Winter is clearly linked with night, while Spring was linked

with day. Winter's "Marian" and "greasy-Joan" seem more vivid, and perhaps remind us too of Jaquenetta's earthiness.

Readers of the play persist, with Berry, in the idea that "Winter is second, and final."[7] Joseph Westlund says of Winter's song, "this is the 'real' world: the world of milk and blood, of coughing and red noses and cold hands."[8] Winter is indeed second, but it is not final, not even "superior" to Spring's song. That Westlund resorts to quotation marks around the word "real" implies an important qualification. Winter's song is no more the "real" world than Spring's. It is simply a different aspect of it, as "Il Penseroso's" world is different from that of "L'Allegro." Neither is complete in itself; both are partly defined by their opposite. The "real" world consists of both impulses.

Moreover, Shakespeare has made the songs marvellously complex by obscuring the usual clear-cut distinctions between the seasons and all that is associated with them. Spring is not just unalloyed joy and fertility, but it also "mocks" and contains a "word of fear"; sexuality is ubiquitous, but it is not free from all unpleasantness. Winter, conversely, is not simply a world of death and darkness; it cannot be totally identified with the world of sickness and death so dramatically announced by Marcade. That world has been transformed, as has Spring, into something less absolute, something more complex and enduring. There <u>is</u> life and fertility in both. Even in Winter, birds brood, the fire warms, there is motion. Even in Spring, the natural impulses can produce a "word of fear."

C. L. Barber eloquently sums up, from his point of view, the effect of these songs on us:

> Each centers on vitality, and moves from nature to man. . . . In the winter song, the center of vitality is the fire. . . . Even the kitchen wench, greasy Joan, keeling the pot to keep it from boiling over, is one of us, a figure of affection. The songs evoke the daily enjoyments and the daily community out of which special festive occasions were shaped up. And so they provide for the conclusion of the comedy what marriage usually provides: an expression of the going-on power of life.[9]

One chooses, not one season over the other, but both, because there is no other choice.

It is worth noting, too, that the play violates one kind of decorum in order to affirm another, and in so doing paradoxically strengthens the first. Berowne's comment, "That's too long for a play," calls attention to the breach in decorum represented by the unconventional ending of the comedy, the "form confounded." It also reminds us of the play's special concern with time, which includes dramatic as well as seasonal time. The decorum and rhythm of the seasons is offered as an ending instead, and these turn out to be wholly appropriate, perhaps even more so in light of the issues which have been raised in the play.

And yet it is still all part of the play, it isn't too "long" after all. The literal marriages can easily be imagined, the figurative marriages have just occurred before us. The delicate artifice of the play is strengthened by the acknowledgement of its limitations. It can be argued, in fact, that Marcade's entry finally <u>saves</u> the play's artifice, by

seeming at first to destroy it. We have been brought to a confrontation with death, acknowledged it, and thankfully seen it transformed by the imagination of the dramatist into something more endurable. We have not forgotten mutability, but it has been placed in perspective, against the cycle of fertility-decay-rebirth on into eternity. The "disgrace of death" finally achieves the "grace" which only the imagination can give it, a grace within the reach of art.

Ultimately the play reaches beyond the literal time-boundaries in which it is contained, by referring ahead to its own "sequel," when the traditional plot will be completed by a round of marriages and Love's Labour's Lost will become a traditional comedy, Love's Labour's Won. The play has been greatly concerned with its own antecedents, and turns at the end to its descendants. Like Spring and Winter, Art and Nature, it includes both extremes of time in a single moment.

In the final action of the play, we are given one last metaphor of the theater. Armado is the stage-manager, the low characters split into two groups to sing the songs, the characters from the court form an on-looking audience, and we look on as still another audience--one final concentric circle. This time, though, the play-within-the-play and the play itself are one and the same, and again the multiple levels collapse. The end of the songs brings the end, not of a single theatrical unit, but of the entire play. Armado's final words,

> The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo,

apply to everyone, Worthies, court characters, audience. The false eloquence of the men has been transmuted, "words" have been forged into "songs," and there remains nothing more to be debated.[10] The "dialogue" becomes one voice. The mercurial words of the critic are also by this time equally harsh and superfluous, and silence is advised. The god of poetry triumphs and so, vicariously, do we. We realize at last that drama, with its "living" actors and mimed "art," its easy marriage of Art and Nature, of Illusion and Reality, is itself the best, most convincing form of "living art."

Notes to Chapter VI

[1]A notable exception to this general approval is Dover Wilson, who says, "After the solemn announcement of 'the dialogue that the two learned men have compiled' these songs burst upon us with exquisitely ludicrous effect." (p. 189)

[2]Thomas M. Greene, "Love's Labour's Lost: The Grace of Society," p. 325.

[3]Richard Cody, The Landscape of the Mind (Oxford, 1969), p. 121, points out the pun.

[4]Ms. McLay, astonishingly, says, "at the opposite pole of Nature stands Death." (p. 124) The point is just the opposite: Nature includes both Death and Life, Winter and Spring.

[5]As Ms. McLay does in her misdirected article, "The Dialogues of Spring and Winter: A Key to the Unity of Love's Labour's Lost," Shakespeare Quarterly, 18 (Spring, 1967), 119-27.

[6]John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 70.

[7]Berry, "The Words of Mercury," p. 76.

[8]Joseph Westlund, "Fancy and Achievement in Love's Labour's Lost," Shakespeare Quarterly, 18 (Winter, 1967), p. 45.

[9]C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, p. 118.

[10]The Folio has after this the line (spoken by "Brag."), "You that way: we this way."

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