Archives Digitised Collections

Creator(s)
Greer, Germaine (1939-)

Title
The Ethic of Love and Marriage in Shakespeare's Early Comedies: Part 2

Date
1967

Description
Item: 2014.0044.00129

Terms and Conditions
Copyright owned by University of Melbourne. For information about ordering a copy of this image contact the University of Melbourne Archives: archives@archives.unimelb.edu.au

Preferred Citation
University of Melbourne Archives, Greer, Germaine (1939-), *The Ethic of Love and Marriage in Shakespeare's Early Comedies*, 2014.0044.00129
The English playwright was invariably more or less learned, and sufficiently forceful and imaginative to retain his hold on the theatre, as well as on the printed play, to an extent which to us today seems slight, but in terms of contemporary practice provided occasion for wonder and admiration.  

The commedia erudita became more and more the faithful depiction of contemporary manners, especially among the lower and more unruly orders of society, crystallising around known types which could provide the professional actor's tour de force. It was very often coarsely and irresistibly funny, sometimes vital and exciting, but never moving. Variety and speed were the motives of the action, which was never deepened to include conflict or development. It is devised to entertain a select but promiscuous urban audience, to divert them from the contemplation of any profound truth, or any criticism of their own lives. It may be the mirror of a certain kind of behaviour, of the latest slang and affectations adopted by the with-it gallants of the sixteenth century affluent society, the incarnation of the salacious tales they told of their own adventures, but it cannot claim to be imago veritatis, for not even the veriest tyro in Renaissance philosophy could pretend that verisimilitude was co-extant with truth. Bibbiena's play may be justified by reference to the banal opportunist world of the original Menaechmi, and it may in fact reflect the greater detachment and sophistication of

classical studies in humanist Italy, but it has little relation to the ideal of
classic comedy developed by the churchmen of the middle ages to which
both Jonson's acid muse and Shakespeare's committed vision are both
more closely related. If we consider all three in relation to the international
body of thought of which Hrotswitha's plays are the expression, Bibbiene
can be seen to have broken with his Christian classic forbears.

Shakespeare's comedy can be compared with the commedia erudita
in its use of the Menaechmi theme, its complication of the plot in the
interests of greater symmetry and complexity, its five-act structure,
considered at the most mechanical level; all these are superficial grounds
for comparison. The Comedy of Errors actually is an imitation of life, a
mirror of human behaviour, and an image of truth, and not just a comedy
of manners, although it reveals much about behaviour at the social level.
The Antipholuses do not have, like the Italian heroes, a specific address;
they belong to Ephesus (and the court of Diana) and Syracuse (and the
court of Dionysus). The Comedy of Errors bears the weight of the full
meaning of the old theories of comedy as naturally and completely as the
human body bears the pressure of the air. Its complexity, sophistication
and gravity are unlooked for and untried for by the best dramatists of Italy.

PLAUTUS IN ENGLAND

English Plautine comedy is represented by a handful of survivals,
Gammer Gurton's Needle, Ralph Roister Doister, Jack Juggler, Mother
Bombe and The Comedy of Errors. There is at least one important
respect in which the latter is more like its fellows than any Italian play.

The wyse Poets long time heretofore,
Vnder merrie Comedies secretes did declare,
Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.
Such to write neither Plautus nor Terence dyd spare,
Whiche among the learned at this day beares the bell:
These with such other therein dyd excell. 1

Twenty-five years have elapsed since the sophisticated eroticism of low-born Dovizi charmed Leo X, and the fame of his work and numerous editions of it have spread through Europe, but Udall is either unaware of it, or chooses to ignore it. He clings to the belief that literature has an almost sacred function, to body forth secrets or mysteries in allegorical or semi-allegorical form, and, more directly, to prescribe, vertuous lore, and to interpret, forewarnings. 2 For such as he Italian comedy did seem to have declined into amorous toys, bawdry, coarse mirth, and to have lost all stateliness and dignity. 3 In Italy the Christian heresy of finding confirmation of Christian doctrine in the pagan classics was as good as dead, despite the reactionary pressure of traditional aestheticians like Trissino. Terence certainly does have a moral concern, but it is not a Christian concern; his morality is civic, political, practical. The Elizabethans found it necessary to transmogrify the ambiguity and the guardedness of his conclusions so that they could find in him the "mysteries

2. Cf. supra p.17 ff.
3. Cf. supra p. 6 ff.
and forewarnings very rare' that they sought. No child could have studied Terence in England without absorbing piece by piece an extraordinary matrix of commentary in which the plays were always embedded, so that the delicate penetration which characterises Terence's handling of human situations was transformed into a blunt and rigorous moralism. In Richard Bernard's *Terence in English*, published as late as 1598, we may clearly observe what I take to be the most representative form of this process, for the author was not long out of school himself, the book appearing while he was still up at Cambridge. First, the *dramatis personae* have their names interpreted by the fictitious etymology so esteemed as a source of illuminating analogies; one example that is particularly illuminating for *The Comedy of Errors* is the explanation of the name Antipha in the *Heautontimouromenos*:

\[
\text{Antipha, amasia: one that is in love } \ldots \\
\text{Antipha, } \alpha\nu\zeta\iota \chi\lambda \sigma\alpha\omicron \xi : \text{ contrà amans. 1}
\]

Next they are equated with virtues and vices of which they are to be understood as exemplars, no matter how minor the part that they play in the action; in the *Eunuchus*, for example, Sophrone is to exemplify \( \delta \alpha \gamma \lambda \sigma \) *castitâte seu probitâte*! 2 Then follows the *argumentum*, chosen from C. Sulpiti Apollinaris, who is careful to reduce all moral ambiguities to manageable proportions, unlike the more scrupulous commentators,

1. *Terence in English ... Opera ac industria R.B. ... Cantabrigiae Ex officina Johannis Legat. 1598*, p. 191.

Muretus and Ascensius. The *argumentum* for the *Hecyra* is perhaps the most obviously misleading, for it underplays Pamphilus's love for Bacchis, and the effect of the withdrawal of her favours, and implies rather too strongly the triumph of his wife's virtue, which is the proper lodestone of love. 1 Of Terence's actual text, each scene is presented separated from the rest by the accreted commentary, so that there is no risk of the play making its impact undistorted. It is presented with the heading of the characters appearing in it, and a formal or moral comment, while rhetorical figures, which include finenesses of psychological insight, are indicated in marginal comments. A Latin *Moralis Expositio* follows, setting in unambiguous mould the significance of each scene, sometimes quite against the bias of Terence's sensitive apprehension of the issues involved. No scene, however short and burlesque, is allowed to pass without such exposition. The scope of the depicted situation is extended into a general context on the slightest justification. The moral elicited from *Andria*, IV. ii. is that

\[ \text{In matrimonio est amicitia ex similitudine morum, eaq; perpetua.} \]  

Terence might not have wished to deny this staunch moral, but he can hardly be said to have written this scene to illustrate it. The *Moralis Expositio* is followed by the text of the scene in English, clumsily translated in prose, and twice as long as the original. From it we can

1. Ibid., p. 335.
2. Ibid., p. 73
discover that Bernard was as muddled about the value of the talent as Shakespeare, and we can assess the measure of preconception that made it quite impossible for any Elizabethan to read exactly what Terence had written. In the *Heautontimouroumenos* the boy exclaims in answer to his father's proposal that he marry their next-door-neighbour's daughter, "O father, I cannot find in my hearte to loue her", for Terence's *Non possum pater*. The tendency to deepen the dimension of love in all approved relationships, and to call it wenching and whoring in unapproved ones is everywhere evident. With all these precautions taken, Bernard is still not quite assured that the dangerous views which caused Terence to be regarded as strong meat in the middle ages have been rendered innocuous, for he follows the English text by a list of Latin sententiae supposedly illustrated by it, sometimes longer than the text itself. They are culled from an amazing variety of sources, all unacknowledged, and none of them appears twice.

If we compare Bernard's treatment of his text with an Italian translation with commentary, we shall notice a great difference in approach. Bernard, apart from the cursory indication of the presence of tropes, ignores all the aesthetic questions raised by Terence's work, including none of the critical commentary of Donatus, or Horace, or Melancthon or even Erasmus. A very popular version of Terence's comedies with Italian translation and commentary appeared in Florence.

---

in 1548, and was reprinted several times thereafter. Like Bernard's it does not include the Latin grammarians' commentaries, but in no other respect can they be said to be alike. Fabrini’s moral interpretation is much less prescriptive than Bernard's and there is much less of it. The translation is elegant and smooth when compared with Bernard's wagon train sentences, for this is Fabrini's chief concern, to write in Italian with all the elegance and sophistication of the original, as a battle in the war to establish the superiority of Tuscan over all other dialects, and to purify it of any taint of coarseness or rusticity. After every scene we are dutifully but perfunctorily told what "la qual cosa ci insegna", but very often this is no more than an observation that human beings have particular reactions to particular situations: the great bulk of the commentary is devoted to discussion of linguistic matters. Richard Bernard was not writing like Fabrini for the sleekly cultured elite of the urban civilisation that boasted Machiavelli and Aretino: his tome was commissioned for little Christopher Wray and the nephews of Lady Bowes and Lady Sainctpoll. The schoolmasters who produced the first classical comedies in English for their boys to act, shared his preoccupations with moral and even spiritual questions.

Nicholas Udall freely adapted the Plautine theme of the miles glorusus for his play Ralph Roister Doister, if not actually for his boys at Eton or

1. Il Terentio latino commentato in lingua tosca de Giovanni Fabrini da fighine fiorâtino. Venetia. M.D.XLVIII.
Westminster, then with schoolboy players in mind. Its scope is stringently limited, and on other respects, its portrayal of middle class life, and the vigour of its language, it resembles that other Plautine play for schoolboys, I Lucidi. The structure is superficially classical, for Udall divided it into the five acts considered de rigueur, but the action is basically too episodic. The resemblance to the Italian genre goes no further. Udall writes in verse, which is not always contemptible, especially when the gossips are clattering. Graceful songs are interpolated, possibly on analogy with the intermezzi which enlivened the academy plays, but nothing could be more English in tone and rhythm. In the element of lyricism, in the sense of moral commitment which pervades even this simple story of the baiting of a vainglorious boaster, and the profound and questing interest in human problems, English comedy, classical or otherwise, found its own distinguishing characteristics. As a satire on vainglory, Roister Doister has rather too much to say about marriage, from the little song "Who-so to marry a minion wife" to the courting letter of nuptial promises which Merygreke reads in the negative so that it has to be read again, and its contents doubly emphasised. The themes of false and true wooing, and the protection of the handfast, which are central to Shakespeare's work, attract so much attention that they are in a fair way to undermine the comedy of the baiting of Roister Doister altogether.

C. Custâce ... Truly, most deare spouse, nought was done but for pastance.
G. Good. But such kynde of sporting is homely dalliance ...
C. Custace. It was none but Roister Doister, that foolish he mome.
Ga. Good. Yea, Custance, better (they say) a badde scuse than none. 1

The play is crude in some ways, and its kind of moral insight is also crude, but it is of the same stuff as the profundity of a great poet, who was once perhaps a schoolmaster, who understood the raw material of comedy, the feature of virtue, the image of scorn, "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure", much better than Udall, and who also understood the classical ideal of comedy better than any single one of his European predecessors or contemporaries. In the profundity and high seriousness of its moral concern, realised in terms of the dramatic image, The Comedy of Errores stands far above the simple solidity of Roister Doister, but this moral commitment relates it fundamentally to the native tradition. Even Trissino, determined to infuse an ethical concern into his version of the Menaechmi cannot see the events in terms of a metaphysical struggle in the way that the clumsiest of the English dramatists could. The superior discretion which sours Roister Doister is more strikingly developed in the disturbingly rethought incident from the Amphitruo recounted in Jack Juggler. The lewd loves of gods are here transformed into a homely episode of a practical joke played upon an unruly page, who, meeting Jack Juggler masquerading as himself, is forced to deny his own identity. The actual treatment of the incident remains very close to the Latin source, but there is an added dimension, much more seriously

---

intended than Plautus’s spoofing of the divine powers.

Good lord of heauen where did I my self leue?  
Or who did of me my name by the way bereue?  
For I am sure of this in my minde:  
That I did in no place leue my selfe behinde,  
If I had my name played away at Dice  
Or had solde my self to any man at a price,  
Or had made a fray and had lost it in fighting:  
Or it had been stolne from me sleeping.  
It had been a matter and I would haue kept  
patience
But it spiteth my hart to haue lost it by negligence. 1

Although this keeps very close to the Latin, it has none of its burlesque quality in its earnestly supplicatory tone. The last line, wrenched out of the metre, makes it clear that the author is not making a joke of Jenkyn’s credulity, as Plautus does of Sosia’s, although Sosia has more reason to be disturbed because his identity is being meddled with by a god. Really, Plautus’s insight is purely mundane: only Sosia’s doltishness could possibly lead him to think that he had lost his identity. Udall’s little inelegant play demonstrates the awful power of a certain kind of mental pressure, the power of a reiterated, plausible lie, and the vulnerability of personality. Although he is proud to admit that he is trained in Cato, Plutarch, Socrates, Plato, Cicero and Ovid, the author retains a basic simplicity and audacity of imagination, which transform a prolix adaptation of an incident from Plautus into something moving and impressive in its own right. Poor little Jenkyn Careaweie fights for his

identity with words as crudely graphic as the blows in a boxing match, until he is forced to yield what none has the right to demand. Jack Juggler, the presiding spirit of deception, is the progeny of a fusion of the vice of the moralities, and Peniculus, the conniving servant who fathered the real heroes of the Italian comedy of the sixteenth century, whose machinations were followed with delight and appreciation far from the Latin sources. In this play he is not allowed the last word, and his eclipse is indicative of the fate suffered by the type in the English theatre, Instead his victim turns his stolen face to the audience, and in rough but powerful stanzas makes explicit the issues which have been raised by this single incident.

And as it is dayly seen for fear of further displeasure
He must that man his best freend and insister call:
Of whom he neuer receyued any maner benefite,
And at whose hand he had neuer any good at all.
And must graunt, affirm or deny what so euer he shall.
He must say Crowe is white if he ne so commaunded;
Yea, and that him self into another body is chaunged.

He must say he did amisse, though he did not offend,
He must ask for forgluines where he did no trespace:
Or els be in trouble, care and misery without end,
And be cast in some average without any grace.
And that thing whiche he saw doon befor his face,
He must by compulsion, stifly denie:
And for fear whether he would or nay say tung you lie.  

Although Shakespeare has utilised the same incident from the Amphitruo in The Comedy of Errors he does not develop it to anything like this extent: Dromio does not see his own likeness as Jenkyn and

1. Ibid., Sig. Elii verso, 11.1169-1182.
Sosia do, but nevertheless the stringency which can turn a mythological farce into a human struggle, and pass stern judgment upon it, to the utter detriment of the comic mood (for Jenkyn's is an odd plaudite) is related to the profound vision of Shakespeare, more closely in fact than it is to the immaculately disguised farce of Gammer Gurton's Needle, which sports five-act dress, protasis, epitasis and catastrophe, but is never more than rough and tumble farce in Poulter's measure, or Lyly's Italianate Mother Bombie which bears unmistakable traces of the author's knowledge of the contemporary Italian scene, and the same slender connection with the classical tradition, pace R. Warwick Bond. ¹ Jack Juggler is the product of the English Protestant genius, born the inheritor of a native dramatic tradition, in which the morality survived with full honours much longer than elsewhere, supplied with the manners and methods of academic classicism, as we might see from a glance at Gascoigne's five-act Latinate cautionary tale for school-boys, The Glasse of Gouernement, which shows exemplary understanding of the grammarians' requirements for the orthodox comedy, and a spirit of stolid moralism as far from Plautus and Terence as Machiavelli and Aretino. Italy produced more learned dramatists, but it is this other element which makes the English tradition capable of so much more. It demanded a meaning for every kind of utterance, however frivolous, and that meaning had to be more than a circumstantial truth. This seriousness must not be understood

as the product of some popular influence working on the dramatist
however, although it can hardly have flourished without some sympathy
from the playgoer. It is a fundamental attribute of English classicism,
of the understanding that could call The Conflict of Conscience a
"pleasant comedy" when it dealt with the story

Of one through love of worldly wealth and fear of
death dismaide,
Because he would his lyfe and goods, haue kept still
as his owne,
From state of grace wherein he stoode, was almost
ouerthrowne:
So that he had no power or all, in heart firme
fayth to haue,
Till at the last, God chaunged his mynde, his mercies
for to craue. 1

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

The Comedy of Errors is a comprehensive example of the old-
fashioned classical paradigm mocked by Bibbiena in claiming Plautus as
the source of his erotic intrigue play. It contains all the mingled
elements of the tradition, and for this reason it stands as the refutation of
Professor Coghill's distinction. All the formal requirements of the
Terentian theorists are satisfied; the action takes place in a single day,
in a single place signified by the three house doors opening on to a street,
as in the old woodcuts of the staging of Terence; the action is clearly and
easily based upon the rule of protasis (the first two acts), epitasis (the

1. Prologue as printed in the second issue of 1581, Malone Soc.
Reprint, ed. H. Davis and F. P. Wilson (1952), Sig. All recto,
II, 31-5.
next two acts) and catastrophe (the last act), each containing in itself the
germ of the next development
1; thus the events of its day parallel the
career of the human life which for the mediaeval theorists was the
justification of this notion of structure; the versification is regular,
symmetrical and even in tone, except for the lapses into the anapaestic
tetrameters usually called doggerel, in obedience to the Horatian doctrine
that the diction should be varied to fit the character. The most arrant
pedant could find nothing amiss with Shakespeare's play at this superficial
level. Even the alteration of Plautus's beginning is unexceptional, if we
remember Trissino.

On the profoundest level, it stands closer to the spirit of the
classical canon, because it does not follow the superficial notion of
speculum consuetudinis at the expense of imago veritatis out of the realm
of poetic drama. It is doubtful whether the elegant, muscular prose of
the Italian masters resembles the actual speech of men any more closely
than verse does. The Terentian precedent clearly requires verse, and
the Dantean vision requires poetry, which is distinguished by what Arnold
would call "high seriousness", and a criticism of life. It is
Shakespeare's ability to respond to these more lofty expectations which
makes The Comedy of Errors a more classical play than any of Johnson's:
Jonson is a more informed classicist of the modern type, and therefore

1. The case for the classicism of the structure of The Comedy of
Errors has been exhaustively argued by T. W. Baldwin in
Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure (Urbana, 1947), Cap.
a lesser exponent of the pseudo-classical ideal developed by mediaeval culture. The doubling of the action by Shakespeare is not merely an instance of the Elizabethan love of copy. The synthesising power of his imagination is so great that he manages to create an extraordinary multiple metaphor of life. Even at what is presumed to be a very early point in his career, he contrives to state the most profound and far-reaching truth in terms of the dramatic illusion. The audacity of the conception is such that the literary student of the play can hardly expect to grasp it: it depends upon a kind of metaphysical slide, in which a man is separated from himself, so that he may confront himself as time has changed him, or as he used to be. It depends upon the identicity of the image presented by the twin, for only one is ever seen on stage at a time, until the very end, and upon the exact parallelism of the situations, as one Antipholus prepares to repeat the destiny that the other bears with such an ill grace. The first governing image is that of the symmetrically freighted mast, with husband, twin son and twin slave at one end, and wife, other twin son and other twin slave at the other. They ought to travel together on the main of life, but their mast is split and carried off over the waves in different directions; one travels faster than the other (I.i.109) and it is that which arrives at Ephesus. The Syracusans are left behind for the bark that takes them up is "very slow of sail" (I.i.116). So Egeon is separated from his wife, as from himself, for husband and wife as Hamlet grimly remarks are one flesh, and the twins from each other. Antipholus of Syracuse is still governed by the sea, and his sojourn in Ephesus is subject to the constant necessity of reembarkation, to catch up to himself on the
surges of time.

I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop,
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
(Unseen, inquisitive) confounds himself.

( I. ii. 35-38)

Drops of water must be kept apart in time-space otherwise they will
coalesce and become one drop. Antipholus imagines that he desires this
coalescence, but when he achieves it, for he is actually confounded with
his brother, he suffers tremendously.

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking, mad, or well advis'd?
Known unto these, and to myself disguis'd,
I'll say as they say, and persever so,
And in this mist at all adventures go. (II. ii. 212-6)

The reason that he suffers so, is that his brother, whom he considers
as like to him as one drop of water to another, is changed, by the passage
of the same tide that separated them. Much has been written on the
clever creation of two contrasting characters for the two brothers, without
much respect for Elizabethan psychology. The seven ages of man include
two, side by side.

... And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation,
Even in the cannon's mouth.

(As You Like It, II. iv. 147-53)

This is a fairly commonplace Elizabeth view of the human career:

for example, in the interlude of Mundus et Infans (1522), the page becomes
Lust and Liking in his teens, and then, at twenty-one, when he is qualified for knight service, Manhood Mighty. Dromio remarks dryly to Antipholus of Syracuse that his character is changing, in their curious discourse of time’s revenges:

Syr. Dro. I durst have denied that before you were so choleric.
Syr. Ant. By what rule, sir?
Syr. Dro. Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of Father Time himself.

(II. ii. 35-9)

Komisarjewsky was probably right to have centred the decor of his remarkable production around a clock, but it ought to have been an ambiguous clock, for as the twins draw closer to their confrontation time plays strange tricks: Dromio of Syracuse hears it chime the hour before the last one.

The hours come back, that did I never hear. (IV. ii. 55)

Dromio jokes with Adriana, that the bailiff has succeeded in laying hands on time and arresting it, but there is some sad truth in his jesting contention that time is a bankrupt and a thief. What it has stolen from Antipholus of Ephesus is his first naive adoring passion for Adriana, and the juvenile mildness of his temper. The ambiguity of the name as it is construed in Bernard’s Terence is therefore very applicable. Antipholus of Ephesus is Antipholus of Syracuse at a later stage of development, and it is the whole irony of the play that one cannot recognise the other without

the intervention of a deus ex machina. Place in the circumstances of his future life, Antipholus rebels in horror, but instantly turns to his unwanted wife's sister and begins to woo her as his brother must have wooed her sister. The two women are apparently contrasted, but more in situation than in character. As Adriana says bitterly to Luciana, cool and sensible in her assessment of her sister's behaviour:

A wretched soul bruised with adversity,
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;
But were we burden'd with like weight of pain,
As much, or more, we should ourselves complain.  
(II. i. 34-7)

Luciana speaks theory, but Adriana nags and moans from wasteful experience. Adriana has seen her husband change, as she has changed herself, as they changed each other from their first wooing:

What ruins are in me that can be found
By him not ruin'd?  
(II. i. 96-7)

Luciana defending her absent brother-in-law speaks curious confusion, which the play is concerned to expose.

A man is master of his liberty;
Time is their master, and when they see time,
They'll go or come; ...  
(II. i. 7-9)

His liberty is the one thing a man cannot master: as we have seen from the bitter experience of Proteus, man cannot stop himself changing, nor can he give this liberty away and melt into the self of another, however much he try. Antipholus rejoices to find that his confusion can be resolved once he (they) is recognised to be two separate people: the image of the separation in time works in two ways; when the two confront,
the time gap is closed and the image coalesces - they speak together, but on the level of their motivation, for the first time they have the chance to recognise themselves as separate. Their metaphysical sameness is recognised by the Duke,

One of these men is genius to the other;
And so of these, which is the natural man,
And which the spirit? Who deciphers them? (V. i. 332-4)

The two Dromios also recognise that the time gap has been closed, as they jostle good-naturedly off the stage.

We came into the world like brother and brother
And now let’s go hand in hand, not one before another.

(V.1.425-6)

The merging with another self has been painful for Antipholus, but nevertheless he seeks it again in his wooing of Luciana: he will bring the subsequent suffering of Adriana and his brother, upon himself and Luciana, by preferring to worship rather than to understand.

It is thyself, mine own self's better part,
Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

(III. ii. 61-4)

A part of him realises the danger that this passion places him in, and he decides, despite his hot wooing, to fly the "mermaid's song" lest he be guilty of self-wrong, a traitor to himself. He has decided, notwithstanding his former intention to lose himself, to protect his integrity. The relationship that he describes is that which Adriana thinks that she should have with her husband.
For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
And take unminglethence that drop again
Without addition or diminishing,
As take thee from myself, and not me too. (II.ii.125-9)

The fallacy of her belief is cruelly demonstrated by the fact that she is saying this to the wrong man. This is the simplest irony in the situation, but there is also the deeper one, that this is her husband as he was when he wooed her, faced with the consequences of his wooing and marriage and rejecting them with scorn and incomprehension. Such wooing is what Luciana admits ought to move an honest suit: for all her callow commonsense she almost yields to the same illusion that has brought Adriana so low. The situation is complex, for religious doctrine enforces Adriana’s belief that husband and wife are the same flesh: her metaphor of elm and vine is culled from the Psalms and universal in epithalamic convention. What she does not understand is that this identification is spiritual, symbolical: while we are imprisoned in the flesh and the cares of the world, we must content ourselves with separateness and finiteness, with imperfection. The story of the dislocation and confrontation of the two Antipholuses is contained within the frame of another drama, the life pilgrimage of Egeon. The shape of the old man’s tribulation, the passage from day to sundown, is the same as that of the human destiny through judgment to salvation, part of the archetypal pattern of Everyman. Everyman must find his Good Deeds; his wife and sons accomplish Egeon’s salvation. The Abbess has reproved Adriana for her jealousy, and has secluded her husband from her, to teach her to respect him as an individual,
for she would have coddled him like a baby. Now Emilia ransomes her husband by her loyalty: they meet like two souls when the walls of the flesh have dissolved, and they may enjoy the fruits of their mutual deserving, like Dante at last united with Beatrice. Their lives have been lived in sad isolation, without the deceitful consolation of caresses and cohabitation, but their preservation of their sacramental union despite the ravages of time and distance, untainted by infidelity or possessiveness, entitles them to the deepest joy and communion, beyond the passionate dreams of an amorous youth like Antipholus. He is not wrong to suppose that Luciana is his heaven's claim, but he must not try to recognise that claim on earth. In later plays marriage may be presented as a way of overcoming the isolation of the self, as Northrop Frye claims, but a callower Shakespeare points a shallower truth. His insight in these early plays is ethical rather than metaphysical; the plays are triumphs of understanding rather than imagination, but this is no good ground for supposing them inferior.

How far can such a work be said to be of the same genre as the cynical comedies which are characteristic of the Plautine tradition in Italy? The only one among those that I have chosen to discuss which prompts any sort of comparison in Trissino's, because it does attempt some sort of seriousness, and it has a self-conscious relation to the learned tradition, which is not specifically Italian, of course, being the product of a European Latin culture. It is from this common stock that The Comedy of Errors is descended, and to that learned tradition that it
Placing Shakespeare in the context of the English understanding of Terence, it must be admitted that his sense of ethical commitment is a specifically English trait, and that the nature of his Ethic is unmistakably Protestant. The salvation of Egeon by the discovery of his wife and the fruits of their union reflects the logical development of the protestant moralists' theories of marriage as the highest vocation known to man, ordained by God, and celebrated by Him in the time of man's innocency. If we compare Shakespeare with Terence, it is immediately evident how sovereign the action of faith is upon his kind of comedy. Shakespeare is as disabused in his expectations of human nature as Terence is, but for him the happy ending is valid in other terms. At the end of the Hecyra Terence stresses the fact that in real life the catastrophe does not occur, and that ignorance and confusion are the common lot.

... placet non stii itidem, vt in comediis, Omnia omnes ubi resciscunt: hi, (sic) quos par fuerat resciscere, Sciunt: quos non autem scire nequum est, neque resciscent, neque scient.

It is implied that the resolution has happened only because of the formal resources available to the dramatist, and the audience's satisfaction is leavened, even by a reservation so slight, to a marked degree. But for Shakespeare it is not the monopoly of the artist to resolve all suffering in a purposeful end, for his function is itself a feeble fleshly parallel of the redemptive power of the almighty, who has designed the comedy that we live. Our joy only has meaning in relation to our

thirty-three years of travail, of "so long grief", and it remains less
tangible on stage than the suffering which we have watched for rather
longer, and which is the result of causes that we understand rather better.
Shakespeare shares Terence's insight and honesty, but he has the
advantage of a solace not afforded to the pagan writer, the dimension in
which redemption and salvation are real possibilities and not merely
artistic fiction. Terence is left with the fact that the old must always
lose the struggle to the young, so that the renewal of life is also the
affirmation of death. In his world victory is not possible for both sides;
the artist may simply deceive us for a brief space. In Shakespeare's
universe a greater hope exists and with it the possibility of a greater
despair. Against the abstract image of souls married in a former time
of joy and peace, restored to their former joy by the omnipotent Duke, are
poised the concrete figures of the courting and the wedded couple whose
tribulations are far from ended, and cannot be resolved by paradisical
intervention. It would seem a strange omission from the scene, that the
spouses are not reconciled, and Luciana not given to Antipholus of Syracuse,
if this were not so.

The Comedy of Errors is the most perfect example of the christian
classical comedy that has survived in any language. As such, it deserves
a more illustrious designation than Plautine, English or Italian. Its kind
of vision is realistic in a much more profound sense than that comedy which
concerns itself with a critique of manners. It is the exhalation of a culture
suffering an upheaval of conscience, which had seen fifty years of martyrdom
and personal anguish as arbitrary and relentless as Solinus's law. In the space of a little day, the English conscience had to find itself, in a forest of equivocation and dispute: the keenness of spiritual insight which results is not Plautine: it is the worthy descendent of the ardour that christianised Terence and informed the *Divina Commedia.*
CHAPTER THREE:

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Ma la comedia nuova e carissima allo stato de tiranni, de re, & de pochi, perciò che non rimprouera loro nuna loro operatione, ne minaccia loro punitione nuna, ne solleua il minuto popolo, ne il commuoue a passione nuna, essendo l’attioni rappresentate di dispiacere non grande & mitigato da sopravegente alegrezza.

(Castelvetro, Poetica d’Aristotele)
THE INDUCTION

Although it is clear that there is some puzzle to be solved in the fading out of the Induction to The Taming of the Shrew, what we have is developed far beyond the Induction of A Shrew, so that, even if it is less fully developed as a frame for the whole action, it is much further developed as a preparation for that action. Both Inductions are probably by Shakespeare: that of The Shrew may even represent a style which is later than the rest of the play. 1 The difference between them does not only consist in that the later Induction is more fully motivated and particular, but also in that the images spun out of the verse are richer and more demanding, so that the relation with the play that follows is organic rather than schematic. The first image is that of the lord spurning the sleeping Sly at the same time as he arranges meticulously for the cherishing and tending of his hounds. The prank that he decides to play on the slumbering drunk is meant to show the extent to which breeding and nurture have separated him from this degraded remnant of humanity, but there are indications that his lordship may not find his own superiority

1. It has been supposed by Pope, Tieck, W. C. Hazlitt, Flesy and Courthope that Shakespeare's hand was evident in A Shrew. It seems likely that the two versions existed simultaneously, to judge from the adaptation of A Shrew that Pepys saw in 1667. A Shrew is quite competently plotted, but the verse is absolutely undistinguished: a young poet's errors would have been more blatant and his achievements more remarkable: moreover the argument from the good verse and bad staging of The Two Gentlemen of Verona cannot simply be reversed to argue for good stage craft and bad poetry in A Shrew. K. B. Banks in "A Shrew and The Shrew", NQ, August, 1955, New Series 11, argues for the concomitant existence of both versions. It is very possible that the Marlovian lapidary set speeches remained in the text, while the language of the by-play was gradually rewritten in performance.
endorsed as effectively as he might wish. He mistakes his own ability to wipe clean the slate of Sly's brain, for despite the hallucinatory nature of his experiences, Sly's developed personality exploits them in its own way. If the lord is to force Sly to accept a new role, he must obliterate much that is good in his character, as well as much that is indifferent or bad. We are aware of potential dangers in this situation as we are not in the Induction of *A Shrew*, where the device works only as a device in making us aware of the interplay of illusions in role-playing. In *The Taming of the Shrew* the Induction develops a poetic dimension of its own, which prepares our sensibility for the perception of profounder themes in the play that follows. The older Induction interests itself in the titillatory aspects of the presentation of Sly's "lady", but here the Lord's instructions are more significant and particular. The page must

... bear himself with honourable action
Such as he hath observed in noble ladies
Unto their lords, by them accomplished: Such duty to the drunkard let him do With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy, And say, "What is't your honour will command, Wherein your lady and your humble wife May show her duty and make known her love?"

(Ind. i. 110-7)

In case the servility and ceremony of such a relationship, stressed to the point of verbosity unusual in Shakespeare, have not made their point, the Lord's last instruction leaves the matter beyond doubt.

And if the boy have not a woman's gift
To rain a shower of commanded tears,
An onion will do well for such a shift ...

(Ind. i. 124-6)
In the second scene of the Induction to *A Shrew* Sly is won over to supposing that he is a Lord almost at once, but here he resists the proffered homage, and passes an implicit criticism on the lord's way of life. What his minions call a "foul spirit" can hardly strike us as such:

Ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear; for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet ... (Ind. ii.9-11)

Sly is stating a fact rather than a policy, but his use of the masterful instruction to the servants never to ask him such things implies a rejection of a way of life which does possess more than it can use. His rattling autobiography has no hint of apology, and it needs all the blandishments of music and sweet repose to swerve him. The mention of Semiramis, who made love to animals, in connection with his bed, would have made more sense to his audience than to him, conveying the hint that Sly is in moral danger of a curious kind. Semiramis is listed among Spenser's "Proude wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke", for she exploited her husband's infatuation in order to steal his throne, and once queen her libidinous excesses knew no bounds. ¹ To a man who needs no more than one suit of clothes the strewing of the ground with flowers before he walks on it must have seemed supererogated indeed. The atmosphere of the hunt which pervaded the first scene is evoked again as he is offered his horses, hounds and hawks, as the lord had suggested in

---

the first scene, and the wanton pictures, each of which enshrines an emblem which can be related to the theme of the main action.

Adonis painted by a running brook,
And Cytherea all in sedges hid,
Which seem to move and wanton with her breath,
Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

(Ind. ii. 52-5)

The only source for such an odd water-picture is Abraham Fraunce's *Amintas Dale*, where Cytherea makes love to Adonis's reflection in a stream. In his poem Shakespeare confuses the Venus and Adonis story with the Hermaphrodite story which precedes it in the *Metamorphoses*, to show Venus as a preying falcon and a starved eagle, driving her love away from her by the fury of her longing, for a man lists to hunt, and to hunt prey worthy of his mettle.

We'll show thee Io as she was a maid
And how she was beguiled and surprised,
As lively painted as the deed was done.

(Ind. ii. 56-8)

The aspect that Shakespeare chooses to stress is that of the virgin surrounded by clouds, so that Jove could mate with her, an emblem which has so exact a reference to the wooing of Kate, that there is no need to explain it.

Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

(Ind. ii. 59-62)

The picture is taken direct from Golding, whose Apollo says,

---

... alas alas how would it grieue my heart,
To see thee fall among the briers, and that the
bloud should start
Cut of thy tender legges. 1

However, Shakespeare's interpretation differs from Golding's in
that he has chosen to imply that Daphne is hurting herself by her
unnecessary flight from the love of a God, stressing the element of
Golding's description of her "impatient and without a man", hating "as
a heinous crime the bond of bridely bed", and suppressing the notion of
the laurel as a fitting crown for virginity preserved. His emphasis may
be compared with Spenser's in the Amoretti,

Proud Daphne scorning Phaebus louely fyre,
on the Thessalian shore from him did flie:
for which the gods in theyr reuengefull yre 2
did her transforme into a laurell tree.

So all the emblems have a relevance to the chase of courtship, from
Venus's sly importunings in the reeds, to Io helpless in Jove's cloud, to
Daphne clinging to her masculine way of life, and fleeing the god of life
and beauty. The peculiar sexual tension that characterises the wooing of
Kate and Petruchio is present in this confusion of suggestive images.
Sly's attitude to his "wife" opens another way into the understanding of the
relationship of man and woman. When the Page enters asking for news
of "her" lord, Sly does not recognise the relationship in which she stands
to him, because of her servility.

Are you my wife, and will not call me husband?
My men should call me "lord": I am your goodman.
(Ind. ii. 106-7)

1. Golding's Ovid, op. cit., fol. 9 recto.
He is speaking verse by now, but it is plain and strong, and makes his point with rigour and clarity. He cannot manage to call his wife Madam, but seeks to know her name: the nearest he can bring himself to utter is "Madam wife".

Among other titles, the ordinary and usual title (wife) is a milde and kinde title, and least offensiue of all other: if an husbande glue any other title to his wife, it must be such an one as manifesteth kindness, familiaritie, loue, and delight. Such are all the titles which Christ giueth to the Church ... but contrary are such titles as on the one side set the wife in too high a place ouer her husband, as Lady, Mistress, Dame, Mother &c. And on the other side, set her in too meane a rancke ...

This point is quite obscured in A Shrew where Sly treats his "wife" as a wench, and the principal entertainment is derived from the inappropriateness of his gross caresses. Here the implications of Sly's attitudes are much more subtle and demanding. In asking his wife's company through the spectacle that follows, Sly again brings the simple ethic of the common folk into the lord's house.

Come, madam wife, sit by my side, and let the world slip: we shall ne'er be younger. (Ind. ii.143-4)

He has acquired this "wife" as suddenly as ever man could, but he has no difficulty in knowing how to treat her: he is gentle, affectionate and familiar. In his world there is no question of transcendent passion, any more than of dowry or breeding, but only the necessity of getting along together, of constituting a household which will survive the vicissitudes of fortune.

1. Of Domestickall Dvties Eight Treatises ... by William Govge. Printed by John Haviland for William Bladen ... 1622 (Written c.1604), fol. 371 recto.
THE LUCENTIO STORY

The comedy designed to purge through the beneficial action of mirth Sly's melancholic humours begins as any one of dozens of renaissance comedies, with the entrance of the student, Lucentio, newly arrived at his play of study. It is a foregone conclusion that he will be seduced from his studies by the blazing eyes of some local beauty, and involve himself in scrapes to win her. He would probably argue with his tutor about the relative merits of love and learning, and the argument would be resolved by the Pedant's ignominious infatuation for some slattern. Lucentio's opening speech does more than identify him as a sciocco giovane, for his precise remarks about the studies he will undertake have a genuine reference.

And therefore Tranio, for the time I study,
Virtue and that part of philosophy
Will I apply that treats of happiness
By virtue specially to be achieved. (I. i. 17-20)

The specific Italianness of the setting is heavily emphasised in this speech, and not even the vagueness of the designation Lombardy will suffice to blur this specificity into the indication of a mere fictitious location. Tranio replies in wrong Italian to emphasise the foreignness.

1. Cf., to quote only a few examples, Antileo in the Vitio Muliebre, the situation in Cecchi's Assiulo and Perrin's Les Escolliers, and Armileo in La Talanta.

2. Shakespeare's use of the term Lombardy to include Padua can be compared with Fynes Moryson's use of the term Lombards on p. 75 of his Itinerary ... containing his ten yeeres travell ... At London Printed by John Beale ... 1617. As late as 1695 Dryden called Titian a Lombard painter (Dufresnoy's Art of Painting, p. 94).
So we have a young student newly arrived in Padua, having come from Pisa, to study ethics. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century Padua had become the stronghold of renaissance Aristotelianism, which developed a characteristic utilitarian ethic, carried to extremes especially in questions of aesthetics.

E non è dubbio che l'ufficio del giudicioso, & perfetto poeta non è altro, che render con prudenti artefici i suoi cittadini virtuosi, & felice la sua republica, ...

The manifesto of this school is the Discorso intorno a quei principii, cause et accrescimenti che la Comedia, la Tragedia, et il Poema heroico ricevono dalla Philosophia morale, which describes the function of comedy in familiar terms, but with a new rigorous emphasis.

... si dice, la comedia essere una rappresentation della uita, spechio della consuetudine, imagine della verità, per institution de' padri di famiglia, per guouro delle mogli, delle figluole, de' figloli, de' servitori per ridurgli alla tranquilità della mente & per inanimar i cittadini alla uita priuata, & alla beniuolenza della republica populare.

The pseudo-Ciceronian canon has been interpreted in a specific fashion, so that comedy must not simply impart a true impression of how life is actually lived, but must teach the beholder how it ought to be lived. Aristotelian formalism dictated that comedy should not portray anyone so

1. Discorso di Jason de Nores intorno a quei principii cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia, la tragedia, et il poema heroico ricevono dalla philosophia morale, ... In Padova, Appresso Paulo Meieto 1587, fol. 42 verso.
2. De Nores, op.cit., fol. 30 verso.
bad that they merited punishment rather than joy at the end, for if they were left unpunished the comedy was immoral, and if they were punished the comedy lost its form and became inchoate. These views, scarcely more Philistine than Tolstoy's, caused great controversy, like the paper war that De Nores conducted with Guarini over the concept of the pastoral tragicomedy, which De Nores rejected both because it was tragicomedy, an inchoate notion, and because, being pastoral, it had no application to the life of the citizen. In fact the exchanges are tedious, and the interesting issues founder in a welter of argumentum ad hominem. The debate was famous enough to have reached English ears, even if Sidney, Spenser and Sir Edwin Sandys had not studied in Northern Italy. 1

Lucentio's account of his projected studies would have met with De Nores's approval, and in leaving the minor Aristotelian school of Pisa to plunge himself into the deeper matters broached in Padua, he is following the lead of many young Italian scholars, who wished to follow the stream of thought initiated in the work of Vincenzo Maggi, Francesco Piccolomini, il Genova and Robertello in the thirties, continued by the brothers Tomitano, Faustino Summo, Giacomo Zabarella, Giovanni Fasolo, and culminating in Riccoboni's Poetica in 1584.

Lucentio's unbelievable serious-mindedness is short-lived, for the words are still resounding when Baptista Minola and his two daughters cross the stage. Lucentio is instantly smitten by Bianca, or rather, by

her silence, which he interprets as "Maid's mild behaviour and sobriety" (I. i. 71). The only utterance she makes he finds worthy of Minerva, the goddess of warlike fortitude who "had a manly countenance and fierce, and glittering and flaming eyes". The justification for such a parallel is so slight, that the line may well have provoked a laugh. The second stage in his rake's progress is accomplished when he allows himself to be overcome by love-in-idleness, the flower that sprang from the blood of heedless Adonis, whose drops betwitch the lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream. The humanists, who for the most part preferred to fly the disease of love, believed quite seriously that fancy invaded the idle mind, and corroded its tranquility irrevocably. Erasmus develops Diogenes's view, with characteristic acidity.

... this pangue or guierie of loue dooth especially aboue al others, inuade and possesse suche persones as been altogether drowned in idleness. And so cometh it to passe that whyle thei geuen theimselfes wholly to idleness, thei stumble on a thynge filleth their handes as full of coubrous busynesse, as thei are hable to awaye withall, and yet in the same tyme the defuill of the one chare of good werke thei dooen.

1. Fraunce, The third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch, op. cit., fol. 40 recto, Cf. The Fountain of Ancient Fiction, wherein is lively depictured the Images and Statues of the gods of the Ancients, with their proper and particular expositions. Done out of Italian into English, by Richard Linche Gent. London Printed by Adam Islip. 1599. "Minerva" passim, Sig. S1 verso, ff.

2. Erasmus Apophthegmes op. cit., fol. 117 verso.
So Lucentio finds himself in the commonplace situation of Euphues, lost to learning through the pernicious power of love. He sees himself, again laughably, as Dido confiding in Anna, at assuming whose person Tranio may be fairly allowed a double take. The treatment is almost absurdly formal: Lucentio announces the absolute necessity of his having Bianca,

Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio,
If I achieve not this young modest girl. (I.1.157-8)

Tranio accentuates the formalised nature of the situation with an inappropriate maxim culled from Lyly's Grammar. Lucentio the scholar absurdly congratulates Tranio on the soundness of his counsel and his schoolbook Latin, and reveals that all his high-flown dedication is dissipated. He unconsciously acknowledges the metamorphosis in the next literary parallel that he finds for himself.

O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face,
Such as the daughter of Agenor had,
That made great Jove humble him to her hand,
When with his knees he kissed the Cretan strand.
(I.1.169-72)

Golding moralises all the metamorphoses of the gods as analogues of our fall from grace into bestiality, as "Jove became a Bull ... for his trull". ¹ This particular example is very easily moralised in this way, for example:

Les anciens ... lesquels metamorphosans Jupiter en Taureau, pour contenter ses amoureuses flames, ...

Lucentio is unconscious of the genuine applicability of his image to his situation: urged on by Tranio he plans his metamorphosis; abandoning his gentlemanly status to his servant, he will become a slave to serve Bianca. Tranio's words upon accepting his odd commission strike a disquieting note.

I am content to be Lucentio,
Because so well I love Lucentio.  (I.i.218-9)

If Lucentio loved himself a little better he would not be so ready to abandon his ambitions and relinquish his social status and responsibilities to court a lass he has glimpsed across the piazza. The situation is thoroughly conventional, but our responses to it have been controlled by the tone of the writing and an imaginative context which prevents us from identifying with Lucentio, whose motivation is so exaggeratedly speedy and simple. In I Suppositi Ariosto criticises Dulipo's masquerade, and allows him a considerable measure of suffering but this responsibility on the part of the author does not survive as long as the character of the sciocco giovane, who is later permitted to embroil himself and cause needless suffering to all the other dramatis personae without any hint of reprobation. Tranio is fully developed as the cunning servant, for the

starring role in their masquerade is his, and all that remain to make up the Italianate recipe are the magnifico and the doctor. Wentersdorff’s arguments for the single authorship of both plots on the grounds of the image patterns common to both are persuasive: the difficulty of reconciling the generally inferior quality of the writing of the Lucentio plot disappears if we assume that Shakespeare is adopting a literary, dignified style for the sub-plot, to contrast it more significantly with the native vigour of the main-plot.

In order to secure the loyalty of Biondello, Lucentio explains his masquerade by a self-calumny,

For in a quarrel since I came ashore
I kill’d a man and fear I was descried. (I. i. 233-4)

and so their masquerade begins to entail its own consequences.

The amorous old man makes his appearance in Act I, Scene ii. He is quite accurately described by Shakespeare as a pantaloon, and is not, in fact, the doctor of Ariosto’s play. The Pantaloon is the mask of the magnifico, Venetian, grave, perhaps a little ridiculous in dress and language. His function is to advise, reprehend, command and persuade. His weak points are amorousness and avarice. The character of the doctor is not clearly defined in Ariosto’s play, having little other defining


characteristic than senility; perhaps Shakespeare is working from some
popularised version of the play in which the character has crystallised to
that of the magnifico. At all events it is difficult to understand how Miss
Lea can have made the statement that Gremio "is imported into The
Taming of the Shrew from the plot of the Supposes", when Gascoigne
does not change the type of the Doctor, the traditional enemy of the
Magnifico. The type of the Bolognese Doctor can be found in the Pedant
who plays the feigned father, designated by Ariosto as simply the "Sanese".  
Shakespeare's alterations make the sub-plot more than ever representative
of the comedy that developed out of the Ariostan tradition, the decadent
comedy against which Castelvetro was already reacting in 1576.  
Luigi Pasqualigo rejects the whole of the commedia nuova in these terms:

Hora s' alcun di uoi s'e ridotto con opinione di ridere sperando di udere rappresentare la semplicità d'un vecchio o vero antico Venetiano (i. e. a Pantaloon), le sciocchezze d'un facchino, cuore le dishonesta d'un parasito, & l'immonditie d'un ebro, cose a mio giudicio vergognose da rappresentarsi a nobili spiriti, perche questa Comedia diversa quasi da tutte le altre, e composta in una sola lingua, & e assai lunga ...

Varchi explains the decadence of contemporary Italian comedy
through a cleaving to the example of Plautus instead of Terence, from

   VI, p. 405.
2. See the epigraph to this chapter, taken from Poetica d'Aristotele
   vulgarizzata et sposta per Lodovico Castelvetro. Riaduta, &
   ammendata secondo l'originale, & la mente dell'autore ...
   Stampata in Basilea ad instanza di Pietro de Sedabonis ...
   M D LXXVI, p. 61.
3. Luigi Pasqualigo, Il Fedele, op. cit., Sig. A5 recto.
4. La Suocera, Commedia di M. Benedetto Varchi ... In Firenze
   Appresso Bartolomeo Sermartelli. MDLXIX, dedicatory address
   to Cosimo de' Medici, Sig. Ali verso.
whose *Eunuchus* and Captivi Ariosto's play was originally derived.

The amorous old man and the disguised servant confront each other in the next scene but Lucentio's dark purpose in having Tranio present himself as a suitor for Bianca's hand does not become clear until he has to outbid the Pantaloon in Baptista's desperate mart. With equal justification Tranio taunts Gremio with his age, and Gremio Tranio with his youth. Baptista pays no attention to the substance of this debate, revealing enough in itself, and there is great irony in his non sequitur.

'Tis deeds must win the prize; and he, of both,
That can assure my daughter greatest dower
Shall have my Bianca's love. (II.1.336-8)

What Baptista takes for deeds is merely the assurance of a larger dowry. Gremio describes his house in fantastic terms, until it seems the tent of the Grand Cham, but the closing lines of his vaunt are weighty in implication.

Myself am struck in years, I must confess;
And if I die to-morrow, this is hers,
If whilst I live she will be only mine. (II.1.354-6)

Gremio must have stood before his audience already horned, for the marriage of May and December leads to whoredom and misery. Tranio's coarser humour underlines the suggestion.

That "only" came well in. (II.1.357)

Tranio triples all Gremio's offers, especially by the mention of a jointure, usually one-third of the husband's whole estate, which exceeds Gremio's whole land revenue. Likewise he triples the argosy, and throws
in assorted smaller craft. The contest being conducted in purely mercenary terms he wins hands down, except that Baptista is too shrewd a tradesman to forgo an assurance from the real holder of this wealth, Lucentio's father. Until this point Shakespeare has been inventing upon the scheme of I Suppositi: it is at this point in the intrigue that Ariosto's play actually begins. As we know, Baptista has made a mistake, abandoning the man whose honour and condition he knows for a stranger whose claims are in fact preposterous, as Gremio points out (II.1.394–6).

In fact Baptista commits the paradigm mistake outlined by Barclay in The Ship of Fools:

If that a man of hye or lowe degree,
Would spouse his daughter vnto a straunge man,
He nought enquireth of his honestie,
Of his behaour, nor if he nurtour can:
But if he be riche in landes and good, then
He shall be prayed his daughter for to haue,
Though he be but a bondeman or a knaue.

Tranio is both a bond man and a knave. It is he who decided the next development in the intrigue,

I see no reason but supposed Lucentio
Must get a father, call'd — supposed Vincentio.

(II.1.401–2)

and off he goes, congratulating himself upon a witty reversal of the natural order.

The first lines of Act III bring us once more into the atmosphere of Lucentio's first entrance, as the feigned tutors wrangle about the merits of their respective disciplines. The serious points of the function of music as a mirror of celestial harmony, and the priority of actual instruction and mental discipline to such delight, ironically recall the aesthetic problems nobly gestured to by heart-whole Lucentio. The two threads of renaissance didacticism are here summarised. On the one hand it was claimed that the mere contemplation of harmonious structures ennobled the soul, the principle of the construction of the fabulous edifices of the Hypnerotomachia, and on the other hand, the more rigorous didacticists would have had all literature instructive and exemplary, as a primary consideration. Lucentio's reference to intellectual discipline chimes from him mechanically, and cannot be brought to bear upon Bianca's unregenerate spirit, for she acts upon Tranio's principle, learning her lessons as she pleases herself. Hortensio's fury at her encouragement of the Pedant's advances doubtless distorts the view that he takes of her, but her pertness in disposing of him (III.1.80-1) provides some justification for his ascription to her of the attributes hitherto applied to Kate.

Yet if thy thoughts, Bianca, be so humble,
To cast thy wandering eyes on every stale,
Seize thee that list: if once I find thee ranging,
Hortensio will be quit with thee by changing. (III.1.89-92)

Lucentio is the lure, disguised, claiming wealth and gentility (for his disguise is not adopted like Aurelius's in A Shrew to test his beloved's disinterestedness) and Bianca is stooping to it, exactly as her father
greedily favours the disguised serving-man, placing him beside Bianca, in
the place of the bride and groom, at Kate's wedding feast. Hortensio's
reaction to his disappointment is to make another mistake, which may
have grave consequences,

I will be married to a wealthy widow,
Ere three days pass, which hath as long loved me
As I have loved this proud disdainful haggard . . .

(III. i. 37-9)

The rich wife is more likely to bully her husband than any other,
especially if she is advanced in years. The unfortunate lady who was
lapped in a morell's skin used to taunt her husband -

A rag on thine (arse) thou shouldest not have,
Excepte my friendes had geuen it thee;
Therefore I tell thee well, thou drunken knaue,
That arte not he that shall rule me.

and Basille warned those who sought wealthy wives that they are
likely to be "ladylyke and hygh in the ymnestep". Tranio takes it for
granted that Hortensio will have a shrew on his hands (IV. ii. 50-8).

The Supposes material develops further with the representation on
the stage of the reported encounter with the man who is to play Lucentio's
father, not a Sienese this time, but a Mantuan, and a Pedant. He plays
his part with quiet dignity, so that the uneasiness of the situation is
heightened. Baptista is blundering in the dark, revealing how little he

1. A merry jest of a Shrewde and curste Wyfe lapped in Morelles Skin
   (Hazlitt, Remains of Early Popular Poetry of England, Vol. IV,
   p. 208.

2. Theodore Basille, the golden boke of christen matrimonye, op. cit.,
   Sig. Bii verso.
understands and how much he is deceived by all about him.

Right true it is, your son Lucentio here
Both love my daughter, and she loveth him,
Or both dissemble deeply their affections.  (IV. iv. 39-41)

Tranio and Bianca are both dissemblers: they may even mock
Baptista by exchanging mock glances and feigned caresses of love. Now
that the prize is within his grasp, Baptista will make all sure, so the
clandestine marriage is planned, without announcing the banns, so that
Gremio cannot object. Only the fact that there has been an even greater
deception, so that Bianca will not in fact marry the disguised servant,
saves Baptista from disgrace. Tranio's comment has a strange irony.

The worst is this, that at so slender warning,
You are like to have a thin and slender pittance.  (IV. iv. 59-60)

Biondello's extraordinary insolence with his disguised master
crystallises the criticism implicit in the scene. He forces Lucentio to
contemplate the matter of his degradation.

Baptista is safe, talking with the deceitful father
of a deceiving son ...  (IV. iv. 81-2)

... they are busied about a counterfeit assurance:
take you assurance of her, cum privilegio ad
imprezendum solem: to the church! take the priest,
clerk and some sufficient honest witnesses.
(IV. iv. 90-4)

His vulgar pun probably has the opposite effect of that indicated by
its words, in view of the extent to which printing monopolies were
respected, and Lucentio, left interrogating Biondello monosyllabically is
made to look pretty foolish. Biondello's contemptuous parallel with the girl who went into the garden for parsley "to stuff a rabbit" and returned married does not draw a response, and he goes off, referring to Bianca as Lucentio's appendix, a discourtesy which he does not even think to reprehend. His last couplet hardly alters the impression he has created, of bewilderment and malleability.

When the real Vincentio is the subject of Kate's mad mistaking on the public road, following immediately upon the scene in which his son cuts such a sorry figure, one feels an immediate anxiety for him. In case we have forgotten what his real social significance is, Kate has been forced to define it; he is a "reverend father", and she and Petruchio respectfully acknowledge their relationship to him. To sharpen the irony which deepens in the following scenes, they comment happily upon the joy of seeing his honest son, whom they believe of course, to be the false Lucentio played by Tranio. The next act places us once more on the scene of the clapped-up wedding, with the insolent Biondello, who is defying his master's instructions, shepherding the spouses to the church, into which Petruchio and Katharine bring the bewildered old man. In the Supposes Philogano builds up the picture of a father's love by the long description of the long and difficult voyage he has made from Sicily, and the letters from Erostrato refusing to come home because he has been too engrossed in his studies: Vincentio's joy and promises of a merry-making have the same effect. The difference is that when Philogano insults the Sieneese, and upbraids Dulipo, the culprits simply return insults,
Shakespeare exploits the situation much more disturbingly, for Petruchio turns upon Vincentio with

*Why, how now, gentleman! why, this is flat knavery to take upon you another man's name. (V.1.55-6)*

and the fact that he is saying it to the wrong man shows just how knavish an act it is. Biondello's cool denial of ever having seen his master puts Vincentio in the position of Jenkyn Carewaille. Kate and Petruchio withdraw from him to observe the way that matters fall out, as he beats Biondello. Surrounded by Tranio, Baptista, the Pedant and the servants, the stranger is really threatened. When he rages at Tranio's finery, Tranio takes advantage of the incomprehensibility of his outcries to call him mad. The forces of this feigning society close menacingly around him, as we learn to our horror, that this is Tranio's gratitude to the man who brought him up. This is the climax of the action engineered by Tranio; he is a specifically and deliberately Italian type, the conspiring, servile, dishonest servant out of whom the Zanne developed, represented perhaps in English by Jack Juggler. He contrasts neatly with the native English fool, Grumio, who is the common man, for he has a fertile imagination and no sense of responsibility or scruple: he must be able to bear the weight of blame that Vincentio will put upon him which no Grumio or Dromio or Launce could possibly do. The disruptive potential of such a character is summed up in Vincentio's agonised cry that his son has been murdered. With appalling audacity Tranio, secure in his adopted character, calls the officers to take the old
man to prison. Not even Gremio can summon up the courage to deny the
false Lucentio, and nothing remains to forestall disaster except the
shamefaced entrance of Lucentio. Fatherly feeling causes the deflection
of Vincentio's wrath to Tranio, but the audience feels that Lucentio is
lucky to be let off so lightly, for the element of blame persists, as the
fathers withdraw, the servants having fled, to "sound the depth of this
knavery" (V. ii. 135). In the violence and confusion of a powerful scene,
Lucentio's explanation,

Love wrought these miracles. (V. ii. 121)

must sound particularly feeble. All these mixed feelings are
suddenly rushed off the stage and out of sight, so that Petruchio and Kate
can exchange their first kiss, so that both plots are brought to their merry
end, and we are prepared for the dramatic epilogue in which they will be
specifically evaluated. We have seen enough of Lucentio to identify him
with Ingeleid's Disobedient Child, the anglicised version of Textor's
Juvenis. Like Lucentio he travelled to a strange town to study, but was
distracted by the charms of a lady whom he married "incontinent"; his
servants discuss the matter hardheadedly:

Mancooke. I thinke she be a shrew, I tall thee playnely,
        And full of debate, malyce and stryfe . . .

Maydecooke. What, though she be now so neate and so nyce,
        And speaketh as gentle as ever I hearde:
        Yet yongmen, which be both wyttie and wyse,
        Such lookes, and such wordes, shulde not regarde. 1

Their fears are justified, and the rash yong man lives to regret

1. A pretie and mery new Enterlude: called the Disobedient Child.
   Compiled by Thomas Ingeleid ... Imprinted at London ... by
   Thomas Colwell, Sig. C2 recto.
his precipitate match, like the "new maried student that played fast or lose" in Tottel's Miscellany:

A Student at his boke so plast:
That welth he might have womne,
From boke to wife did flete in hast,
From wealth to wo to rumne.
Now, who hath played a feater cast,
Since jugling first begunne?
In knitting of himself so fast, 1
Him selfe he hath vn donne.

Gascoigne's *Glass of Government* makes much the same point at much greater length: Shakespeare's moralism is probably as strenuous, but his artistry is greater: we come to appreciate Lucentio's mistake in a fashion as subtle in its own way as the plight of Lydgate in *Middlemarch*.

Shakespeare's use of the *Supposes* material is far from extensive and not at all parasitic. The character of Bianca cannot be explained by reference to Gascoigne or even to Ariosto: the young man of the *Supposes* is not represented in a wooing situation, nor is he married before the arrival of his father. His dilemma is simply that he has pretended to be a servant in order to seduce Polinesta, and now, with her projected marriage to the doctor, the matter is sure to come out. To reveal the situation is to risk death and disgrace and to stay silent to lose Polinesta forever. Ariosto's is a beautifully classical treatment of the young man's efforts to extricate himself from this scrape, when Polinesta's condition is revealed, he is put in prison and his father is denied by his servants,

1. *Songes and sonettes*, op. cit., fol. 64.
until Cleandro acts for him, and all ends well. Ariosto does criticise his hero's imprudence, and allows considerable anxiety to creep in, but he is not interested in the relationship of the two lovers as any more than a fait accompli, given at the beginning of the of the play. If, as C. C. Seronsky maintains, "supposes" are to be seen as the unifying theme in Shakespeare's play, it is well to distinguish that they be Ariosto's suppositi rather than Gascoigne's pedestrian understanding of the term, for he obligingly marks out all the places in the play where a mistake occurs in a character's knowledge of the facts. Ariosto is concerned with something much more profound, for self-deception and mistaking one's role in society play the principal roles.

Castelvetro's definition of inganni as the second manner of writing comedies, is itself derived from Ariosto, and includes the situations described by him as suppositi. Castelvetro is speaking of the principles of composing comedies however, and not the theme or subject matter: to make of supposings a theme for a comedy would seem to be a fairly navel-regarding activity unless they were collocated to some wider theme: much Italian comedy is of course navel-regarding in just this way, doing nothing but working a symmetrical series of


2. Vide the Prologues to both prose and verse versions of the play.

3. Castelvetro op. cit., p. 93.
mistakings into a pleasing and harmonious whole; but Shakespeare's
genius is too genuinely committed to permit such aestheticism.

Certainly Mr. Seronsky is right in considering that the Ariostan
Suppositi had deepened Shakespeare's treatment of the shrew theme,
but that is tantamount to saying that the comedy is more competent and
more conscious of its literary context. Cinzio was aware of the
reactionary nature of his claim when in 1553 he wrote that

hoggidi le lodeuoli (comedies) sono di una sola
maniera, & sono quelle, che imitano quelle
dell'Ariosto. 1

As influences on structure Ariosto's comedies are still alive, but
the intelligence that marks his treatment of the issues raised by his
play is not so easily inherited. Castelvetro and Varchi would both have
agreed that the Lucentio plot was like the decadent literary comedy of
which Varchi complained:

... la Commedia venne tanto a mutarsi da se stessa
a poco a poco, e diventare ogni altra cosa, che
Commedia, che le più disoneste, e le più inutili,
anzi dannose composizioni, che siano hoggi nella
lingua nostra sono le Commedie: ... 2

In adapting the Supposes material, Shakespeare reveals that he
understands the issues involved in the original, and how the tradition has
declined, and what attitude, as a writer of comedies, he takes to the
fashionable form as it exists in his time, all at once. It is not

1. Discorsi di M. Giovanbattista Giraldi Cinthio ... intorno al
comporre de i Romanzi, delle Commedie, e delle Tragedie ... In
Vinegia appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari et Fratelli, MDLIUII, p.219.
2. Varchi, Le Suocera,op.cit., Sig. Aij verso.
surprising then that certain critics have felt the writing of this section to be inferior, because Lucentio speaks the language of artifice, an artifice of which Shakespeare disapproves, and therefore the verse does not operate to involve us in the action, but permits detachment and criticism, without being patronising or wearisome. 1 From the injurious masquerade directed by Lucentio and Tranio, we must now turn to the manipulation of illusion for nobler ends by Petruchio.

PETRUCHIO

Lucentio's grandiose reference to the rigorous aesthetic developed by the Studio di Padova is ironically denied by the action in which he chooses to take part, but Petruchio's comedy satisfies their sternest wish.

Even if De Nores had not specifically included the governing of wives among the special topics of comedy, the most cursory study of Aristotle's Politica makes it clear that the nucleus of society is the husband and wife relationship which precedes all others, and upon which all others depend. Torquato Tasso referred specifically to marriage as the first society in his panegyric to marriage, in answer to his brother's diatribe against it,

Thou first didst bring mankind to dwell in a house, enclosing him within a wall, causing him to build

Citties and Townes to inhabit in, where before men lived like saugade beasts in the woods and desarts, dispersed one from another.  

It constitutes the first society in another sense as well, for all other social duties have this as their headspring. The relationship of man and wife is paralleled with that of the soul and the body, of the head and the members, of reason and the passions, and of Christ and his church. Petrarch uses the parallel between the soul and the body and marriage when he calls the soul "L'errante mia consorte" as Tasso points out; he continues

It is then a vertue in a woman, to know howe to honor and obey her husband, not as a Servant doth his Maister, or the bodye the mind, but ciuilly and in such sort, as we see the Cittizens in wel governed Citties obey the Lawes, and reverence their Magistrates, or so as in our soules, wherein as wel the well dysposed powers as the orders of the Cittizens within their Citties, compell affections to be subject vnto reason: ...

1. Tasso, Of Marriage and Wiving, op. cit., Sig. K3 recto.
2. Cf. Vitis Palatina, op. cit., pp.4-5: Man and wife are primum par, fundamentum parium, the first original match of all others. All other couples and paires, as father and sonne, maister and servant, king & subject come out of this paire.
3. The householders Philosophie... First written in Italian by that excellent Oratour and Poet Signior Torquato Tasso, and now translated by T.K. ... At London Printed by J.C. for Thomas Hacket, ... MD.LXXXVIII, fol. 10 verso.
Smith in his *Commonwealth* sees marriage as a microcosm of the state. Knox refers repeatedly to the parallel of the soul and body in the *First Blast of the Trumpet*, and Hermann of Cologne exhorts the husband to be "an heade, and sauiour to the wyfe, as Christe is the heade, and the sauioure of the congregacion", while the wife must be subject to the husband "as the flesh is vnto the spirite". The comparison with the relation of the head and members naturally involves the analogy of the relationship of Christ with his church, and the interpretation can be traced widely, for example, in Carr's *Godly Form of Household Government*. It is this fundamental relationship which will be clarified by the action of Petruchio's comedy, which fulfils the most rigorous canons ever devised for creative writing, in a play so unassuming and lusty, that even the editors of the New Cambridge edition, who are intelligent and honorable men, could say, "it is of its nature

---


2. Vide e.g. Fol. 20 verso of the edition of 1558.

3. A simple and religious consultation of vs Herman ... Archebishop of Colone ... Imprinted in 1547. I.D., Sig. II i verso of, II iv verso of, A briefe and plaine declaration of the duety of married folkes ... by Hermon Archbishop of Colaine ... newly translated into the English tongue by Haunce Dekin (Col; : Imprinted at London by I. C. for H.S.), Sig. Av recto.

rough, crierd; part of the fun at those fairs at which honest rustics won
prizes by grinning through horse-collars". 1

In The Taming of a Shrew, the coming of Ferando is prepared for
as Polidor and Aurelius decide that they need a decoy for the eldest to
get at the younger. This device is not altogether satisfactory for it robs
Ferando of the initiative, and when he states his intention of wooing
Katherine because Alfonso has offered him 6,000 crowns, the effect is
to diminish his stature and cloud his integrity. Petruchio bursts on the
scene in a curiously tumultuous squabble with his man. Moreover, we
see at once that Petruchio, who has expressed himself ambiguously will
not explain what should by other criteria be obvious. It is a recognised
comic technique, and it also is revealing of his character as an educator.

When Hortensio appears Petruchio has no difficulty in changing his
demeanour. Gremio’s explanation of the situation if it can be called
such reveals that Petruchio is no stripling, and that he is not to be trifled
with. Moreover, a principle has been stated:

... I should knock you first,
And then I know after who comes by the worst.
(I. ii. 13–4)

Would to God I had well-knocked at first,
Then had not Grumio come by the worst.
(I. ii. 34–5)

As an old soldier, Petruchio knows very well that the attacker has
a moral advantage over the defender. His next words reveal him as a

---

1. The Works of Shakespeare edited for the Syndics of the Cambridge
University Press by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch and John Dover
Wilson: The Taming of the Shrew (Cambridge, 1928) Introduction,
p. xvi.
man arrived at the normal age and condition to take a wife. He is in full possession of his legal powers, regulates his own income and expenditure, and his house stands in need of a mistress. Thirty-two years of age will place him squarely on the norm discerned by Mr. Laslett from parish register statistics, and, more relevantly perhaps, since the statistics for the Tudor period are by and large lacking, identify him as the mature man, fit to marry, of the domestic theorists of the sixteenth century. Aristotle had defined the ideal age of the husband as thirty-five, and of his wife, eighteen, so that they would coincide in the greatest period of their adult vigour for childbearing. Piccolomini, while acknowledging thirty-five to forty-nine as the age of maturity, which neither is callow and hasty like youth, or rigid and declining in vigour like age, accepts thirty as the proper age for his young friend to marry, so that he shall have the vigour and sagacity to educate his growing sons. \(^1\) Primaudaye is of the same opinion, on the ground of "the shortnes of mans daies", \(^2\) and Bacon expresses the principle more simply, when he claims that the husband must be able to support his wife independently of his family and friends. \(^3\)

Hortensio's offer of a rich, ill-favoured wife is tempered by the fact that we have already seen her, and know she is not ugly, so the rallying
tone of the next interchange is set. Hortensio is trying Petruchio to see how serious his intention of wiving is, and Petruchio in turn is making it very clear that he does not want to make love, but to find a wife. He overstates his case deliberately, so that the irrelevancies that audiences expect on the stage if not in real life are eliminated. He expects, not to fall in love, but to find a woman whom he can love. His wife is to be his equal in wealth and social status, in obedience to the universal counsel,

But especially let him beware that intendeth to marrie, that these things concurre and meete together, namely, that in theyr states there be an equallitie, for where there is no equallitie of condition, there can be no quietnesse of life...  

"... a man should take a wife neither richer nor poorer then himselfe" said Guazzo, and Petruchio, despite his own mock-cynical insistence upon Kate's money, is doing just that. He does not expect blissful transports, but the solid advantages that marriage will confer upon a man of his age and social standing. He will be one of the "best binders in the hedge of the Commonwealth" for he has understood Fuller's terse warning,

Deceive not thy self by overexpecting happinesse In the married estate.  

---

1. Averall, A Dyall for dainty Darlings, op. cit., Sig. Fii verso.  
2. The ciuile Conversacion of M. Stephen Guazzo, written first in Italian, divided into foure booke, the first three translated out of French by G. pettie... the fourth... now translated out of Italian into English by Barth. Young;... Imprinted at London by Thomas East. 1586, fol. 122 verso.  
Grumio, in taking Petruchio's position literally as is his wont, brings in the vulgar but universal parallel of the wife and the horse, which may be found in Aristotle, Socrates, Xenophon, Plutarch and Cato. In the older play, Kate is specifically compared to the Thracian horse; Shakespeare now keeps the image clear of any direct application to Kate except in the use of verbs like "curbed" and "bridled", but it is strongly present in the imaginative background, especially in the great ikon of Petruchio on his diseased horse, which this speech of Grumio's prepares for. The image is used in many ways in Renaissance iconography, but perhaps the applicable one for Petruchio's case is that of the unbridled horse of love, which is illustrated in the Hypnerotomachia, and is probably derived from that of Barberini's Documenti d'Amore. The image is explained and justified at length in Caracciolo's La Gloria del Cavallo. In the Induction, the lord unthinkingly placed horse and hounds before wife; Grumio puts Kate on a level with a horse, and Petruchio significantly advances her. As Lodovico Dolce sharply remarked, men cared more to understand their horses than their women summarising Sir Thomas More's argument in the Utopia. Grumio's description of

1. Documenti d' amore di M. Francesco Barberino. (Col.: In Roma Nella Stamperia di Vitale Mascardi. MDCXL), Fig. facing p. 356.  
2. La gloria del cavallo opera dell' Illustris Pasquale Caracciolo ... In Vinegia appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari MDLXVI, pp. 50 ff.  
3. De gli ammaestramenti pregiatissimi, Che appartengono alla Educazione, & honoreole, e virtuosa vita virginalie, maritale e vedovile Libri Tre ... di Lodovico Dolce Vinitalio ... In Vinegia appresso Barezzo Barezzi. MDXXII, p. 2.  
4. A frutefull pleasaunt, & wittie worke, of the best state of a publique weale, and of the newe vie, called Vtopia: ... by Sir Thomas More ... and translated into Englishe by Raphe Robinson ... Imprinted at London, by Abraham Vele, ... (1556), fol. 23 -94.
Petruchio's intention in terms of taking an "old trot, a puppet or an aglet baby" makes it clear that he would no more take such to wife than buy fifty-two diseased horses, and finally eliminates the sordid suggestions of greed attributed to Petruchio. Kate has wealth enough, is young and beauteous, and her breeding known to Petruchio as equal to his own. When Hortensio who would not wed Katharine for a mine of gold, flings himself into the arms of a wealthy widow, we have the clearest example of one who misunderstood Petruchio's mode of proceeding. Once he has established her suitability, Petruchio is as importunate as any lover in his desire to confront the maid, not only as future husband, but also as wife-tamer, as Grumio gives us to understand, with peculiar notions of education by rope-tricks, or rhetoric. Grumio, anticipating Petruchio's action with glee, pauses for an acid comment on the action of the sub-plot.

Here's no knavery! See, to beguile the old folks
How the young folks lay their heads together.
(I.i.139-140)

From the first Petruchio refuses to take Kate's brawling seriously. When other men pale before her ineffectual rages, Petruchio confidently expects to be able to ignore them: in describing them in terms of all the furies of nature, he suggests by contrast the real frailty of the single woman, and makes it clear that the battleground is his element. He speaks of her as of a worthy opponent whom he wishes to grapple with himself.

Sir, sir, the first's for me; let her go by. (I.i.255)
Our first glimpse of Petruchio's methods is given us when he meets Baptista: by specifically describing Kate as fair and virtuous, he pretends that what should be the case is the case, preserving Baptista's and Kate's honour and not demeaning himself. It is mean of Baptista to deny what he says, but Baptista thinks he is being mocked; instead Petruchio is obeying the rule of the psalmist quoted by Carr:

They that seeke after my life, lay snares, and they that go about to do me still, talke wicked thinges, and imagine deceit continually: But I as a deafe man, heard not and am a dumbe man, which openeth not his mouth. Thus I am as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reprooches. 1

This is how Carr thought that the husband should maintain his wife's honour, which is, as De la Primadaye argues, a part of his own honour. The contrast with Baptista's indignity in this exchange does Petruchio's work for him. As well, the attribution to Kate of characteristics which the world is convinced that she does not have, may give her new heart to claim them, to strive for them, to escape from the expectations and interpretations of others to play a freer and juster role. Already Petruchio presents himself to Kate's father as her ally, while he does not scruple to make it clear that he has washed his hands of her. The odd thing about Petruchio's asking about Kate's dowry, which is a necessary formality, is not that he should ask for it, but that Baptista, who is later so greedy in arranging Bianca's match, does not think to ask what surety Petruchio is offering on his part. Kate's fractiousness has succeeded in rendering her unsaleable. What Petruchio

offers is extraordinarily generous, for it was normal to give the widow the use of one-third of her husband’s lands, for use until her death or remarriage. Other arrangements, such as leaving the whole estate in the hands of the widow could be made in the church-porch by special covenant. 

Petruchio makes clear by this that he is prepared to repose the greatest trust in his wife. Although Kate has not been auctioned off like Bianca, her jointure is actually greater than her sister’s.

The formalities dealt with Petruchio explains his attraction to such a match, in terms of the similarity of their natures, another necessary ground for marriage.

Moreover, let there be a lykenesse in theyr manners, and a unittie in theyr mindes, least if there affections be variable, they become seperable: for where there is no likenesse in manners, there can be no soundnesse in freendshippe: ...

In Petruchio’s words, there is also suggested a wonderful kind of sexual compatibility:

I am as preremptory as she proud-minded;
And where two raging fires mett together
They do consume the thing that feeds their fury.

(II. i. 132-4)

1. Vide the section on tenant in dower in Lytelton’s Tenures and the chapter in Smith’s Commonwealth, op. cit., pp. 130 ff. “Of wiuues and marriages”.

2. Averell, A Dyall for dainty Darlings, op. cit., Sig. Fiii verso.
On the one hand he stresses the basic similarity between them, and on the other the naturalness of their commerce, however turbulent. In the paean to the marriage of James I's daughter and the Palatine, the Bishop of London explained every marital failure as failure to observe the principle of similitudo mater amoris.

And the whole infelicity of marriage for the most part, that illade of evils which accompanyeth some matches, is when this sicut is wanting, when men choose not similis their likes, when matches are made of such as match not; ...

This similarity does not merely consist in that of estate and age, but approaches a notion of psychological compatibility. Petruchio, in distinguishing himself from the babes that woo, implies that he knows his own needs, and that only a Kate will satisfy them. The clash between them will be as natural as the visitation of the winds among the mountains. When he remarks that Kate will make a better soldier than a musician, Hortensio unwittingly underlines the similarity of temperament between them, and we are not surprised when Petruchio carols with anticipatory glee at this manifestation of his adversary's mettle. Alone, he explains his policy to the audience: he will act towards Kate as if she were as he would have her be, while baffling her and forcing her to new shifts. He will treat her well when she patently does not deserve it, so that the violent resentment that poisons her relationships may dissipate in wonderment and, eventually, trust. When they meet in hand to hand combat, Kate is instantly at a loss, baffled by the use of the affectionate and domestic diminutive of her name, and

the curious mixture of flattering and unflattering epithets he chooses to apply, so that her resentment must be as incoherent as his offence. She persists in trying to reverse the natural order, so that Petruchio becomes her horse, and she may saddle and bridle him, but Petruchio insists upon the imagery, and so Kate finds herself cornered in embarrassing equivocations, which underline her sexual role. She reacts with childish violence, with blows and insults, but bit by bit, Petruchio gains the upper hand. She tries to sneer, implying that he has cut a sorry figure in what she recognises is a hand-to-hand encounter of a deeply personal and sexual kind,

No cock of mine; you crow too like a craven. (II. i. 226)

When she attempts to withdraw he detains her with the speech that we have been waiting for, in which he denies that she has comported herself in this offensive way, and describes her as if she had acted in a seemly fashion. In his little song of praise, rejecting all the things that report actually did say of her, he includes one that is never said, so that Kate must pause to look at herself with new eyes.

Why does the world report that Kate doth limp? O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel-twig Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue As hazel-nuts and sweeter than the kernels. (II. i. 247-50)

Kate may not take kindly to being given the attributes of a heroine so vulgar as the nut-brown maid, but the Renaissance physionomists could have added at once, that a brown complexion showed the humours held in
the healthiest balance. 1

The thriftilles thred which pampered beauty spinnes,
In thraldom binds the foolish gazing eyes: ...

But lo, when eld in toothlesse mouth appeares,
And whoary heares in stead of beauties blaze:
The Had I wist, doth teach repenting yearaes,
The tlickle tracke of craftie Cupides maze.
Twixt faire and foule therefore, twist great and small,
A louely nutbrowne face is best of all. 2

Like a high-mettled colt, Kate is persuaded to walk for Petruchio,
for despite her verbal refusal, it is clear from Petruchio's words that she
accedes to his request. He compliments her fierce virginity by ascribing
it to Diane, the wild and unkempt, fleeing the society of men but seeking
to emulate them by becoming a huntress, and suggests that it is a matter
of her choice. She is disarmed, and Petruchio seizes his advantage to
explain to Kate what he wants of her. It is not surprising that she listens
without protest. From the beginning her attitude has been comprehensible
as a rebellion, against being sold, being taught to simper and wheedle, and
against being offered as a consolation prize to one of Bianca's suitors.

Her antagonism towards Bianca is also easily understandable, if not
forgivable. It is clear that Gremio is rather overstating the case to call
her a fiend of hell, but he shows more discrimination when he hints that it
is a matter of finding "a fit man to teach her that wherein she delights",

1. Vide Phisionomia laqualle compilo Maestro Michael Scotto ...
   (Colophon: stampata in Vinogia per Francesco Bindoni & Matteo
   Pasini Compagni ... 1533), fol. 32 verso. Actually Kate has the
   characteristics of the woman che sta volontira con l'huomo (ibid.
   fol. 10 verso) Cf. The X Properties of a woman' described in
   Fitzherbert's Boke of Husbandry.

2. Gascoigne, An Hundreth sundrie Flowres ... Gathered partly
   (by translatour) in the lyne out Landsk. Gardens of Cupides,
   (Chad, Petrante, Aristo and Chano ... At London, Imprinted for
which is not only a sniggering reference, but an indication that Kate's curtness is a result of some confusion and unhappiness, and does as much harm to her as to others. Hortensio is less pessimistic, and guarantees that there be men in the world who can cope with the alarums of which Kate's extraordinary violence consists. Indeed, she seems very like the definition of the foolish woman given in Proverbs, and not the hell-fiend old Gremio keeps trying to make her.

A foolish woman is clamourous: she is simple and knoweth nothing ...

Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

(Proverbs, IX, 13; XIV, 1)

What we are to see demonstrated in dealing with this foolish virgin, is the fourth natural mystery which revelation does not presume to utter.

There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not, The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid. (XXX. 19)

Poor Kate's recalcitrant maidhood is repeatedly related to the other mysteries; she is a storm, a hawk, and Petruchio recognises this realm as his natural element. In the scene with Bianca, it is not always noted that Kate is being taunted with her greater age and with Bianca's spurious submission. She in turn is attempting to throttle a confidence from Bianca, a proceeding which is not likely to have much result. Bianca sweetly maddens Kate by affecting to offer her one of her spare suitors.

If you affect him, sister, here I swear
I'll plead for you myself, but you shall have him. (II.1.14-15)
Bianca appears to be unable to conceive of any other motive for Kate's questioning than jealousy or deprivation, and decides that she was jesting when she asks bitterly whether she wants to sell herself to Gremio. Kate in her turn cannot, rightly, believe that her sister's innocent reticence, in refraining from forming a preference, is genuine. Even Portia can make an interesting discourse out of the men she refuses: only Bianca pretends to have no thoughts at all. Exasperated, Kate boxes her ears, and when Baptista rushes in to protect his favourite, with the wounding words worthy of old Capulet, she explains that Bianca's silence has flouted her. The petulance of her reproaches to Baptista speaks for itself. She sees herself as a victim of her society, precisely because she is incapable of the instinctive duplicity of the conventional female character, like Bianca's, or Rosamund's in Middlemarch. There is no reason in her outburst, for she is really revolting against the traditional humiliations for the spinster, dancing barefoot at a younger sister's wedding, and being popularly supposed to be destined to lead apes in hell. This then is the unregenerate female whom Petruchio must civilise. In this play Kate's character is built up carefully, especially by the Bianca scene, which is not in A Shrew, so that we can understand the nature of the problem. Petruchio's laughter at the ill outcome of Hortensio's masquerade can help us to sympathise with Kate, who doubtless observed that her music master had no eyes but for Bianca. Marriage offered by Petruchio is a challenge, and an emancipation from an intolerable situation. Kate may take it without losing face. Petruchio brings her
like a nervous colt to his side with caresses and cherishings, and then calms her girlish panic with a clear and uncompromising statement of his intentions, to which his wild-cat can find no smart rejoinder.

For I am he am born to tame you Kate. (II. i. 270)

rings like the greatest compliment he could pay her, and shows her a way to end her fruitless revolt; Petruchio vaunts like some hero who must ride a horse never before mastered, or draw an enchanted sword out of a rock. He is quite right: it is impossible that he should speed amiss, for Kate has no opportunity to use her discretion, not that she tries very hard. In her agitation she must turn upon her father, for Petruchio has already made an ally of her, at least to the point that they will connive like two swordsmen to deceive the authorities so that they may have an opportunity to slaughter each other. He reapply the trick of stating that which is not so that it might be, but with the added dimension that we are now aware that real truth of Kate's character is basically more like Petruchio's fiction than her own mask.

When next we see her, she is scolding Petruchio still, but this time for his absence (III. ii. 8-20): her description of what she thinks has happened points to her own insecurity, as if she said that she knew that it could never be true that anyone could really want to marry her. The immense image of Petruchio on his moribund steed dressed in tattered and ill-agreeing clothes is central to the motif of wife-taming. The indication is given in the interchange before Petruchio's entry, which Biondello closes with
O horse and a man
Is more than one,
And yet not many. (III. ii. 85-8)

Just as a horse and a man makes a horseman, man and wife is one
flesh, and one unit in the social system. As Petruchio's dignity suffers
by the extraordinary mount, so he can be damaged and degraded by a
sordid relationship with his wife. As Primaudaye puts it more clearly

euerie one ought to maintaine the dignitie of his
wife as he would do the just height of a horse
and be skilfull both in the one and the other to
use the bridle well as it becommeth him.

As a horseman Petruchio provides an emblem of the inchoate
marriage being offered him. His insane behaviour at the wedding is another
externalisation of the travesty that that marriage must be if Kate is
bringing to it all the perversity of her old attitude. Moreover, it indicates
to Kate that there is no predicting what Petruchio is capable of, and no way
of classifying him with other men of her acquaintance, so that she is forced
to contemplate him as a being at least as complicated as she. Petruchio
has roped his colt, and taken his hawk; now the training must begin.
First of all, neither must be approached by anyone other than his eventual
handler, so Petruchio must get Kate away immediately from her family and
friends. He indicates contemptuously that there may be yet another
justification for removing Kate, when he tells them to

Go to the feast, revel and domineer,
Carouse full measure to her maidenhead,
Be mad and merry, or go hang yourselves. (III. ii. 226-8)

We are reminded of the frequent denunciations by scrupulous clergy of the profane celebrations of marriage, in which the dignity and sacredness of the couple's first congress was sacrificed to bawdry and practical jokery. He may also be acknowledging that Kate owes very little to friends who served her in such bad stead. At all events marriage has now made him the only friend she may have. His tough speech, which has filled less toughminded critics with misgivings about the nobility of his sentiments, apart from delineating the firmness of his determination not to be interfered with by frivolous objectors, also indicates that Kate is his everything, and in all senses his. He justifies his offensive upon her person as a defence of her before the world, confusing her and forestalling opposition, but stating a truth at the same time. The next stage in their battle occurs on the wintry road from Padua to Petruchio's house, so different from the blandness of Lucentio's courtship, in an imaginative landscape where they might expect to pass greasy Joan's cottage, and to hear the owl chanting his note of comfort to husbands. Winter is the season of endurance, of hunger, when the earth sleeps in a death-like trance and the bastards conceived in summer dalliance are born. Grumio describes the building of a fire as the only way of defeating the coldness

1. Not only the Puritans criticised the marriage celebrations of Elizabethan England, for Sidney and Spenser imply criticism in their delineation of the ideal in the third eclogues of the Arcadia and the Epithalamium. Basile devotes a part of the golden boke (op. cit., fol. xlvi - xlvii) to a graphic description of wedding celebrations, and we might add William Bradshaw's description of "A Marriage Feast" (Two Marriage Sermons: The Former on Prov. 19.14. By Thomas Gataker ... The Latter on John. 2.1-12 by ... William Bradshaw ... London, Printed by Edward Griffin for Fulke Clifton ... 1620).
without, and we are reminded of the two fires of Petruchio and Kate. The scene he describes of Kate thrown by her horse is a reversal of the reappearing image of the horseman, the realisation of the confusion which Kate had made in it in her first conversation with Petruchio. Grumio says specifically that her horse was on top of her, and that he, Grumio, was beaten for it, as Kate would have Petruchio suffer for the distortion of her life by pressures quite unconnected with him. Grumio reinforces his own imagery by telling the servant not to touch a hair of his master's horsetail, as if the horse were an extention of his person, and he were to ride like a Centaur into the house. When Petruchio arrives railing, he calls Grumio "a whoreson malthorse drudge", and so the image continues to revolve about Kate without actually touching her; the ill-bred workhorse implies his opposite, the fiery noble steed which is a gentleman's greatest asset. Like the newly-wed husband in Count Lucanor's story, who hacks a spaniel and a cat to pieces and chops up a horse, to frighten his wife into submission, Petruchio cuffs his servants for nothing and orders his spaniel to fetch his cousin. Like Tobit, he declares that they must fast on their wedding night, for like Tobit, he is in danger of destruction, if he display eagerness to possess his bride. The servants' comments help us to understand Petruchio's game in case it is going too fast for us.

He kills her in her own humour. (IV. i. 180)

1. The story of Tobit is an apocryphal biblical version of the fatal lady story. It was universally known, being recounted at length in the Golden Legend as in many another popular repository of superstitious lore.
A faint echo of the story of Admetus and Alcest in Pettie's *Pallace* chimes through this line. This will be the peripeteia of Kate's comedy.

This seemeth strange vnto you (Gentlewoman) that a woman should die and then live again, but the meaninge of it is this, that you should die to your selves and live to your husbands ...

Petruchio plays Tobit in grim earnest, for he preaches continency to poor Kate, who has fallen into a trance, her version of Sly's sleep resembling death. The speech of Petruchio's which follows establishes the image of Kate as a falcon, the noblest of the preying birds, Elizabeth I's own impress, and the dearest companion of a gentleman in his chiefest amusement, whose death has been known to be revenged by kings with terrible massacres. For all its nobility however, the falcon is of significance only in terms of its relationship with its owner; it must be brought to obedience without damaging its spirit, or its body. No such gentlemanly art is needed by the heroes of old domestic farces, who are not ashamed to beat their recalcitrant spouses until they lose consciousness and lie on the floor in their own blood, and then to wrap them in the salted hide of an old mare. The treatment that a falcon may expect is much different.

The soaring hawk from fist that flies,  
her Falconer doth constrain:  
Sometime to range the ground unknown,  
to find her out again:  
And if by sight or sound of bell,  
his falcon he may see:  
Wo ho he cries, with cheerful voice,  
the gladdest man is he.

1. Pettie's *Pallace*, op. cit., p. 117

2. “Her highest desire of the falcon” is mentioned in the marriage poems of her daughter, the Earl of Oxford, Elizabeth de Vere, and William Stanley, Earl of Derby, in 1575, now in the Royal Collection (MS 1083/6) of which aranscript by J. L. Stteffens may be found in *MLR*, Vol. 58, April 1963, pp. 217-9.
By Lure then in Finest sort,
he seekes to bring her in.
But if that she, ful gorged be,
he can not so her win:
Although her becks and bending eies
she manie proffers makes:
Wo ho ho he cries, awale she flies,
and so her issue she takes.

This wofull man with wearie limmes
runnes wandring round about:
At length by noise of chattering Pies,
his hawke againe found out
His heart was glad his eie had seen,
his falcon swift of flight:
Wo ho ho he cries, she emptie gorgde,
upon his Lure doth light.

How glad was then the Falconer there,
no pen nor tongue can tel:
He swam in blisse that latelie felt
like paines of cruel hel.
His hand somtime vpon her train,
somtime vpon her breast:
Wo ho ho he cries, with cheerfull voice,
his heart was now at rest.

My dear likewise, beholde thy loue,
What paines he doth endure:
And now at length let pitie move,
to stoup vnto his Lure.
A hood of silk, and siluer belles,
new gifts I promise thee:
Wo ho ho, I criе, I come then sale,
make me as glad as hie.

Petruchio has chosen the most difficult of birds, the haggard, the
wild female hawk who has preyed for herself before being taken. First of
all he must take secure hold of her:

1. A Handefull of pleasant delites, Containing sundrie new Sonets and
delectable Histories ... by Clement Robinson, and divers others.
At London Printed by Richard Ihones ... 1584, Sig. Eiv recto.
The first true Tearme and Title a Falconer ought to leare, is to holde fast at all times, and especially when she batteth, or striueth to flee avvay. It is called batting, in that she batteth with hirselfe without cause: ...

Just so Petruchio must calm Kate's struggling, so that she may learn "that wherein she delights". Petruchio takes the Tobit parallel to its ultimate when he declares his intention of keeping Kate awake during the night, which is also the way in which the hawk is trained to perch upon her master's wrist at will. No man who recognised all these terms of hawking could be unaware that the hawk is to be rewarded every time that she attempts to cooperate with rejoicing, when she is allowed to preen, or given some delicacy, for very little of her training is accomplished by starving, and mewing is only practised in Lent to prepare her for the summer season. (Indeed, the References in The Taming of a Shrew to hawking are rather less informed than those of The Taming of the Shrew)

Every single part of training involves the manipulation of her blindness, however, for as soon as she is taken her eyelids are sewn up over her head, or, preferably, down under her beak, and for some days she is kept completely in the dark. While she still retains the strength and the resentment to beat Grumio when he offers her nothing but the names of the food she might eat, and remains silent when Petruchio brings her food to

1. The Gentlemans Academie, or, The Booke of S. Albans: ... Now reduced into a better method, by G(ervase) M(arkham). London. Printed for Humfrey Lownes ... 1585, fol. 3 recto.

her, so that he is forced to teach her the rudiments of courtesy, she must remain blindfolded. All her repining at his tormenting her with withdrawing all the handsome clothes he has made for her, which is a figure of her behaviour in rejecting his proffered kindness as a husband, is attributed to the tailor, so that Kate can see what answer it merits without being led astray by her own resentment at correction. At the same time it is hilarious, its hilarity depending largely upon the absolute good-nature with which Petruchio throws the tradesmen into the deepest confusion, and Grumio turns his unflagging propensity for dreary literal-mindedness to torment the tailor, as he torments his master elsewhere. Again the deliberateness of the masquerade is made clear by the instruction to Hortensio to settle the account. Kate falls silent.

Petruchio tests her silence, by proposing to set out for her father's house, but Kate, momentarily unhooded, flies off at a tangent, and corrects her husband in a mistake so palpable, that it is clear that she has not realised how astute he is, and so they return to the house like Mette and her husband in the Danish story. The deference he is exacting from her is the most extreme, but we remember the old man of Don Juan Manuel's story, and how such deference is rewarded. At last Kate seems to have understood, and makes her voluntary act of submission. The shout of joy from Petruchio is genuine.

Well, forward, forward,thus the bowl should run, And not unluckily against the bias. (IV.v.25-5)

The fact that Kate must submit on all questions of observation, even
the most simple and the vastest, may seem exaggerated and unlikely, but
when we remember Habington's description of the wife's attitude to her
husband's intelligence, Shakespeare would seem to be demanding little
enough.

She is inquisite onely of new wayes to please him,
and her Witt sailes by no other compasse then that
of his direction. Shee lookes upon him as
Conjurors upon the Circle, beyond which there is
nothing but Death and Hell; and in him shee believes
Paradice circumscrib'd. His vertues are her wonder
and imitation; and his errors, her credulitie thinkes
no more fraylitle, then makes him descend to the
title of Man.

The demands of this relationship may estrange the wife from the
outside world, and may offend and confuse others with less valid claims
upon her courtesy, as Vincentio is startled by Kate's mad mistaking.
She demonstrates her ability to play Petruchio's game with a kind of
childlike pride, waxing eloquent in expressing a view that she cannot
really share. Hortensio's aside reflects the dimension in which they
have been playing, and we are momentarily conscious of the danger of
Petruchio's undertaking.

A' will make the man mad, to make a woman of him.
(IV. v. 35)

Kate must also have the strength to come through her taming process
unbroken, to wake up from her trance and live again to her husband. But

---

her words to the old man indicate her readiness to accept the notion that maids are for marrying, and indirectly her acceptance of her own social role. The real end of beauty and virtue is indicated by whom it makes most happy.

Happier the man, whose favourable stars
Allot thee for his lovely bed-fellow. (IV. v. 40-41)

Petruchio's fear of Kate's madness is voiced when all fear is past. She prettily asks pardon for her mistaking, and refers to the period of her blindness. Like the hawk stooping to the lure indicated by his master, too dazzled by the sudden light to be sure of what it is, or to hunt it for herself, she embraces the old man and brings him to her lord. When they kiss in the street, Petruchio takes Katharine to wife like a non-conformist in facie ecclesiae, and their little ceremony constitutes that dulcet union of hearts, which is real marriage, at last.

EVALUATION

In the last scene we are invited to compare the two methods of marrying, in such a way that there can be no doubt at all as to the judgment that must make. The first to reveal her colours is the widow, who begins by sneering at Petruchio, and Kate is struck by what she says, repeating it after Hortensio has extricated his new wife from the obscene muddle (V. ii. 20-3) into which she has got herself, and asking the widow, gently enough, what she can have meant. The expression is a telling one, for it summarises all Kate's old rebelliousness. The widow
continues to gibe, but Kate, despite the encouragements of the others, hardly rises to the challenge. Suddenly, unsolicited, the mild but Minerva-like Bianca offers for the company’s delectation an insult to Gremio, the old man who must wear a willow garland in penance for his ill-suited wooing. Curiously, the insult she chooses would be more befitting a cuckold. She would withdraw from the colloquy so unseemly begun, and speaks of herself as a bird refusing to rise to the fowler’s cry. Petruchio comes strongly in at this point and proceeds to incite her to further demonstrations of her delicate wit in an unmistakably aggressive way—

Nay, that you shall not: since you have begun, Have at you for a bitter jest or two! (V. ii.44-5)

These harsh words correspond very oddly with his usual manner of addressing Kate. Bianca responds by taking up the image of herself as the goal of his hunt, and withdraws, coquettishly inviting him to follow like the fowler aiming at a moving target. Petruchio abandons the pursuit and turns to Tranio

This bird you aim’d at, though you hit her not; Therefore a health to all that shot and missed. (V. ii.50-1)

If Kate is the falcon whom a man would tame and hunt with, Bianca is the bird he seeks to bring down, the white at which his arrows are aimed. Once brought down, by implication, it is difficult to know what to do with her, for she can only be consumed. Tranio takes up the idea of Bianca as the prey that all had run for, when he calls himself Lucentio’s
greyhound, which ran for itself and caught for its master. Petruchio gives the simile the praise he must, for it is exact, but includes a less pleasant observation -

A good swift simile, but something currish. (V. ii. 54)

It is against this background of criticism of the hugger-mugger proceedings of Bianca's courtship, that Petruchio makes his wager.

As his antagonism to Bianca might have indicated, he is sure that the others have matched with worse shrews than he. The archetypal shrew who reduces her husband to penury, misery and shame, begins as the gay, brave, modest bride of the XV Joies, and her shrewdom emerges as she exercises her will in the marital situation, even using the marriage bed as a pawn in her sordid bargaining with her husband. This shrewishness is a cool prosecution of the battle of the sexes with neither pity nor respect for the opponent. When she refuses her husband his conjugal rights he foolishly rejoices in her coldness and chastity:

Et qu'il ne lui enchante, et a l'adventuere elle est femme blanche et de petite complexion.  

The white woman, according to the physionomist, plump, fair-haired, phlegmatic and indolent, was unwilling to associate with the male, and of low fertility. Certainly Bianca lacks vitality, but not guile; Kate, like Abra, is a born shrew,

1. Les Quinze Joies des Mariages (n. t. p. Biblioteque Nationale, Res. Y2. 150. 2) Sig. 5v, the fifth joy.

2. Scotto, op. cit., fol. 11 recto, 31 verso.
As true as any stele: ye may trust her with gold.
Though it were a bushell, and not a penye tolde.
As quicke about her worke that must be quickly spedd
As any wench in twenty mile about her head.
As fine a piece it is as I knowe but a few,
Yet perchaunce her husbande of her may haue a shrewe. 1

energetic, full of fierce loyalties, and not at all dangerous to the
man who knows how to profit by her extraordinary qualities. She is not
the subject of misogynist literature, for she is not guileful or lecherous.
The white ladies however are deeply and irrevocably self-interested, and
always get their own way, using charms, threats, peevishness and violence
indiscriminately: against this type there is no defence, especially if the
besotted suitor has already given her the mastery.

I wold not counsel y^e to mary her, w^t whome thou
hast bene in amors withal, whom thou flatterdest,
whome thou didst serue, whom thou calledst thy hart,
thy life, thy maistres, thy light, thy eyes, w^t other
sucche wordes as foolishhe love doth perswade, vsing
impietie agaynst god, which is y^e ende of al desire &
goodnes. Thys submission is & shoulde be the cause,
y^t she doth not regard y^e, but disdaymeth to serue
thee, whose ladye she was as she esteemed, & whô
she foûd more obedient vnto her, euen with y^e peril
& danger of life, thô any other slave y^t was bought
for monie. 2

Montaigne sees the situation in greater depth, seeing the woman's
demeanour as naturally entailed by the man's.

1. The character described as a little wench, in A newe mere and
wittie Comedie or Enterlude, newly imprinted, treating vpon the
Historie of Jacob and Essau ... Imprinted at London by Henrie
Bynneman ... 1538, Sig. E3 recto, IV.iv.43-8.

2. The office and dutie of an husband, made by the excellént Philosopher
Lodouicus Vlues, and translated into Englyshe by Thomas Paynell.
Imprinted at London ... by Iohn Cawood ... (1550), Sig. K 5 recto.
... there is not one of them, but vpon the first oath one maketh to serve her, will very easily bee perswaded to thinke well of her selfe. Now this common treason and ordinary protestations of men in these dailes must needes produce the effects, experience already discouereth: which is, that either they joine together, and cast away themselves on themselves, to avoyde vs, or on their side allow also the example wee glue them; acting their part of the play, without passion; without care, and without Ioue, lending themselves to this entercourse: Neque affectui suo aut alieno obnoxia: Neither liable to their owne nor other folkes affection. 1

The man who casts himself away for such an infatuation has no choice but to live out the consequences: in Averell's gloomy phrase:

So, who so attempteth marriage without advisement, running rashlie vpon the rockes of theyr owne ruine, and entring the combersome conflict of cares, where the gun shotte of calamitie shall batter theyr braines, ... must patientlie beare the brunt of theyr owne breeding ... tyl death make a deuision of theyr fortunes ... 2

By their deeds we are to know them, and so Petruchio enters on the wager, drawn from the same folk stock as the story of Karen, Hette and Mette, but with new currents animating it. Petruchio increases the stake, because twenty crowns the sum first proposed is what one might wager upon a hauflor hound (V.ii.70-2), explicitly placing Kate above them in

1. The essayes Or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michael de Montaigne ... First written by him in French And now done into English by ... John Florio. Printed at London by Val. Sims for Edward Blount ... 1603, p.463,

2. A Dyall for dainty Darlings, rockt in the cradle of Securitie ... compiled by W. Auerell ... Imprinted at London for Thomas Hackett ... 1584, Sig. Ei recto - Ei verso,
the list of his assets, even to the extent of twenty times their value. It is the team that will be tried, the hawk and his handler, the dog and his master, the man and his wife. Lucentio has not trained his wife at all: he has never even thought of the way in which they shall live and work and rejoice together. He wagers blindly on his wife's character, more rashly than he would ever have done for a hawk or a horse, and indeed she turns out to have more Minerva-like qualities than he expected when he rashly applied the epithet, and simply refuses to obey him. Petruchio laughs when Hortensio entreats his widow, for the husband who entreats of his wife is as absurd as the man who entreats his dog or his horse.

Kate comes simply and respectfully. Petruchio asks of her another deed which will prove that her spirit is not broken, although she answers to her husband's demands without protest, namely, to bring the defiant wives by force before their husbands. The foolish husbands beg to know what the portent that they have just witnessed might signify, and Petruchio answers with the nearest thing to a didactic justification that Shakespeare could permit himself.

Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life,  
An awful rule and right supremacy;  
And to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy?  
(V. ii. 106-8)

Petruchio is a figure of the just ruler, because he has the power and the discretion to maintain his rule, and the welfare of his subject at heart. The political significance of the play was not lost upon Shakespeare's contemporaries, for Fletcher, whose The Woman's Prize or the Tamer Tamed is much rather a frivolous parody than a serious counterproposition,
seems to be aware of the subtlety of his greater source.

We do intreat that angry men should not
Expect the mazes of a subtle plot,
Set speeches, high Expressions, and what's worse,
In a true Comedy, politique discourse. 1

Baptista speaks of the change in Kate as a rebirth and Petruchio demonstrates the extreme of her compliance in the irrational demand to throw her cap underfoot, for her trust will always assume some purpose in his requests, as indeed there is. The widow's response to the situation is no surprise, but Bianca's retort to Lucentio,

The more fool you, for laying on my duty. (V. ii. 127)

will not really permit those critics to go on believing that she is a sly but lovable little thing. Kate's speech makes it clear that the just relation between man and wife is a figure of the order which all spheres of activity must hold. The rebellious woman becomes a figure of all revolt against just power and proportion. Her conclusions are moderate compared to those arrived at by the Queen, a lady of considerable sophistication and dignity, in the Decameron.

... Nature hath given us a sufficient demonstration,
in creating our bodies more soft and delicate, yea, and our hearts timorous, fearefull, benigne and compassionable, our strength feeble, our voyces pleasing, and the motion of our members sweetly plyant; all which are apparent testimonies that wee

haue neede of others gouernment ... And therefore it is my preremptory sentence, that all such women as will not be gracious, benigne and pleasing: doe justly deserve ... rude, rough and harsh handling, as both nature, custome and lawes haue commanded. 1

The husband is lord, king, governor, life, keeper, head, sovereign, prince, as well as lover, protector and friend. In opposing such rule, Kate sees herself as the foolish, clamorous woman of Proverbs.

I am ashamed that women are so simple,
To offer war, where they should kneel for peace.
(V.ii.159-60)

She accepts what appeared to be a self-evident doctrine, especially in the days of high mortality of infants and mothers, that women are the weaker sex, and need and want their husband's aid and protection. This they cannot get, unless they act in a manner calculated to encourage it. It is useless to resent dependence because women are incapable of attaining or enjoying independence: the extent to which they desire illusory freedom is the index of the extent to which they are incapable of achieving it.

My mind hath been as big as one of yours,
My heart as great, my reason haply more,
To bandy word for word, and frown for frown;
But now I see our lances are but straws,
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,
That seeming to be most, which we indeed least are.
(V.ii.168-73)

She understands at last that her passionate pride was really the product

1. The Decameron containing An hundred pleasant Novels ... London, printed by Isaac Jaggard, 1620, The Ninth Day, the Ninth Nouell, fol. 131 verso.
of her fear and sense of inferiority, as we have already decided from an independent assessment of her behaviour.

There is hardly a woman alive who is not deeply attracted to the notion of a husband of the kind extolled by Kate: the difficulty is to find a man capable of assuming all this responsibility and exercising this kind of sexual and domestic dominion. Petruchio is capable of managing his high-mettled champion wife, of wielding this Excalibur of a woman: he is the ninth of the twelve wonders of the world, the man who can say,

Yet court I not my wife, but yeeld observance due
Being neither fond, nor crosse, nor jealous, nor vntrue. 1

The battle to subdue Kate is both a romp, with motifs drawn from some obscure folk source of which other representatives have survived, and the eternal battle of the sexes, in which women must realise that they must suffer and accept. Whether the decision is made in terms of Freudian psychology or Hebrew theology, it is substantially the same. As well as cherishing all that is best in the folk tradition of wedding theory, the background of Sly's assumptions, Shakespeare is at least as perceptive as the best of the Renaissance critics of domestic life. The new secular ideal includes the notion that the complete man is able to create the household that mirrors his own culture and humanity.

... the very truth is, that there is no yuel houswife, but for her fautis ye good man is to be blamed. For I am utterly of this opinion, that the man may make, shape & forme ye womâ as he wyl.  

The young man's guides in educating his wife are Aristotle and Zenophon: they are no less present in Petruchio's assumptions about his relations with Kate. The Taming of the Shrew enacts the new principle that a man gets the wife he deserves:

... the husband must seeke diligently to remove the occasion and stone, whereat his wife stumbles and taketh occasion of grief, ...  

The producers of the play who make it a feast of slap and tickle, have misunderstood the whole principle of Petruchio's taming, for nowhere is he required to offer Kate the least violence, for with what hart can she loue that man that can finde in his heart to beate her?  

The rebirth which forms the catastrophe of this comedy is that of Kate, to a tranquil and busy life at Petruchio's side: as she lays her hand under his foot, the ikon is that of an old marriage ceremony in which his shoe would have been laid upon her head; the difference is that  

2. An Exhortation to yonge men, perswading them to walke in the pathe way that leadeth to honeste and goodnes: ... By Thomas Lupsete London. 1534. (Col.: Londini in aedibus Thomae Berthelet. Anno M.D.XXXV), fol. 23 verso.  
she had been persuaded to want to place her hand below his foot. That
Petruchio should do so plausibly and before the eyes of all beholders
constitutes that great and fundamental lesson that lewd comedies of love
and liking failed to teach, so that they became the most pernicious forms
of writing in the commonwealth, and yet the play is so amusing that inept
historians have called it an immature farce. Even if, in such a play,
Shakespeare is only the best artist of his time, and not the best artist of
all time, there is ample cause for praise and interest, rather than the
assumption, like that of the Cambridge Editors, that Shakespeare is like
the little girl who had a little curl right in the middle of her forehead.
Surely, in the age that boasts Simone de Beauvoir, Mary McCarthy and
Brigid Brophy, we cannot assume that the lesson of the play is so well-
learned that there is no further need to teach it! In any case, The Taming
of the Shrew has an unerring logic, thoroughly dramatic in conception,
which makes use of every confrontation, every image, every juxtaposition.
The basic structural principle is one of revealing contrast, out of which
the ideological issues soon emerge. On the one hand we have a domestic
comedy, the eternal battle between husband and wife, moving, intellectually
and sexually exciting, simplicity itself in all but the postulated background,
and the interplay of ideas. Much has been written about Kate's place in
the shrew tradition, in which she has been compared to any violent or
deprecated female character in existence, and too much has been assumed,
but certainly this simple situation belongs to the rustic tradition of farce,
and its accompanying tradition of morality. Rich in moralising and high
jinks, this part of the play roves about, reckless of classical staging
conventions, involving houses, horses and woods and the moon and sun, and the very change of seasons. The contrasted situation involves Bianca, Bianca's suitors and their train, and takes place in the classical Italian street scene with house-doors. The disguisings, wooings and clandestine marriage take place in a social and cosmic vacuum, which Vincentio breaks asunder. Here the characters do everything but confront each other in their true colours. The situations are not weighed, hearts are not seen. Shakespeare took a debased version of the most famous representative of Italian learned comedy in England, debased in a manner typical of its later development, and recast the folk-motif of the three sisters, which survives in *The Taming of a Shrew*, into a new form of two sisters contrasted, and through them two notions of drama and two contrasting notions of the dramatist's function. The judgment passed upon Bianca's world is unmistakeable. It is useless to repine at the ethics of Katharine's marriage; they are only too straightforward and clean. The unpretentious comedy typified by Kate may justly hale the haggard falsity of its younger sister, so despised in England by the discerning, before its lord, the audience.
CHAPTER FOUR:

LOVE’S LABOUR’S LOST

Whence comes it (as we daily see by experience) that the rudest and grossest clowns, are more tough-strong, and more desired in amorous executions? And that the love of a Muletier is often more acceptable, then that of a perfumed-quaint courtier. But because in the latter, the agitation of his minde doth so distract, trouble, and weary the force of his body; as it also troubleth and wearieith it selfe, who doeth belie, or more commonly cast the same down even into madnesse, but her own promptitude, her point, her agilite, and to conclude her proper force? When proceeds the subtilest follie, but from the subtilest wisdome.

(Montaigne, *An Apologie of Raymond Sebond*)
For fifty years now Love's Labour's Lost has been steadily gaining ground with the critics, for its vivacity, its fascinating blend of art and nature, for its dancing movement and for "landscapes" present in the verse. Harley Granville Barker implied that anything that could make it go on stage was permissible by the very nature of its confection.

Charm and brilliance, uproarious witticisms may be allowed but it seems to be tacitly admitted that the play has not got much guts. C. L. Barber

1. C. L. Barber (Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, Princeton, 1959) speaks at length of the resemblance of the play's movement to a dance... "the four lords and the four ladies make up what amounts to a set in English country dancing", and compares the play to Sir John Davies Orchestra. A more informed and legitimate observation is probably that of John Long in Shakespeare's Use of Music (Gainesville, 1955), pp. 69-72, in which he compares the action of the ladies in feigning to begin to dance with the Muscovites to a galliard. Marco Mincoff ("Shakespeare and Lyly", Shakespeare Survey, No. 14, 1961, p. 22) speaks of the fugal method of the play's construction, and Robert Gittings, in Shakespeare's Rival (London, 1960) compares Love's Labour's Lost with Ariadne auf Naxos and Cosi fan tutte (p. 46). The comparison with the Mozart opera is also suggested by John Dover Wilson in Shakespeare's Happy Comedies (London, 1962), p. 65. On the other hand H. B. Charlton (Shakespearean Comedy, London, 1928, p. 45) thinks that is "is made of such stuff as a Tatler, a Bystander, or a revue maker would offer us".


3. In Vol. II of the Prefaces to Shakespeare (London, 1958) he wrote, "It is all very charming; the mere sound is charming, and a 'set of wit' describes it well. Get a knowledge of the game and it may be as attractive to watch as are a few sets of tennis" (p. 419) and again, "Our spontaneous enjoyment will hang upon pleasant sights and sounds alone, sense and purpose apart. Really it almost amounts to this; Better face the difficulty at its worst. Is there any surmounting it?" (p. 421).
regards the flimsiness of its structure as a part of Shakespeare's intention to show us the triumph and then the inadequacy of festivity.

The story in Love's Labour's Lost is all too obviously designed to provide a resistance which can be triumphantly swept away by festivity. 1

He admits that the festivities never actually come off, nevertheless he denies that Shakespeare is guilty of sadism in his relations with the audience which knows "how the conflict will come out before it starts", because he demonstrates the true role of festivity in the affairs of men. It is clear that Barber has treated the play as evidence for a theory of festivity already formed in his own mind. Boas described the play as "asserting the vitality and transforming power of love",

In the mainplot Shakespeare covers with ridicule an attempt to defy the ordinary rules of life. 2

Probably no critic would allow himself such a complacent phrase as "the ordinary rules of life" in 1967, but the view has persisted. For Richard David, the play is

the gentle ragging of youthful priggishness and affectation as measured against natural good sense and natural good feeling — and it is a point that time has not dulled. Dons and donnishness are today more popular as butts than they were in the 1590's, and the vivacity controlled by a good heart that Shakespeare praises is a virtue that does not grow stale. 3

1. C. L. Barber, op. cit., p. 88.
David manages to avoid postulating a vacuum at the centre of the play because unlike Boas he does not find the young men’s wooing wearisome; nevertheless it is not very clear just how he regards the abortive love-making which constitutes the major part of the play. Youthful priggishness and donnishness are mild enough faults and comedies of gentle ragging ought not to end with talk of penance.

The hollowness of such descriptions of the play, which are rather less irritating than the sorts which assume that it is a kind of verbal galliard, is usually filled out by the assumption that the play is more or less satirical, in the harsh, cryptic, personal and scurrilous way that the Elizabethans believed appropriate to satire. The target refuses to reveal itself clearly: it seems to be the school of night, if it ever existed, or the school of Ralegh, perhaps involving the Nashe-Harvey quarrel and centring round the figure of Moth. The difficulty about establishing such an occasion for the play is that the vague parallels proliferate, and recorded history does not reveal anything like a clear ranking of one side against another. Notwithstanding, even so recent and conscientious commentator as Richard David is led to say,

All the evidence then goes to show that Love’s Labour’s Lost was a battle in a private war between court factions. 1

If this were true, the case for the excellence of the play, which eventually depends upon its autonomy as a work of art, would seem to

stagger, despite David’s own poignant praise of its charm and brilliance. Of all socio-political phenomena, private wars between court factions would seem to be the most evanescent and intrinsically unworthy. At all events the traces of such a combat are all but obliterated, while the play has survived, mutilated but full of life, independently of its originating occasion. The statement of the titlepage of the 1631 quarto, that it was still being acted, seems evidence that it made good sense to the Jacobeans when the ephemeral circumstances of its composition were forgotten. ¹ We have inherited it as a play, and not just as a literary curiosity, so that it seems proper to undertake to establish its abiding value in some intrinsic significance. I shall virtually ignore the occasion of the criticism that we find within the play, and shall attempt instead to identify the essential truth and applicability of it, beyond any desire to oblige Southampton, or to annoy Raleigh, Northumberland, Eliot, Florio or Harvey. It seems proper to begin with the assumption that Shakespeare created the young dilettantes of Navarre for some purpose which arose out of the integrity of his own developing poetic vision. What ought to concern us is the essential dialectic of the play in terms of its inner coherence; it will have reference to contemporary social and intellectual phenomena, but not the irresponsible gesture of the lampoon. If we were to decide that Raleigh and Sidney and Harriot were recognisable to the Elizabethan audience, we would also have to conclude that the picture given of their activities was highly unjust and inaccurate.

¹ Noted by John Dover Wilson, op. cit., p. 55-6.
If we concentrate on identifying exactly what it is that is presented for our critical reaction, the question of injustice and inaccuracy will not arise, and we may be able to discern a universal truth of the kind which only a poet can teach us, beyond polemic and propaganda. If it is irrelevant to puzzle about the number of Lady Macbeth's children, it is much more irrelevant to try to understand Berowne by reference to Giordano Bruno or the Duc de Biron. Whereas the literary detective is frustrated to find that Shakespeare's characters have traits in common with persons who have little in common with each other, for my purposes, arguing from intelligible argument within the play to a genuine social commitment, the more widely suggestive the dramatic situation the better.

THE LITTLE ACADEME

We begin with the pastoral scene undividable. The imagery of the play is sober, little of the lush decay of the summer scene is invoked; we encounter no fairies, no wild beast, not a flower except the single rose of the young men's imagery and the painted meads of the last song. Instead there is a strong evocation of the rural community, the constable, the schoolmaster, the curate, and the red-handed lass and her swain. The woodland setting is introduced in matter-of-fact details, with the names of trees, like Boyet's sycamore, and the Princess's tart reference to the wide fields, or Armado's to the curious knotted garden. The countryside is assumed as the context of the action, not a part of the
fiction. The first words spoken in the play are of mortality, of brazen
tombs, the disgrace of death, cormorant devouring time and his scythe's
keen edge. Life is reduced to this present breath, spent hunting after
fame and honour, sole means of cheating time and oblivion. The tone of
the King's words is almost Marlovian lofty, and he enforces the effect
by calling his followers brave conquerors — he might indeed have been
addressing a group of dying heroes, until he explains himself with more
than a nuance of incongruity —

— for so you are,
That war against your own affections
And the huge army of the world's desires — (1.1.8-10)

The desire for fame and honour is a worldly desire, superbia vitae
and therefore diabolica,

reprooned by Philosophie and Divinitie, which
pronounceith it follie before God: Stultiam fecit
Deus sapientiam hujus mundi. 1

The fight against one's own affections and the demands of the world
should be undertaken in humility, in hope to achieve virtue and win
heaven; it is worse than useless to undertake such a discipline for an
earthly motive.

1. Who worship Fame, commit idolatry,
    Make men their god, Fortune and Time their worth;
    Forme but reforme not — meer hypocrisie;
    By shadowes, onely shadowes bringing forth.
    Which must, as blossoms, fade ere true fruit springs; 2
    — Like voice and eccho — joyned yet diuers things.

2. Of wisdome three bookes written in French by Peter Charr5 ...
Translated by Samson Lennard. At London Printed For Edward
Blount & Will. Aspley, p.3.

2. The Works in verse and prose complete of ... Fulke Greville,
Lord Brooke ... ed. A. B. Grosart (London, for Private
Circulation, 1870), Vol. II, pp.99-100, "An Inquisition upon Fame
and Honour", st. 86.
The description of the contemplative life in terms of the active life implies the perpetual debate between arms and letters which had become a set topic in the Academies. The conclusion was always the same, that the virtuous gentleman should be disciplined in both. In practice however, the fusion of the active and the contemplative had decayed. Lord Burghley had replaced Sir Thomas More, the skilful diplomatist ousted the virtuous man in the field of politics, and the ideal of wisdom and virtue active in the community was no longer the centre of school studies, which had declined into grammar and flagellation. The monastic ideal of the contemplative life had been thoroughly discredited, but the Stoics and Platonists made the delineation of virtue their special province, and limited its exercise to the preservation of the noble spirit in a waste of shame by means of isolation for the Stoics, or amor razionale for the Platonists, a love which was not diffused in the community, but passionately dedicated to a friend, an unenjoyed lady, or best of all, donna sapienza.

Our court shall be a little academe,
Still and contemplative in living art. (I. i. 13-14)

Despite Dover Wilson's confidence that

1. E.g. The will of wit, Wits Will, or Wils Wit ... Compiled by Nicholas Breton ... London Printed by Thomas Creede, 1599, has a second part, with separate titlepage although paginated as part of the same volume, called "The Scholler and the Souldiour, a Disputation pithily passed betweene them, the one defending Learning, the other Martiall Discipline".

2. Giles Fletcher the elder counsels the reader to take Licia "to be some Diana, at the least chaste, or some Minerva, no Venus, farther far; it may be shee is Learnings image ... perhaps ... I have shadowed Discipline ... It may be some Collidge; it may be my conceit, ..." (Licia, or Poemes of Love, in honour of the admirable and singular vertues of his lady, ... (s.d., s.t.), Sig. B1 recto.
Such little academies were common enough in the time of the Renaissance. Hundreds of them were set up in the petty Italian courts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. 1

not one of them was actually like this one. The devices of the hundreds of academies that have left records of their existence show emblems of arms and letters intertwined. Frequently, especially in the late sixteenth century, they assumed an active role in civic affairs. They were not at all monastic, but social and cultural centres, where plays and masques were held, dancing, fencing and music taught, and public works of charity undertaken. 2 In England the view of the fit pursuits of a gentleman was probably less intellectually oriented than in Italy or France.

For man being finite both in wit, time, might,
His dayes in vanitie may be misspent;
Vse therefore must stand higher than delight,
The actiue hate a fruitlesse instrument:
So must the World those busie idle fooles,
That serve no other market than the Schooles. 3

Even for a Platonist the King's notion is a rare and wonderful one. Pierre de la Primaudaye considered his Academie Francaise a platonical institution, but even so most of the discussion centres around the duties of the Academicians in the community, to marry and to rule. To the

1. John Dover Wilson, op. cit., p. 66.
2. Vide Maylender, Storia delle Accademie d'Italia (5 vol., Bologna, 1926-30) passim, and Capitoli et Ordini per l'accademia degli'Erranti di Brescia (1635), passim.
groundlings, the king's resolution must have seemed the ultimate in intellectual snobbery, and to the educated an absurdity. When the King speaks of the readiness of his spiritual warriors to strike down their own honour if they fail in any article of their oath, we realise that they are armed against themselves, and moral suicide may be the result. Longaville's triumphant assertion that "the mind shall banquet though the body pine" expresses the aspiration of the young men to purge the dross of their human nature and aspire to the condition of the angels.

... the cause why our God hath created vs of two substances, the one terrestrial, and the other celestial, is to this end, that if we begin to swell vp in pride, the vileness of the creation of our bodie, which is but earth and ashes doe retaine and keepe vs back. 1

Shakespeare's view has not the sourness of Boaistua's Manicheism, but it is the pride of the young men in supposing that they can so easily escape the human condition which makes us suspect that the Academe is doomed to inglorious failure. A civil war has occurred in the little state of each man, dividing him against himself, so that the rule of right reason is impossible. Dumaine vaunts that he has forsworn the pleasures of love, wealth and pomp, and shall be dead to the world.

These are vows taken

---

1. Theatrum Mundi. The Theatre or rule of the world ... written in the French & Latin tongues by Peter Boaistua, and translated into English by Iohn Alday. Imprinted at London by H.D. for Thomas Hacket ... (1566?), Sig. Q5 verso.
so that the alteration of their life is a refusal of the popular and open lyfe, where men do liue out of cloysters, in such states and degrees as be appointed by God for the liuing together of me, as to be subject vnto parentes and masters, to marry, to get children, to gouerne houses & families, to bear office, &c. ¹

The intention of a King to cloister himself in monkish fashion is clearly preposterous. Berowne is that giddiest of all men who promises what he knows he cannot perform. De la Primaudaye is very strict on this point.

Neither is there any thing whereby a foole is sooner discerned from a wise man, thy. by promises: forasmuch as an undiscreeet man lightly promiseth whatsoever you will, & oftentimes more than is required of him: ... ²

From Berowne we learn that they have covenanted not to see a woman for three years, to fast for one day a week (an unsympathetically papist requirement), to eat only one meal a day, and to sleep only three hours. More than an academy, the king proposes to make of his court a secular monastery. Berowne complains that this rule of life is barren, and too hard to keep, a position with which no orthodox contemporary would have disagreed, for without grace we cannot fulfill the law, let alone perform works of supererogation. Now, too late, he asks the overwhelming un-Platonic question, "What is the use of all this?". The King's answer is not the right one. The most inattentive schoolboy could have answered correctly,


A wise and courageous spirit ouermastereth his wisdome, enloyeth it, vseth it, and employeth it to his best advantage, enformeth his own judgment, rectifieth his will, helpeth and fortifieth his naturall light, and makeh himselfe more quicke and actiue; ... 1

All else is mere pedantry. The King's answer is lame, naïve and dangerous. He assumes certainty in human knowledge, and reveals that apart from the desire for posthumous honour, his only motive is curiosity. De la Primaudaye distrusts the study of natural sciences precisely because such study

... serveth rather to content the curiositie of hawtie spirits, than to make them better; ... 2

Curiosity stirred by pride, the sin of Lucifer, caused our first Parents to inherit death, and dimmed the clear faculties of the human race. The King's vague and presumptuous answer,

Why, that to know which else we should not know. (I.1.56)

leads directly to Berowne's teasing question,

Things hid and barr'd you mean, from common sense. (I.1.57)

Common sense in Elizabethan psychology was the faculty which interpreted sense data to recognise the object characterised by these attributes, and is also called the imagination, that is, the faculty for

1. Charron, op.cit., Sig. A5 recto.
taking and recording images, of which Lipsius speaks in his description of the mind.

In man, the highest and most soueragne facultie of the Soule, is Understanding: being inthroned in the highest place, to guide and conduct all his liues Actions, hath appointed and ordained an vnder facultie, that we call Imaginatieve, to dispose and judge by the representation of the Sences, the qualitie and condition of things offered, with authoritie to rouse and stirre our affections, for execution of its judgement.

Things hid and barred from such a sense must be the objects of contemplation, of speculative reason. Berowne believes that the King's contemplative inquiry will lead him into the realms of the occult and forbidden. Beyond the bounds of simple observation illuminated by the god-given light of understanding, which recognises the good and eternal, the natural light of human reason misinforms the will and leads to error and doubt's boundless sea. The King's answer however betrays no misgiving.

Ay, that is study's god-like recompense. (I. i. 58)

Cornelius Agrippa undertook to write his famous work De vanitate et incertitudine artis et scientiarum to vanquish just that conviction. To believe that study suffices to perfect human knowledge even of this finite world is to trust oneself first to the evidence of the senses which we know perceive only the semblances of things, and then to speculate upon such

seeming in order to postulate a whole system. Cornelius Agrippa was a learned man, but the advances in the human sciences that he saw in his lifetime served more to convince him of uncertainty than to fire him with enthusiasm for the empirical methods which produced such disquieting results. The humility which scientists show in the twentieth century when theories are conceived, accepted and destroyed within days, did not characterise the first rejectors of the old astronomy. He describes the error of intellectual pride in the beginning of the *De vanitate* thus:

> It is an auncient, and almoste an agreeable and common opinion, of all the Philosophers, by the which they thinke, that euery Science doothe bringe vnto man some Divinitie, accordinge to the capacitie and value of them both, so that oftentimes, beyonde the limites of Humanitie, they may be reckened amonge the felowship of the Godd.

In the discussion of the relative merits of soldiery and learning in the commonwealth in Romei's *Discorsi*, translated by John Kepers as the *Courtiers Academye*, the soldiers charge the scholars with overweening ambition.

> ... Philosophers, and wise men, who not content with matters terreine, like the Giants, endeavour to ascend vppe vnto heauen, and make themselues equall with God, as also nourished in idlenesse, and knowing themselues vnapt to action: attaining to Magistracie, or honours, swelling themselues in pride, they retire from euil companie into a solitarie life: and after hauing beene mewed vppe vppon theyr studies and

---

Booke, they become leane and macerate, and not able to determine in what manner the summe heatheth, wholly confounded, they waste themselves in melancholick humours. 1

This is the kind of sequence of events that Berowne sees awaiting the oath-takers, pointing out that the large number of prohibitions will ensure that much of their intellectual activity will be devoted to finding ways of circumventing them. Mistresses hidden from common sense are not only those enjoyed in secret, but also those female simulacra spun by the sublimating fantasies of Platonists, like Chapman's Mistress Philosophy. Human nature will always have the last word, bending the angelic intellect to serve its necessary desires.

If study's gain be this, and this be so
Study knows that which yet it doth not know. (I. i. 67-8)

The King's objection that Berowne's argument makes learning the salve to useless pleasure gives Berowne the upper hand, for he had been unable to posit an end for learning beyond itself. Berowne hastens to point out that no ulterior end need be adduced for delight, but that the way of life proposed by the king is not only likely to bring none but a painful result, it is painful in its very exercise.

1. The Courtiers Academie: Comprehending seven seuerall daues discourses ... 7 Of precedence of Letters or Armes ... Originally written in Italian by Count Hanibali Romei, ... and translated into English by I(ohn) K(epers) ... Printed by Valentine Sims. (1598), p. 275.
Such force hath worldly glory (though but vaine)
To make men, for her louse, themselves to hate,
Who for desire of her, their strength doe straine
Farre, farre aboue the pitch of mortall state,
And paine in sense, to sense doe captiuate:
Thyough paine wake sense, yet sense doth waking sleep,
Dreaming on Glory in the lapp of Fate:
So paine from sense, doth paine with pleasure keepe, \( ^1 \)
While sense is mounting Honor's Mountaine stepe.

Berowne may mean the pain of confusion and the rebellion of the
body chastised beyond its power to bear it, or he may mean the pain of
damnation. The argument that follows is perfectly orthodox, not only in
terms of the contemporary religious attitude to the new science, but also
in terms of Aristotelian and Platonic theories of truth. The image of
light is richly ambiguous. The light which seeks light is the soul which
reflects the divine light of God –

... the soules of men, louing and fearing God,
receive influence from that divine light it selfe,
whereof the Sunnes claritie, and that of the
Starres is by Plato called but a shadow. \( ^2 \)

The light that it seeks is the natural light of human reasoning, which
to discern it must quench its own glow (the illumination of faith and
revelation) or else it is an invisible as a glowworm by sunlight. So

Light seeking light doth light of light beguile. (I. i. 77)

\( ^1 \) The Complete Works of John Davies of Hereford, ed. A. B. Grosart. Printed for private circulation, London, 1878, p. 34, Microcosmos, St. 120, cf. Politic discourses, treating of the differences and inequalities of vocations Translated out of French by AEgremont Ratcliffe ... Imprinted at London for Edward Aggas, 1578, fol. 64 verso et seq.

\( ^2 \) Ralegh, Historie of the World, op. cit., p. 17.
Wandering in our own deliberately created darkness, we may find that the soul is dead, and unable even to perceive the lesser light, like Dee who followed his blind faith in experimental science into charlatanry.

Berowne suggests a more valid Platonic pastime, of discerning the beauty of the soul through the sovereign and universal action of love.

He is not altogether frivolous, as his next point makes clear:

Study is like the Heaven's glorious Sun,
That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks: (I.i.84-5)

Berowne's image, the leit-motif of almost all his utterances, may be often found in arguments to the same intent, for example -

The beames of Mars himselfe ... are parched and combust under Sol, with the senses are amated, as Philosophers defend, with a subject that excelleth in predominance, and hee that laboureth to ascend or mount above his ordinarie pitche by vncertayne stayes, seeketh not an eluation, but an ouerthrowe ... I would therefore willinglie take paine in perswading these menne to flie beneath the cloudes, for feare of wasting with the foolish Eagle (which went about to builde her neste, within the cyrcle of the Sunne) in a fruitlesse altitude. For what can it auaille a man to conquer all the world, with the peryll of his owne soule ... 1

Fulke Greville's is probably the most powerful expression of the Christian sceptic's point of view, and Berowne's image appears here as well.

1. Henry Howard, Ninth Earl of Northampton, A defensatiue against the poxon of supposed Prophecies ... At London Printed by John Charlewood ... 1583, Sig. *iii verso, of. Certaine very proper and most profitable Similies ... Collected by Anthonie Fletcher ... 1595. Printed at London, by John Jackson, for Isaac Bing, Simile 38, p.14.
This Knowledge is the same forbidden Tree,
Which man lusts after to be made his Maker;
For Knowledge is of Power's eternity,
And perfect Glory, the true image-taker;
So as what doth the infinite containe,
Must be as infinite as it againe.

No maruell then, if proud desires' reflexion,
By gazing on this Sunne, doe make vs blinde,
Nor if our lust, our Centaure-like affection,
In stead of Nature, sadome clouds and winde;
So adding to originall defecion,
As no man knowes his owne vnknowing minde:
And our AEgyptian darkenesse growes so grosse,
As we may easily in it, feele our losse. 1

The young men do not doubt the infinity of knowledge, but they do
not doubt their capacity to absorb the infinite either: even when Cupid
blindsolds them, dazzled by the after-images burnt on their brains, they
still insist that they are eagles. 2 Berowne's arguments are just and
well-chosen, and would have found support among obscurantists and
intellectuals alike. He chooses the most disreputable of the sciences to
illustrate his argument, the involved and polemical astronomy of his time.

This is the study which divorces the scholar most fully from mundane
affairs and beguiles him with the illusion of conquering celestial

learning", sts. 3 & 4.

2. Thomas Williams in a congratulatory poem affixed to Guise
Banquet of sens, A Coronet for his Mistresse Philosophie, and
his amorous Zodiacke (At London, printed by I.R, for Richard
Smith, 1595, Sig. A3 recto) congratulates Chapman for being
just such an eagle.

Your eyes can well the dazeling beames behold
This Pythian lightner freshly doth effuse ...
empires. 1 Berowne's view, and his governing image are explained by Nicholas of Cusa:

It so far surpasses human reason, however, to know the precision of the combinations in material things and how exactly the known has to be adapted to the unknown that Socrates thought he knew nothing save his own ignorance, whilst Solomon, the wise, affirmed that in all things there are difficulties which beggar explanation in words; and we have it from another who was divinely inspired, that wisdom and the locality of the understanding lie hidden from the eyes of all the living ... In the presence of such difficulty we may be compared to owls trying to look at the sun. 2

1. The champions of all other learning not infrequently made an exception of astronomy, for example, Henry Cross in Vertues Common-wealth: or the high-way to honovr ... London Printed for John Newbery, ... 1603, Sig. N2 verso - N3 recto:

But forasmuch, as some are diversly affected, they obserue not this decorum before noted, but fall into vaine iangling, and so conceited of their owne wits, and haue so many crotchets in their heads, that they publish great volumes of nice and curious questions, ambiguities & doubts, as many of the Asse-strumenters, that are very inquisitiue to knowe if the world were created in the Spring or Autumne, the night before the day, ...

2. Nicholas de Cusa, De Docta Ignorantia, trans. Germain Heron, O. F. M., with an introduction by Dr. D. J. B. Hawkins (London, 1954), p. 8. We may compare this with Raleigh's view: Et humanum est errare. And to the end that no man should be proude of himselfe, God hath distributed vnto men such a proportion of knowledge, as the wisest may behold in themselues their owne weakenesse. Nulli vnquam dedit omnis Deus, God neuer gave the knowledge of all things to any one, (2. Cor. 12, 2) ... Sapientia vbi iuenitur? (saith Iob) but where is wisedome found? And where is the place of understanding? man knoweth not the price thereof, for it is not found in the land of the liuing. And therefore seeing God found follie in his Angels, mens judgements (which inhabite in houses of clay) cannot be without their mistakings ... (The Historie of the World, op. cit., p. 34).
The King implies that there are good authorities for Berowne's views.

How well he's read to reason against reading: (I.i.94)

No specific source has ever been nominated. The argument may be justified by reference to a number of streams in European thought. The Neo-stoics, like Lipsius, would have supported such an argument on the grounds that the King's notion of the Academe is vainly optimistic, man's life being forever subject to the myriad accidents and perversions of the human condition. The English humanists of the early sixteenth century would have agreed that the pursuit of scientia was foolishness because the real wisdom, sapientia, was an active and ethical ideal.

1. There is a great volume of neo-stoic writing being published in England during Shakespeare's writing life. Evidence for the stoic attitude to the getting of wisdom can be found in Guevara's Dispraise of the life of a Courtier, and a commendacion of the life of the labouring man, MDXLVIII (col: Excusum Londini, in aedibus Richardi Graftoni) passim; in the fifth book passim of Sir Richard Barckley's Discourse of the Felicitie of Man: or his Summum bonum ... London, Printed for VVilliam Ponsonby, 1598; and in Joseph Hall's Heaven vpon Earth, Or Of true Peace and Tranquillitie of Minde ... London. Printed by Iohn Windet for Samuel Macham and Matthew Cooke ... 1606.

2. Many examples of this view can be cited; e.g. Baldwin's Treatise of Moral Philosophy (loc.cit.) Sig. N3 recto:

Science separate from justitie and vertue, is not wysedome but subteltie.

and Sir Thomas Elyot Of the Knowledge (sic) whiche maketh a wise man, Londini in aedibus Thomas Bertheleti, MD.XXIII, fol. 91. One of the most winning and succinct formulations is that of Cornelius Agrippa (op.cit., f. fol. 3 recto)

For the true felicitee, consisteth not in the knowledge of goodnesse, but in a good life: not in understandinge, but in liuinge, with understandinge: For not the good understandinge, but the good will, ioygneth men vnto God.
They in turn inherited the mediaeval concept of Christ, *logos*, the Word, as knowledge. Erasmus develops the idea of Thomas a' Kempis, of the fool in Christ, who realises that his intellectual pretensions are absurd before God, accomplishing his salvation with a light heart through

1. *Si Christum bene scis, nihil est si cetera nescis:*
   *Si Christum nescis, nihil est si cetera discis.*

   Know Christ aright, know all that can be worth the knowing:
   But know not Christ, and know all knowledge overthrowing.

*A dialogue full of pith and pleasure: between three Philosophers: Antonio, Meandro and Dinarco: Upon the Dignity, or Indignity of Man. Partly Translated out of Italian, and partly set down by way of observation. By Nicholas Breton, Gentleman. London Printed by T. C. for John Browne ... 1603, Sig. E3 verso. Cf.*

Study not Astronomy,
Least to darkness turne thy light:
But that high Divinitie,
Where the day hath neuer night . . .

*A Divine Poeme, divided into two Partes: The Rauisht Soule, and the Blessed VVeeper. Compiled by Nicholas Breton, Gentleman. Imprinted at London, for John Browne and John Deane. 1601, Sig. B3 recto.*)
humility and trust. The tradition of the encomium morae \(^1\) links with
the Pyrrhonism of Montaigne, who finds tranquillity and detachment in his
view of the world's folly, which does not require such a drastic perversion
of human nature as stoicism. \(^2\) Berowne argues in the fashion developed

---

1. But now at last I lepe backe agayne to saint Paule, and Gladly
(saieth he) ye doo beare with vnwise men, (speakyng it by him
selfe) also in an other place, receiue you me, as vnwise that I
am; and further, I speake not this precisely as vpon gods precept,
but rather in mine owne vnwisedome. Than againe, we (saieth he)
are become fooles for Christes sake: Dooe you here now how
great praises of Foly this so great an autor alleageth, yea and
that more is, he plainely enioygneth Folie vnto vs, for a thyng most
necessary and right, importyng to saluacion. For who so semeth
(saieth he) to be wise amongeth you, let him become a foole, to the
ende he be wise in deede.

The praise of Folie. Morae Encomivr a booke made in latine
by that great clerke Erasmus Roterodame. Englisshed by Sir Thomas
Chaloner knight. Anno M.D.DLIX, Sig. Riv recto.

For a summary of the whole tradition in literature, see Walter
Kaiser, Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare (London,
1964).

2. Erasmus attacks the Stoics with vigour in the Praise of Folly (op. cit)
Sig. Elv verso - F1 recto.

For whiche of you woulde not lathe, and blisse you from the
company of suche maner a man, as were mortified, and benummed
in al those sensis and vnderstandynges, that naturally other men
are ledde by? that had no affections reigynng in hym? nor woulde
no more bee sterred with loue, or compassion than if he were a
flint stone? that in nothing could ouershoote him selfe, but rather
lyke Argus see, and cast all thynges to the vttremost? Forgyn
no man? be onely pleasde with hym selfe? esteeme him selfe
onely to be riche? onely to be a kyng? onely to be a freeman?
brifely, onely all thynges, but in his owne conceyte onely? that
cared for no friendes? friend him selfe to no man? Wolde not
sticke to defte the Gods? and what so euer is dooen of other men
in this present life to laugh at it and dispise it, as a verie madnesse?
Yet suche a maner quaynt beast is this complete wyseman of theirs.

Montaigne's Apologie of Raymond Sebond is largely conceived as an
attack upon conventional philosophers especially Stoics (Florio's
Montaigne, op. cit., pp. 252 ff.).
by the supporters of true wisdom and virtue in the combat with proud
knowledge and incipient error, but his motives are libertine, as Longaville
is quick to point out.

He weeds the corn and still lets grow the weeding. (I.i.96)

When Berowne caps Longaville's line with a strange reference to
spring as the season of wantonness (for green geese are not only the geese
fattened at Whitsuntide) the young men are puzzled by the apparent non
sequitur, until the King's comment reminds us where we have heard his
kind of argument before.

Berowne is like an envious sneaping frost
That bites the new-born infants of the spring. (I.i.100-1)

In Nashe's Summer's Last Will and Testament, Winter attacks Spring
because it is the season beloved of scholars. We have already had a
chance to assess the demeanour of Ver for ourselves, and we know him
for a giddy fop whose great delight is in "giving wenches greene gownes".
Summer says of Winter, as the King remarks of Berowne,

Gainst her owne bowels thou Arts weapons turnst.

With the aid of the poor fellows who kept the house and tilled the land,
Nashe taught the lesson of Winter, cheerful endurance and cooperation,
to Whitgift and his little academy. Unlike the little household sheltering
from the plague in the Archbishop's house at Croydon, Berowne is

1. McKerrow, Nashe, Vol. III, p.230; Summer's Last Will and
   Testament, I.1487.
invulnerable; the attitude he takes is not a lesson he has learnt in innocence, but an attitude he adopts in self-indulgence. His rejoinder to the King shows arrogance as well as orthodoxy.

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
Then 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. (I.i.102-9)

In his famous pioneering work of psychology, Huarte makes the same comparison of learning and agriculture:

... after he (the good husbandman) hath manured the earth in due season he lookes for conuenient time to sow it, for it cannot be done at all times of the yeare, and after that the graine is sprung vp, he clenseseth and weedeth it, that it may encrease and grow, gluing the fruit which of the seed is expected. After this sort, it is necessarie that the science being knowne, which best fitteth with the person, he begin to studie from his first age, for this (sayth Aristotle) is the most pliant of all others to learning. Moreover, mans life is very short, and the arts long and toilsome, for which it behooues that there be time sufficient to know them, and space to exercise them, and therwith to profit the common wealth. 1

This fills out Berowne’s argument: the fruit of learning is the benefit for which it is exercised in the commonwealth in mature age, which if spent in study is wasted in pointless labour. When Berowne speaks of abortive birth, he means the monster or the still-born child,

---

carried in the womb for so long, and born to no effect but wonder or grief.

So there is nothing so monstrous, and against nature, as the abandoning of this commonaltie, by neglecting the action. 1

Seneca and Cicero can provide authority for the view that effort made contrary to nature's bent is vain, 2 but Shakespeare's view is probably closer to Montaigne's:

Of Philosophies opinions, I more willingly embrace those, which are the most solide: that is to say, such as are most humane and most ours: My discourses are suitable to my manners; lowe and humble ... Wee must enter into the nature of things, and throughly see what she inwardly requers. I quest after her tracke; we have confounded her with artificiall traces. And that Academicall and Peripatetical sumnum bonum or soveraigne felicity, which is, to live according to her rules: by this reason becommeth difficult to be limited, and hard to be expounded. And that of the Stoickes, cousin-german to the other, which is, to yeelde vnto nature. Is it not an errour to esteeme some actions lesse woorthie, forsomuch as they are necessary? Yet shall they never remoove out of my head, that it is not a most convenient marriage, to wedde Pleasure vnto Necessitie ... Who will not call it a property of folly to doe sloathfuilly and frowardly, what is to be done, and one way to drive the body and another way the minde, and himselfe to be distracted into most divers motions? 3

---

1. AEGremont Ratcliffe, Politique discourses, op.cit., fol. 52 verso.

2. E.g. ibid., fol. 12, and Huarte, op.cit., p.12.

3. Florio's Montaigne, op.cit., p.663, "Of Experience".
The King acknowledges the force of Berowne's argument and offers to release him from his promise, but perversely Berowne refuses to renegue; like the contemners of knowledge themselves, he cannot follow his own advice. (Nicholas of Cusa was an important contributor to the overthrow of Ptolemaic astronomy, and Cornelius Agrippa had all his works, including the De vanitate, on the Index because he was an occultist.) He speaks of his argument as of a mere verbal exercise, a challenge to which the King has failed to respond, a skirmish which he has won, and not a declaration of his real intentions. Ironically, the play will prove the truth of what he argued in sport. He cannot abandon his train of thought, and on the mention of the necessity of parley with the Princess, he reverts to it:

So study evermore is overshot:
While it doth study to have what it would,
It doth forget to do the thing it should;
And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,
'Tis won as towns with fire; so won, so lost. (I. i. 141-5)

What the academicians would was fame in afterlife, for which they neglected virtue, which consists in fulfilling the duties of one's state in life, and as there is no other way into the temple of honour but through the temple of virtue, in their very striving for honour they have lost it. As Montaigne said,

I finde nothing so humble and mortall in Alexander's life, as his conceipts about his immortalization. 1

1. Ibid, p. 664.
The king, so rudely reminded of the duties of his state in life, contemplates the wiping out of his edict, which is only four days old, on the plea of necessity, and Bironse again pounces on him, with the orthodox argument at his fingertips.

Necessity will make us all forsworn
Three thousand times within this three years' space.
For every man with his affects is born,
Not by might mastered, but by special grace. (I.i.148-151)

According to Protestant doctrine, the law as revealed by the Bible is sufficient for salvation, and the nature of man after the Fall such that he cannot fulfil the law, let alone undertake anything not positively required by it, the so-called acts of supererogation. The taking of any vow, of poverty, celibacy or obedience, according to Osiander,

... is contrarie to the article of sanctification, which dooth not grant to any man in this life, a perfect & plenarie fulfilling of the lawe; much less anie workes of supererogation. 1

God must have "ye whole honour of mans saluation" is the burden of Cavendish's The Image of Nature and Grace. 2 The vow of continency was regarded as particularly foolhardly, because the sexual impulse was sent us by the will of God, who had provided his own chosen

1. A Manvell Or brev volume of Controversies of Religion between the Protestants and the Papists: ... Written in Latine ... by Lvcas Osiander, and now Englished with some additions and corrections. At London Printed by Humfreys Lownes. 1606, p.204.

2. The Image of Nature and Grace, conteynynge the whole course, and condition of mans estate, written by Richard Caundishe ... At London Printed by John Daye. (1571), fol. 122 recto.
way, matrimony, of directing it to His ends, and avoiding the sin of fornication. By Calvin's definition, the young lords are rash and ungrateful.

For he that voweth that which either is not in his power, or disagreeeth with his vocation, is rash: and he that despiseth the bountifulnesse of God, whereby hee is appointed Lorde of all thinges, is vnthankesfull.

The affects are the lower powers of the mind which move us to desire the good and flee the bad, but by our Fall which darkened our reason and limited our perception, they continually move towards the bad and away from God. The affections "servants of the Minde,


the ende that by such vnsatiablenesse, nature be angered, and almost forced to take more than is needfull.  

This is then the background to Berowne's curtly expressed misgiving about the vow to have no commerce with women. Of all the lords he is the most presumptuous, for he has sworn without deluding himself, and expects to keep the impossible rule of life longer than his fellows. The arrogance of his decision is only exceeded by its cynicism, for clearly he does not expect the others to be faithful to their oath for very long. After his vaunting speech he asks languidly if they will be allowed any means of recreation, and the answer is ready: Armado will be the lords' unwitting jester. Well might the laconic lords differentiate themselves from him in that he has a mint of phrases in his brain; events will prove that he will not be alone in allowing his own tongue to ravish him. His preposterous battles may be compared to the discipline which the lords have devised for their own torment, and his motive can hardly be more vain-glorious than theirs, although it maybe more crudely so. The other half of their entertainment will be Costard, the unlettered swain. The twin natures of man, the man of fire and the child of fancy, and the grosser corporeal nature will be the objects of their ridicule, Armado who aspires to the heroic status of the paladins, and Costard who dreams of a quiet life and one good meal a day.

At the entry of Dull and Costard the King is called upon to administer his own edict, which has turned what ought to be an innocent activity into

---

1. Boaistuau, op. cit., Sig. B8 recto.
a crime for which Costard must now suffer, Costard, whose name is only another word for poll, one of the multitude. The fact that Costard's lines are unbidden interjections and so must be delivered to the audience means that the audience builds up complicity with him. He knows, in his peculiar droll resignation spiced with the irrepressibility of his innocence, that the decision will go against him and he is so used to culpability that it never occurs to him to protest. He confesses his transgression freely, in a torrent of words which comes to a halt in the statement, "It is the manner of a man to speak with a woman", which is oddly redolent of the Proverb of the four wonderful things. In his assumption that man is born to desire woman he is perfectly orthodox: he can no more expect to escape the general doom than he can to speak with the tongues of angels, for

... if every man may obtaine by prayer the gift of continencie, why not also the gift of tongues? or, why not the gift of healing also? 1

When Berowne sneeringly offers to hear the letter as he would an oracle, Costard replies with an oracular pronouncement of his own:

Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh,
(I.i.215)

Meanwhile, after Longaville's rebuke to Berowne (I.i.195) the other lords have been curiously silent. During the reading of Armado's preposterous letter, Costard gives evidence that he has learned that

Page 243 does not exist
hardest fundamental lesson, tirelessly cited by every moral philosopher, to know himself and his own imperfections. Aware of the factitiousness of the law that condemns him, he tries to find a way out by ringing the changes on the phrases of the edict, in a parody of a lawyer's manner, but in this court sophistry is the prerogative of the judges and he is condemned. The sense of his twisting the King's phrase is not so much a bawdiness as a flash of loyalty.

This maid will serve my turn, sir. (1. i. 283)

Browne continues to divert himself at this spectacle, as if it were a play. He watches Costard condemned to bread and water in the custody of Armado, like the baser nature of the young men mortified by their ambition. Costard's suggestion that he be allowed to eat and pray, instead of fasting, reflects the uselessness of the lords' self-imposed mortification, for, unlike them, he has had experience of hunger, and it can accomplish nothing in regenerating his character or benefiting the commonwealth. The real significance of his suffering lies in the statement he makes as Browne takes him off the stage.

I suffer for the truth, sir; for true it is, I was taken with Jaquenetta and Jaquenetta is a true girl, and therefore welcome the sour cup of prosperity, affliction may one day smile again, and till then, sit thee down sorrow! (1. i. 294-298)

His muddling of the words for fortune and ill fortune reflects the mingled nature of man's lot upon earth, and his own resignation to it. He is as far from hope and ambition as he is from despair and self-loathing.
He invites sorrow to take her place at his table for he has learned what Montaigne called the great lesson of philosophy, by dint of living with the wind and the rain.

Be it supposed that Learning and Knowledge should work those effects they speak of, that is, to blunt and abate the sharpness of those accidents or mischances, that followe and attend vs; doth she any more than what ignorance effecteth, much more evidently and simply?  

The notion of the value of affliction can be filled out by the most powerful part of Davies Nosce Teipsum —

If ought can teach vs ought, Affliction's lookes,
(Making vs looke vnto ourselfes so neere,)
Teach vs to know our selues beyond all bookes,
Or all the learned S(c)hooles that euer were.  

Costard invites Affliction to share his board like a valued guest, for her value is not that she be borne with, but that she be received with good-humour. The Stoics learnt to bear the vicissitudes of fortune impassively but the great achievement of the Christian Pyrrhonist is to jest in the face of confusion and uncertainty, and to use misfortune to cement relationships with others.

1. Florio's Montaigne, opcit., p. 283, "An Apologie of Raymond Sebond".

Then though Affliction be no welcome Ghost
Vnto the world (that loues nought but her weale)
Of me, therefore she shalbe loved best,
Because to me shee doth the world reveale,
Which worldly welfare would from me conceale.  

Further light may be cast upon the associations raised in the mind
of an audience by the opening picture of four young Frenchmen creating
their idealist academy in the King’s park, by a plate in Civitas Veri, an
allegory of the city of truth presented to Henry of Navarre by Bartolommeo
Delbene. One of the few pastoral scenes in the book is the Grove of
Arrogance and Falsehood, which is formed by a natural arena of trees
wreathed in mist and infected with bugs. Falsehood poses in borrowed
plumes in the centre, but in the foreground Arrogance, strutting in
cothurnoi approaches a group of four young men crowned with laurel.
Another bows low before her, but the crown she holds aloft is turned as
if in act to crown herself. In the right foreground are enacted the
pursuits of "Chymistae, Spagiritae, circulatores, divinaculi,
mathematici". Clearly the opening of Love's Labour's Lost cannot
be interpreted wholly in terms of this allegory, but it is not to be
automatically construed as festivity either. The audience has seen a
heavily criticised oath-taking and an unjust trial: Berowne has said that
Spring is near, but further suggestions of a May-time frolic are still to
come. The longest speeches have been given to the cynic, while the

---

2. Civitas veri Sive morum Bartholomei Delbene ... Parisiis Apud
Ambrosium et Hieronymum Drouart ... M. DC. IX, p. 150,
Appendix, fig. 1.
optimists have remained curiously silent, apart from the King's speeches which are full of death, oblivion, and frost. Our laughter is not the happy chuckle of festivity, but something much more ambiguous and troubled.

In the next scene we have the entrance of another critic of the play's proceeding, the apt child, Moth, whom the historians labour to identify with Nashe. While not commenting upon the value of discovering an exact parallel, it might be as well to examine the tendencies of Nashe's writing, which might justify Miss Yates's highly suggestive attribution of the title "villanist" to both Nashe and Shakespeare. 1

Like Berowne, Nashe was well-read to reason against reading, and his position is not simply one of bed-tempered obscurantism.

Young men are not so much delighted with solide substances, as with painted shadowes, following rather those thinges which are goodly to the viewe, then profitable to the use, naithere they lose so much those thinges that are doing, as those thinges that are sounding; rejoycing more to be strowed with flowers then nourished with frute. How many be there that seeke truth, not in truth, but in vanitie, and find that they sought not according to truth but according to vanitie, and that which is most miserable, in the words of life, they toile for the merchandise of death. 2

In the Anatomic of Absurditie, he mentions Mulcaster and Ascham, the humanists in whose tradition he considers himself to be writing. He condemns speculative studies for the very reason that they have no

---


demonstrable relation to an active ethical ideal, to the "good Life" and "honest conversation". 1 Winter's attack on academicism in Summer's Last Will and Testament might be specifically applied to the four young lords, "word-warriors, lazy star-gazers",

They thought how they might plant a heaué on earth, Whereof they would be principall lowe gods; That heauen they called Contemplation, As much to say as a most pleasant slouth; ... 2

The conclusion of Winter's bitter diatribe is that they are "vain boasters, liers, makeshifts", and that the truth can only be expected from the lips of simple folk who perform more than they promise.

Vox populi, vox dei. In Nashe's play vox populi is most clearly represented in the figure of Harvest, the farm hand stitched over with ears of wheat from Goodman Yeoman's unpaid wheatsheaf, who, despite the recentness of the harvest, is already in debt at the alehouse. The figure of the fool by choice, who never loses sight of his human frailty and the fragility of his fortunes, is Will Summer, who remains, like all those who would be saved, as a little child. As he takes the tongue-tied imp upon his knee to provide the great closing image of Nashe's pageant, he protests childishly —

1. Ibid., pp.47-8.
As sure as this coate is too short for me, all the Points of your hoase are for this condemned to my pocket if you and I e're play at spanne Counter more. 1

In the first scene Costard provided the counterpoise to the academicians: his role in the second is taken by the child who acts as father to the man Armado, and counters his extravagances with sharply expressed commonsense. As audience to Armado's posturing he is identified with the actual audience, which Shares his scorn for the Spanish popinjay. We discover that Armado has sworn to three years of fasting and study along with the other lords, so that he too is a member of the little academe. Moth presents to him in a cryptic form arguments like those that Berowne offered the covenanters: he understands the three years to be a word, a concept merely, which might be quite adequately studied by arithmetical computation alone. The Braggart is impressed by his reasoning, exclaiming wittily,

A most fine figure. (I. ii. 52)

To which Moth replies in disgust,

To prove you a cipher. (I. ii. 53)

Heedless of the criticism, Armado makes his confession of love. Like the other lords, he considers himself a soldier, and for all his massive vain-glory he is the first to fall from his self-ordained eminence. He admits himself incapable of warring against this affection of his own.

1. Ibid., p. 294-5, I.1948-50.
providing a grotesque parallel of the lord's pretensions, and a hint of what is to come.

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 devis'd courtesy. (I. ii. 58-60)

His useless sword is the fantastic parallel of the oath of the lords, and his power to wield it as much an illusion as their power to surmount their own nature by an oath. Moth offers him as a precedent, Hercules, the first of the many appearances of the Titan in the play: Hercules was a figure beloved of Renaissance humanism, significant of the superhuman struggle of the triumphant intellect against doubt, confusion and obscurantism, even to the point of heresy and damnation; in the older mediaeval concept he was a simpler figure of the power of the human soul aided by grace to conquer the powers of darkness. 1 Shakespeare begins with Hercules the lover, but the concept evolves in the course of the play and it is Moth who takes the role of the Titan at the last. The audience's complicity with Moth builds as they consistently understand more of what he says than Armado does: Armado pretends to a Platonical passion for Jaquenetta, admiring her wit, but Moth interprets her greenness in quite another fashion. He reminds Armado that red and white cannot be immaculate for they are the colours of flesh and blood, of shame and fear. He knows that Jaquenetta is the object of this transmogrified lust, and he

is sorry for her. As Armado says, "She deserves well", he replies,

To be whipp'd: and yet a better love than my master.  
(I. ii. 114)

The rational hind and his wench break into Armado's lofty passioning at this point. Armado is Costard's gaoler, as well as Jaquenetta's suitor, so he may feast while Costard pines. The consequences constitute the only practical results of the King's legislation. Jaquenetta replies to Armado's advances without coquetry or simpering, finding nothing in his magnificence but oddity, and his protestations nothing but words. Costard prays that he will not be mewed up: "I will fast being loose" (I. ii. 146) makes clear the supererogated nature of his punishment. If Armado can relax his meanness to feed him on the other four days of the week that will constitute the change in his fortunes. Moth is made his custodian for the nonce, but their relationship, despite the page's hauteur, seems to change before they leave the stage.

Costard: Well if ever I do see the merry days of desolation that I have seen, some shall see —

Moth: What shall some see?

Costard: Nothing master Moth, but what they look upon. 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 any man, therefore I can be quiet.  
(I. ii. 149-156)

For the moment the clown is the teacher of the boy, whose quickness of wit does not prevent him from discerning a difference between the absurdity of his master and the muddle of this poor soul. Costard begins in a high fantastical vein of his own, attempting to compose a jeremiad
in his biblical fashion, but the child's question restores him to self-possession, so that contradictory elements in his vision of the world partially resolve themselves into a statement of Costard's peculiar wisdom. Watching the childlike man and the witty child conversing gravely while Armado heaves his phony sighs, it is not hard to believe what Boaistuau says about the day of judgment:

Beholde these the whiche in times past we had in derision, in infamie and reproch, esteeming them as foolishe, and their life to be without honor, behold they are mounted among the children of God, and their porcion is among the Saintes. It is (sayth S. Jerome) the houre wherein many foolish and dumbe persons, shall be more happier than the wise and eloquent, manye Shepherdes and Carters shall be preferred before Philosophers, manye poore beggars before ryche Princes and Monarches, manye simple and ignorant, before the wittie and subtil, the which being deeply wayed and considered by Saint Augustine, saide that fools and simple witted men raushed the heauens, and the wise with their wisedome were sunke downe to Hell. 1

Armado's love ravings close the act. His attempts to justify himself are so perfunctory, so much an extension of his own vain-glory that we are in no danger of supposing that he is being rescued from a wrong way of life for the virtuous and fruitful path of love. The epitasis is in sight.

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. (I.ii.173-5)

The last word on Armado's character could well be Nashe's: in the definition of an Upstart, from Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Divell:

1. Boaistuau, op. cit., Sig. Q2 recto - verso.
Hee will bee humorous, forsoth, and haue a broode of fashions by himselfe. Sometimes (because Loue commonly weares the luteray of Wit) hee will bee an Inamorato Poeta, & sonnet a whole quire of paper in praise of Lady Swins-snout, his yeollow fac'd Mistress, & weare a feather of her rainbeaten fan for a favor, like a favr-horse. 1

This then is the protasis as far as it has been revealed by the first act. Furness laments that the characters of low life are not "more intimately connected with the more important business of the piece": 2

the comment is odd for various reasons; first, because it is difficult to decide what the important business of the piece is, it is so much a play of non-happening, and second, because they are obviously closely connected to the themes of the play, which are much more exposed than in plays with a stronger line of narrative development. The natural society of Jaquenetta and Costard is harmed by the antics of the academical ruler who chooses to subject their ordinary actions to his extraordinary aims, and at the end of the play it is this fact which we are obliged to confront. Armado is a grosser example of the self-deception practised by the lords, because he is a grotesque fake in everything, but they are deceived in a subtler fashion; the counterbalance is the unwinking stare of the yokels, walking unimpressed in and out of the gentles' game. The audience knows that love will revenge itself on the young men, and they may even guess, if they have read their Petrarch, that it will be the arrow of unrequited love that will transfix these scorners of their own humanity, but in a

fashion far less lyrical and lovely than we might be led to expect, in order that they may learn the greatest lesson, to know themselves.

The other datum in our experiment is provided in the next scene, the ladies. They are preceded by Boyet, playing his dual role of officer to the crown and weaver of fantastic compliment with perfect sang froid. The Princess's slight acerbity in begging him to diminish the vastness of his flattery shows us that she has a fairly shrewd estimate of herself, and of how glibly the compliments roll off her councillor's tongue.

I am less proud to hear you tell my worth,
Than you much willing to be accounted wise
In spending your wit in the praise of mine. (II.1.17-9)

The glance is a shrewd one, for doubtless Boyet is fairly smug about his ability in the courtesy department, but hardly so effete as to rely upon it. The Princess astutely mixes the commission to seek an interview with the King with praise, knowing what effect it will have upon him.

Proud of employment, willingly I go. (II.1.35)

The Princess's comment reveals her shrewdness, and the orthodoxy of her psychological insights:

All pride is willing pride, and yours is so. (II.1.36)

(Will holds the royall septer in the soule
And on the passions of the heart doth raigne.) 1

Vives describes the mind as divided between *Mens*, or understanding, which is the part made in the image of God, and *Will*, "voyde of reson, brute, fierse, cruell, more lyker a beast, than a man, wherein dwelleth these motions, whiche be named either affections, or perturbations, arrogancy, enuie, malyce, ire, feare, sorowe, desire nouer satisfied, and vayne joye". The proper regime to be established within the soul between wit and will is described by John Davies of Hereford, with specific reference to the sin of the young lords.

For our *Will'*s Baiard blind, yet bold, and free,
And, had she *way* made in her maine *Carrere*,
Sh' would runne into that *Light* that none can see
Save light of *Lights* to feele the *secrets* there,
Which *Angells* wonder at, yet come not neere:
But *Reas'n*’s conduct is nothing safe herein,
Therefore the *Will* hath too lust cause of *feare*
Lest shee should runne into presumptuous *sinne*,
For which diuinest *Angells* damn’d haue bin.

The young men have overthrown the supremacy of right *reason* in their souls by the sin of pride, and now they are enslaved to the will, which, lacking the control of the understanding, is swayed hither and thither by the affections, while the intelligence itself can no longer co-operate in the mind's commonwealth, but must perform for the gratification of the will, like a prisoner dancing to please his gaolers: the Princess's comment prepares us for her judgment of the scholar lords. Each lady has a flatteringly clear recollection of one of them, but all the

---

1. *An Introduction to VVysedome* made by Ludovicus Vives and translated into Englyshe by R. Morysine. (Col.: Londini in aedibus Thomae Bertheleti ... M.D.XLI, Sig. Di recto - verso.

descriptions contain a current of criticism, which is subtly and seriously expressed.

The only soil of his virtues' fair gloss ...
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.

(II. i. 47-52)

Longaville's will has lost its special virtue of integrity and indulges itself by allowing wit to coruscate in wanton disregard of the harm that it can do. The sovereignty of the angelic faculty is destroyed and the man's intelligence has become the tool of his malice. The inherent fault was explained by Petrarch, and his version given new currency by Thomas Twyne.

Joy, My wit is very sharpe. Reason: It is not the sharpeness, but the vprightnesse and staiednesse of the wit, that deserue the true and perpetual commendation. The sharpnesse of some wittes is rebated with smal force, and wil faile at the first encounter, and the most strongest things if they be stretched foorth to the uttermost, become feeble, and so likewise weakenesse ouercommeth all strength.

Joy, I haue a most sharpe wit. Reason. There is nothing more odious vnto wisdom then to much sharpnes: Nothing more greuenous vnto a Philosopher then a sophist: ... 1

Katherine describes the young Dumaine in words that might have described Shakespeare's beloved, the lily of Sonnet XCIV, whose beauty

and wit may not be matched with power to act virtuously, so that he has "most power to do most harm". The Princess’s reference to the withering of quick-springing plants brings even nearer the image of the fruitless, luxuriant flower, perishing in proud isolation in the stench of promise unfulfilled. Winter says of Sol, called in the marginal note, imberbis Apollo and, Will Summer assumes, a figure of pride,

Let him not talke for he hath words at will,
And wit to make the baddest matter good.

Summer snape,
Bad words, bad wit. 1

Rosaline does not lay beauty to Berowne’s credit, but makes up for it in celebrating the versatility of his eloquence, which is not a part of The Knowledg (sic) whiche maketh a wise man, according to Sir Thomas Elyot, for Plato asks Aristippus,

... what supposest thou them to be, which in every mater, that is mewed, canne raison fetely, makyng men that do here them/ wonder at their comuayance, though it be somtyme ferre from the purpose? be not they wise men? And that thing that they haue, is it not the very knowlege, that maketh wisedome? Ari: No, but it is a good parte of inuention, which commeth of witte. All be it bycause that which they do rayson is neuer certayne, it is rather opinion than wisedome, and also that maner prompte raysonynge hapneth more of nature than study, and therfore it is more commended of vulgare persones or ignorante: than of them which be of a ripe and perfect iugement. 2

2. Elyot, Of the Knowledg that maketh a wise man, op. cit., fol. 16 verso - 17 recto.
Our picture of the young men is now complete, and our misgivings about their behaviour in the first act are now justified. Boyet’s return presents the Princess with the King’s intention to "lodge her in the field" rather than "seek a dispensation for his oath", a reference which indicates the solemnness of oath-taking in Elizabethan England. The Princess has barely time to digest the unpalatable information when the King himself arrives and must himself hear her rebuke.

"Fair I give you back again; and welcome I have not yet: the roof of this court is too high to be yours, and welcome to the wide fields too base to be mine."

(II. i. 91-4)

There is now no doubt that the neglect of the sacred duties of hospitality was a grave sin in the Elizabethan ethic, but the Princess first rebukes the King’s pride. She gives him no quarter, and he fails signally to equal the sharpness and readiness of her tongue. She snatchest at the word will and makes the point of her remarks about Boyet again in a different way, implying that the oath was wilful, and its setting aside will be equally so.

"Why, will shall break it will, and nothing else."

(II. i. 100)

When the King mistakenly protests that she does not know what they have sworn to, she replies with true knowledge’s criticism of his proud knowledge —

"Where my lord so, his ignorance were wise, Where now his knowledge must prove ignorance."

(II. i. 102-3)
Her comment condenses all the point of Berowne's criticism of their aim of study, and she follows it with a description of their *summum bonum* as inevitably sinful. While the King peruses her letter, Berowne, regardless of his oath, attempts to converse with one of the ladies.

There is considerable confusion about this scene: the ladies may or may not be masked, and Berowne's first conversation may or may not be with Katherine. In any case, it seems clear that the lords have no firm idea of what they are doing: none remembers who the lady is who takes his fancy, as the ladies remember them. When the acrimonious discussion between the King and the Princess ends in stalemate, there is a furtive interchange oddly curtailed by the dimeters, between Rosaline and Berowne, which is very amusing because of Berowne's attempts to evade detection, while Rosaline answers clearly and gaily. Berowne is already forsworn: not only is he conversing with a lady, he has already begun to woo her. The ladies, in reverence to the oath which is so little regarded, withdraw discreetly, while the ascetic lords hang about to get information from Boyet, who is slightly acid because he too must lodge in the open field with his lady, in respect of an oath which the lords themselves hardly seem to take seriously. Berowne who boasted so coolly that he would be the last to keep his oath, has so far lost his self-possession that he inquires if Rosaline be married or not, drawing a particularly unpromising reply from the courtier, so that he leaves in some ill-humour. Maria's wry comment refers to the sorry figure he cuts, while Rosaline supplies the criticism she left out of her earlier eulogy.
And every jest but a word. (II.1.216)

In their high spirits the girls skirmish with their professional flatterer, exchanging, as ladies might with one advanced in years and pure of intention, kisses and mock favours, so that some control is applied to the predominant vision of them so far, as rather aggressive and thorny.

The Princess curbs their mock battle however, with a more serious suggestion:

This civil war of wits were much better us'd
On Navarre and his book-men, for here 'tis abus'd. (II.1.226-7)

Clearly the ladies have the intention of teaching the arrogant gentlemen a lesson, but it will not be easy to find the lesson to make an imprint upon such volatile matter, which has already ignited, unbidden, with the flame of love.

THE ACADEMICAL LOVERS: EPITASIS

The new development in the play begins with Boyet's anapaestic poem, delivered purely as a tour de force among much skirmishing in that odd metre. The quality of the performance is not high, for part of the joke is that the metre wrests some lines rather extravagantly wide of the rhetorical stress (e.g. 1.248). The general sense hops along from couplet to couplet, following the rapid but uneven flow of Boyet's invention, and subject always to the controlling conceit of the King's senses all gathered in his sight, which mutely supplicates and feasts upon the image of the Princess. The
conceits he spins, of the court of his eye, of the image of her in his eyeball being actually the presence of his heart impressed with her image (one of the better ones) and his tongue stumbling with haste to be in his eye (one of the worse), of the crystal full of jewels, are all far-fetched and nimble, even if they are too shallow to permit of development beyond the individual couplets. As the poetic flow dwindles to the banal the Princess seizes the opportunity to leave, but unabashed Boyet converts her line to the first of another couplet, crowning it with a repetition of his own worst conceit,

I only have made a mouth of his eye
By adding a tongue which I know will not lie. (II.1.252–3)

so extravagant compliment and pseudo-amorous jeu d'esprit are part of the Princess's milieu, a gay diversion which she understands as requiring the same kind of suspension of disbelief as a sport.

The next scene parallels the entertainment situation presented here, as Moth beguiles his languid master with a traditional air. Boyet exercised the courtiers' skill without ulterior motive or pretention, but to the inept courtier who seeks to make love by such means, the comment is sharply applicable.

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. (III.1.20–4)

Moth's words are ambiguous: he is not as the Arden editor appears to think, merely describing how a man may have success in love, for his
words are weighted with disapproval. The trappings of the conventional lover are worn either to amuse those who play love, or to seduce the vain and credulous. Moth claims that such refinements, like all smart accomplishments, are practised for praise and prestige. His attitude can be compared to that expressed by Philautus in Euphues and his England.

... in tymes past they vsed to wooe in playne tearmes, not in piked sentences, and hee speedeth best that speaketh wisest: every one following the newest waye, which is not ever the neerest waye: some going over the stile when the gate is open, and other keeping the right beaten path, when hee maye crosse ouer better by the fieldes. Every one followeth his owne fancie, which maketh divers leaes shorte for want of good rysinge, and many shoote ouer for lack of true syme.

And to that passe it is come, that they make an arte of that, which was woont to be thought naturall.

Extravagant wooing which climbs over the stile when the gate is open, may be compared to the study that the lords attempted which climbed over the house to get in at the little gate. Moth means Costard by the hobby-horse, but Armado betrays his unspoken attitudes by understanding it as Jaquenetta. The child takes the opportunity to utter a positive recommendation.

Negligent student! learn her by heart. (III. i. 34)

which shows that he sees learning and loving as a continuum.

Costard and Jaquenetta, horse and probably hackney, are both equine, but Armado is an ass, that proverbially lecherous of beasts. If we compare the words of Cornelius Agrippa about the Spanish lover, we may understand Armado's extraordinary character a little sooner.

The vnaduised Spaniarde is vnpatient in burning loue, verye made, with troubled lasciuiousnes he renneth furiously, and with piteful complaintes bewayling his fervent desire, doth call vpon his ladie and woershippeth her, at length being waxen iealous doth either kill her, or hurting her, makes her common for every man for meede: ... 1

When Moth, Armado's bullet, brings his wounded quarry to his master, they imitate the cultivated, expounding foolish riddles, in which Costard shows himself as apt, if a little literal-minded, as anyone else. When he is told that Armado means to enfranchise him, he is aghast, having used his own system of etymology to construe it as marriage with a whore, the punishment worse than death. It ought to be clear from this reaction that Costard does not think of Jaquenetta as a drab, and that Moth does not either. Costard's literalness can be seen as his wonder at the magic of words, their quidditas: word and signification are for him multiple and coexistent, palpable to the imagination. He is the raw material upon which rhetoric may work sad wonders, deluding him and

teasing his innocence with the discrepancy between word and fact. For him words are tokens to be held in the mouth, savoured and remembered: like Caliban, he is the real connoisseur of the poet's art, of sounds and sweet airs, and the poet must never forget his moral obligation to edify and safeguard him, or, like Prospero, he must drown his book.

Costard is of the same stock as the country folk dazzled by Autolycus's tawdry ware in The Winter's Tale, the genuine peasant folk whom Shakespeare observed with a loyal but often dismayed eye. Although he is not educated, he is apt and puts on his new word, remuneration, like a new coat and preens in it until Berowne appears. Berowne's action in giving letter and guerdon, though more graceful, is a clear parallel to Armado's. His subsequent behaviour tallies with Moth's description: he might well cross his arms across his doublet, and tip his hat over his eyes, leaning against a tree like the gentleman in the Nicholas Hillier miniature. His peculiar kind of arrogance emerges here in the image of the dominie tyrannising over the snivelling boy-child "than whom no mortal so magnificent", which parallels Armado's fixed image of himself as a Titan. Whatever public role he may assume as lover, soliloquising he expresses his disdain for his present servitude in terms that would have served Bruno for his attack on the love of woman in the Preface to the Heroici Furori. 1

1. Bruno begins by deriding poetry written to "quelle guance, quel busto" and finishes with "quel schifo, quel puzzo, quel sepolcro, quel cesso, quel mestruo, quella carogna, quella febre quartana, quella estrema ingiuria et torto di natura: che con una superficie, vn ombra, vn fantasma, vn sogno, vn Circeo incantistemo ordinato al servigio della generatione inganna in specie di bellezza; ... " (De si'heroici furori. Al molto eccellente Cavalliero, Signor Phillippo Sidneo. Parigi, Appresso Antnolo Baio, l'Anno. 1585, Sig. (*5) recto.)
A woman that is like a German clock,
Still repairing, ever out of frame,
And never going aright being a watch,
But being watched that it may still go right! (III. i. 187-190)

He is despite his vaunt the first to fall in love, and it is no heavenly
version that is afforded him. He sees Cupid as a bawd and extortioner
thriving on the guilty lusts of foolish men. This is the extension of his
cynicism about everything, because he desires the idealised nature
which he is convinced that he can never attain to. He now cannot accept
the fact that his love for Rosaline is sexual in its origins, when he would
like to think that he could express the noblest desires of the human spirit
by contemplating the sumnum bonum in a lady's lineaments. His
description of the beauty which has seduced him gains its point from
the unspoken comparison with the conventional beauty who blushed white
and red, whose eyes were grey as glass or made blackness bright, whose
hair was a golden net woven by the Gods to entrap the wandering
imagination. Rosaline does not coincide at any point with his notions of
beauty: he cannot even claim that her beauty has drawn him from the
search for the good, to show him a closer analogue to the divine source
of things. He is in love in the normal human fashion, and in his arrogance
he cannot bear it.

And among three, to love the worst of all;
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay and by heaven, one that will do the deed
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:
And I to sigh for her, to watch for her! (III. i. 192-197)