

As You Like It

by Peter Cash



English Association Shakespeare Bookmarks
Longer Commentaries No. 5

As You Like It (1599)

by

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SCOPE OF TOPIC

As You Like It is a product both of Renaissance humanism and Christian theology. Shakespeare's characterisation conforms to the view that a man and a woman can be defined in Platonic terms; at the same time, his plot teaches the Biblical lesson that, because they are mortal creatures, men and women should forgive each other their trespasses and unite/re-unite in a spirit of brotherly or not-so-brotherly love.

Consequently, Shakespeare's aims in the play are

- a] to demonstrate that a man has a tri-partite soul: in particular, to show that a man such as Orlando is not a balanced individual until the three parts of his soul [= action, education, passion] are in complete harmony;
- b] to demonstrate that a woman has a tri-partite soul: in particular, to show that a woman such as Rosalind is not a balanced individual until the three parts of her soul [= beauty, chastity, passion] are in complete harmony;
- c] to illustrate the irony of the human condition: namely, that man/woman is a finite creature in an infinite universe. Although there may be 'no clock in the forest', the forest itself is a supremely effective chronometer by which the movement of time on a wider scale can be measured; in the Forest of Arden, 'the greenwood tree' is a most versatile monitor of cyclical/seasonal change and its effect on all human 'ambition';
- d] to compose a satire on the subject of love: in particular, to show that the sentiments expressed in romantic poetry fail to take into account the effects of time upon human friendship and are therefore exaggerated and false ('feigning');
- e] to set up an antithesis between the court and the country: in particular, to show that courtly values (for all their sophistication) are ironically inferior to country values which are informed by a simpler self-knowledge and a franker appreciation of man's place in the universe;
- f] to assert that the differences between alienated men can be resolved by compassionate, Christian understanding: in particular, to show that reconciliation, even between sworn enemies, estranged brothers, remains – according to this theology – a miraculous possibility.

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ACT I Scene 1

The purpose of this first scene is to introduce Orlando De Boys. Although Orlando ('the spirit of my father ... within me') is a gentleman born, he suffers from the law of primogeniture; although he is a gentleman by birth, his older brother Oliver keeps him in a state of servitude/employs him as a mere swineherd ('like a peasant'). Because his 'first-born' brother deprives him of a 'good education', Orlando has no opportunity to develop 'all gentleman-like qualities': that is, he cannot become 'a gentleman' in whom the three parts of the soul are in harmony and cannot pursue his rightful careers as soldier, scholar and lover.

For his part, Oliver De Boys ("I will physic your rankness") conforms to the role of archetypal villain; he is a personification of Envy, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, a stock figure of the Morality Plays instantly recognisable to Elizabethan audiences. As an embodiment of Envy, Oliver belongs by the court where inter-personal rivalries traditionally flourish.

Enter Charles, the wrestler. The function of this figure is two-fold: first, he permits an exposition of the plot, explaining (in answer to Oliver's staged question) that Duke Senior has been 'banished' from the court by his 'younger brother' Frederick and with 'three or four loving lords' has gone into 'voluntary exile' in the Forest of Arden. There, these 'merry men'

live like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.

At once, Charles suggests that the Forest of Arden is a place where the passage of time is not a serious consideration; in this 'golden world', men – it is suggested – need not factor its swift movement into their daily equations, but can instead proceed at their leisure: 'fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world'. In this misleading incarnation, Arden is a pastoral idyll, a paradise, 'a golden world', an infinite world ...

Second, Charles supplies an occasion on which Oliver can give full expression to his villainy. In order to prove himself as a man of action, Orlando is 'tomorrow' planning to take part in a court entertainment and challenge Charles to a bout of wrestling; believing mistakenly that Oliver will be concerned for his younger brother's safety, Charles puts a well-meaning word in Oliver's ear – only to be told a pack of lies: namely, that Orlando is 'a secret and villainous contriver' who, if given a half a chance, will 'practise against thee by poison, entrap thee by some treacherous device'. Oliver's mendacity belongs on a Machiavellian scale, calculated as it is to animate Charles into doing Orlando fatal harm ('see an end of him').

Upon Charles' exit, Oliver's ten-line soliloquy gives the reason for his deviousness; here, to paraphrase John Middleton Murry, is Shakespeare the playwright at work, not endowing his villain with psychological realism, but giving him a plausible motive for his action. Oliver's soliloquy takes the form of a glowing testament to Orlando's character – 'gentle ... full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved' – beside which Oliver himself pales into insignificance and feels under-rated ('altogether misprized'). In short, Oliver De Boys seems motivated by a malicious sibling rivalry.

ACT I Scene 2

The purpose of this scene is to introduce Rosalind (Duke Senior's daughter) and her cousin Celia (Duke Frederick's daughter). At the start of the play, they are resident at the court where Duke Frederick has only recently usurped his older brother's position; to begin with, the two cousins recap upon this situation.

Since Rosalind is missing her 'banished father', Celia tries to cheer her up: 'be merry' x 2. In response, Rosalind asks Celia a leading question: "What think you of falling in love?" In doing so, she expresses a desire to satisfy the passionate part of her tri-partite soul.

Enter Touchstone, the court clown, its licensed jester, dressed in a motley costume. Touchstone is in the tradition of all Shakespearean clowns in that, although he may be a fool in appearance, he is a wise fellow in reality. Like Feste in *Twelfth Night*, he 'wears not motley in his brain' and is a fellow 'wise enough to play the fool'.

Touchstone speaks in prose **a]** because he is a low-life character and **b]** because he is expert at logical reasoning. As this opening exchange with Celia reveals, he reasons at speed, organising his ideas with an extraordinary mental agility:

TOUCHSTONE: Stroke your chins and swear by your beards that I am a knave.

CELIA: By our beards, if we had them, thou art.

TOUCHSTONE: By my knavery, if I had it, then I were. But if you swear by that that is not, you are not forsworn. No more was this knight swearing by his honour, for he never had any.

Touchstone's wit expresses itself with a syllogistic slickness: by means of hypotheses, if-then clauses, reinforced by syntactical parallelisms, he is able to think through an idea to its logical conclusion. Here, Touchstone's sub-textual reference is to the beards which the original boy-actors playing Rosalind and Celia have not yet been able to grow! At the same time, 'beard' is a metaphor for the female genital-area as defined by its pubic hair, an Elizabethan equivalent of the modern metonym 'bush'; consequently, Celia's remark doubles up, referring also to that covering of pubic hair which the boy-actors specifically lack.

Although she is a lady, a high-life character, Rosalind speaks prose. As a convenient result, she is able in due course to engage in repartee with Touchstone and prove herself his equal in wit. In this exchange, Rosalind's pun –

TOUCHSTONE: Nay, if I keep not my rank –

ROSALIND: Thou lovest thy old smell

– exemplifies her own mental alertness and prepares us for the philosophical role which she is soon to play: that is, as an analyst of romantic love. Such verbal dexterity – playing upon both the substantive and the adjective meanings of 'rank' – becomes her characteristic mode of expression; her character/her role is that of a woman who, once the passionate part of her Platonic soul is satisfied, will embody the Renaissance conception of womanhood.

The theatrical stage-direction – *Flourish. Enter Duke Frederick, Lords, Orlando, Charles and attendants* – prepares us for a scene of high drama. The inclusion of both 'Lords' and 'attendants' indicates that this is to be a crowd scene for which Shakespeare will call on all available members of his company in order to create a sense of public spectacle. Specifically, Orlando's wrestling match with Charles will be a public 'trial' of his manhood: that is, it will 'try ... the strength of [his] youth'. He will discover whether he matches up to the standards expected of a man of action.

Rosalind ("Is yonder the man?") notices Orlando's manliness at first sight. After Orlando has explained the ground rules to her, she is anxious to dissuade him from tangling with Charles; in resisting her entreaties, Orlando duly exhibits his 'gentleman-like qualities' first in praising her beauty (her 'fair eyes') and then in speaking with humility: "I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me". He is both courageous and gracious. To these qualities, Rosalind responds with four expressions of good wishes ("Now Hercules be thy speed, young man"/"O excellent young man") which leave us in no doubt about the strength of the feelings which she has immediately conceived for him. In fact, Rosalind's utterances are little less than exclamations of joy at his bravery and his masculinity.

The stage-direction – *A shout as Charles is thrown* – brings to an end an episode of theatre in which Rosalind can visibly react first to Orlando's shirtless physique and then to his exercise of this muscled physique in the ring/on the mat. By his victory over Charles, Orlando has publicly demonstrated his masculine fitness: that is, he has made a public display of his physical prowess and, before the numerous members of the court with whom the stage is populated, shown that he is a man of action. Even Duke Frederick, a natural enemy to Orlando's family, pays tribute/testifies to his gallantry: "Thou art a gallant youth".

Upon Duke Frederick's abrupt exit, Celia comments upon her father's 'rough and envious disposition' (a courtly vice) and hastens to add her own congratulations. As in a pantomime, there is a proleptic irony in her sense that, if Orlando 'keep [his] promises in love', then his 'mistress' – could that be Rosalind? – 'shall be happy'. To give dramatic point to this prediction, Rosalind, *taking a chain from her neck*, places it around his: "Wear this for me." The chain becomes an emblem of her love for him – which he wears throughout the subsequent action.

As *Rosalind and Celia begin to withdraw*, Orlando too stands love-struck. Suddenly speaking a blank verse that amplifies her sudden feelings, Rosalind –

Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown
More than your enemies

– plays on the adjective 'overthrown': as he overthrew Charles physically, so Orlando overthrew Rosalind emotionally. Unlike Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Rosalind recognises her passion for Orlando at once and immediately faces up to its strength; she is not at all 'disdainful', but comes straight to terms with her sexual longing. For his part, Orlando ("What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?") stands tongue-tied except for this line of blank verse and another ("O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown") in which he picks up her word and thus requites her love in a miniature form of stichomythia.

At this point, Le Beau warns Orlando that Duke Frederick 'is humorous': that is, volatile by nature. Furthermore, Le Beau warns him that the Duke has recently been revising his opinion of Rosalind for no other reason than that 'the people praise her for her virtues'. Duke Frederick is thus depicted as hating virtue for its own sake; confronted by it, his fiend-like reaction is to lash out and destroy it, knowing that its benign influence is likely to threaten his evil ambition. Anticipating Scene 3, Le Beau predicts that the Duke's 'malice' against his swan-like niece 'will suddenly break forth' ...

ACT I Scene 3

The first purpose of this scene is to confirm Rosalind's passion for Orlando. It is clear that Rosalind has Orlando on the brain. First, she tells Celia that her silent suffering is not for her banished father, but 'for my child's father': ie. for the man (Orlando) by whom she would willingly be impregnated. Second, she rebuts Celia's request – that she 'wrestle with her affections' – with the admission that her affections are already engaged by 'a better wrestler than myself': namely, Orlando. To bolster the Shakespearean convention that lovers should fall in love hopelessly and at first sight, Celia queries whether it is 'possible' that Rosalind can

'on such a sudden' have conceived 'so strong a liking' for 'the youngest son of Sir Rowland De Boys'. Apparently, Orlando's lineage helps to explain things.

The second purpose of this scene is to arrange for Rosalind's removal to the Forest of Arden in trans-sexual disguise. The 'necessary agent' (Murry's phrase) for this removal is Duke Frederick who – entirely in character – intrudes suddenly upon the scene and interrupts this girl talk 'with his eyes full of anger' (another of the Deadly Sins).

Exactly like Oliver, Duke Frederick – 'envious', 'humorous' – is shown to be an ill-tempered and scheming individual, acting in the Machiavellian tradition against his own brother. He is representative of the court, his suspiciousness ('she is too subtle for thee') and his tyrannical dispensation of law ('she is banished') expressed here in his unfair treatment of Rosalind: 'banished' for being no more than her father's daughter. Upon being faced with her goodness, his reflex action is to find an ulterior motive for it: in this case, an alleged ambition to dispossess Celia of her birthright ('thy name'). Egocentric and vindictive, Duke Frederick is a classical example of the 'bad governor' or 'black prince'.

Realising that Rosalind ('my poor Rosalind') is in dire straits, Celia displays a loyalty to her cousin for which the court itself is not renowned: "Thou and I am one". So close is Celia to Rosalind that Duke Frederick cannot banish one (his niece) without in effect banishing the other (his daughter); so selfless is Celia that she is prepared to relinquish her inheritance ("No, let my father seek another heir") rather than desert her destitute cousin.

Furthermore, Celia is resourceful enough to have conceived a plan: 'to seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden' [that is, to join Rosalind's father Duke Senior]. Rosalind envisages that Arden ("What danger will it be to us?") is a potentially hostile environment and believes that 'maids' must tread cautiously for fear of 'assailants'. It is in response to this hazardous situation that Celia proposes to dress 'in poor and mean attire', 'smirch' her face like a country wench and take the appropriate name of Aliena. For her part, Rosalind comes up with the plan to adopt a trans-sexual disguise: that is, to dress herself 'at all points like a man' and assume the name of Ganymede ('Jove's own page'). For good measure, Celia proposes that they persuade the court jester Touchstone to accompany them; in this positive spirit of adventure, they set off 'to liberty [= freedom from the machinations of the court] and not to banishment'.

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ACT II Scene 1

The first purpose of this scene is to introduce us to Duke Senior and the 'three or four loving lords' (including Amiens) who have accompanied him into his woodland 'exile'. Significantly, he and his 'co-mates' have entered into the spirit of the sylvan environment and 'dressed like foresters'.

In his opening speech, Duke Senior examines the antithesis between court and country. He attempts to convince both his 'brothers in exile' and himself of the virtues of forest life: is it not 'more sweet than that of painted pomp' (as enjoyed in the court)? Rhetorical though his questions sound –

Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?

– they demand an eventual answer: throughout the play, these questions remain open, as if (to begin with) Duke Senior is making a virtue of out the necessity to live in the cold forest. Duke Senior's language suggests that the Forest of Arden is superior to the 'painted pomp' of the 'envious court'; it implies that man is more likely to find a true sense of identity in natural

surroundings than in the artificial surroundings of the court. In the Forest of Arden, man is made aware that he is a fallen creature: 'here', he can feel 'the penalty of Adam' [= his feeble, mortal condition] in the forms of 'the icy fang/And churlish chiding of the winter's wind'. It is his exposure to these elements ('the seasons' differences') that 'feelingly persuades' him what he is: that is, a frail human being born to die.

Faced by these adverse circumstances, Duke Senior comes to the wise conclusion that moral courage is the only truly adequate response to experience. In the conclusion to his speech, he attempts to cheer himself up with the idea that there is no more wholesome way of life than a return to Nature. Heroically determined to make the best of the bleak conditions in which he finds himself, Duke Senior ("Sweet are the uses of adversity") articulates an idealistic/optimistic resolution to

Find[s] tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything.

Duke Senior is asserting that the structures of the court (teachers and 'books', preachers and 'sermons') are inadequate means of instruction in that they do not necessarily teach a man to know himself. More instructive are the practical lessons of life which he must learn in order to survive in the wild. This being so, the Forest of Arden anticipates and closely resembles Salisbury Plain on to which King Lear is cast out. Like Duke Senior, Lear (1604) is cast out of his court on to the wild heath around Stonehenge where he – an 'unaccommodated man' – discovers his true identity.

Amiens concurs with Duke Senior's opinion ("I would not change it") and congratulates him on making the best of his bad 'fortune' with such good grace ('so quiet and so sweet a style'). Duke Senior, however, is not oblivious to the irony of his situation: having had his own position usurped, he is sensitive that his exiled courtiers-cum-foresters are themselves now in the process of usurping the territory of the deer, the 'native burghers of this desert city' whom they are slaughtering for venison 'in their own confines'. At this point, the First Lord remarks that 'the melancholy Jaques' was earlier that day making this very criticism of their hypocritical occupation of the Forest.

The second purpose of this scene is to prepare us for the entrance of 'the melancholy Jaques', a character of major importance whose function in the play may be identified by the epithet applied to him. The epithet itself (used twice in the First Lord's speech) signals to an audience that he can be trusted consistently to contest more sanguine interpretations of human experience.

In ***As You Like It***, Jaques' function is to present the necessary opposite case: that is, to put the alternative point-of-view to the conventional point-of-view. To this extent, he is a radical politician whose criticisms challenge orthodox opinion/received wisdom. Like Duke Senior, he does not take it for granted that he and his fellow 'foresters' have a right to occupy the deer's land and kill them for meat; consequently, he is not afraid to 'swear' that Duke Senior, on taking up residence in the country, is more of an usurper ('you do more usurp') than Duke Frederick, back at court, is. He points out that Duke Senior, previously a ruler of the court, has in effect established a new tyranny over the native inhabitants of the forest.

In Duke Senior's company, Jaques is a dissident voice. In fact, he is one of five characters whose function – both throughout and at the ends of Shakespeare's comedies – is to dissent from the mood of good fellowship which has been falsely or precariously restored. By definition, Shakespeare's dissidents –

Shylock in ***The Merchant of Venice*** (1597)
Don John in ***Much Ado about Nothing*** (1598)
Jaques in ***As You Like It*** (1599)

Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* (1600)

Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida* (1608)

– are there to sound the note of dissent which prevents an audience from witnessing a happy ending with any sort of complacency. In Jaques, Shakespeare's educated audience would instantly have recognized an example of the contemplative man (as defined by Plato). For this reason, Shakespeare's presentation of him is as a poseur: that is, a character who self-consciously adopts a pose (in this case, a 'melancholy' one) and then enjoys calculating the effect that it achieves. Accordingly, the First Lord's description is of a pained figure: reclining 'along' the bank of a brook, Jaques is depicted as observing 'a poor sequestered stag' which a hunter's arrow has painfully wounded.

Duke Senior sees that the plight of this stag is precisely the kind of experience about which Jaques can be expected to draw a moral conclusion: "Did he not moralise this spectacle?" Sure enough, Jaques did not hesitate to strike a pose and, according to the First Lord, place an anthropomorphic construction upon the fate of this 'wretched animal'; he exaggerated its suffering, finding for it 'a thousand similes'. As Duke Senior saw, Jaques can be relied upon to adopt the self-conscious poses of both an ecologist and a moral philosopher. Wearing these hats, he becomes a Friend of the Earth whose sympathies ("Poor deer") lie entirely with the dispossessed and tyrannised deer. The First Lord then reports Jaques' indignant reaction to a sudden development in this brook-side drama: when 'a careless herd' of deer came upon their injured fellow, only then to ignore him, Jaques railed against those deer for being callously indifferent to their brother:

Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens,
'Tis just the fashion!

Given the accents of such an imperative, an actor playing Jaques will usually speak in an affected manner; hearing his sentimental response to the deer, an audience might think that he is merely striking an attitude/trying on a political hat for size. Not so: even though he may appear a comical character, Jaques never postures merely for dramatic effect. Here, his serious point is that the deer who ignore their injured fellow ('that poor and broken bankrupt there') are little different from the 'fat and greasy citizens' of the court; both the well-fed stags and the obsequious, self-satisfied courtiers are examples of Bad Samaritans whose herd-instinct [= 'the fashion'] is to pass by an unfortunate brother on the other side of the running brook. In Jaques' cynical view, all creatures are alike in their pursuits of their own ends; in his experience, there is brotherhood between neither deer nor men, for both species – put to the test – prove 'mere usurpers, tyrants'. To illustrate the moral point of his invective, he has only to cite the gory abuse which Arden's deer – even 'in their assigned and native dwelling place' – have recently suffered at the hands of Duke Senior's noble 'foresters'. As a result, he remains a staunch critic of Duke Senior's Forest ethic and scorns the idea of a 'golden world' in which all creatures enjoy equal citizenship.

ACT II Scene 2

The purpose of this scene is to confirm that Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone ('the roynish clown') have fled Duke Frederick's court for the Forest of Arden. Once more, Duke Frederick – a stock figure of courtly malevolence, a stereotypical baddie – makes an entrance 'with his eyes full of anger'. Once more, his suspicious nature is on show: for assisting the three fugitives in their flight, he blames without evidence 'some villains of my court'.

In fact, Act II Scene 3 broadly illustrates the mistrustful nature of the court. The Second Lord reports that Hisperia (one of Celia's gentlewomen) has eavesdropped on a conversation between the two cousins about 'the parts and graces' of Orlando; as is the way at the court, she has 'secretly o'erheard' it. Adept at espionage, the Second Lord passes on Hisperia's belief that, 'wherever they are gone', Orlando is 'surely in their company'.

Given this intelligence, Duke Frederick sets about constructing an unholy alliance between Oliver and himself: 'bring his brother to me'. In this alliance, the two vengeful brothers act against the forces of goodness; in contemptuous and tyrannical fashion, they will set up an 'inquisition' to determine where the three fugitives ('these foolish runaways') have got to.

ACT II Scene 3

It was by design that Shakespeare set Act I Scene 1 in an Edenic 'orchard'; there, we met Orlando (bereft of a 'good education', an 'unaccommodated man') and Adam (in his old age, an epitome of human frailty and mortality). In short, Orlando and Adam are respective portraits of Youth and Age. The purpose of this juxtaposition is literally to illustrate 'the penalty of Adam': thrown out of Eden, he is condemned to eventual death. Shakespeare's Adam is both a *senex* [= the stock figure of an old man in early drama] and a *memento mori* [= a reminder of death]. Because Orlando's robust youth is a stuff which will not endure, he has only to look at the frail Adam to remind himself of the fate that eventually awaits him.

It is to these stock profiles that Shakespeare adds in the exchanges here, set immediately before the speakers' own joint-flight into the wilderness. Adam's question – "And wherefore are you gentle, strong and valiant?" – supplies three adjectives which illustrate Orlando's 'gentleman-like qualities' and confirm that one part of his tri-partite soul [= a 'strong' and 'valiant' man of action] is in place. Duke Frederick ('the humorous Duke') resents such comeliness: as we have seen twice, such 'graces'/'virtues' antagonise him with the result that all places within his jurisdiction become unsafe for Rosalinds and Orlandos. Duke Frederick's court is 'a world' turned morally upside-down, an institution in which moral values are topsy-turvy. By the Duke's scale of values, Orlando's fair behaviour is foul: 'what is comely' about the youth makes him a venomous enemy and turns him into a target for assassination. In Oliver, Duke Frederick has found a willing accomplice: so envious is he of Orlando's graces (a Deadly Sin) that he devises 'practices' to kill him (a broken Commandment). At Duke Frederick's instigation, Oliver is planning 'this night' to commit an act of arson against Orlando's house and thereby murder him: 'to burn the lodging where you use to lie/And you within it'.

Orlando's instinctive reaction to this deadly threat is 'strong' and 'valiant': rather than 'beg' or become a brigand, he will brave 'the malice' that the court has fostered in his 'bloody brother'. Adam ("But do not so") has the wisdom to see that discretion will be the better part of such valour and advises his 'gentle master' to flee. It emerges that Adam is a repository of the courtly virtues that Duke Frederick's court has flamboyantly abandoned. Totally loyal to 'the memory of old Sir Rowland', Adam practises both thrift ("I have five hundred crowns ... I saved") and generosity ("All this I give you"). Dedicated to the concept of service, he further extols the virtues of temperance ("I never did apply/Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood") and of fortitude ("I'll do the service of a younger man"). Here, he is to be imagined teaching to Orlando the Christian qualities required for survival in an un-Christian world.

Orlando is not slow to appreciate Adam's worth: although 'unschooled', he can distinguish intellectually between Adam's altruistic idea of 'service' [= a feature of 'the antique world', 'the golden world'] and service in pursuit of one's own ends [= an obsession of the current 'times' in which 'none will sweat but for promotion']. For this 'poor old man', his family's servant for sixty-two years, Orlando displays a reciprocal compassion and 'loyalty' and agrees to 'go along' with him. Inevitably, they head for the Forest of Arden ...

ACT II Scene 4

In Act I Scene 1, Charles the wrestler had advanced the view that the Forest of Arden is 'a golden world' where Duke Senior and his fellow exiles 'fleet the time carelessly'; in Act II Scene 1, Duke Senior himself was quick to point out that the Forest is a place in which it is necessary to make a virtue of 'adversity'. The opening sentiments of this scene ("O Jupiter,

how weary are my spirits!") contribute more to the idea that the Forest of Arden is a testing ground in which travellers soon encounter conditions sufficiently adverse to try their patience and tire them out. Within six lines, Rosalind ("therefore courage, good Aliena!") is exhorting her cousin Celia to show fortitude. For his part, Touchstone ("I had rather bear with you than bear you") cracks a pun: that is, he uses his wit to deflect attention from the hardships which they are already suffering. This famous exchange –

ROSALIND: Well, this is the Forest of Arden.
 TOUCHSTONE: Ay, now am I in Arden, the more fool I.
 When I was at home, I was in a better place,
 but travellers must be content

– is specifically designed to deflate the sentimental expectations of the Forest that Charles' view of a 'golden world' had aroused. Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone head for the Forest of Arden in high spirits; first-hand experience of the great outdoors dampens them. On arrival, they discover that the reality of the place does not match the 'golden' illusion. It is instantly evident that Arden is not an enchanted wood and that it would therefore be foolish ('more fool') to idealise it. In his disillusionment with the Forest, Touchstone (who was not banished there) soon starts wishing that he had never left the court. An especially important contribution to the debate between Court and Country is his emphatic belief that the court is 'a better place': although the play offers more subtle insights into the Forest, Touchstone adheres to the view that nothing beats home-comforts and he is never parted from it.

Here, Shakespeare introduces two new characters: 'a young man and an old in solemn talk'. Corin (a wise shepherd) and Silvius (a 'young swain') are stock figures of pastoral romance; what is more, their 'solemn talk' is of love. One of the central theses of the play is that 'most loving' is 'mere folly' [Amiens II.7]. Consequently, Shakespeare puts into Silvius' mouth a number of hubristic statements ("No, Corin, being old thou canst not guess ...") which Corin's sense of perspective proceeds at once to embarrass; 'being old', Corin has 'forgotten' more about love than Silvius ("As sure I think did never man love so") can even begin to imagine. Because he is in love, Silvius, though he is a low-life character, speaks verse. It is therefore ironic that, though he is a low-life character, he acts more like a courtier: first, he adopts the very postures to be expected of the true lover in courtly romance [= extravagant praise of the mistress, erratic behaviour]; second, he gives voice to his feelings in the syntactical parallels ("Thou hast not loved") which the courtly lover deploys in his poetry.

Silvius ("O Phebe, Phebe, Phebe!") makes a melodramatic exit, repeatedly crying out his mistress' name. It is a measure of her own lovesickness that Rosalind ('poor shepherd') can sympathise with his plight without irony; her 'hard adventure' [= her journey into the Forest] immediately becomes a metaphor for her confirmation of her painful feelings for Orlando. To this debate, Touchstone adds realism. He recalls when he was 'in love with Jane Smile', both washerwoman and milkmaid; in particular, he has unromantic memories of both her batler [a wooden club used to beat wet clothes] and the cow's udders 'which her pretty chopt hands had milked'. To Silvius' rhetorical verse, Touchstone's prose supplies a stark contrast, recognising (as it does) that true love involves not the worship of a Phebean image, but the physical appreciation of a real human being, unattractive and unhygienic though she may sometimes appear. Touchstone's conclusion –

We that are true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal in nature,
 so is all nature in love mortal in folly

– hears him laughing at himself for his earlier lack of a self-knowledge which in later years he has come to possess. His is a sober reflection on the 'mortal' condition of men and women: just as all men and women must die, so must the love that they express with their bodies; by the same law of 'nature', all men and women 'in love' are bound to act in foolish ways that prove fatal [= 'mortal'] to their romantic aspirations. Foremost among their 'strange capers',

their 'mortal' follies, are **a]** an excessive/religious adoration of the loved one which her actual/human qualities cannot support; and **b]** a conviction that passion – experienced and expressed by the flesh – can last for ever/can stand the test of time.

Faint with hunger, Celia (Aliena) asks Touchstone to 'question' Corin. Being from the court, Touchstone ("Your betters, sir") immediately adopts a superior tone. Being in the country, Rosalind ("I prithee, shepherd ...") is shrewd enough to realise that they are in no position to alienate themselves further and offers to pay their way. Further evidence that the Forest is no sylvan paradise is contained in Corin's reply:

My master is of churlish disposition
And little recks to find the way to heaven
By doing deeds of hospitality.

Arden, then, is both a 'desert place' and an inhospitable place; it is not a place where runaways can count instinctively upon Christian charity. Fortunately, Rosalind, having brought 'gold' with her, is in a position to purchase 'the cottage, pasture and the flock' which Corin's master has put up for sale. Much to Celia's delight, they acquire a base:

I like this place
And willingly could waste my time in it.

Although the Forest may not measure up to its profile in Charles' speech, Celia can see the honest attractions of 'this kind of life'. It is because she is not yet in love that she can afford to 'waste [her] time in it'.

ACT II Scene 5

Amiens' songs are central to an understanding of the play. No symbol is more important than 'the greenwood tree' (a major oak) which stands for the major circumstances of a man's life: after all, it is 'under the greenwood tree' where man is conceived, then lives his life and is finally buried. In short, 'the greenwood tree' – beneath which men 'love to lie' both with their lovers and in their graves – represents the cycle of birth, copulation and death; it points out the way of all flesh. Amiens' song is remarkable for its ungentle ironies:

Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

First, its three 'come hithers' call men to the three fates which await them in any case; it is not as if they have any choice but to obey the laws of nature. Second, its chorus gives the misleading impression that the country is a friendlier and safer place than the court (where human enemies stab backs). The irony here, of course, is that in the end men have much more to fear from their non-human enemies: 'winter and rough weather', agents of the inexorable movement of time. What on first hearing sounds as if it is an enticement to holiday in Arden sounds on second hearing more sinister; the fact is that ultimately man has *no* other enemies 'but winter and rough weather'. At the end of *Twelfth Night*, Feste's song echoes this chilly sentiment; its two refrains – "With hey-ho, the wind and the rain" and "For the rain, it raineth every day" – find in winter weather two metaphors for the forces of adversity, two emblems for the erosive action of time. Far from being two of his more tractable enemies, 'winter and rough weather' (or 'the wind and the rain') are man's most deadly and only invincible enemies. Consequently, Amiens' song is an advertisement, not of the Forest's possible attractions, but of its certain perils; by its unflinching honesty, this song seriously questions whether 'the uses of adversity' are 'sweet'.

When Jaques asks for a second 'stanza' of his song, Amiens – aware of its sombre theme – worries that 'it will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques'. Amiens seems not to know that Jaques ("I can suck melancholy out of a song") loves nothing better than to indulge himself in this very sentiment and that he is playing Jaques' kind of music. According to Amiens' second verse, the Forest is the place for the man who is without the courtly vices of 'ambition' and greed; its chorus, however, still warns against an uncritical acceptance of the greenwood. In this sardonic chorus, there persists the suggestion that a man may indeed be 'more fool' for fleeing the court for the country where he can expect only to be confronted by the irreducible facts of his existence: 'winter and rough weather'. In other words, the debate between Court and Country is complex in that it cannot be simply resolved.

The verse which Jaques then contributes to the song seeks to make this very point. It wonders aloud about the wisdom of renouncing the court for the country, calling into question the sane judgement of 'any man' who feels that he can justify such a move:

If it do come to pass
That any man turn ass,
Leaving his wealth and ease,
A stubborn will to please:
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame.
Here shall he see
Gross fools as he,
An if he will come to me.

The target of Jaques' satirical verse is 'any man' who elects to leave the 'wealth and ease' of the court in order to pursue some vague notion of a better life in the Forest; in Jaques' view, his motives ('a stubborn will to please') must be perverse, certainly suspect enough to require closer examination. In his final analysis, 'any man' who prefers to establish his dukedom [= 'ducdame?'] in the cold forest, rather than at the comfortable court, cannot be in his right mind: in other words, Duke Senior and his 'foresters' must be 'gross fools' if they think that the Forest grass is greener. Is not 'this life', once they become accustomed to it, 'more sweet than that of painted pomp' [Duke II.1]? Not necessarily ...

Jaques, then, is explicitly cautioning against an idealised view of the Forest, offering a legitimate criticism of Duke Senior's and Celia's liking for 'this kind of life'. Stage-craft suggests that, in the course of this third verse, Duke Senior's 'co-mates' should organise themselves into a circle. Such a circular arrangement, even if it is inadvertent, then gives dramatic point to this exchange:

AMIENS: What's that 'ducdame'?
JAQUES: 'Tis a Greek invocation, to call fools into a circle.

At the end of the dance, the Duke's 'brothers in exile' are – both literally and metaphorically – forced to re-examine the position in which they find themselves; in short, the choreographic pattern becomes an emblem of their foolhardy attitude to their adverse circumstances/their conditions of 'exile' in the greenwood. Jaques' answer brings about a moment of *comic* self-awareness in that the exiles, men holding hands, suddenly become aware of their stances in both senses of this word.

Jaques' dramatic function is to play Devil's Advocate: that is, to put forward a contentious point-of-view in order to provoke a reaction/question the status quo in order to test it out. Ironically, it is Jaques, not Duke Senior, who is 'too disputable'; if anyone, then it is he who is too argumentative to be good company. He will say anything, argue with anyone; in doing so, he obliges others – not least, the members of an audience – to define more clearly their own attitudes to environmental/moral issues and move closer to self-knowledge. For this reason, we cannot be certain, not until the end of the play, whether he himself actually holds

the contrary view which he is putting forward ... Because we cannot make a sound judgement about Jaques' integrity, it is difficult, right up until Act V Scene 1, to know if and when he is being hypocritical.

ACT II Scene 6

Elsewhere in the Forest of Arden, Orlando and Adam arrive. Although this scene is primarily functional in the development of the plot, it does add to our solid impression that the Forest is an 'uncouth' place where the air is 'bleak'. Orlando's feeling that it is a 'desert' conflicts with Charles' idealised view [I.1] but corroborates Touchstone's view [II.4] and Amiens' view [II.5] that all of the 'runaways' are 'foolish' [= 'more fools'] for fleeing into its 'rough weather'.

Shakespeare's language signals that 79-year-old Adam ("O, I die for food") is about to suffer 'the penalty' of his fallen namesake: that is, expire of starvation/of senile decay/of exposure to the elements. In his moribund condition, Adam is an emblem of man's mortality; he is put on stage to set the ambitions of the youthful characters in a cosmic/universal context. In ten lines, Orlando's reply refers to the imminence of his death on five occasions: 'nearer death', 'hold death a while at the arm's end', 'leave to die', 'if thou diest', 'thou shalt not die'. Once again, Shakespeare emphasises the cardinal virtue of fortitude; on three occasions, he stresses Duke Senior's earlier realisation [II.1] that moral courage [= 'cheer'] is the only truly adequate response to human experience. One function of the Forest is to test man's powers of endurance: in the face of such 'adversity', such 'rough' and 'bleak' weather-conditions, both Adam and Orlando need 'great heart' [= both physical and moral fortitude] in order to survive.

Orlando passes this test: 'raising' Adam to his feet, he leads him towards 'shelter' and then, braving the perils of the Forest, goes in search of 'a dinner' for them. Despite his lack of education, Orlando continues to exhibit 'gentleman-like qualities'/'graces'/cardinal 'virtues': not only is he respectful of his servant's old age, but he is also fearless and selfless, putting another's welfare before his own. In short, the Forest brings out the best in Orlando: by the time that he re-encounters Lady Rosalind, he will have proven himself a fit match for her.

ACT II Scene 7

This scene picks up the ironic moment from Act II Scene 5 at which Jaques explains to Amiens that he has 'been all this day' attempting to 'avoid' Duke Senior because the Duke is 'too disputable' for his company. To the Duke's inquiry, the First Lord replies that he has just missed him: "Here was he merry, hearing of a song." It is significant that Jaques has derived merriment from hearing Amiens' melancholy song. It sets the tone for Jaques' subsequent entrance: "What, you look merrily?" asks Duke Senior in astonishment. Sure enough, Jaques' merriment (as he explains) is a direct result of an encounter with Touchstone in which the 'motley fool' – miserable at missing his creature-comforts in the Forest of Arden – has 'railed on Lady Fortune in good terms'. In particular, Touchstone – consistently aware that 'all is mortal in nature' – has reportedly contemplated the speed of time:

"Thus we may see," quoth he, "how the world wags:
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,
And after one hour more 'twill be eleven,
And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot,
And thereby hangs a tale."

His 'tale', of course, is of man's brief life; presumably, he is pre-occupied by the thought that, having followed Rosalind and Celia into the Forest, he is wasting the precious hours of his life in such a barren desert. When he hears this profound analysis of the insidious effects of time, Jaques is so impressed by the wisdom of the fool, so impressed [that fools can 'be so

deep-contemplative'] that he conceives an ambition to become a jester himself and enjoy the freedom to rail at [= be cynical about] the world:

O noble fool!
A worthy fool; motley's the only wear!

O that I were a fool!
I am ambitious for a motley coat.

This reference to Touchstone's 'coat' rather suggests that Touchstone, being a professional jester of the Elizabethan era, is wearing not the red-and-yellow quarters in which modern jockeys race, but a robe of cloth woven from threads of black and green. The apostrophes and the exclamation-marks indicate Jaques' eagerness to don such a garment: after hearing Touchstone's sad tale, he can suddenly associate his calling not with red-faced frivolity, but with black-browed contemplation. Consequently, he will try on the 'motley coat' and wear it like his melancholy attitude.

In Elizabethan times, 'melancholy' was not so much an adjective that described a mood as a noun that described a medical condition. At first, Jaques seemed to cultivate this condition; from this point, his suffering sounds less contrived and seems to stem more from his sense that the world is a 'miserable' place in which moral reforms are overdue/in which certain wrongs need righting. As a jester, he would enjoy the licence to crusade abroad, teaching people the errors of their ways. The prospect endows him with an evangelical sense of mission:

Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

Jaques is a loquacious individual who will waste no opportunity to pontificate: here, he vows in emotive language ('foul body of th' infected world') to purge the world of its corrupt pursuit of physical pleasures. At once, Duke Senior objects to Jaques' puritanical evangelism on the grounds that he is being both self-righteous and hypocritical:

Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin:
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
As sensual as the brutish sting itself ...

In his time, Jaques himself has been 'a libertine': that is, he has lived the good life, obsessed with the courtly pursuit of 'sensual' pleasures [= wine, women and song]. For this reason, Duke Senior can argue that Jaques has no authority to condemn appetitive pursuits in which 'with licence of free foot' he himself has engaged at the court. In short, the Duke's argument is that Jaques is a fine one to be talking with disapproval about pleasures of the flesh.

Such is Jaques' determination to do 'good' that he organises his response into a series of rhetorical questions based upon the scripture, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" [St John Chapter 8 Verse 7]. In this cause, he cites the example of 'the city woman' [eg. a brothel-keeper, a court prostitute] who bears a striking resemblance to the woman 'taken in adultery' in St John's Gospel. Which of her neighbours can accuse her ("Who can come in and say that I mean her ...?") safe in the knowledge that she herself is not guilty of some corruption? Jaques speaks with the missionary zeal of a convert: from his invective emerges a vision of 'the general world' [= urban society in Elizabethan England] as an ungodly place in need of strong medicine to cure its venal and venereal diseases.

Immediately, Orlando's aggressive entrance ("Forbear and eat no more") puts the Christian charity of Duke Senior's 'outlaws' to the test. This test it passes: first metaphorically, then literally, Duke Senior – to whom the courtly virtues are integral – disarms Orlando. By his 'civility' and his 'gentleness', he encourages Orlando to sheathe his sword and then offers him hospitality:

Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table.

Pacified, Orlando – on whose nature 'some nurture' has stuck – is quick to respond to Duke Senior's generosity and exhibit an altruism of his own. Once he realises that these outlaws are not 'savage', but civilised and charitable, his first thought is not for himself but for Adam: 'an old poor man' who, in his 'age and hunger', is in greater need.

When Orlando goes off to fetch his faithful servant, Duke Senior turns to Jaques and reminds him that, in 'this wide and universal theatre', there are people worse off than themselves. Jaques' famous reply –

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His Acts being seven ages

– picks up the Duke's theatrical image and proceeds to give a definitive form to the traditional idea that every man, in the course of his life, goes through 'seven ages'. This being so, the speech (which runs for twenty-eight lines of blank verse) is an extended metaphor in which the seven stages of a human life [= the Seven Ages of Man] man are compared to the acts of a play. The set-piece has two functions. Its poetic function is to set the human endeavours of the play – especially the efforts of the lovers to achieve happiness – within the context of time; against this temporal background, Orlando and Rosalind/Silvius and Phebe must seek to satisfy their passion for each other and perfect their tri-partite souls. Its dramatic function is to prepare for Orlando's re-entrance with Adam and gesture towards a sombre conclusion:

last Scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans everything.

All can see that Adam (an embodiment of 'second childishness') is 'a poor player' that has strutted and fretted his hour upon this stage and is about to be 'heard no more': indeed, after this entrance in II.7, he is heard no more. Adam's decrepitude gives point to Touchstone's dark suspicion that the tale of human life is 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing' [Macbeth V.5]. The cynical conclusion that Jaques contributes to the debate is that 'the life of man' is both brief and futile: if not also 'solitary, poor, nasty' and 'brutish', it is certainly 'short' [Thomas Hobbes 1651].

When Orlando and Adam return, Duke Senior and his 'brothers in exile' include them in their number. They break bread with them, share their 'banquet'; instantly, this act of charity becomes an emblem of the brotherhood of man. While they 'feed', Amiens sings a second song in which he contrasts the virtues of the country with the vices of the court:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.

Specifically, he condemns the courtly vice of ingratitude, suggesting – ironically – that the harsh elements ('winter and rough weather') treat a man more kindly than his fellow men do.

According to Amiens, neither the 'winter wind' nor the nightly frost ('bitter sky') is more 'unkind' [= cause more hurt] than man's ingratitude to man: 'benefits forgot'/'friend remembered not'. For this reason, it makes sense to eke out an ascetic existence in the Forest of Arden, paying homage to 'the holly' which – because it is ever 'green' – will remain a lifelong friend:

Hey-ho, sing hey-ho, unto the green holly,
 Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly;
 Then hey-ho, the holly,
 This life is most jolly.

Since 'most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly', a man can do no better than settle for 'this life' in the bleak air: in a 'desert inaccessible' to courtly influences. Compared to the alternative, an easy life in the licentious and pretentious court, 'this life' in the country 'is most jolly'. The effect of this chilly song is to suggest that the first half of the play is set in Winter; by contrast, the lively songs of Act IV Scene 2 ("What shall he have that killed the deer?") and Act V Scene 3 ("It was a lover and his lass") suggest that the second half is set in Spring.

During this song, Duke Senior discovers that Orlando is the son of Sir Rowland De Boys. In reply, he admits to Orlando that he has 'seen better days' and that he is the exiled Duke: 'the Duke that loved your father', a friend whom he has not forgotten. This family tie will prove extremely convenient when Duke Senior finally discovers that Orlando wishes to marry his daughter, Rosalind.

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ACT III Scene 1

The structure of *As You Like It* permits numerous cross-references between the court (which houses the Seven Deadly Sins) and the country (home to the Four Cardinal Virtues). This scene is the fourth and final scene in which Duke Frederick makes an appearance; it is the fourth and final scene in which he displays his envious and vengeful nature.

In Act II Scene 2, Duke Frederick, anxious to discover his missing daughter's whereabouts, had summoned Oliver De Boys to the court; he believed that Celia and her cousin Rosalind had fled with Orlando and that Oliver would know where they had gone. In this scene, the Duke is refusing to listen to Oliver's protestation that he is not his brother's keeper and – in a show of tyrannical unreasonableness – threatening to avenge himself upon Oliver if he cannot find the fugitives. Duke Frederick, his eyes consistently 'full of anger', threatens to banish Oliver and confiscate his estate and his worldly goods.

From Act I Scene 1, we know that Oliver has never done anything to keep his brother and would do nothing now to shield him from the Duke's ire. By way of defence, Oliver explains that there is bad blood between Orlando and himself ("I never loved my brother in my life") and thereby hopes to ally himself with a fellow tyrant. The Duke's answer – "More villain thou" – completely wrong-foots him. Given that he has banished his own brother, Duke Frederick might have been expected to side with Oliver on this issue; instead, the 'humorous' Duke condemns his lack of fraternal feeling and makes it an excuse to seize 'his house and lands' anyway. For his villainy, Oliver thus receives his come-uppance.

Dispossessed, Oliver too ventures into the Forest of Arden where he hears 'sermons in stones': that is, he receives a religious education. Under the influence of the Forest, he will undergo a conversion which first reconciles him to his brother Orlando and then entitles him to Celia's hand in marriage.

ACT III Scene 2

Orlando has taken up residence in Duke Senior's cave from which he emerges to pin on Arden's trees the poems which he – a man of both education and passion – has written to Rosalind. To signify the growth in Orlando's soul, Shakespeare first reveals that he has been writing poems ("Hang there, my verse ...") and then puts into his mouth ten lines of rhyme in which he makes explicit the feelings for Rosalind which have gone into his verse:

Run, run, Orlando, carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste and unexpressive she.

Much as Silvius had done, Orlando runs off to make public his feelings for his mistress – and, it should be added, thereby open up these excessive feelings to satirical criticism (by Jaques 200 lines later in this scene).

Enter Corin and Touchstone. Corin asks Touchstone (a court jester) how he likes country living and promptly initiates a series of exchanges in which the two represent the relative merits of Court and Country. Corin's question Touchstone answers in an euphuistic style:

Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious.

In 1578, John Lyly published *Euphues*, it is a prose romance notable for Lyly's systematic organisation of his language. To be exact, Lyly makes an excessive use of antithesis, a stylistic device which he often pursues regardless of sense and inevitably emphasises by a complementary use of syntactical parallelism. Six times Touchstone's answer uses the subordinate conjunction 'in respect that' in order to achieve a pattern of antitheses: first between 'a good life' and 'a shepherd's life', second between 'solitary' and 'private' and between 'very well' and 'very vile life' and third between 'in the fields' and 'in the court'. Each of the three sentences he balances by means of a semi-colon that separates the first statement from its antithesis. What is more, Touchstone's sentences struggle to make much sense: what, for instance, is the serious difference between 'solitary' and 'private'? For this nonsense, there are two reasons: first, Shakespeare wants to parody this particular aspect of Lyly's euphuistic style; second, he wants to satirise the shortcomings of a courtly wit that could easily conceal itself in such a style. In this speech, Touchstone is a casuist: that is, a philosopher who joys in weighing conflicting obligations, making nice distinctions and classifying exceptions, but who fails in the final analysis to commit himself to any position/to any point of view. By his pedantic splitting of hairs, Touchstone seeks to argue both ways; this double-talk satirises the failure of the court philosopher to give a straight answer to an honest question.

When Touchstone in turn asks Corin if he can philosophise, it is vital to note that Corin too talks in the euphuistic style, but that by contrast his complex sentences make simple sense. Corin may not know much, but he does know

that the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn; that good pasture
makes fat sheep; and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun ...

Although Corin is stating the blindingly obvious, his rustic empiricism is designed to be satirical at the expense of Touchstone's courtly sophistication (which is stating nothing). So impressed is Touchstone by this euphuistic reply that he asks Corin whether he was 'ever in court'. When Corin answers 'no', Touchstone this time seeks to establish his intellectual superiority over the shepherd by an exercise of logic. He explains to Corin why men who have never been 'at court' are 'damned':

Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good manners;
if thou never sawest good manners, then thy manners must be wicked,
and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation ...

Fortunately for Corin, Touchstone's logic is chop-logic. His argument is a non-sequitur: even though he runs his hypotheses smoothly together, his premises do not follow one another with the sufficiency required for a syllogism. To his credit, Corin is in no way alarmed by the syllogistic slickness with which Touchstone delivers his argument. In response, he articulates the standard by which the respective merits of Court and Country should be judged:

Those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country
as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court.

To the debate between Court and Country, Corin here contributes the common-sense view that the values are relative to the situation – either court or country – in which they are held. Asked for an example, Corin explains that certain courtesies (such as kissing hands) 'would be uncleanly if courtiers were shepherds'; this is because shepherds' hands are permanently 'greasy' from handling the fleeces of their sheep and would therefore be unhygienic to kiss. Not to be outdone, Touchstone ("Come, instance") keeps finding fault with Corin's reasons for believing that the etiquette of the court cannot be applied universally/is not appropriate everywhere.

Only after Touchstone ("Most shallow man") has ironically insulted his intelligence for a fourth time does Corin realise that Touchstone will not listen to reason: at least, not to the reasons that a shepherd gives. Gracefully, Corin tells Touchstone that he has 'too courtly a wit' for him: that is, that he argues in such a complicated way that he, a straightforward countryman, cannot see the sense of it. When Touchstone retorts that Corin will still be 'damned', Corin still refuses to be intimidated and, by another ironic use of euphuistic parallels, proceeds to itemise the 'true' values of country life:

I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness,
glad of other men's good, content with my harm; and the greatest of my pride
is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.

What is ironic is that, whereas Touchstone's organised thoughts are 'shallow', Corin's are profound; he is not a 'shallow man', but a wise one. Here, Corin publishes a manifesto in which the rudiments of the bucolic idyll are plainly set out; its main virtues are honesty and simplicity. Because he is a countryman, Corin lives by subsistence farming ("I earn that I eat, get that I wear"); because he is not a courtier, he has 'no enemy but winter and rough weather' ('owe no man hate'). He is guilty neither of envy nor of covetousness (two Deadly Sins, courtly vices); he is an altruist ('glad of other men's good') and exhibits a Job-like fortitude in face of adversity ('content with my harm'). He takes pride only in his flock ('to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck').

Touchstone persists in believing that, whereas courtiers are blessed, countrymen are 'damned'. At this rustic simplicity, he continues to sneer: still refusing to accept that courtly standards may for practical reasons be inappropriate to the country, he admonishes Corin for bringing 'the ewes and the rams together' and earning his living 'by the copulation of cattle'. It is a measure of his corruption by the court that Touchstone should compare breeding sheep to pimping: by his estimation, Corin is 'a bawd' [= a pimp] for procuring 'a she-lamb of a twelvemonth' for an 'old, cuckoldy ram' and thereby guilty of a sin. In the end, Touchstone is unable to make fun of Corin (who is too aware of his own strengths). Ultimately, his wit is too clever [= 'too courtly'] for its own good: by comparing Corin's innocent sheep-rearing to procuring for prostitution, he reduces his criticism of country customs to absurdity.

Enter Rosalind, reading one of the poems about her which Orlando has pinned to a tree. Each of the four couplets ends with a rhyme on her name:

Let no face be kept in mind
But the fair of Rosalind.

As a love-poet, Orlando – a man of both education and passion – is competent. Touchstone, however, wastes no time in turning his satirical attack to Orlando's versification. Impromptu, he composes six couplets that parody the repetitive form of Orlando's sentiments. In particular, he targets the lines which rhyme only under poetic licence: that is, those which require a pretentious pronunciation of 'Rosalind':

He that sweetest rose will find
Must find love's prick and Rosalind.

Although his initial rhymes are romantic, Touchstone suggests that the realistic intention of Rosalind's admirer is to penetrate her 'sweetest rose' [= vagina] with his thorn ['prick'/penis]. Rosalind ("Peace, you dull fool") rebukes Touchstone for being salacious and meddlesome. Touchstone ("Let the forest judge") replies that 'the forest' must be the 'judge' of that: namely, whether or not he is wise to remind her of a man's true intention and to counsel her against listening to his extravagant praises of 'her worth'.

The dramatic function of the Forest of Arden is to 'judge': that is, to provide a background against which the characters who find themselves there can be seen in their moral places. Its greenwood trees, expert at monitoring the seasonal movement of time, issue reminders of man's mortal status in nature and create the circumstances in which he can acquire an accurate and humble knowledge of his seven ages. The Forest, then, judges how finite men and women react to the infinite world in which they find themselves living: supremely, it is a place where they acquire a frank knowledge of themselves [= mortals with limitations] and find a true sense of human identity.

Enter Celia, reading another of the poems which Orlando has pinned to a tree. This 30-line poem **a]** elevates Rosalind to the status of a mythical goddess ("With all graces wide-enlarged") and **b]** protests that the poet will be enthralled by her deified image till he dies ("And I to live and die her slave"). Both are clichés of the contemporary love-poetry that Shakespeare seeks to satirise in *As You Like It*, primarily because it makes claims inconsistent with the reality of human existence (to which the Forest points).

When Rosalind asks Celia if she knows who has been writing these poems and pinning them to trees, Celia answers that it is a man who wears 'a chain ... about his neck' [I.1]. Rosalind reminds Celia (and the audience) that, although she may be 'caparisoned like a man', she remains a woman with a woman's natural interest in men. When Celia confirms that 'it is young Orlando', Rosalind reels off nine questions –

What did he when thou sawest him? What said he? How looked he?
Wherein went he? What makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where
remains he? How parted he with thee? And when shalt thou see him again?
Answer me in one word

– designed dynamically to express her passionate interest in Orlando. This series of insistent questions Shakespeare terminates with a single imperative in order to show that Rosalind is madly in love: how can Celia answer nine questions 'in one word'? In the throes of passion, Rosalind cannot think straight. "Lord, what fools these mortals be" [Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* III.2]. By demanding one answer to nine questions, Rosalind reveals that she has suddenly lost her sense of proportion and lacks self-awareness. "Why, this is very

midsummer madness" [Olivia, *Twelfth Night* III.4]. At this point, Shakespeare's satire is at the expense not of the love-poet, but of the 'giddy' lover herself.

Rosalind ("But doth he know that I am in this forest and in man's apparel?") implores Celia to tell her about her encounter with Orlando. Further to satirise the lovesick poet, Celia recounts that she 'found him under a tree like a dropped acorn': that is, in a forlorn and lovelorn posture. Celia's simile ('like a dropped acorn') creates bathos: that is, it reduces Rosalind's knight both in human stature and divine status/puts her rapturous reaction to Orlando in a natural perspective.

Enter Orlando and Jaques. Dramatic irony occurs because Rosalind and Celia hide themselves in order to overhear the dialogue that ensues between Orlando ('Signor Love') and Jaques ('Monsieur Melancholy'). It transpires that, by their chance encounter, each has compromised the solitude in which the other was endeavouring to indulge his characteristic mood: Orlando (love-longing) and Jaques (melancholy). In *Romeo and Juliet*, Benvolio reports that Romeo has sought 'the covert of the wood' in order to be by himself with his feelings for Rosaline; at this point, Orlando is likewise 'his own affections' counsellor' [I.1] who wants to be left 'alone' so that his intense concentration on the object of his affections is not disturbed. As such, he readily agrees to Jaques' suggestion that they go their own ways ('meet as little as we can').

In this dialogue, Jaques' role is to criticise Orlando's lovelorn behaviour; at the same time, Orlando's role is to criticise Jaques' melancholy world-weariness. It is in this exchange that each puts the opposite case with which the other's viewpoint needs to be confronted:

JAQUES: I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love-songs in their barks.
ORLANDO: I pray you, mar no moe of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly.
JAQUES: Rosalind is your love's name?
ORLANDO: Yes, just.
JAQUES: I do not like her name.
ORLANDO: There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened.

Being a 'true lover', Orlando has run into three 'strange capers': first, he has been writing love-poems in which he has raised Rosalind to the status of a Helen, a Cleopatra, an Atalanta and a Lucretia, all in one; second, he has pinned these poems to trees; and third, he has carved both these lyrics and her name into the barks of the trees.

In his criticism, Jaques plays the role of an environmentalist who is concerned not so much with green issues as with 'greenwood' issues; he is especially critical of Orlando's fly-posting of his banal poems on poor, unsuspecting trees. In his response, Orlando strikes the pose of a love-poet who believes that his work warrants more respect than Jaques' sarcastic [= 'ill-favoured'] readings have given it. He is suitably proud of his 'love' and her poetic name and, when Jaques objects to it, retaliates wittily that there was 'no thought of pleasing [him] when she was christened' twenty years ago. By this riposte, Orlando reminds an egocentric Jaques that the world does not revolve around him and implies that he should mind his own business. Since his conversion, Jaques has become a self-opinionated critic of public morality and a self-appointed guardian of public taste: not even in a beautiful, traditional English name can this judgmental man hear any good ...

When Orlando ('as high as my heart') uses a simile to illustrate Rosalind's stature in his affections, Jaques – consistently cynical about poetic sentiment – infers that Orlando must have taken such a 'pretty answer' from an inscription which a goldsmith's wife had carved inside a ring: in other words, it is both unoriginal and trite – what Gratiano calls 'cutler's poetry' (*The Merchant of Venice* V.1). When Orlando retorts that he got his answer from reading the 'right painted cloth' [= cheap tapestry] from which Jaques seems to have derived his own 'questions', Jaques cannot help but admire his flair for repartee/his debating-skill. He

thinks that he has found in Orlando a kindred spirit; he is so impressed by his 'nimble wit' that he invites him to 'sit down' and 'rail against our mistress the world and all our misery'. This cynical invitation Orlando declines:

I will chide no breather in the world but myself against whom I know most faults.

Whilst Jaques is self-consciously cultivating the pose of the 'railer' against a corrupt and unjust world, Orlando – in acknowledging 'faults' in himself – is refreshingly self-aware and self-deprecating, showing how advanced his development as a Renaissance man is. In their next exchange, Orlando counters Jaques' criticism of his love-longing ("The worst fault you have is to be in love") with an assertion which signifies that the three parts of his tri-partite soul may be in place: "Tis a fault I will not change for your worst virtue." Every Director will instruct the Rosalind-actress (who over-hears this robust assertion) to share her delight with Celia so vocally that they are almost discovered.

Impressed by Orlando's ability and integrity, Jaques remarks that he 'was seeking for a fool' [Touchstone] when he came across Orlando. Not finished proving himself a match for a courtier, Orlando tells Jaques that 'he is drowned in the brook' and that he has only to 'look in' and he will see him: not Touchstone, but 'a fool' [= his 'own figure', his own reflection, himself]. At the end of this skirmish of wit, Orlando rejects Jaques' negative attitude to life ('a cipher') in order to pursue both Rosalind and positive fulfilment.

Exit Jaques. When Rosalind as Ganymede first speaks to Orlando, she asks him what time it is. Orlando's reply – "You should ask me what time of day; there's no clock in the forest" – explains at once that conventional time-keeping has 'no' point in the forest; in the forest, a mechanical awareness of time is without effective relevance. Rosalind is ready to agree: to her, what matters is the psychological awareness of time. From experience, she has already learned that 'the true lover' ('sighing every minute and groaning every hour') will be all too painfully aware of the slow passage of time towards his next meeting with his mistress.

Beyond the court, at which clocks measured the time in hours and minutes, Rosalind has become aware of other movements of time (of year, of life) which no clock is competent to gauge. For Rosalind, the psychological awareness of time – that "Time travels in divers paces with divers persons"/that one's perception of time varies in accordance with one's particular circumstances – is of greater importance. For each of four verbs, Rosalind proposes a different reaction:

Who does Time 'trot withal' – 'with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized'.

'Who ambles Time withal' – 'with a priest that lacks Latin and a rich man that hath not the gout'.

'Who doth he gallop withal' – 'with a thief to the gallows'.

'Who stays it still withal' – 'with lawyers in the vacation'.

Depending upon the meaning of the verb, the Rosalind-actress needs to adapt the pace of her delivery to the emotional circumstances upon which she is reflecting. As a result, these responses involve an actress (such as Rebecca Hall) in a series of role-plays required to communicate Rosalind's Theory of Relativity: namely, that a person's perception of the speed of time is entirely relative to his/her situation in life – for example, it is difficult not to hear Rosalind ('a young maid') ironically longing to lose her virginity to Orlando. In the Forest of Arden, 'there's no clock'; instead, there are greenwood trees (with their tree-rings) by which the movement of time at large can be gauged. Ultimately, Shakespeare's characters view themselves and their ambitions in this cosmic context.

Dramatic irony flavours the three scenes between Rosalind (as Ganymede) and Orlando. Because she is in a trans-sexual disguise, Rosalind holds over him an advantage which she can enjoy. Rosalind describes his 'strange capers' –

There is a man haunts the forest that abuses our young plants with carving
'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles
– all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind

– and accuses him of being both an eco-vandal and a 'fancy-monger'. By her very language, she is satirising Orlando's predilection for pinning his poems to trees: between 'odes' and 'hawthorns', between 'elegies' and 'brambles', there is an oxymoronic contrast that creates bathos at the expense of the love-poet, ridiculing him. In each case, a work of art, an object of decorum, is stuck incongruously on a prickly bush! Of course, there is also an irony at Rosalind's expense in that she wants Orlando to publish his feelings for her and to prove that they are not 'feigning'. Consequently, she regards his immaculate appearance (which does not conform to the literary stereotype) with private dismay.

When Orlando admits that he is 'so love-shaked', Rosalind points out that he presents none of the conventional symptoms of lovesickness: 'a lean cheek', 'a blue eye and sunken', 'an unquestionable spirit', 'a beard neglected', 'your hose ... ungartered', 'your bonnet unbanded', 'your sleeve unbuttoned', 'your shoe untied'. Orlando exhibits not one of the dishevelments conventionally attributed to 'the true lover'; in him, she can espy none of the eight 'marks' which conspire to create the air of 'careless desolation' which should single him out.

In several of its scenes, *As You Like It* is a parody of Thomas Lodge's prose romance *Rosalynde* (1540) in which romantic lovers appear in a pastoral setting and express their passions seriously in an euphuistic style. In Lodge's *Rosalynde*, the sartorial failings which Rosalind cannot find in Orlando apply in earnest to the unrequited lover; there, the idea was that the true lover should evince this 'careless desolation' in order to broadcast his feelings. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare seeks to parody the seriousness with which Lodge's swains and wenches took their passions. For this reason, Rosalind is heard to ridicule the very idea of a formula which such lovers are supposed to follow.

Being equally 'love-shaked', Rosalind plays Devil's Advocate; her indignation ("Me believe it?") succeeds at once in provoking Orlando into a public declaration of his passion for her. Every Director will ensure that Orlando seizes Ganymede's hand before he swears 'by the white hand of Rosalind' (which he is then holding) that he is indeed her 'unfortunate' admirer; 'neither rhyme nor reason can express how much' he loves Rosalind. Having heard this confession, Rosalind generalises with a proverbial ruefulness:

Love is merely a madness and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too.

This sentence predicts exactly the plot of *Twelfth Night* (1600) in which Malvolio, for being in love with Olivia, is accused of 'madness' and consigned to 'a dark house' by Olivia and Sir Toby who 'are in love too' (with 'Cesario' and Maria). In the Forest, Rosalind has acquired a painful self-knowledge: in recognising that she herself is as guilty of 'giddy offences' as Orlando is, she understands how 'ordinary' [= widespread] love-madness is. Rosalind's philosophical awareness ('that the whippers are in love too') warns her to guard against hypocrisy: after all, she has diagnosed a human condition to which not even she ("Looks he as freshly as he did the day he wrestled?") is immune.

At this point, Ganymede recalls one previous occasion on which he was able to cure a man of his lunacy: "He was to imagine me [Ganymede, a man] his love, his mistress; and I set him [a young man] every day to woo me" [another young man]. According to this fantastic scenario, she talked this young man out of his passion by behaving towards him much as

Phebe is behaving towards Silvius: that is, in a 'changeable' [= capricious] manner. In female character, entirely congenial to Rosalind, if not to the boy-actor of 1599, Ganymede

would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him;
now weep for him, then spit at him.

By these contrary means, Ganymede drove this youth 'from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness': ie. he started out madly in love, but ended up just mad. According to this fictional account, the young man became so confused by the behaviour of his mistress [herself mad] that he forsook 'the full stream of the world' for a monastery! It is no accident that, for Ganymede's presentation of the fickle lover, Shakespeare finds another series of euphuistic antitheses (syntactical parallels, reinforced by identical forms of punctuation) and in this way satirises further the 'mere folly' of romantic 'loving' (as presented in Lodge's *Rosalynde*).

To Orlando, Ganymede ("Call me, Rosalind") proposes the same form of psychiatric therapy and thereby propels the plot towards Act IV Scene 1. When Orlando states that he 'would not be cured' of his love for Rosalind, he says what Rosalind wants to hear; in the course of Act IV Scene 1, she will endeavour to discover whether or not he is 'feigning'.

ACT III Scene 3

The juxtaposition of this scene with the previous scene [Act III Scene 2] is functional in depicting the contrast between the romantic and the realistic attitudes to love.

In this scene, Shakespeare introduces us to Audrey, a resident of the Forest of Arden with whom Touchstone has taken up. Audrey is a lonely goatherd. Because she is native to the country, she is not familiar with courtly expressions; consequently, she does not understand Touchstone's question when he asks whether she likes 'the simple feature' [= the verse] which he has written for her. This misunderstanding prompts an exchange which encapsulates Shakespeare's satirical attitude to the romantic poetry of his day:

TOUCHSTONE: Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.
AUDREY: I do not know what 'poetical' is. Is it honest in deed and word?
Is it a true thing?
TOUCHSTONE: No, truly: for the truest poetry is the most feigning; and
lovers are given to poetry ...

Recalling the 'false gallop' of Orlando's verses to Rosalind, Touchstone – on Shakespeare's behalf – engages in literary criticism. As a literary critic, he is of the opinion that artificiality [a form of dishonesty, of 'feigning'] is ironically 'the truest' characteristic of the love poetry which courtiers write. In other words, courtly love-poets do not tell the truth; 'poetical' writing – which makes exaggerated claims about constancy – is not therefore to be trusted. Audrey's two questions about 'poetical' work express a major concern of the play: Do its 'words' faithfully reflect the 'deeds' of the poet? According to Touchstone, 'the truest poetry' [= the writing which best typifies that genre] is the most insincere poetry ('most feigning'). Why 'then', wonders Audrey, does Touchstone wish 'that the gods had made me poetical'? Touchstone's answer involves a courtly pun on the adjective 'honest':

for thou swearest to me thou art honest; now, if thou wert a poet, I might
have some hope thou didst feign.

Because she is native to the country, Audrey exhibits a natural honesty: first, she is 'honest' in that she is truthful; second, she is 'honest' in that she is chaste. Touchstone twists her truthful assurance that she is a virgin to express his 'hope' that she might not be: if she were 'a poet', then she might have been feigning a lack of sexual experience and in fact be a practised lover. Being a country wench, Audrey ("Would you not have me honest?") reacts

primly to Touchstone's courtly preference for an experienced woman; knowing that she is 'not fair', not endowed with beauty, she is rightly proud of her chastity [= her 'honesty']. Although she may have a buxom figure, Audrey can thank her 'foul' face [= her plainness] for preserving her from 'sluttishness' [= a promiscuous life in the fields] and ensuring that she remains marriageable.

Because Audrey makes a virtue of her virginity, Touchstone realises that he must marry her if he is to satisfy his desires ("so man hath his desires"). Being versed in the cunning ways of the court, his one fear is that 'sluttishness may come hereafter': that Audrey, once married, will inevitably cuckold him. Convinced that cuckold's horns [= the traditional emblems of a deceived husband] are 'necessary' consequences of marriage, he persuades himself to proceed with the wedding on the grounds that it is better to be a cuckold than an unsatisfied 'bachelor' ("so man hath his desires").

At this stage, Jaques (who has been shadowing the couple) steps forward, ready to give Audrey's grubby hand to Touchstone in marriage. But Jaques cannot help wondering whether Sir Oliver Martext ('the vicar of the next village') is a fit person to conduct a wedding; in addition, he points out that 'the wood' is not an adequate 'temple' for such a ceremony. By insisting upon protocol, Jaques is talking to Touchstone as one courtier to another and therefore asks: why – 'being a man of your breeding' – are you planning to 'be married under a bush like a beggar'? Although he ultimately takes Jaques' superior point, Touchstone explains why he is reluctant to stand upon such ceremony: if Sir Oliver Martext were a hedge-priest, likely to 'mar' the 'text' of the marriage service, then it would suit him because an invalid service would give him 'a good excuse' to leave Audrey in the future. In this cynical aside, Touchstone divulges to the audience that he has less integrity than Jaques and confirms that he at least remains a creature of the duplicitous court.

ACT III Scene 4

For this scene, the agreement between Ganymede [Rosalind] and Orlando at the end of III.2 supplies the context. It transpires that Orlando is late for his first appointment, causing in Rosalind an acute consternation and perplexity.

In this context, Celia's function is to act as a foil to Rosalind's romantic optimism: not at this stage in love herself, she can be sceptical about her cousin's high expectations of Orlando. If Orlando were truly in love with his Rosalind, then – says Rosalind – he would have been so eager to discuss her with Ganymede that nothing would have kept him from his appointment. Suspecting that he is not now in love with her, Rosalind feels entitled to respond in traditional fashion: "I will weep."

Celia's response to this attitudinising – "tears do not become a man" – is to tease her cousin, here making fun of her trans-sexual disguise. Celia is deliberately unsympathetic towards Rosalind's attempt to play the unrequited lover; her later reply – "therefore weep" – affects a cool indifference to her plight and has the dismissive effect of "Go right ahead! Cry your eyes out! Weep to your heart's content and see what good it will do you!" Such terse prose acts as a stern corrective of self-conscious posturing; it rebukes all lovers, not just Rosalind, for taking their feelings too seriously.

In her panic, Rosalind reproaches herself: by 'the dissembling colour' of his hair, she should have known that Orlando was not reliable. Celia does not argue: even though it is 'browner' than Judas Iscariot's hair, its reddish tinge is a sure sign that Orlando too will betray those whom he loves by 'his kisses'. Although she would trust Orlando with her purse or her horse, Celia suspects 'his verity in love': ie. his constancy. In the following exchange, Celia subjects Rosalind's loose use of language to forensic analysis:

ROSALIND: Not true in love?

CELIA: Yes, when he is in – but I think he is not.

ROSALIND: You have heard him swear downright he was.

CELIA: 'Was' is not 'is'. Besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster.

She takes for granted none of the romantic clichés ('true in love') which lovers use, but instead takes apart the syntax of such bland phrases and obliges her cousin to re-examine the precise force of them: in the first case, she challenges Rosalind's complacent usage of the preposition 'in'; in the second case, she makes her think again about the tense of the verb 'to be'. In both cases, Celia catches Rosalind off balance: rather than accept expressions uncritically, she focuses attention upon those parts of the sentences – 'in true love' and 'swear downright he was' – which Rosalind, in her lovesick complacency, has not inspected closely and properly.

After recounting an ironic episode in which she encountered Duke Senior incognito, Rosalind asks: "But what talk we of fathers, when there is such a man as Orlando?" Hearing Rosalind pause before uttering Orlando's name in a tone of whispered awe, Celia – as a cure for her gushing lovesickness – retorts with sarcasm, "O, that's a brave man!" In her view, Orlando is 'a brave man' in that he both swears and breaks oaths 'bravely': that is, not 'brave' [= good, honourable] at all because he does not keep his word. By this tone of voice, Celia, schooled in the ways of the court, is pouring her rhetorical scorn upon Rosalind's failure to see her loved one in a worldly perspective; her conclusion – "all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides" – seems to issue a sardonic reminder that 'most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly' [II.7]. By this attitude, she shapes the context for Orlando's eventual arrival: in Act IV Scene 1, the onus will be upon him to allay a scepticism born of the court and prove in the country that his oath is 'stronger than the word of a tapster' [= a barman notorious for over-charging].

Enter Corin. His function is to play impresario to the 'pageant' between Silvius ('the pale complexion of true love') and Phebe ('the red glow of scorn and proud disdain'). It is from this point that Rosalind's education in the subject of romantic love gathers pace. By bearing witness to a conflict between these two archetypes, she will be able to refine her attitude to her own situation.

ACT III Scene 5

In this scene, Shakespeare re-introduces us to Silvius ("Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me") and Phebe (the reluctant object of his passion). In so doing, he presents us with 'a pageant' of a lover and his lass: to be precise, an unrequited lover and his lass. Silvius (the lovesick swain) and Phebe (his coy mistress) are stock figures of pastoral romance: in this context, Silvius (with his 'pale complexion') is Christopher Marlowe's passionate shepherd and Phebe (with her 'red glow of scorn') is his love; whereas he wants her to live with him and be his love, she is having none of it. For this stereotyping, it is important **a]** that Silvius should complain of love as if it is a disease which has made him pale and ill; and **b]** that Phebe, who refuses to return his love, should by contrast have 'the red glow' of health in her cheeks.

Silvius cuts an abject figure, content to accept rejection as long as Phebe does not speak unkindly to him ("say not so in bitterness"); too eager to please, he is no challenge. What, however, Phebe scorns are his exaggerated protestations of his 'true love'. Because of his 'pale complexion', Silvius feels that he must be in a terminal condition and goes so far as to accuse Phebe of being 'sterner' than a 'common executioner'. Implicit in her subsequent ridicule of his hyperbole is a satirical criticism, not only of his melodramatic posturing, but also of an entire genre: courtly love-poetry.

Enter Rosalind, Celia and Corin, unobserved. For this scene, Rosalind's 'hard adventure' [= her painful longing for Orlando] supplies the context. Because her own love remains unrequited, she can sympathise whole-heartedly with Silvius' plight. Consequently, there opens up a scene in which Rosalind – ironically – will find herself empathising with an attitude for which elsewhere in the play [IV.1] she voices her own robust scepticism.

As literary critic, Phebe's strategy is to take Silvius' words literally: according to your poetic thesis, 'there is murder in mine eye ...' How likely is that? she scoffs. With his metaphorical means of expression, Phebe adopts a sarcastic incredulosity: " 'tis pretty, sure and very probable that eyes ... the frail'st and softest things ... should be called tyrants, butchers, murderers!" She puts on a prompt demonstration of her point, frowning upon him with all her might and calling his bluff. The fierce monosyllables of her iambic pentameter –

Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee

– challenge his claim and reduce to absurdity the very idea that 'eyes' can make any physical impression upon a man, let alone inflict a mortal wound. Phebe's criticism is that such 'poetical' thinking is at best over-elaborate, at worst untruthful ('feigning'). Silvius' response to her literal assertion that 'there is no force in eyes that can do hurt' is to explain that there is a metaphorical sense in which eyes can wound. His lines involve a proleptic irony:

If ever – as that ever may be near –
You meet in some fresh cheek the power of fancy,
Then shall you know the wounds invisible
That love's keen arrows make.

Just you wait, he tells her. Of course, she does not have to wait for even a minute, for 'that time' could not be nearer. Stung by Phebe's pitiless treatment of her suitor, Rosalind as Ganymede is already 'coming forward' to admonish her: within six lines, Phebe's hubris ('proud disdain') has met its nemesis in Ganymede's 'fresh cheek'; within six lines, she has met 'the power of fancy' and obeyed the pastoral/romantic convention by falling in love with 'him' at first sight:

Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?

Realising what has happened, Rosalind seizes the opportunity to deliver a moral lecture in which she chides Phebe for her vanity and rebukes Silvius for his lack of self-respect. Being female, Rosalind cannot see in Phebe what Silvius sees and so feels free to chastise Phebe in her own fierce tones, administering to her a taste of her own verbal medicine. In any case, Phebe's eyes 'are nothing like the sun' [Sonnet 130]; because her complexion ('inky brows') and her hair are 'black', she does not conform to the Elizabethan conception of true beauty and should not therefore consider herself out of 'the ordinary of nature's sale-work'. On the other hand, Rosalind, being a lovesick female, can see in Silvius a handsome and deserving youth:

You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman.

According to her, Silvius is a 'foolish shepherd' for having flattered such a plain shepherdess; he has paid her so much attention that she has developed too high an opinion of her 'lineaments'. By contrast, Phebe ('proud mistress') is an ungrateful little madam who lacks self-knowledge: "mistress, know yourself". Because hers are not conventional good looks, Phebe should be thankful ('down on your knees and thank heaven') "for a good man's love". Rosalind has a 'friendly' word in Phebe's ear: because she is 'not for all markets', she should 'take his offer'. Rather than torment Silvius, she should 'look on him better' because he deserves better. In a Christian world, Silvius should receive his just deserts, if that's what Phebe is ...

Upon Rosalind's exit, Phebe quotes Marlowe's poem *Hero and Leander* – "Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?" – and attempts to reform herself. Unfortunately, Phebe is a selfish and scheming minx whose only idea of moral rehabilitation is first to put up with Silvius and then to take advantage of him:

Thy company, which erst was irksome to me,
I will endure, and I'll employ thee too.

It is bad enough that he should not 'look for further recompense' than that she has finally found a purpose for him in her life; what is worse is that this purpose will be to run an errand to Ganymede, another man. Phebe cares so little for Silvius that she then pours into his ear twenty-six lines of blank verse in which she agonises over Ganymede's qualities:

Think not I love him, though I ask for him.
'Tis but a peevish boy. Yet he talks well ...
It is a pretty youth – not very pretty –
But, sure, he's proud – and yet his pride becomes him.

It is poetic justice that Phebe should find herself swallowing yet another dose of her own medicine: this time, experiencing herself the very pains through which she puts Silvius. Worse still is her disingenuousness: according to Phebe, there are 'some women' – although not of course herself! – who would have been tempted 'to fall in love with him'. With mock-indignation, Phebe pretends that, far from being attracted, she was repelled by Ganymede's personal remarks to her ("For what had he to do to chide at me?") and wants now to answer back ... In keeping with romantic convention, she will 'write to him a very taunting letter'.

Utterly beguiled, Silvius agrees to act as a go-between: "Phebe, with all my heart." Worst of all then is Phebe's deceitfulness: when she asks Silvius to be her knight-errant, she does not of course disclose to him that the letter, far from 'railing' at Ganymede for his presumptuousness, will implore him to requite her love at first sight [IV.3]. It will be not a 'taunting letter', but a love-letter.

* * * * *

ACT IV Scene 1

The purpose of the dialogue between Jaques and Rosalind is to further Rosalind's education. The subject of discussion is the condition of melancholy – into which Rosalind, by her 'hard adventure' in the Forest of Arden, has acquired an insight. She has heard that Jaques is 'a melancholy fellow' and puts it to him that he has taken this pose to an extreme. In his defence, Jaques embarks upon an anatomy of melancholy from which his own case is to be dramatically excluded:

but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted
from many objects and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels ...

In an euphuistic style, he explains that the melancholy mood from which he suffers ('a most humorous sadness') is entirely peculiar to him. Now that she is in Arden, Rosalind, herself 'a traveller', is able to sympathise with him. She too has 'gained ... experience' from her travels which has made her both weary and sad. For this reason, she is glad that she and Celia (also on stage) brought Touchstone with them: "I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience [= of unconsummated/unrequited love] to make me sad.

Upon Jaques' exit, Orlando enters. For the purposes of this entire dialogue, it is essential to bear in mind that Ganymede is impersonating Rosalind: ie. that Orlando has agreed to speak to Ganymede as if she is Rosalind (which, of course, she is!) Even though he may be a 'pretty youth', Ganymede stretches literal credibility by 'his'/her demand that he call 'him' by the female name of 'Rosalind'. In this scene, Orlando's dramatic function is mainly to feed Rosalind the questions which Shakespeare wants her to answer; at this point, he ceases to be a character and becomes a mere prompter, enabling her to dissert on the subject of love.

When Orlando finally rolls up, Ganymede/Rosalind first asks him where he has been 'all this while'; her second question – "You a lover?" – asks him how he can call himself 'a lover' if he cannot be punctual even for his first date. Orlando's answer – "My fair Rosalind, I come within an hour of my promise" – is complacent, enabling her to explain that a true lover would be counting the nano-seconds ('the thousandth parts of a minute') until the moment when he could be with his loved one again. For confirmation, she has only to consult the example of Silvius who cannot bear to be out of Phebe's company.

Ganymede/Rosalind retorts that she would rather be 'wooded of a snail' than by such a dilatory man. One reason for this preference is that a snail 'brings his destiny with him': because a snail has horns on his head, he is prepared for the moment when his wife inevitably makes a cuckold of him (for which a pair of horns is the symbol). This invidious remark sets a first test for Orlando which he duly passes:

Virtue is no horn-maker; and my Rosalind is virtuous.

This is what he is supposed to say: that, whereas most wives will fall out of love with their husbands and commit adultery, his Rosalind won't; he is confident that she will prove an exception to this unhappy rule. Exploiting the dramatic irony of the situation, Rosalind then sets him a second test:

ROSALIND: Well, in her own person, I say I will not have you.

ORLANDO: Then, in mine own person, I die.

ROSALIND: No, faith, die by attorney. The poor world is almost six thousand years old and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, *videlicet*, in a love-cause. [She cites two great lovers of classical mythology: Troilus who was killed in action and Leander who was drowned] Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

From the over-heard dialogue between Silvius and Phebe, Rosalind has gathered that men, though they may suffer from lovesickness, get better. Claims that they will die of broken hearts are metaphorical over-statements of the case. Phebe's literal challenge to Silvius – "Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee" [III.5] – explains that such protestations are nothing more than rhetorical exaggerations for which romantic poets are responsible. Whatever Orlando may feel for her, Rosalind – seated 'under the shade of melancholy boughs' – has learned to recognise that it will not last. Such an unsentimental realism ('but not for love') is one measure of her education in this subject.

Another measure follows. Ganymede/Rosalind ("Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry us") requests that Celia stage a mock-wedding between Orlando and herself. Among their marriage-lines is this exchange:

ROSALIND: Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possessed her.

ORLANDO: For ever and a day.

ROSALIND: Say 'a day' without the 'ever'. No, no, Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed; maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives.

From the Forest of Arden, Rosalind has learned to anticipate an inevitable pattern of change. It is a law of nature: that a man, after he has sexually 'possessed' a woman, tends lose interest in her/that, in the course of time, his ardour cools. Orlando's instantly optimistic answer receives a dose of Celia's medicine [III.4]; its conventional sentiment (till the twelfth of Never) is too ambitious and too good to be true. Why? Significantly, Rosalind uses a seasonal metaphor to explain herself; her experience of the Forest has taught her that human relationships are subject to climatic change/that meteorological and emotional temperatures are both cyclical. Like Amiens' metaphors, her use of months illustrates her awareness that human ambitions are subject to elemental forces ('the sky changes') beyond their control.

At the end of this charade, Orlando prepares to take his leave. When she discovers that he will be gone for 'two hours', Rosalind reacts with dismay; even though he is behaving reasonably, she reverts to the type of 'moonish youth' whom she had criticised for being 'changeable' in III. 2. She reproaches him sulkily:

Ay, go your ways, go your ways: I knew what you would prove, my friends
told me as much and I thought no less. That flattering tongue of your won
me. 'Tis but one cast away, and so, come death. Two o' clock is your hour?

An acute listener to this sulk will have heard from Rosalind a spectacular contradiction of her earlier position ... Even though 'men have died from time to time', none – according to her – has died 'for love'; her sudden prediction – "and so, come death" – is therefore a 'poetical' reflex to Orlando's brief absence which is at striking odds with her previous conclusion. This inconsistency is one of the 'strange capers' into which lovers run; it depicts her deep confusion, her turmoil, showing how difficult it is for even the wisest head to rule a heart. Another instance immediately ensues: if Orlando's temporary absence will cause her sudden 'death', then his estimated time of return (two o' clock) should be immaterial to her. Instead, Ganymede/Rosalind sets him another time-trial: if he is even 'one minute' late in returning, then it will 'prove' that he is 'the most hollow lover' ('as concave as ... a worm-eaten nut'). As Orlando departs, Rosalind amuses herself with an ambiguous usage:

Well, Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try.

Just as Orlando will be tested [= 'examined'] by his ability to return on time, so Orlando and Rosalind's love for each other will be tested [= 'tried'] by its capacity to withstand the effects of Time.

After Orlando's departure, Rosalind – a paragon of Renaissance womanhood – confesses twice to Celia that she is deeply in love with him: "how deep I am in love". In John Middleton Murry's words, Shakespeare "did what he could to make [Rosalind] a credible human being to himself"; he gave her "humanly plausible motives for her acts and situations". Rosalind, then, becomes more than an archetype, an agent for the story. She is a complex character, not least because her emotion defies her logic; hard though she may exercise her reason, she can do nothing to subdue her passion. Despite her disguise, she is a woman who has discovered that her refined thoughts can do nothing to control her raw feelings for a man.

ACT IV Scene 2

ORLANDO: For these two hours, Rosalind, I will leave thee [IV.1] In theatrical effect, the function of this very short scene is to mark the passage of time – between noon and two o' clock – in which Orlando is absent from Ganymede (the sweet youth whom he calls 'Rosalind'). During the 'two hours', Orlando must 'attend the Duke at dinner'; here, he is shown doing so.

This interval contributes to the pastoral ideal, but at the same time mocks it. After all, the stage-direction – *Enter Jaques and Lords dressed as foresters* – consciously recalls the stage-direction which introduced Duke Senior and his ‘brothers in exile’ in Act II Scene 1: *Enter Duke Senior, Amiens and two or three Lords dressed like foresters*. No sooner does II.1 start than Duke Senior can be heard regretting that they must kill ‘the native burghers of this desert city ... in their own confines’: kill deer in order to eat venison. It is upon this ironic inconsistency that Jaques is then reported to have been moralising: ie. that the foresters ‘do more usurp’ the deer’s territory than Duke Frederick usurps theirs. This hypocrisy did not escape Jaques’ satirical jests in II.1; nor does it escape them now. His role in IV.2 is to identify the so-called forester who ‘killed the deer’ and then, rather than honour him, hold him up to an unexpected form of ridicule:

Let’s present him to the Duke as a Roman conqueror. And it would do well to set the deer’s horns upon his head for a branch of victory. Have you no song, forester, for this purpose?

This critical introduction invites us to regard the ceremonial procession in an ironic light. In Jaques’ voice, we can hear three satirical notes: first, in his comparison of the deer hunter to a Roman hero; second, in his comparison of him to a cuckolded husband; and third, in his sarcastic application of the epithet ‘forester’ to a courtier. In Jaques’ view, the foresters are imposters whose hypocrisy and rapacity belong more properly in ‘the pompous court’. Consequently, their celebration of the greenwood way of life may be better heard as an unwitting criticism of their own ethics. The question with which the song begins –

What shall he have that killed the deer?

– invites a narrative answer ... While this hero was away, his wife was committing adultery; for this reason, not to herald any ‘victory’, antlers (the traditional emblem of cuckoldom) should be placed on his head. This being so, the ceremony is not so much ritual celebration as ritual humiliation.

ACT IV Scene 3

At the start of this scene, Rosalind (“Is it not past two o’clock?”) is beginning to fear that Orlando is not going to keep his appointment with her. Before she can fret further, Silvius enters and delivers Phebe’s letter to her: *He gives Rosalind a letter, which she reads*. It transpires that Phebe, in writing the letter, had worn a ‘stern brow’ in order to give Silvius the false impression that she was writing ‘a very taunting letter’; as a result, he has been deceived into thinking that it ‘bears an angry tenor’.

Having read it, Rosalind at first contrives to give Silvius another false impression: namely, that the letter does not mean what it says. Before she reads it aloud, she pretends to think that the words [of love] must be insincere to the point of sarcasm; according to Rosalind, it has been written in such ‘a boisterous and a cruel style’ that no woman could have played such a trick. When she reads it aloud, it becomes clear from this stretch of dialogue –

ROSALIND: Art thou god to shepherd turned
That a maiden’s heart hath burned?
Can a woman rail thus?
SILVIUS: Call you this railing?
ROSALIND: Why, thy godhead laid apart,
Warrest thou with a woman’s heart?
Did you ever hear such railing?

– that the style is indeed ‘cruel’, but in the sense that Phebe has once more been cruel to Silvius: first, in writing to Ganymede the very couplets which he himself would love to hear from her; second, in asking him under a false pretence to deliver this manuscript. In fact,

Phebe's 'railing' contains four expressions of her love for Ganymede and a confession that she has used her besotted Silvius to convey them:

He that brings this love to thee
Little knows this love in me.

Once Rosalind has brought home to Silvius how mendacious and unfaithful Phebe is, she points out frankly that he deserves better: "Wilt thou love such a woman? What, to make thee an instrument and play false strains upon thee?" Sadly, Silvius – more of 'a tame snake' than a man – proves incapable of seeing his 'proud mistress' in realistic terms. As a result, there begins to form in Rosalind's head the fantastic plan by which the complications of the plot will finally be resolved.

Upon Silvius' exit, Oliver De Boys suddenly and surprisingly enters. The second half of this scene involves an undeveloped theme of the play: namely, the constant possibility of brotherly reconciliation/the limitless scope for the brotherhood of man. This character – from whom we last heard in Act III Scene 1 – is both physically and verbally unrecognisable. It turns out that Oliver ("I never loved my brother in his life") is no longer a Machiavellian wannabe in evil pursuit of a hated brother; in his current incarnation, he is 'a wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair' [Line 107] who speaks with a formal politeness: "Good morrow, fair ones." It transpires that, in obeying Duke Frederick's order to track down Orlando, he has come under the magical influence of the Forest of Arden (with its olive trees, ranks of osiers and murmuring streams) and undergone a moral transformation.

Oliver tells a tale which borrows its theme from the fantastic adventures of prose romance: indeed, it is an adaptation of an episode from Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*. In his verse-narrative, Oliver reports an adventure in the impersonal style of a Greek messenger: "Lo, what befell!" This third-person narrative involves none other than Orlando: first, it explains why he is late for his appointment with Rosalind; second, it confirms that he is a courageous man of action; and third, it illustrates that he is capable of an exceptional compassion. To cut Oliver's long verse-story short, Orlando – on his way back from Duke Senior's feast – comes across a 'sleeping man' on whom a 'hungry lioness' is waiting to pounce as soon as he awakes. Realising that this sleeping vagabond is none other than his 'unnatural' brother Oliver, Orlando 'twice' decides to abandon him to a much-deserved mauling:

But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,
And nature, stronger than his just occasion,
Made him give battle to the lioness,
Who quickly fell before him ...

This episode – as Oliver relates it – is an exemplum of brotherly love; supremely, it testifies to Orlando's capacity for Christian forgiveness, for 'noble kindness' [= magnanimity]; ultimately, it confirms how fit a husband for Rosalind he is. As soon as Rosalind and Celia realise that Orlando has 'rescued' the brother who 'did so oft contrive to kill him', Oliver announces that, since entering the greenwood, he has been a changed man: "'Twas I, but 'tis not I". He has undergone a dramatic change of identity, a religious 'conversion'. This announcement (as we shall see) explains what fit a husband for Celia he would now make.

But what of Orlando? Oliver recounts how Orlando and he became reconciled to each other, how Orlando then led him to 'the gentle Duke' and how afterwards Orlando took him 'unto his cave' where – in dressing the wound to his arm received in battle with the lioness – 'he fainted and cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind'. When he came round, Orlando ('being strong at heart') despatched Oliver (now in 'fresh array') to Ganymede's sheep-cote in order to apologise for 'his broken promise'; he sent also 'this napkin' dyed in his blood to corroborate the fantastic story.

The twenty-five lines which conclude this scene re-concentrate attention upon Rosalind's trans-sexual disguise and its dramatic effects. On hearing that Orlando was thinking of her, *Rosalind faints* and invites a dramatic irony at Oliver's expense:

OLIVER: Be of good cheer, youth! You a man? You lack a man's heart.

For an obvious reason, Rosalind confesses that she does lack a man's heart, but continues to insist that her emotional reaction to Orlando's bloody napkin was merely in keeping with the charade in which both of them have agreed to engage; it was merely 'well counterfeited'. Faced with Ganymede's pale complexion, Oliver retorts that 'it was a passion of earnest' and thereby signals that Rosalind has fully developed the passionate part of her Platonic soul. Although for the time being she will still 'counterfeit to be a man', Rosalind's admission that she 'should have been a woman by right' prepares us for the moment [in V.4] when she will 'devise something' enabling her to resume her female identity and claim Orlando.

At scene-end, stage-business should also prepare us for the match between Oliver and Celia. Although there is nothing in Shakespeare's stage-directions to suggest this turn of events, Celia ("Good sir, go with us") has fallen in love with Oliver at first sight and would be exchanging glances with him and even taking his arm.

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ACT V Scene 1

In the play, one of Shakespeare's aims is to organise a debate between Court and Country. In Act IV Scene 3, Oliver entered the Forest of Arden, fell under its benign spell and became a reformed character: in other words, a court character responded to the superior influence of the country. In this scene, Touchstone – the court jester – uses his courtly wit to outwit Audrey's erstwhile suitor, William: here, a court character uses his superior intelligence to score a triumph over a country bumpkin. Will Touchstone's sophisticated 'flouting' seem more endearing than William's bucolic simplicity? It is left to audiences to decide how they like it: ie. which of the two scenes presents a more edifying spectacle.

At the start of this scene, Touchstone ("We shall find a time, Audrey") is still trying to pacify Audrey for his earlier failure [III.3] to go through a wedding service with her. Preparing us for the multiple marriages of Act V, he promises that he will still marry her, but not until she has renounced 'the youth here in the forest' who 'lays claim' to her. It is at this point that William, an entirely new character, enters.

Shakespeare's aim in placing his courtly characters (Orlando and Rosalind/Oliver and Celia) beside these 'country copulatives' is to illustrate the contrast. For this purpose, Silvius and Phebe (who express their feelings in blank verse) are too sophisticated; by contrast, William and Audrey are very realistic figures who thus imply a criticism of the Arcadian ideal which poetic shepherds and shepherdesses represent.

As soon as he sets eyes on William, Touchstone can hardly contain his comic wit: "it is meat and drink to me to see a clown". He realises that he shouldn't take advantage of a yokel, but cannot honestly see himself resisting the temptation to make satirical fun of the man. Although William thinks that he is both rich and wise, he is neither by the standards of the court; in fact, he stands there gormlessly. Touchstone's apparent digression –

The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth, meaning thereby that grapes were made to eat and lips to open

– can be given point by William’s body-language. His speech ceases to be a digression if William can be imagined standing there with his mouth open, drooling and lusting after his buxom wench. In that context, Touchstone’s comment becomes both a reference to Audrey’s mouth-watering ripeness (‘a grape’) and a satire on William’s ignorance of etiquette/his rustic goofiness.

Dimwit though he may be, William is wise enough to know that he is not ‘learned’. Having established this failing, Touchstone proceeds to blind him with physical science: “To have is to have.” The obvious point which he is stating is that possession [of Audrey’s body] is nine-tenths of the law; now that she may marry into the court, Audrey is unlikely to return to a clown [= a country boy]. This being so, Touchstone concludes that he, not William, is ‘the man’: “Now, you are not ‘ipse’, for I am he.” To reinforce his courtly superiority over the country boy, Touchstone resorts to a Latin pronoun which purports to endow his attachment to Audrey with a quasi-legal status. Finally, Touchstone sees off William with an exercise in English diction:

Therefore, you clown, abandon – which is in the vulgar ‘leave’ – the society – which in the boorish is ‘company’ – of this female – which in the common is ‘woman’ – which, together, is ‘abandon the society of this female’ or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest ...

If not quite spelling out William’s situation for him, Touchstone translates it from a classical English into a more ‘vulgar’ form of the language: to be exact, he construes from words of a Greek or Latin root (‘abandon’, ‘society’, ‘female’, ‘perishest’) their ‘common’ meanings: ‘leave’, ‘company’, ‘woman’, ‘diest’. For William, this course in English etymology is intimidating enough. Even before Touchstone threatens him with physical violence, he has begun to ‘tremble’ and is on his way.

ACT V Scene 2

If – at the end of Act IV Scene 3 – there has been no indication of an attraction between Oliver and Celia, then the topic of the first conversation between the reconciled brothers will be an abrupt surprise. So sudden is this passion that even Orlando can be heard wondering whether it is ‘possible’ to fall in love at first sight:

That, but seeing, you should love her? And loving woo? And, wooing,
she should grant?

Oliver has to admit that ‘man is a giddy thing’ [*Much Ado* V.4] and liable to commit ‘giddy offences’, but adds that Orlando must not let this ‘giddiness’ concern him: after all, he is proposing to marry Aliena (whose true identity remains unknown to him) and set up home in her sheep-cote – with the result that Orlando can take over the running of their father’s estate. Such is the transformation which the enchanted wood has wrought in him.

Upon Rosalind’s entrance, Oliver exits. This is the first occasion on which Orlando and Rosalind have met since he damaged his arm in wrestling with the lioness [IV.3]. For this scene, he is to be imagined as wearing a sling. Given the position of this sling, Rosalind makes the convenient mistake of thinking that his heart has been ‘wounded with the claws of a lion’. Orlando’s reply – “Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady” – contains a familiar figure of speech, straight from the conventional lexicon of love-poetry. What Phebe [III.5] would make of his metaphorical statement is on record: ‘there is no force in eyes that can do hurt’. Such a fanciful perception is a form of false pretence, of ‘feigning’; such imaginings are among the ‘strange capers’ into which lovers run.

Rosalind is preoccupied by the sudden ease with which Orlando’s brother Oliver and her cousin Celia have become betrothed; it has not escaped her attention that Celia, though she

remained disguised as Aliena, was not disguised as a man and was thus able to woo in her own person. She cannot help dwelling dolefully upon the sheer smoothness of the process by which the two of them got together:

For your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked; no sooner looked but they loved; no sooner loved but they sighed; no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy ...

She does so in an euphuistic language which, by means of its syntactical parallels, illustrates the logical progression in Oliver and Celia's relationship from meeting to marrying. They are said to be 'in the very wrath of love'.

Orlando tempers his eager anticipation of Oliver and Celia's wedding ("They shall be married tomorrow ...") with his equivalent awareness that he will 'tomorrow be at the height of heart-heaviness' because he cannot simultaneously marry his Rosalind. Upon this note, Rosalind makes good her promise to 'devise something' to resolve the complications of the plot: that is, to clear up the confusion to which these bright things have come. Now confident that Orlando is 'a gentleman of good conceit', she explains that, owing to her lifelong association with a fictional 'magician', she 'can do strange things':

If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries it out,
when your brother marries Aliena, shall you marry her.

Knowing perfectly well 'into what straits of fortune she is driven', Ganymede/Rosalind promises to set Rosalind [= herself, dressed again as a woman] before Orlando's eyes 'tomorrow'. No fewer than six times in this exchange do Orlando and Rosalind between them use the adverb 'tomorrow', thereby preparing audiences for the nuptial celebrations of the final scene [V.4].

Enter Silvius and Phebe. At once, Phebe reproaches Ganymede for having shown to Silvius her love-letter. Accused of treachery by the treacherous Phebe, Ganymede/Rosalind retorts that she 'cares not' how 'ungentle' she has been, for Phebe – after her ill-treatment of her 'faithful shepherd' Silvius – fully deserves it: "Look upon him, love him: he worships you." There then ensue twenty-two lines of stichomythia in which Silvius catalogues the characteristics of a man who 'worships' his mistress:

SILVIUS: It is to be all made of sighs and tears,
And so am I for Phebe.
PHEBE: And I for Ganymede.
ORLANDO: And I for Rosalind.
ROSALIND: And I for no woman.

During this litany, Silvius makes an exhaustive list of the virtues of a courtly lover. From the diction used, it is clear that his devotion is expected to be both uncritical and religious in its intensity: 'faith and service', 'all adoration, duty and observance', 'all humbleness, all patience', 'all trial, all observance' (again!) As Orlando explicitly declares himself 'for Rosalind', so Rosalind implicitly declares herself for Orlando: if she is 'for no woman', then it is because she is for a man. From these reciprocal responses, it is clear that Orlando ('all gentleman-like qualities' together in harmony) has been transformed by his Forest experience into an example of Renaissance manhood fit to complement Rosalind's equally complete womanhood.

After three rounds, Rosalind silences these choruses with her own criticism of formulaic speaking/writing: "'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon." Even so, her own prose – in which she prepares four more times for 'tomorrow' – is heavily stylised:

Tomorrow meet me all together. (To Phebe) I will marry you if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married tomorrow. (To Orlando) I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied man, and you shall be married tomorrow. (To Silvius) I will content you, if what pleases you contents you, and you shall be married tomorrow.

Although there remains a dramatic irony at the expense of her cast, Rosalind is preparing to shed her trans-sexual disguise and – like a great illusionist – effect further miraculous reconciliations. It is in this spirit of restored harmony that ***As You Like It*** – except for one dissonant note – will end.

ACT V Scene 3

The motto of this scene is *carpe diem*. To celebrate Touchstone and Audrey's imminent marriage, Shakespeare stages a fourth song in which two pages herald the onset of spring and advise 'a lover' (Touchstone) 'and his lass' (Audrey) to seize 'the joyful day'. In this setting, it is entirely natural that a maid should – as Audrey does – 'desire to be a woman of the world': that is, be ready to relinquish her chastity. Consequently, the language of the Pages' Song -

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey and a ho and a hey-nonino,
That o'er the green corn field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding-ding,
Sweet lovers love the spring

– exhorts the couple to enjoy 'the spring time' of their lives: both literally and metaphorically, to make hay ('the green corn field') while the sun shines. Spring is the season 'when birds', if not bees, respond to each other's mating calls ('do sing'); at such a 'pretty time', men and women should not hesitate to do likewise. To this extent, the lyric anticipates the second verse of Feste's song in ***Twelfth Night*** [II.3] in which he warns against sexual procrastination ("In delay, there lies no plenty") and reflects upon the ephemeral nature of human existence: "Youth's a stuff will not endure". To the same extent, the Pages' Song also inspires two more sixteenth-century lyrics: Ben Jonson's ***To Celia*** and Robert Herrick's ***To The Virgins, To Make Much of Time***. Both Jonson ("Time will not be ours for ever") and Herrick are aware of human transience; each poet is acutely conscious that he must 'make much of time' and on that basis is trying to persuade a virgin to lose her virginity to him.

All who dwell under the greenwood tree are acutely conscious of the temporal context in which human life is lived; to them, it is evident that 'the spring time' (April/May) is 'the only pretty ring time' of their lives and that these days must therefore be seized. Consequently, the Pages sing that 'life [is] but a flower' and demand that the lover and his lass 'therefore take the present time'. They chorus that 'sweet lovers' should enjoy their 'love' while they are in the 'prime' of their brief lives: "For love is crownèd with the prime". They must act swiftly before 'the sky changes' [IV.1] and it is December ('winter and rough weather').

It is from the Pages' Song that Herrick (1591-1674) takes both his imagery and his note of urgency. His famous imperative – "Gather ye rose-buds while ye may" – reminds the virgins that flowers (such as themselves) are evanescent; his declarative statement – "That age is best which is the first" – counsels them against being 'coy' and urges them to 'use [their] time'. Edmund Waller's ***Go, Lovely Rose*** and Andrew Marvell's ***To His Coy Mistress*** ("Now let us sport us while we may") also belong to this sixteenth-century tradition of lyrics in which an amorous man warns a young woman of her fleeting prime.

ACT V Scene 4

'Tomorrow' comes. For the first time in the play, Duke Senior (though he does not know it) and his daughter Rosalind are on stage together and briefly share dialogue. It can be very easily forgotten that Rosalind and Celia [I.3] originally headed for the Forest of Arden expressly to seek out Duke Senior; in the meantime, Rosalind has been such 'a busy actor' [III.4] that she seems to have forgotten this original intention.

Because the Pages' Song has intervened, Shakespeare finds it necessary to run again through 'the bargain' which Ganymede has struck with Orlando, Phebe and Silvius. In stichomythia, Ganymede reminds Phebe that, if she refuses to marry him, then she must give herself instead to Silvius ('this most faithful shepherd'); at the same time, 'he' reminds Silvius that he must then 'have' Phebe. Silvius' promise to keep his side of this bargain – "Though to have her and death were both one thing" – has its own humour: knowing what we know of Phebe, being married to her is likely to be a fate worse than death!

Ganymede/Rosalind then repeats these conditions in blank verse, emphasising for the last time the advantage which her trans-sexual disguise has given her over Orlando and Phebe. In particular, Rosalind –

Keep you your word, Phebe, that you'll marry me
Or else, refusing me, to wed this shepherd

– enjoys reinforcing the point that Phebe, when she finds out that Ganymede is not male, will not want to marry a woman and will consequently receive her come-uppance for having spurned her 'faithful shepherd': in short, she will have to marry him.

Exeunt Rosalind and Celia. Unsurprisingly, Duke Senior has recognised in Ganymede 'some lively touches of my daughter's favour' and – hereby undercutting an audience's considerable incredulity – comments on their facial similarities. Endorsing one of the clumsier ironies of the play, Orlando suddenly sees fit to remark that he always thought that Ganymede ('this shepherd boy') was 'a brother to your daughter'.

Touchstone and Audrey enter in order to create an interlude in which Rosalind and Celia can change out of their respective disguises and into regal dresses. As soon as he sees them, Jaques greets them ironically; in his eyes, Touchstone (from the court) and Audrey (from the country) make 'a pair of very strange beasts'. Because they look an unlikely match, they constitute an emblem of the sharp antithesis between Court and Country which the play never quite manages to blunt.

Jaques hails Touchstone ('the motley-minded gentleman') as if he is a long-lost friend and informs Duke Senior that 'he hath been a courtier'. Touchstone needs no invitation to demonstrate his affinity with the court: in particular, his mastery of courtly protocol. To this end, he explains that, although he may now find himself amongst 'the country copulatives', he can boast practical experience of the intrigues in which courtiers delight: not only has he 'flattered a lady' and 'been politic with my friend', but he has also engaged in 'four quarrels', one of which almost ended in a duel ...

Nowhere in *As You Like It* is Shakespeare more satirical at the expense of 'the pompous court'. The pride which Touchstone takes in enumerating the steps that he took to avoid this duel exemplifies the extreme artificiality of its customs. Agnes Latham (Arden, 1975) explains that there were published in the same decade as *As You Like It* four books on the practice of duelling:

1590 Sir William Segar *The Booke and Honor of Armes*

- 1594 Giacomo di Grassi ***His true Arte of Defence***
1594 Vincentio Saviolo ***His Practise of the Rapier and Dagger***
1599 George Silver ***Paradoxes of Defence***

Duels (which take various shapes in ***Romeo and Juliet***, ***Much Ado about Nothing*** and ***Twelfth Night***) were common features of court life, regularly costing the lives of its best young men, its youngest and hottest bloods. In Touchstone's prosaic account of his close-shave, Shakespeare's aim is to show that the court has evolved an etiquette even for this barbaric practice. Having done something so trivial as insult 'the cut of a certain courtier's beard', Touchstone was obliged to go through a rigmarole of exchanges with him so that their argument did not culminate in a duel to the death.

Before setting out the safeguards against a fatal outcome, Touchstone ("Bear your body more seeming, Audrey") seems to notice that Audrey's breasts are bulging out of her frock. For exhibiting her natural charms, he admonishes her in order to emphasise that he possesses the artificial refinement which present company would expect of a practised courtier:

He sent me word, if I said his beard was not well cut, he was in the mind it was; this is called the Retort Courteous. If I sent him word again it was not well cut, he would send me word he cut it to please himself; this is called the Quip Modest. If again 'it was not well cut', he disabled my judgement; this is called the Reply Churlish. If again 'it was not well cut', he would answer, I spake not true; this is called the Reproof Valiant. If again 'it was not well cut', he would say, I lie; this is called the Countercheck Quarrelsome. And so to the Lie Circumstantial and the Lie Direct.

From this tedious account, it is plain that Touchstone and his adversary submitted themselves to a process of arbitration calculated to ensure that they would never come to mortal blows. When Jaques asks Touchstone to nominate again 'the degrees of the lie', Touchstone replies that he can do so with ease because, just as courtiers 'have books for good manners', so they also have manuals for quarrelling and duelling. Indeed, in Segar's book, there is a chapter on 'the nature of the diversitie of lies; in Saviolo's book, there is a discourse on 'the giving and receiving of the Lie'. Listening to Touchstone's slick use of this elaborate terminology, it is difficult not to laugh at the lengths to which courtiers of the 1590s went in order to satisfy their senses of honour.

Between editions, stage-directions at this key point vary. Certainly, the Penguin direction – "Enter a masquer representing Hymen" – enables a Director to introduce Hymen not as a fantastic character in her own right, as some *dea ex machina*, but in the person of Amiens or Corin or even Sir Oliver Martext, performing for Rosalind a favour. Furthermore, the fuller stage-direction – *Enter ... Rosalind and Celia as themselves* – makes clear that they reappear as noble females, wearing women's weeds and consequently making a grand entrance.

Being the Goddess of the Wedding, Hymen speaks a verse which celebrates both the cosmic and the social importance of marriage. It makes the traditional connection between celestial and terrestrial harmony:

Then is there mirth in heaven
When earthly things, made even,
Atone together.

The dominant idea is that Heaven, upon observing peace on Earth, itself rejoices; allegedly, the heavenly spheres then sing in harmony both with one another and with their 'earthly' representatives; to indicate this atonement, this concord, the stage-direction (in all editions)

requires that there be *Still music*, perhaps an ironic playing of an earlier melody. In this respect, the harmonious world of the play becomes a microcosm of the Elizabethan world; merry Arden is Merrie England.

At this point, Rosalind becomes a theatrical impresario to an epithalamium. She confirms her true identity: first to Duke Senior, then to Orlando, but with the same line of blank verse: "To you, I give myself for I am yours." The responses to this revelation –

DUKE: If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.
ORLANDO: If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.
PHEBE: If sight and shape be true,
Why then, my love adieu!

– terminate in Phebe's reflection, especially painful for her, but comical to us, that Ganymede's appearance was deceptive: not 'true'. In Aristotelian terms, this moment of anagnorisis (by which Phebe is humiliated) satisfies us because it constitutes her nemesis for her hubristic insensitivity to Silvius' feelings for her. At this point, Hymen resumes control of the proceedings. Her verse –

Here's eight that must take hands,
To join in Hymen's bands,
If truth holds true contents

– concentrates upon the 'eight' who wish to be wed: Orlando to Rosalind, Oliver to Celia, Silvius to Phebe and Touchstone to Audrey. For these four couples, she finds rhyming couplets:

(to Orlando and Rosalind) You and you no cross shall part;
(to Oliver and Celia) You and you are heart to heart;
(to Phebe) You to his love must accord
Or have a woman to your lord;
(to Touchstone and Audrey) You and you are sure together,
As the winter to foul weather.

In the symmetrical arrangement of the wedded couples, she perceives a reproduction of the alignment between the spheres, the planets. To solemnise these four weddings, she calls for 'a wedlock-hymn': that is, a tune which will echo the planetary alignment between the 'brides and bridegrooms all'. Accordingly, the Song which ensues – "High wedlock then be honoured" – stresses the supreme importance of marriage in 'every town'; it signifies the means of ensuring heavenly harmony on earth. Whether an audience is totally convinced by this tableau of marital bliss will depend partly upon its reaction to the matches between Silvius and Phebe ("Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine") and Touchstone and Audrey (their 'loving voyage ... but for two months victualled').

To enhance this state of social harmony, Shakespeare abruptly introduces another character. In the very first speech of the play, Orlando [I.1] had informed the audience that his eldest brother Oliver De Boys kept his other brother Jaques De Boys 'at school' where he was said to be making excellent progress ('report speaks goldenly of his profit'). Suddenly, the tableau of reconciliation is complete when this middle brother Jaques ('the second son of old Sir Rowland') turns up at his brothers' communal wedding.

What is more, his second function is to bring glad tidings to 'this fair assembly'; once more in the style of a Greek messenger, a character has important action to report, a tale to tell. Apparently, Duke Frederick, having gathered together a 'mighty' force of fighting men, had set off for Arden with the evil intention of putting Duke Senior and his followers finally 'to the sword'. Fate intervenes:

what is she doing ("What a case am I in ..?") craving an audience's indulgence and expressly asking for its applause? How, 'then', should she best go about this superfluous task?

The answer is to break with another convention: upon explaining that his 'way' will be to 'conjure' [= appeal to] his audience in gender-specific terms, the Rosalind-actor steps out of his trans-sexual disguise and addresses the audience in his own male person. His argument is mischievously complex:

I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much
of this play as please you.

On a straightforward level, it runs that, if women like men, then they will like him; on this basis, they will like the play in which he (a boy) has played Rosalind. Similarly, he charges the men in the audience – "I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women ..." – to explain to the women ('between you and the women') that they like the way in which he (although a boy) has represented one of the opposite sex.

On another level, there is a pun on the noun 'play': not Shakespeare's play of ***As You Like It***; but the boy-actor's 'play' at being a girl. His final hypothesis – "If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me ..." – confirms that the literal appeal of this epilogue is homo-erotic and flirtatiously so, not least in that second pun on 'beards': either the facial hair of men or the pubic hair of women [cf. I.2]. The Rosalind-boy is so pleased with himself as a bender of gender that he asks: in which costume did you, O women, find me more attractive? in which form did you, O men, find me more desirable? His offer to kiss beards is therefore a 'kind offer' in that it is a bisexual's offer to kiss both kinds: as a female character, he will kiss the men's lips; as a male actor, he will kiss the women's labia! On this level, Shakespeare's title springs into sexual life: with which of my persons, says the Rosalind-actor, would sex be as you like it?

If you like, ***As You Like It*** is an essay on the subject of trans-sexual disguise as Shakespeare's theatre knew it. In this unusual epilogue, itself a sort of literary criticism, the male actor addresses each man and each woman in the audience and says of his female role in the play, "Imagine sex with me as you like it ..." No matter how the text of ***As You Like It*** is interpreted, the sub-text of the play – endorsed by both its title and its epilogue – is bisexuality.

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As You Like It by Peter Cash is Number 5 in the Shakespeare Bookmark Longer Commentaries series, published by

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