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Date January 31, 1975
Shakespeare's plays do not dramatize a single point of view; rather, they enact the mind's playing with a concern. They are the dancing of several attitudes through time. As with the text in polyphonic music, Shakespeare's concern in each play is distributed among several voices, each of which expresses it in ways unique to itself while in relation to all the others. The concern emerges through the counterpointing of one voice with another - by the repetition of similar words and situations among the several parts. As a result, the play does not conclude with a point proven so much as it ends with attitudes celebrated.

Renaissance aesthetics, by its emphasis on decorum and proportion, recognized the need for distinct voices in poetic expression. Renaissance cosmology recognized the principle of hierarchy on all levels of the cosmos, each level expressing the principle in a way proper to itself while corresponding with the others. Being attuned to polyphonic structuring was a habit of the Renaissance mind that was seeking understanding.

The three comedies studied in this thesis - Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night and As You Like It - are analyzed with an eye and ear alerted to the polyphonic relations among several voices. It studies these plays as they move through time, notes the variety of attitudes counterpointed with one another, and accounts for the festive mood that holds in the end.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Any critic of Shakespeare will admit the complexity of trying to analyze his plays. No sooner has the critic noticed the emergence of some theme in a play — appearance versus reality let us say — when another theme appears to challenge the importance of the first one: Nature versus art; fortune versus nature; the corrosive effects of time, etc. Each theme may be demonstrably there, traceable throughout the imagery and action of the play. But the complexity of a play's meaning arises from the fact that several themes are being played out simultaneously and that each of them is presented differently according to which character is speaking. The critic who analyzes a Shakespearean play as if Shakespeare intended to dramatize only one theme or one version of a theme or worse yet that he intended to make only one paraphrasable statement in a play learns soon enough that much of the play has escaped his analysis.

Perhaps the danger of making a thematic statement is simply the price that one must pay for trying to say anything analytical at all. If the critic's remarks have helped to illuminate even a strand of the pattern in Shakespeare's carpet he can claim to have done his job. The reader can return to the whole experience of the play more sensitive to something he had not noticed before.

On the other hand, perhaps the critic should acquire something of the negative capability so admirable in Shakespeare himself and so avoid an irritable search after meaning which impels him to make precipitous and sometimes misleading conclusions about a play's theme. Mr. Norman Rabkin suggests that a Shakespearean critic might find it easier to avoid reducing
a play to a conceptual paraphrase if he were to adopt the sensitivities needed of a musical critic:

. . . the music critic cannot look for a conceptual content at the center of the work's intention and power. The attraction of the word "theme" for literary critics may be its musical implications, but its prime meaning as they use it is its older lexical meaning - the text of a sermon or the subject of a discourse. For the musicologist a theme is generally one among several and it is never to be confused with meaning. If he wants to discuss meaning the music critic has no choice but to study in minute particularity the ways in which at each point a composition arouses and fulfills or fails to fulfill an audience's expectation.

This thesis will adapt something of Mr. Rabkin's suggestion and analyze three of Shakespeare's festive comedies, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, and Twelfth Night, as if they played like music - specifically polyphonic music. This approach seems worth pursuing because of the structural similarity between drama and music: both achieve expression only through words or notes which succeed one another in time. Also, this approach seems justified by the theories of Renaissance critics who thought of language and poetry in terms of decorous proportion among many parts of a composition and even more broadly by the Renaissance view of the Cosmos as a hierarchy of beings with analogous relations to one another. These ways of thinking about literature and the Cosmos bear a resemblance to polyphonic music in which several voices give expression to the same theme while each does so in a way appropriate to itself. There is a decorous relationship among all the parts of the music so that while each voice receives its proper expression no one of them can be said to be the dominant one.

Renaissance critics inherited the concern with decorum from medieval theorists from whom they also inherited the custom of studying literature under the categories of grammar, logic and rhetoric. As a result, the
emphasis in their criticism fell on proportion, harmony and decorum as these were maintained among a variety of figures or rhetorical devices in a sentence or in a work of literature. The following quote from George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* is worth citing in full because in it he relates the idea of proportion in poetry to proportion in several other disciplines:

It is said by such as professe the Mathematicall sciences, that all things stand by proportion, and that without it nothing could stand to be good or beautiful. The Doctors of our Theologie to the same effect, but in other termes, say that God made the world by number, measure, and weight; some for weight say tune, and peraduenture better. For weight is a kind of measure or of much conueniencie with it; and therefore in their descriptions be always coupled together statica et metrica, weight and measures. Hereupon it seemeth the Philosopher gathers a triple proportion, to wit, the Arithemetical, the Geometrical, and the Musical. And by one of these three is every other proportion guided of the things that have conueniencie by relation, as the visible by light colour and shadow; the audible by stirres, times, and accents; the odorabale by smelles of sundry temperaments; the tastable by sauours to the rate; the tangible by his obiectes in this or that regard. Of all which we leaue to speake, returning to our poetical proportion, which holdeth of the Musical, because, as we sayd before, Poesie is a skill to speake & write harmonically: and verses or rime be a kind of Musicall utterance, by reason of a certaine congruitie in sounds pleasing the eare, though not perchance so exquisitely as the harmonical concents of the artificial Musicke, consisting in strained tunes, as is the vocall Musike, or that of melodious instruments, as Lutes, Harpes, Regals, Records, and such like. And this our proportion Poeticall resteth in five points: Staffe, Measure, Concord, Scituation, and Figure, all which shall be spoken of in their places.  

A good illustration of proportion and harmony is the euphuistic sentence in which one meaning is elaborated by several parallel expressions which are harmoniously and proportionately in relation to one another. Such polyphony of sentence structure is found in Falstaff's imitation of Henry IV for the benefit of Prince Hal in *Henry IV*.
Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears. . .If then thou be son to me, here lies the point; why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a milcher and eat blackberries? A question not to be asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses? A question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest: for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink but in tears, not in pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in woe also. . .

(II,iv,438-459)

Falstaff's speech is full of the figures catalogued by grammarians such as Puttenham: antithesis, parallelism, repetition, and alliteration. These figures were schematized and studied in order to equip the speaker and the audience with the ability to note the aptness of an expression to achieve an intended effect. Speaker and audience could be expected to be well attuned to the demands of proportion and harmony; not only within the sentence itself but between the sentence and the meaning it was intended to convey and between the style of the speech and the character of the man who spoke it. As Puttenham wrote:

...as learning and arte teacheth a schollar to speake, so doth it also teach a counsellour, and aswell an old man as a yong, and a man in authoritie aswell as a priuate person, and a pleader aswell as a preacher, every man after his sort and calling as best becommeth: and that speach which becommeth one doth not become another, for maners of speaches, some serue to work in excess, some in mediocritie, some to grave purposes, some to light, some to be short and brief, some to be long, some to stirre vp affections, some to pacifie and appease them, and these common despisers of good utterance, which resteth altogether in figurative speaches, being well vsed whether it come by nature or by arte or by exercise, they be but certaine grosse ignorance, of whom it is truly spoken scientia non habet inimicum nisi ignorantem.
Falstaff's speech is funny, in terms of Renaissance aesthetics, because it is indecorous on at least two counts: the speaker is straining to affect a style more elevated than his own; and the marshalling of his rhetorical devices is out of proportion to the meaning conveyed. As Horace warned the poet when urging decorous composition, beware that a mountain in labor does not give birth to a mouse. Falstaff's speech is especially funny to one attuned to the indecorous proportion in the polyphony of meaning and expression, speaker and speech.

Shakespeare's plays, like a euphuistic sentence and a piece of polyphony keep several voices counterpointed at all times. An audience must be attuned to how each one has a proportionate right to a place in the piece; and if no voice is disregarded for the sake of some extractable meaning, the complexity of Shakespeare's exploration of a theme will become increasingly evident. For example, the complexity of Hamlet's dilemma whether to revenge his father or not increases for an audience when they see the parallel situations of Fortinbras, Laertes, and the Player King counterpointed against his. And when all of these courtiers and revengers are alluded to in the joking of the gravedigger, a further consideration of where their action leads is counterpointed with what the audience has already heard of the glory of honor defended for an eggshell. The success of the play in exploring its concerns depends, in terms of Renaissance aesthetics, on maintaining a decorous proportion among a polyphony of analogous situations, giving each its complete expression without letting any one receive undue emphasis.

The prominence given to decorum in aesthetics was part of the larger belief in a harmonious and hierarchically structured universe -
a way of thinking about the universe also inherited from the Middle Ages. As D. W. Robertson, Jr. points out in *A Preface to Chaucer*, this way of thinking in terms of faculties and functions related to one another hierarchically is different from the post-romantic belief that thesis in conflict with antithesis will equal synthesis. The Medieval and early Renaissance mind saw life as well ordered, not in conflict, and believed that order was maintained by each level of the hierarchy knowing its place and performing according to its competence. Robertson summarizes one of St. Augustine's arguments for the existence of God in which the theologian explains what can be known about God by the senses and then proceeds to what can be known by the faculty of understanding, and so on. As Robertson points out:

It is noteworthy that there is no opposition between the bodily senses and the understanding; they represent different ways in which the problem may be approached, and the way of understanding is superior to, but not opposite to, the way of the senses. The two approaches do not interact dynamically to produce the desired solution. . .The pattern of ascent by degrees is familiar throughout the Middle Ages in works as diverse as St. Bonaventura's *The Mind's Road to God*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or Petrarch's *Ascent of Mount Ventoux*.

The hierarchy of faculties which could be used to know God was only one among many hierarchies in creation. For animals, elements, planets, social positions—everything—there was a proper place along a stratified scale of value or importance. All existents related to one another because they shared a common substance (being) and a common purpose (the fulfillment of God's intentions for them); they were, in principle, as tightly related to one another as the words of a sentence are related by the logic of the speaker's mind.
As R. W. Ackerman remarks:

The most impressive efforts of the philosophers were devoted to perceiving the divinely established analogies or links between the heavens and the purposes of God so far as man is concerned. In developing these links, they utilized with eclectic ingenuity much ancient lore and several concepts from late Greek thought. Most important among these fragments from the pagan past were the doctrine of the four elements, astrological and numerological superstitions, the notion of the goddess Fortuna, and miscellaneous Platonic and neo-Platonic concepts having to do with the triad, the nine orders of angels, and the great chain of being. The result—the vast, comprehensive rationale of God's Providence or governance of the universe uniting in seamless unity the physical and moral realms—was perhaps the most sublime achievement of the medieval mind.5

The habit of thinking in terms of hierarchies requires that a mind be sensitive to the analogous interrelationships among several existents as among the several parts in a piece of polyphonic music. And this way of thinking also respects the claim of each existent within its own sphere. This primarily medieval mode of thought certainly survived throughout the Renaissance and even lasted into the early Seventeenth Century where it contributes to the poetic expression of the Adam-Eve relationship in Paradise Lost.

At some hard-to-identify moment, the comfortable (because reasonable and benevolent) assumptions of the Middle Ages gave way to others. There was a turning away from the hierarchial system toward the "thing-in-itself". Creatures like men, animals, elements, and plants ceased to be significant because related and became merely coincidental because occupying space-time simultaneously. It is difficult to say at what point the system collapsed first: in its assumptions about man's right reason; about the necessity for the state to obey God's law; or about creation as containing significant correspondences among creatures ruled by God's will. In any case, each assumption implied the others and one was modified when another changed.
By 1600 Luther had long ago raised doubts about the ability of "whore reason" to understand God and had rejected it in favor of "faith alone". Montaigne too had rejected right reason as a sure guide to God but had gone further than Luther by denying any knowledge of God whatever that is not anthropomorphic. In orthodox theology, the reason could be darkened and the will weakened by appetite and inordinate passion. But for Montaigne reason and will were thoroughly useless equipment if used to weigh speculations which were literally imponderable. If God could not be known by faith or reason, the Medieval analogies and correspondences could only be pleasant similes and not intuitions of real relationships. Without faith or reason, purpose and final cause were inscrutable and skepticism about them was only being honest about one's own limitations.

Without any way of seeing how God's purposes were anchored in the disposition of natural objects and the laws of nature, late Renaissance man witnessed the feeling that these purposes for him were drifting away beyond his mental horizon. God's ways were not man's ways - not only in the orthodox sense that God was more just, more merciful, more holy than man, but in the newer Calvinistic sense that God's will was inscrutable and unpredictable. No use of analogy could fathom it; no appeal to the precedents of biblical history could bind God to act now as he had then; no church or human action could intervene between God's predestination and man's fate or rescue him from the hands of an angry God. With God so far removed from human comprehension and so unaffected by human behavior, he was effectively dead. He was so far above the human condition as to be "out of it" and the consequences of God's absence or demise were applied by Machiavelli to his theory of statecraft.
Unlike Dante who saw man's infinite desire as an index of his infinite goal - God - Machiavelli saw infinite desire as futile because directed to a finite object - the getting and keeping of power. This power is necessary because men who are innately evil needed to be coerced into obedience (over-awed by someone) to prevent chaos from engulfing everyone. Machiavelli anticipates Hobbes in his pessimism about man and in his theory of Government. Coming after Machiavelli and soon before Hobbes, James I's assertion of Divine right seems sadly anachronistic.

If God's purposes were ignored in Statecraft, they were disregarded in scientific study as well. They were, after all, irrelevant to an understanding of how something worked and, consequently, to the power of control possible through the knowledge of the thing-in-itself. A doctor did not have to believe that sickness was a judgement of God in order to cure it; understanding why the eyes were placed on top of the head (to enable man to study the universe easily and thereby to praise God, according to More's *Utopia*) would not solve the problem of helping them to see. Moreover, understanding man's significance in relation to a world of other beings only risked introducing a paralyzing awe and preventing objective investigation (which, etymologically, cannot avoid stepping on its object of research). DaVinci had to dissect cadavers to understand human anatomy and, to do so, had to suspend whatever belief he may have had that, as men, these had been microcosms of the universe and temples of the Holy Ghost. Death itself had to be bracketed as a significant event: as "God's beadle" or a "fell sargeant". DaVinci could not attend to Death as the summons to judgement (as dramatized in *Everyman*) if he wanted to understand how an old man dies.
Shakespeare and his world lived on the isthmus of a middle state between the Medieval and the late Seventeenth Century views. Their spot of time felt a great tension of interpretations: whether the variety of creation was significant or coincidental; whether man is the paragon of animals with godlike reason or a quintessence of dust; whether the king was always God's regent or at times a cutpurse of the empire; whether conscience was a way of rightly knowing obligations or merely a word devised to keep the strong in awe. The Medieval view had had its own tensions which could be dramatized. Man could choose to rise or fall in the hierarchy of being and the first Fall was enough to show that the choice of Everyman was significant and consequential. But the Elizabethan world allowed for an additional choice: to be part of hierarchy or apart from it. The distance of disagreement about creation, society and man was too broad to be harmonious; the opinions could only, as in polyphony, be counterpointed.

For example, when Richard III boasts that he will send the learned Machiavel to school, he becomes more than a wicked king in a chronicle play or a Vice figure in a morality play; he represents a contemporary attitude about statecraft which is at variance with all accepted notions of the king as God's regent for the exercise of justice. This attitude that the Prince is bound by no law is counterpointed with Richmond's attitude, that he is God's "captain", and each is related to the other by a common concern with conscience as a regulative principle of kings and statesmen. When these viewpoints are further contrasted in the comic debate of Clarence's executioners, the use of polyphony as a metaphor to explain how the play is structured and makes its effect seem increasingly apt. The Medieval assumptions are the norm according to
which Richard can be judged villainous but the pressure to which his attitude subjects that norm is severe. As a character, he voices the subterranean doubts of his audience and their age about the divine right of kings. The conflict in Richard III raises strong emotions because it is the dancing of two attitudes, the counterpointing of two beliefs which are driving at centripetal force away from one another while being held together by the centrifugal attraction of expressing a common concern: in this case, conscience and its claims.

In his study of King Lear, John F. Danby notes a similar counterpointing of ideas about Nature: the benevolent view of the early Renaissance espoused by Lear and Cordelia, and the purposeless view of Hobbes and the late Seventeenth Century, espoused by Edmund, Goneril, and Regan. As in Richard III, an Elizabethan truly felt the claims of both attitudes and this accounted for the complexity of his responses as he tried to follow the polyphonic development of both views. To the extent that our own age has found it hard to accept the Medieval assumptions about a benevolent and purposeful universe, it has found it hard to appreciate the searing trial to Lear's spirit when he pleads with the gods for thunder and has to learn patience and compassion through the suffering of his being refused this request. Lear's plea for divine justice appears absurd or at least presumptuous to modern audiences who cannot assume as easily as the Elizabethans that it was only justice and God's business to avenge his annointed. Furthermore, modern audiences find it hard to accept one of the necessities of tragedy: that a moral order which has been violated be appeased and reaffirmed; it is consequently a moot point whether tragedy itself is possible on the modern stage. Whatever limitations our Twentieth Century assumptions impose on us, they at least show how
unlimited. Shakespeare was in having a public credence in two diverging attitudes. The Renaissance could not repose on either continent of assurance held by the Middle Ages or the late Seventeenth Century. Elizabethan England was truly the isthmus between both views and Elizabethans could entertain both attitudes because they could see and feel both as tenable. To return to the musical analogy, the Elizabethan could hear both assumptions; he was not "tone deaf" to either one and so could follow the counterpointing of each and appreciate the complexity and ambivalence of any expression about the human condition made by such means. Listening to a Shakespearean play requires a sensitivity to echoes, contrasts, and counterpointing which imply a never stated and silent center of concern that has prompted the expression. The complexity of Shakespeare's plays is such that they resist paraphrase as surely as a Palestrina motet resists being hummed. And the complexity of both art forms and both artists reflects the complexity of their age.

Because the Renaissance accepted a hierarchy of beings, God as the giver of law for these beings, and right reason as the way of knowing that law, Shakespeare could evoke a moral order and norm which gave significance to a character's conduct. Because the same moral order which bound the character also bound the audience, the significant conduct of the story had parabolic and even emblematic - universal - application. But because his characters were realized as individuals, and because some of them assumed attitudes which challenged the accepted views of a benevolent hierarchy, a drama of sharp conflicts was possible in which the unity of the play, like the age itself, was tested almost to breaking.
This thesis will analyze three of Shakespeare's comedies by looking for correspondences and echoes among several analogous situations; it will present the results of attempting to listen to these plays as if they developed like polyphonic music. It should be shown that the plays, like polyphonic music, have a significant rhythm to them and contain several voices, which when counterpointed with one another, develop a theme differently than any one voice could do separately. Furthermore, the theme in each play is not one that can be easily paraphrased in verbal terms, such as "appearance versus reality", "fortune versus Nature", or "nature versus art". Rather, the theme is a situation like eavesdropping, or a word like "love" which is played with in a variety of ways until the audience arrives at some felt appreciation of what it is like and what it can do. This thesis attempts to illuminate some of Shakespeare's central concerns in each of the three comedies, and to demonstrate at the same time the complexity with which these concerns are expressed.
CHAPTER II

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

In *Much Ado About Nothing* Shakespeare expresses interest in what can happen when a person overhears or notes a presumably candid conversation. As the title of the comedy suggests, there is much ado made by several characters as, one by one, they overhear slanderous or gossipy talk about somebody else. It does not matter if the talk is intended to be overheard or not, nor whether it is true, probable or false; what matters is that the person overhearing the conversation believes what he hears and, as a result, changes his attitude toward the one who has been the topic of discussion. Furthermore, a change in the listener's attitude will incline him to take decisive action based on his belief, and this will bode either well or ill for the one who has been talked about.

The theme is as complex as it is serious and Shakespeare respects the complexity by structuring his comedy polyphonically; that is, he distributes the theme among several characters or voices who express it differently but in relation to one another. By the conclusion of the play an audience is convinced that faith comes from hearing but it is also aware that such faith can be erroneous as well as accurate.

There are five crucial instances of overhearing in this play: when Benedick hears that Beatrice loves him despite her apparent disdain; when Beatrice hears that Benedick really loves her despite his apparent scorn; when Claudio hears that Hero is unfaithful to him; when Dogberry and the Night Watch hear how Hero has been maligned; when Claudio hears that Hero is dead as a result of his deserting her.
The first of these crucial conversations takes place because the gallants of Messina, recently home from the wars and passing time until the wedding of Claudio and Hero, decide to play a joke on Benedick, their comrade, and Beatrice, the niece of Leonato, Governor of Messina. Benedick and Beatrice never meet but there is a skirmish of wits between them, each one trying to excel in mocking the other. Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon and leader of the gallants suggests a playful deception that may have the result of bringing Benedick and Beatrice together. His idea is simple: to stage a candid conversation among Claudio, Leonato and himself, about how much Beatrice loves Benedick despite all appearances to the contrary, and about how she is doomed to go unrequited because Benedick, despite his many commendable qualities, is prone to make broad jests at her expense. As the gulling proceeds, the men note how Benedick is taking the bait and how the "fowl" is being trapped. Soon, they hope, he will change his attitude toward Beatrice and think better of her for loving him. The friends are not disappointed. Benedick, who does not want to be thought of as proud, and hearing himself "slandered" in this way, resolves to requite Beatrice's supposed love and save his reputation. Once he is resolved, reasons enough rush to his defence: "The world must be peopled", he says (II,iii,238) and begins to read into Beatrice's words and actions signs of the love he has heard about and believed in.

Before overhearing the conversation, Benedick had ironically anticipated his own case by musing on the scorn heaped on a man like Claudio who falls in love after professing indifference to it:

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behavior to love, will, after he has laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love; and such a man is Claudio. (II,iii,7-13)
Now Benedick, like Claudio, has changed; however, unlike Claudio, Benedick qualifies his love with reasons and with considerations of honour. He does not love Beatrice only for herself but because loving her is consistent with other principles which are important to him—such as his own good name. Ballasted as it is by practical considerations, Benedick’s love will move slowly but more surely through storms which always seem to threaten those who love, like Claudio, in a more Petrarchan manner.

Beatrice is subjected to a similar deception by Hero and her servant, Ursula, who follow the directions of Don Pedro. Beatrice, like Benedick, is a fish ready to take the bait and a bird ready to be caught by overhearing a staged conversation. Like Benedick as well, Beatrice does not want to be known as proud and disdainful because "no glory lives behind the back of such" (III,i,110), and decides to requite his supposed love. Beatrice, as practical and self-regarding as her male counterpart, loves in order to be consistent with her sense of honour and to escape the slander she hears threatening her reputation.

Don Pedro intends his deception only as a playful diversion. It will be amusing, he thinks, to witness the dumb show of two people who meet and who cannot use their customary banter because they see each other differently. He does not anticipate that Beatrice and Benedick will be greatly changed, but they will be; Don Pedro’s white lie becomes a chance for the two of them to look at another facet of their merry war—to consider that love can be closely allied with mockery, abuse, and scorn. Fault finding may, in fact, be a way of showing interest in a person whom one is afraid to love. Don Pedro’s "slander" helps Beatrice and Benedick to acknowledge feelings they have been suppressing in exchange
for the safety of remaining at sword's length from one another. There is some indication that the two of them do feel more positively about one another than their mutual mockery would indicate. Benedick had already let slip some hint of his positive feelings for Beatrice when he admitted to Claudio:

There's (Hero's) cousin, and she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December.

(I,i,184-186)

And Beatrice at sometime in the indefinite past did not escape feeling hurt by Benedick's light treatment of her advances; as she admits to Don Pedro:

Indeed, my Lord, he lent (his heart to) me awhile and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one. Marry, once before he won it of me with false dice; therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

(II,i,275-279)

Both are led to remorse through what they overhear and resolve to vindicate their good names by doing the honorable thing of requiting an offer of love. This is not only consistent with their desire to maintain their good reputations but, as it happens, is also true to their feelings for each other. The resolution will be a satisfactory one for, as Benedick says, "Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending" (II,iii,225-226).

Don Pedro undertook the office of trickster with a flattering sense of self-importance. "If we can do this", he had said, "Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods" (II,i,380-383). In the courtly world of Messina, the gods are mentioned frequently but only to decorate conversation. There is no sense that they represent powers to be reckoned with. On the contrary, the nobles of Messina imagine themselves to be self-sufficient and in control of the events they arrange.
Because Don Pedro feels so smugly in control of events, it is heavily ironic that in the scene immediately following his determination to "fashion" the gulling of Benedick and Beatrice, his bastard brother, John, aided by his Henchman, Borachio, determines to "fashion" the deception of Don Pedro and Claudio. The love-gods do not realize that they are not the prime movers of Messina and so they will soon fall victim not only to Don John's deception, but later in the play, to the deceptions of a Friar as well.

Don John seeks to destroy his brother's happiness by destroying the happiness of Claudio, Don Pedro's protege. To accomplish this, Don John first slanders Hero by telling Don Pedro and Claudio that she is unfaithful to Claudio, her betrothed, even on the night before the wedding. He then offers to give them proof of his accusations and takes them at night to the garden below Hero's window where they witness a rendezvous between a man and a woman. Don John's slander has prejudiced Claudio's interpretation of this scene, which is ambiguous in itself. The man and woman are actually the villain Borachio and one of Hero's servants, Margaret. But Claudio's belief in the slander he has heard determines his version of what he sees and his attitude toward Hero suffers a complete reversal from ardent love to seething hate. He determines, with Don Pedro's backing, to shame her before the congregation which will meet for the wedding the next day.

This is not the first time that Claudio has reversed his opinion about Hero as a result of hearsay. Earlier at a masked ball held at Leonato's house, Claudio waited anxiously while Don Pedro undertook to woo Hero on his behalf. Don John approached Claudio knowing full well who he was even behind a mask but, addressing him as Benedick, had asked him to dissuade Don Pedro from marrying Hero.
Claudio: How know you he loves her?

Don John: I heard him swear his affection.

Borachio: So did I too, and he swore he would marry her tonight.

Don John: Come, let us to the banquet.

Claudio: Thus answer I in name of Benedick
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio. 'Tis certain so. The Prince woos for himself. Friendship is constant in all other things Save in the office and affairs of love. Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues; Let every eye negotiate for itself And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch Against whose charms faith melteth into blood. This is an accident of hourly proof, Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero!

(II,i,165-180)

Claudio learns later that Don Pedro has actually been wooing as he had agreed to and so he resumes his previous feelings for Hero. Claudio has shown, however, that he is all too ready to believe what he has been told and to change his attitude toward Hero as a result.

Don John's first slander failed, but his second one succeeds in convincing Don Pedro and Claudio of Hero's infidelity. And as they have resolved in the garden, they shame Hero in the church at the very moment of the wedding. Claudio denounces her in the most scathing terms:

Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it. You seem to me as Dian in her orb, As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown; But you are more intemperate in your blood Than Venus, or those pamp'red animals That rage in savage sensuality.  (IV,i,55-60)

And even Leonato joins in a fierce denunciation of his daughter after she faints from the shock of Claudio's words and is trying to recover:

Leonato: Dost thou look up?

Friar: Yea, wherefore should she not?
Leonato: Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes;
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would on the rearward of reproaches
Strike at thy life.

(IV,i,117-126)

There seems to be no way of delivering Hero from the slander under which her reputation lies buried. But the Friar who has witnessed the entire scene has noted the lady more deeply and has seen something that gives the lie to all the slanders against her and that supports his faith in her innocence:

...I have marked
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appeared a fire
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenor of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

(IV,i,157-169)

He urges patience on Leonato and advises that all agree to start a rumor that Hero has died. When Claudio hears this, the Friar hopes, he will have still another facet of her character to consider and will perhaps look on her differently:

Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come appareled in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul
Than when she lived indeed. Then shall he mourn,
If ever love had interest in his liver,
And wish he had not so accused her,
No, though he thought his accusation true.

(IV,i,223-232)
With remorse at work, the truth will have a chance to come to light in time, though the Friar admits to some uncertainty about exactly how it will do so. The Friar has no proof for what he believes about Hero's innocence and that is why he fashions the deception of her death. He is testing what will be proved about Hero when some hypothesis of her worth suggested by the imagination is entertained along with the hypothesis of her infidelity suggested by slander; having advised this much, and having counselled patience, he trusts that, in time, "success will fashion the event in better shape than (he) can lay it down in likelihood" (IV,i,233-235).

The help the Friar is hoping for comes from an unexpected source, indicating again that the events fashioned by men are not completely under their control. Don John is foiled and the Friar is helped by the night Watch, this play's inclusion of the "low life" humour which Shakespeare often incorporates into his drama. Clown comedy is a distinctive voice in a Shakespearean play, distinguishable by the colloquial accent and distinctive prose idiom. As a separate voice the clown humour repeats the concerns of the play in burlesquing fashion and presents in miniature what the plot and sub-plot ravel and unravel for five acts. A short cut to the understanding of many a Shakespearean play runs through a study of the clowns' exchanges.

The importance that overhearing has in this play gets renewed emphasis by appearing in the clown scenes, although the clowns repeat this theme with a difference: the conversation overheard by the Watch is the only candid conversation overheard in the play and Dogberry's misunderstanding of the truth reported to him by the Watch is almost as disastrous as Claudio's misreading of the slander against Hero. By what they overhear
the Watch will eventually help renew Hero's damaged reputation, but through their garrulous and apparently unimportant conversation, they will also unwittingly comment on some of the central concerns of the play. Two of the exchanges in the clown sub-plot are especially noteworthy. The first of these is the long conversation between Borachio and his friend, Conrade, overhead by the Watch:

Borachio: Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Conrade: Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

Borachio: Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Conrade: I wonder at it.

Borachio: That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Conrade: Yes, it is apparel.

Borachio: I mean the fashion.

Conrade: Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Borachio: Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch (Aside) I know that Deformed; 'a has been a vile thief this seven year; 'a goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.

Borachio: Didst thou not hear somebody?

Conrade: No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Borachio: Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? How giddily 'a turns about all the hotbloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? Sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten
tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club?

Conrade: All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Borachio: Not so neither. But know that I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night. I tell this tale vilely—I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

(III,iii,108-152)

What emerges from their apparent digression is that: (1) the fashion of a man's clothes does not reveal his character; (2) fashion itself - or a change of appearance - is the fashion; and (3) fashion is a thief because it forces the giddy young men to change clothes more than they need to. These remarks have such little connection with Borachio's story of how he has duped Don Pedro and Claudio in the garden that an explanation of what they may refer to has to be sought for in the main plot. It is by studying the echoes of fashion there and by comparing these echoes to the commentary in the clown's sub-plot that some hint of one of Shakespeare's concerns in Much Ado can be discovered.

Shakespeare seems to be likening the fortunes of Hero to the giddy changes of fashion which take place because of the rumor of what is "in" and "out" and not because of a need for change. Fashion wears out more clothes than the man does, as Borachio says. So too, slander rather than true worthlessness causes Claudio to discard Hero while rumor of her death, coupled with word of her innocence, causes him to repent what he has done and to look on her differently. Both Don John and the Friar had
hoped to "fashion" results with their deceptions about Hero, and the rumors they devised about her did have the same effect as rumors about fashions in clothes - they caused a change in the "buyer".

Benedick, too, changes his mind about Beatrice after Don Pedro has fashioned a white lie about how much she loves him. Benedick's change may be one for the better, but, like Claudio's, it begins with a concern for reputation, and not from a concern for the true worth of what he is "buying".

The faithfulness of the men of this play is as giddy as any of the hotbloods between fourteen and thirty-five whom Borachio speaks of. Beatrice is good humoured about it when she says teasingly at the beginning of the play that Benedick's faithfulness is worn "like the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block" (I,i,72-73) and Benedick is equally lighthearted when he sums up the change he has undergone in order to marry Beatrice by saying, "Since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion" (V,iv,104-108).

But giddiness has painful consequences too, as Claudio's rejection of Hero shows. It is ironic that, before the denunciation, Hero is concerned with what she will wear to the wedding and that Margaret compliments her on the fashion of her dress. After all, Claudio will not be attending to this fashion but to the slander that has been fashioned by Don John. It is only when the rumor of Hero's death is fashioned by the Friar that Hero will appear to Claudio "appareled in more precious habit" than when she lived. Meanwhile, the Friar counsels patience and trusts to what will appear in time.
The Friar has confidence that no matter how much giddy men turn about, they will turn out right in time. This trust is shared by Don Pedro and Claudio who, in referring to Benedick, are sure that "In time the savage bull will bear the yoke" (I,i,252); in time, they believe, Benedick will get married - and Claudio reminds Benedick of this proverb turned prophecy at the end of the play (V,iv,43). As a central belief of the play, this trust in time is burlesqued in a second conversation of the clown sub-plot - Dogberry's charge to the Watch. The Constable instructs his men to wait until the drunk man sobers up - and then they need not arrest him since he is not the same man; to let the thief show himself for what he is and steal away; and to let the baby wake the nurse because if she does not hear the child, she will certainly not hear the Watch. He instructs them, in effect, to do nothing and to let events resolve themselves by following a natural course; in due time the man will shake off his drunkeness, the thief will remove himself from the company of good men, and the nurse will awake to her duty. Counterpointed with the trust of the Friar and Don Pedro is the clown's absurd application of it and the audience's realization, "Would that such trust were so simple!".

But in their own way and in their own time the Watch brings about the downfall of Don John's best laid plans and assists the Friar's by acting on what they overhear of Borachio's conversation with Conrade. They report what they have overheard to Dogberry who in turn tries to present the villains to Leonato, but because Leonato is in a hurry to attend Hero's wedding and because Dogberry is as loquacious as ever, the examination of Borachio and Conrade is deputed to Dogberry and his men. They conduct the investigation in the scene following Claudio's denunciation of Hero and provide a comic parody of that scene as Dogberry invites the
Watch to come forward and "accuse" these men while he proceeds to misunderstand the accusations completely. The town clerk is present, however, and he understands well enough to take the examination to Leonato and to explain the entire affair to him before Dogberry and the Watch bring the two villains along. When Borachio meets Don Pedro and Claudio before Leonato's house he confesses to them what he has done, which leads Claudio to a profound repentance for what he thinks has been his murder of Hero by slander.

Leonato is surprisingly calm and forgiving, imposing on Claudio only the penance of hanging an epitaph on Hero's tomb and singing a lament in her honour. When this is accomplished, he says, Claudio may then have the hand of his niece in marriage who is "almost the copy of (his) child that's dead" (V,i,290). Claudio readily agrees to this arrangement, performs his penance and receives back the very Hero he thought had been killed by his murdering tongue.

The deliverance made possible by the Watch is entirely unexpected; they represent that element of unpredictability which the comic artist believes is at work to make all turn out for the best in time. Although they are the lowest social stratum of Messina, they perform the most decisive action of the play and voice in a muddled way the aptest commentary on their comic world. There is a paradox here such as Borachio notes when he says to Don Pedro and Claudio, "What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light..." (V,i,231-233). There is a reversal here of cosmic proportions when the prime mover toward the resolution should be so low and foolish as the Watch.

The clown's sub-plot is one way Shakespeare has of repeating the concerns of his play. As a student of Elizabethan cosmology would see it,
the clown's world is a microcosm corresponding on its own level to the nature of the macrocosm or the world of Messina's high society; as a student of polyphony would understand it, the clowns are a unique voice, expressing in a way appropriate to their range or rank, the same themes of the play which concern the other more noble characters.

But Shakespeare has other ways than the clown's sub-plot to reiterate his concerns in this play. One of these is music. When words are sung they become more noticeable if only because it takes more time and effort to sing them. There is something of a stasis created when all the action stops on stage, the actors assume an attitude of attention, and someone takes time out to sing. Shakespeare will often use this moment of stasis to repeat his play's concerns in the words of a song.

In Much Ado, the first song occurs immediately before the gulling of Benedick and after the plans of Don John to deceive Don Pedro and Claudio. The audience has already seen Claudio's quick desertion of Hero at the slightest suspicion of his infidelity to him and has just heard Benedick's soliloquy on the unlikelihood of his ever marrying "till all graces be in one woman" (II,iii,28-29). At this point, the music begins and, as it plays in the background, Balthasar the singer makes jests which unconsciously apply to the action yet to come:

"O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice to slander music anymore than once." (II,iii,44-45)

a warning against Don John and a foreshadowing of how much slander will occur in the play.

"Because you talk of wooing, I will sing, Since many a wooer doth commence his suit To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos, Yet will he swear he loves" (II,iii,49-52)
a description of what Benedick's situation will be after he has been "slandered" by his friends and been shown Beatrice in a new light.

"Note this before my notes: There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting"

(Ii,iii,54-55)

a recollection of the title of the play and an ironic warning to Don Pedro, Leonato and Claudio who will be asked to note the proofs of Hero's infidelity.

The song itself is a grim comment on the faithlessness of men:

"...men were deceivers ever
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never...

(Ii,iii,63-65)

and it underscores the long continuance and ultimate deceptiveness of a man's promises:

"...The fraud of men was ever so
Since summer first was leavy...

(Ii,iii,73-74)

As the luxurient trees soon reveal barren boughs, men's fine words soon give way to empty deeds. Don Pedro's response is ironically perceptive: "By my troth, a good song" (Ii,iii,76).

The second song is the "solemn hymn" at Hero's tomb which asks pardon from Diana for Claudio and Don Pedro and thus underscores the steps already taken toward reconciliation at the end of the play.

Dance, as measured movement, does for action what music does for words - it patterns action and makes it noticeable and, as such, is useful for reiterating the concerns of the play. Immediately preceding the Mask in Much Ado there is a pairing off of four couples, all of whom are masked and identified as revellers. What they say in four brief exchanges is noticeable because occurring in a stylized, rather than natural pattern
of movement. Each couple makes a remark, then steps aside and allows another couple to step forward for an exchange; it is almost a dance before the dance. What they say stands out from the pattern as words stand out from music.

First, Hero and Don Pedro exchange light banter about his mask. Hero professes to be rejecting his advances because his mask is so ugly and "God defend the lute should be like the case" (II,i,93-94). But Don Pedro claims that his mask is like Philemon's roof which housed a god despite humble appearances. Hero enacts in a teasing way what Claudio and Don Pedro will later enact seriously: a denunciation of character because of an ugly appearance. And Don Pedro's defence to Hero is, ironically, appropriate to her own defence later.

Then, Balthasar and Margaret enact the wooing with insult which Beatrice and Benedick will later engage in:

Balthasar: Well, I would you did like me.
Margaret: So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.
Balthasar: Which is one?
Margaret: I say my prayers aloud.
Balthasar: I love you the better. The hearers may cry amen.
Margaret: God match me with a good dancer!
Balthasar: Amen.
Margaret: And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done! Answer, clerk.
Balthasar: No more words. The clerk is answered.

(II,i,99-110)
In a third exchange, Ursula notices the aged Antonio behind the mask because of the tell-tale sign of his dry hands. And when she adds: "Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there's an end" (II,i,121-123) she anticipates the ultimate vindication of Hero who, at the denunciation of Claudio loses all grace, even in her father's eyes, only to show herself as bright as usual when the cloud of slander is blown away. There is an aptness to the analogy between Hero's unchanged virtue and Antonio's old age unchanged beneath the mask as well as a comic sense of incongruity when old age is compared with youth and ugliness with beauty.

Finally, Beatrice flaunts Benedick, pretending not to recognize him behind his mask. This directly anticipates Don John's similar treatment of Claudio and highlights the role that overhearing a deliberate slander will have in advancing action in Messina.

After Beatrice has teased Benedick, the music strikes up and the two exchange some final significant words:

**Beatrice:** We must follow the leaders.

**Benedick:** In every good thing.

**Beatrice:** Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

(II,i,149-153)

And this is exactly what both will do when Claudio takes the lead in the denunciation of Hero.

During the Mask that follows these exchanges, the audience has time to reflect on what has been said and to see the society of Messina, appropriately masked, mingling with one another in artificial movement. They present a picture of confidence as they relate to one another through the predictable rituals of dance and can, as long as the pattern holds,
disregard the uncertainties which arise when one wonders who is behind which disguise. The Dance is emblematic of Messina society which, beneath its codes and patterned relationships, contains the attitudes enacted in the four exchanges. These attitudes are soon to be prodded into release by Don John who alone remains unmasked among maskers, a bastard among legittimates, and an outsider among the court. This dance scene not only shows the nature of Messina society but also shows the extent to which it is subject to a measureless power beyond its control - Don John, a very "devil" whose sadness and the malice it breeds are, unlike the dance, without measure (III,i,155 and I,i,3-4).

The next time Messina assembles for a Mask and a Dance will be under chastened circumstances. Slander will have been overheard and allowed to cloud reality with the appearance of truth; the truth will have appeared in time, pardon asked for, and forgiveness given. At this second Mask, Claudio effects his reconciliation to Leonato by accepting the bride offered to him, sight unseen. He knows by now that appearances will tell him nothing and accepts his bride at Leonato's word and as Leonato's gift. His reward is "another Hero" who unmasks herself and shows herself as she is. Once again, something measureless accompanies the movements of this highly patterned society, but this time it is the measureless joy of wonder and amazement.

Benedick, who has always qualified his love for Beatrice with reasons pro and con asks to see "which is Beatrice" before proceeding to the marriage. She unmasks and, face to face, the two engage in a last exchange of love masked as insult. They are convinced by a "miracle" that they really love one another - what they have written in secret contradicts what they say in public - and they complete the wonder of the occasion by preparing to dance, unmasked, together.
Immediately before the final dance, however, there is a grim reminder of the forces which started all the damaging action of the play and which were present at the first masked ball. A messenger announces:

My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

(V,iv,125-126)

Don John will return and the question remains whether or not the citizens of Messina have been inoculated against his practices as a result of what they have undergone. Whether they are prepared for him or not, they will not be rid of him and of the melancholy-breeding evil which he encourages. The play ends with grace showing itself unmasked, with Benedick's carefree words, "Think not on him till tomorrow", and yet with the sober realization that Don John cannot remain ignored for long.

The mood of festivity is not broken, however, despite the sobering reentry of Don John. Much Ado as a comedy has already vindicated the confidence expressed by the Friar that, in time, Hero would be delivered from slander. Don John's ingenious deception of Don Pedro and Claudio was much like Iago's deception of Othello in its lending of slanderous interpretation to what is really an ambiguous action: a man and a woman at a window or a man receiving a hankerchief from his mistress. But Don John, unlike Iago, is spoiled in time. Likewise, the Friar who fashions the deception of Hero's death is successful in time, unlike his counterpart in Romeo and Juliet whose plan for the lovers failed because time in tragedy moves far too quickly for everyone.

Although there is the sad admission that men are deceivers and are too ready to change loyalties on mere hearsay, there is also confidence and even evidence in this play that, in time, "graces will show themselves", that forgiveness such as Leonato's is effective, and that patience under
duress and remorse for mistakes will bring pardon and reconciliation.

This confidence in the bounties that are sure to come in time creates a festive mood; it is saved from sentimentality and gains in credibility by surviving several tests of its spirit. For example, it is burlesqued by Dogberry's charge to the Watch, as mentioned earlier, and shown to be a precarious assurance at best because dependent on such bumbling fools as they to sort out the truth from slander. Furthermore, the confidence that there is time for deliverance must always work under the shadow of Don John who, although reconciled to his brother, will continue to plot his undoing. Dogberry implicitly warns Leonato about Don John when he indites Borachio as a man who obtains forgiveness but who does not extend it to others. He is one who "borrows money in God's name, the which he hath used so long and never paid that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God's sake" (V,i,310-313). Leonato is one who gives freely - of money and forgiveness - but there are some with whom such generosity will have no effect and who will therefore always remain as unreconciled alternatives to the happy society.

Finally, the confidence that all will be well in time is qualified by two sobering considerations: that people who must change or repent in order to be reconciled and forgiven may not, in fact, be able to change all that much; and that defeats as well as success come in time.

There is one person, of course, who is determined not to change and that is Don John. But there are slight reminders of a resistance to change which is shared by everyone. There are, for example, the references to planetary influences on peoples' dispositions, which help determine their personalities. Don John says to Conrade, "I wonder that thou, being (as thou say'st thou art) born under Saturn, goest about to apply
a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief" (I,iii,10-12).

Beatrice says of herself: "...there was a star danced, and under that was I born" - which explains her merry disposition (II,i,331-332).

And Benedick explains his inability to invent rhymes by a similar reference to the influence of the planets: "No, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms" (V,ii,40-41).

Another indication that peoples' personalities are somewhat fixed and resistant to change is shown in the use of epithets to describe the characters of Messina: Beatrice is Lady Tongue and Lady Disdain; Benedick is "the married man"; Claudio is Lord Lackbeard and Monsieur Love; and even conscience is Don Worm. The epithet illustrates Bergson's theory of the comic as the imposition of a stereotype or rigid code of behaviour onto a living person who is always more than the most accurate paraphrase of who he is. Nevertheless, to the extent that the epithet is accurate, it shows a range of behaviour that is predictable because characteristic; it establishes the broad limits within which it can be assumed a person will operate. In doing this, the epithet is a biting reminder of limit - of the difficulty of change even when necessary.

There are reminders too of the defeats that come in time along with the successes; they come into the play quickly and amid light banter but they challenge, however briefly, the mood of festivity which comes from the belief that time is on one's side. Beatrice says of Benedick, "...he is no less than a stuffed man. But for the stuffing - well, we are all mortal (I,i,36-37). And she says of marriage, "Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust? To make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl?" (II,i,60-62). In these sayings she reminds an audience of all that is mortal in nature, all that goes
Don Pedro remarks to Beatrice about her mirth: "...out o'question you were born in a merry hour." And she replies, "No, sure, my lord, my mother cried..." (II,i,328-330). And all the joy in life that in time is purchased by pain receives some slight expression.

However, all of the counter-assertions against the mood that creates festivity are in the end only one voice among a polyphony of others. They create a dissonance throughout the play, but in so doing, make it more true to life which, it so happens, is not always harmonious. The dissonance may be a threat to the final harmony but also makes it all the more welcome when it comes.

In festive comedy, such as Much Ado About Nothing, forgiveness, reconciliation, and harmony prove their strength by the number of people who end up espousing and effecting the desired resolution, and by the large measure of resistance that has been overcome. In this play, faith that comes from hearing has been erroneous but also accurate; deceptions have been devilishly malicious but also purgative and helpful toward inducing remorse. In this play, confidence in the deliverance that comes with time is well placed and wonder is the appropriate response to the outcome. In the world of Messina, Hero has died in order to live.
CHAPTER III  
TWELFTH NIGHT

In Shakespeare's comedy, Twelfth Night, the citizens of Illyria have to learn to make their wishes within limits that show a respect for reality; they also have to learn that reality is difficult to recognize because appearances are often deceptive. The Lady Olivia, for example, begins an unrealistic seven year mourning period for her dead brother, during which she resolves to receive no solicitations to marriage from Duke Orsino. As Shakespeare has said elsewhere, "Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living" (All's Well I,i,63-4). Olivia's behavior certainly contrasts sharply with the shipwrecked Viola who thinks she has lost a brother and yet who determines to carry on with life, seek employment with Orsino and comfort herself with chance. Olivia's fool, Feste, tries to point out that such mourning is especially foolish because Olivia believes that her brother is in heaven and that he has therefore suffered no irreparable loss, considering the alternative. Feste also hints at a measure of insincerity in Olivia's plan by reminding her that the cowl does not make the monk - nor does the veil she throws over her face necessarily cover a woman in mourning.

Olivia's resolution to remain a recluse ends soon afterwards when Viola appears disguised as Orsino's page boy, Caesario, to plead the cause of the Duke's love for Olivia. The lady has no desire to marry the Duke but she falls quickly in love with Caesario. Viola's appearance deceives Olivia and she makes her hopeless wish with no knowledge of how unrealistic and ironic it is: "Fate, show thy force; ourselves we do
Caesario warns Olivia "I am not what I am" (III,i,143) but this disavowal is too subtle to help Olivia overcome the strength of appearances. Olivia replies only the more desperately: "I would you were as I would have you be" (III,i,144). She has been a proud woman up to now, according to Cassario, but she quickly loses this pride by sending a ring after the messenger as an obvious ploy to get him to return. As Olivia admits to Caesario later:

Under your hard construction must I sit
To force that on you in a shameful cunning
Which you knew none of yours. What might you think?
Have you not set mine honor at the stake
And baited it with all th' unmuzzled thoughts
That tyrannous heart can think? To one of your receiving
Enough is shown. . .

(III,i,117-123)

Olivia learns much about her own pride and foolishness while infatuated by Viola's appearance and comes at least that much closer to reality. But her wishes are completely unrealistic and she is bound to be lastingly frustrated by them if the situation does not change.

Duke Orsino, too, begins the play in a pose of unrealistic melancholy which is almost a caricature of itself. He thinks of himself as "skittish in all motions else/ Save in the constant image of the creature/ That is beloved" (II,iv,18-20). He illustrates how fanciful this melancholy makes him by punning on the words "hart" and "heart" and by interpreting the news of Olivia's resolution to mourn for her brother as reflecting favorably on his own hopes: if she mourns this way for a brother, he reasons, how much more will she love him "when the rich golden shaft/ Hath killed the flock of all affections else/ That live in her" (I,i,36-38). His very diction shows an artificiality dangerously captive to fancy and floating free of reality. Olivia is
determined not to marry the Duke, though she acknowledges his merits and, as she tells Caesario, "He might have took his answer long ago." (I,v,264)

Orsino shows little ability or inclination to give up this pose and he also shows little awareness of how much of a pose it is. He tells Caesario that he is constant, like all true lovers, on line 19 of II,iv and then on line 32 he is counseling his page to marry a younger woman so that his affections will remain steady towards her. Orsino, like Olivia, needs schooling from Feste who tells him that his constancy is not as genuine as he thinks:

I would have men of such constancy put to sea, that their business might be everything and their intent everywhere; for that's it that always makes a good voyage of nothing.

(II,iv,75-78)

Orsino has begun to show some constancy toward Caesario, even though their acquaintance has been short. After only three days Caesario is "no stranger" and the Duke can tell him: "Thou know'st no less but all..." (I,iv,13). Caesario is a confidant, a trusted messenger, and one toward whom the Duke will grow "tender" (V,i,126). However, "he" is still an appearance and deceives Orsino. As a result, the Duke continues in his illusion that "There is no woman's slides/ Can bide the beating of so strong a passion/ As love doth give my heart..." (II,iv,94-96).

And, deceived by Viola's disguise, he persists in his hopeless desire to win Olivia. "But", says Viola, "if she cannot love you, sir?"

The two principal citizens of Illyria persist in choices that will ultimately frustrate them because they are deceived by a disguise. Viola realizes what is happening after Olivia makes her mistake and sums up the situation accurately:

My master loves her dearly;
And I (poor monster) fond as much on him;
And she (mistaken) seems to dote on me.
What will become of this? As I am man,
My state is desperate for my master's love.
As I am woman (now alas the day!),
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe?
O Time, thou must untangle this, not I;
It is too hard a knot for me t'untie.

(II, ii, 33-41)

In this same soliloquy Viola likens her disguise to something which the "pregnant enemy" (Satan) might do to deceive every man, which, for the moment, makes the predicament of Olivia and Orsino a parable for the audience and connects them, by analogy, to the players. Viola also trusts the outcome to Time, as she did when she landed in Illyria—a trust that, in comedy, will be rewarded. But while Time is delivering up a solution in the person of Sebastian, the frustrations of unrequited lovers continue. The audience sees the results of making unwise choices at the same time that it recognizes the difficulty of choosing correctly. Reality must be what it appears to be or appear as it is so that people can more easily know the extent of its limits. Once those limits are known, it is easier to make wise choices.

The predicament of Olivia and Orsino is parodied by the fate of Olivia's steward, Malvolio. He is led into such an illusion of being loved by Olivia that "when the image of it leaves him", predicts Sir Toby, "he must run mad". (II, v, 194-195). The deception is planned by Maria, whom Sir Toby calls "a very devil of wit". Her manipulation of
appearances (like Viola's disguise and Satan's tactics) deceives
Malvolio and leads him to make a choice based on illusion which, being
unrealistic, will never be satisfied. Feste has already told Malvolio
the truth about himself - that he is a fool - but the steward has paid
the clown no more heed than Olivia or Orsino did. He is under the
illusion that "all that look on him love him" (II, iii, 151-152) and
Maria will use that "grounds of faith" to work her trick.

Maria's plan is to supply Malvolio with a letter apparently written
in Olivia's hand and apparently about her love for the steward. The
jest will be to watch Malvolio twist the contents of the letter so
that it reads as he wants it to. Maria and the others are not
disappointed. The handwriting deceives Malvolio understandably enough
but he contributes more than his own share to his own deception by
interpreting the initials of Olivia's supposed lover as spelling
his own name:

M. - Malvolio. M - Why, that begins my name... M - But then there is no consonancy in the sequel. That
suffers under probation. A should follow, but O does... And then I comes behind... M.O.A.I. This simulation
is not as the former; and yet, to crush this a little, it
would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in
my name. (II, v, 125-140)

Like Olivia, who imagines she is in love with a man, and like Orsino
who imagines there is no woman who loves him as much as he loves Olivia,
Malvolio is under an illusion. Appearances deceive him because his
self love is only too ready to construct a willful interpretation of
them with the help of an active imagination. Malvolio's state is a
dangerous one because any clash between illusion and reality is one
sided - at the expense of illusion. The only weapon against the devil
of deception is faith, as Sir Toby says in passing, but what one is
to believe becomes a problem when appearances are so shifty. Malvolio will see no humor in the deception he suffers. Although he will not end up mad, he will leave the stage embittered, no less full of self love than before. His fate could very well become Olivia's or Orsino's to the extent that they continue to be deceived by Viola's appearance and continue to nourish self-pitying feelings of unrequited love.

Viola, too, will suffer by keeping up the pretense of her own disguise. It has been helpful in getting her employment from the Duke and in getting him to confide in her man to "man" - as he could not do with a woman. Viola's disguise has helped her to get close to the Duke in a way she could not have done had she appeared as a woman and had he been in his melancholy, unrealistic, fit. But, having come so close, she can go no farther; she cannot get him to merge trust and tenderness into love as long as she appears as she is.

Viola is almost relieved of her disguise (and her burden) when she, along with Sir Andrew, is made the victim of yet another deception in this play, stage managed by Sir Toby and Fabian. As in Much Ado About Nothing, the characters most removed from an awareness of what is going on in their world come closest to learning a deep secret and to resolving the difficulties of the play. Fabian has already convinced Sir Andrew - a complete but delightful fool - that Olivia's attentions toward Caesario are really meant to arouse Sir Andrew to prove his love for her in a dual. Since Sir Andrew would like to believe that Olivia loves him, it is easy to convince him of any opinion which reaches that conclusion. Like Orsino who interprets Olivia's mourning in his favor, like Olivia who thinks Caesario's look of scorn is "beautiful", and like Malvolio who twists the letter until it reads according to his
hopes, Sir Andrew lets his hopeless wish lead him to believe Fabian's interpretation of events. Sir Andrew writes a letter intended to challenge Caesario to a duel but it is, in effect, only an unintended parody of the letter Malvolio received. Sir Andrew gets his language so confused that Sir Toby realizes at once that the letter is completely useless. Caesario will never believe this letter as Malvolio believed Maria's. As a result, Toby determines to issue Sir Andrew's challenge by word of mouth. The sport he hopes to have is to watch Caesario and Sir Andrew "kill one another by the look, like cockatrices" when they come face to face for a dual, each convinced that the other is "a very devil" for valor (III, iv, 204).

Sir Toby's scheme works well and Viola has to struggle to maintain the swaggering pose of a page boy. As she says in an aside, "Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man" (III, iv, 313-315). She learns, thanks to this deception, that there are limits to what she can pretend to be: sooner or later those limits are bound to force her to reveal herself; looked at another way, those limits to pretense will free her to be herself. As she and Sir Andrew stand for a moment with drawn swords and knocking knees, the audience becomes laughingly aware that there are limits to "what you will".

Up to this point Viola has not been forced to reveal her identity and has also seen no way of doing so which would not jeopardize her privileged position close to Orsino. But with the entrance of Antonio she begins to sense that deliverance may be at hand. The audience has known of Antonio since Act II when he appeared as the faithful companion of Viola's brother, Sebastian. The audience has learned at
the same time that Sebastian was not drowned but has arrived in Illyria and is going to seek the court of Count Orsino while Antonio seeks lodging for the two of them in town. Somehow, the audience knows, Sebastian will supply the missing piece to a puzzle that cannot be assembled without him. Meanwhile, he can be expected to add to the confusion of people already bewildered by deceptive appearances.

The tempo of confusion increases when Antonio sees Caesario about to be attacked by Sir Andrew and stops the fight, thinking he is saving Sebastian from trouble. However, Antonio himself is soon arrested by the officers of the law who have been searching for him to put him under arrest for past offences against the city. Ironically, they arrest Antonio because they recognize his face while he is deceived and confused because he cannot recognize Viola's.

Viola, too, is confused by Antonio's friendliness and is puzzled by the fact he calls her Sebastian. Antonio's mistake gives Viola a reason to hope that her brother is still alive. But Antonio, deceived by Viola's appearance, is driven to disillusionment. He has to ask "Sebastian" to return some money he had lent him but Caesario does not know what he is talking about. The appearance of ingratitude stings Antonio:

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Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.
In nature there's no blemish but the mind;
None can be called deformed but the unkind.
Virtue is beauty; but the beauteous evil
Are empty trunks, o'erflourished by the devil.
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(III,iv,378-382)

Antonio is one more example of a person whose best intentions have been baffled by unreliable appearances. His case is even more pathetic than Malvolio's because he has no folly to be exorcised. His good nature seems imposed upon and there is no remedy for it.
Three more deceptions quickly follow one another, accelerating the movement toward a resolution. The Clown approaches Sebastian whom he thinks is Caesario and tells him that the Lady Olivia wants to see him. Sebastian, like Viola earlier, is understandably puzzled and sends the Clown away with no satisfaction. Feste, like Antonio, is deceived by this behavior into reaching a pessimistic but inaccurate conclusion. His remarks are more true than he realizes, but in an opposite sense than he intends:

Well held out, i' faith! No, I do not know you; nor I am not sent to you by my lady, to bid you come speak with her; nor your name is not Master Caesario; nor this is not my nose neither. Nothing that is so is so.

(IV,i,5-9)

Some things are what they appear to be and the next incident between Sebastian and Sir Toby proves it.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew mistake Sebastian for Caesario and are determined to continue the fight that Antonio interrupted. They too are deceived by appearances because, in this case, reality is what it appears to be and is not otherwise. Sebastian is a man and a gentleman and fully capable of giving his attackers a sound drubbing. There is a limit to their mischief making which the testy Malvolio had not been able to impose: and that limit is the limit of reality.

Olivia arrives to stop the fighting and she, in turn, is deceived by Sebastian's appearance. She reaches out to him as she had to Caesario, though this time with a better chance of success because this time what she sees is really there. Olivia's case is the opposite of Antonio's: he had stopped a fight to save a friend and had looked for help in return only to be refused, much to his disillusionment; Olivia stops a fight to save whom she thinks is her love and asks him to come home with her which he accepts, much to her surprise.
The madness which Antonio, Feste, and Sebastian are beginning
to experience - each as a result of his own involvement on a deception -
is parodied by the fate of Malvolio. Malvolio knows he is not mad and
wants only a chance to prove his sanity. But he is kept confined in a
dark house by Maria, Toby and the others and treated as if he were mad.
Feste's remarks to him are more true than Malvolio is ready to admit:
"Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but ignorance, in
which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog" (IV,ii,43-45).
Malvolio is ignorant of exactly how much appearances have deceived him
and he is unaware too of the irony of his remark: "I am as well in my
wits as any man in Illyria" (IV,ii,109-110). All the others in the
play have fallen victim to the deceptions of appearance and are as
puzzled as Malvolio about how to sort the pieces out. Sebastian, who
appears in the scene following the baiting of Malvolio expresses the
bafflement common to the others:

This is the air; that is the glorious sun;
This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't;
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
Yet 'tis not madness. . .
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me
To any other trust but that I am mad,
Or else the lady's mad. . . There's something in't
That is deceivable.  
(IV,iii,1-21)

The comedy of Twelfth Night is about people who make faulty
decisions because they are misled by appearances. In some cases the
appearances have been deliberately constructed or interpreted to
mislead a victim (viz. Toby's gulling of Sir Andrew and Caesario and
Maria's gulling of Malvolio); in other cases, the appearances have
prevented a correct assessment of the situation and have so encouraged wrong choices (viz. Olivia's love of Caesario, Antonio's protection of Caesario, Orsino's ignorance of Viola's love, Toby's attack on Sebastian, and Feste's ignorance of Sebastian). In a moment, all the confusion will be sorted out and the madness will cease. After all, this is a comic world where confusion leads to a renewal of people who have been chastened by their experiences; there is enough time in comedy to learn something from mistakes.

In a tragic world there is not enough time to learn and the same experiences that end happily in comedy can lead to disastrous results. Comedy makes fun of events that are tragic in other contexts and it encourages a sense of superiority over events that arouse fear at other times. *Twelfth Night* has fun with the deception of appearances which lead to tragedy in *Othello*. Iago, like Maria is a "devil of wit" who leads Othello into a madness which "not poppy, nor mandragora/ Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world" (III,iii,330-331) can cure. Iago uses the "divinity of hell" to juggle appearances that will damn his victims. And Viola, like Iago, uses words that are more true than the listener has wit enough to believe. Both of them say explicitly and ironically: "I am not what I am". The tragic possibilities of these comic actions is one feature that raises them above mere divertimentoes and makes them worthy of serious as well as laughable attention. In addition to other features which will be mentioned later, the tragic overtones that resonate among the comic actions of *Twelfth Night* contribute to making this comedy more true to life than mere farce or comedy of manners.

To return to the action, then, the resolution to the polyphony of confusions—because—of—deceptions begins in Act V with light banter
between Fabian and Feste which anticipates what will follow between Olivia and Caesario:

Fabian: Now, as thou lov'st me, let me see (Malvolio's) letter.

Feste: Good Master Fabian, grant me another request.

Fabian: Anything.

Feste: Do not desire to see this letter.

Fabian: This is to give a dog, and in recompense desire my dog again.

(C.i.l-7)

Caesario, accompanying the Duke, comes to Olivia's house immediately after this exchange. When Olivia sees the one she thinks is her newly married husband, she reminds him, "Caesario, you do not keep promise with me" (V.i,103). But Viola remains resolutely by the Duke's side, leading Olivia to exclaim with desperation, "Ay me detested, how am I beguiled" (V.i,139). The husband she thinks has been given to her is being taken away again. She calls the priest to witness on her behalf to the marriage which causes the Duke and Viola to become confused and their confusion is increased by Andrew and Toby who enter with bandaged wounds and with cross words for Caesario. Into this cacophony of recapitulated madness Sebastian enters as a tonic chord and enables the confusion to sort itself out amid exclamations of "most wonderful" and with a mutual and delightful recognition between himself and Viola. Olivia easily recognizes her mistake in longing for Viola and Orsino, in order to "have share in this most happy wrack" (V.i,266) gives over his suit to Olivia, accepts Viola's love for what it is, and asks to see her in her "woman's weeds."

The ending is a victory for Time and Chance to which Viola had trusted in the beginning. In time, appearances are shown up for what
they are - deceptive and convincing, to the extent they mirror reality but only temporarily deceptive in the long run. Maria's handwriting resembles Olivia's almost perfectly but can be distinguished in time. Viola mirrors Sebastian almost perfectly: she not only looks like her brother but, like him, has also escaped from the sea, entered Illyria with a faithful companion, and has proceeded to Orsino's court. The audience is even more aware than the citizens of Illyria of how much alike the twins are in almost every way. But, in time, even Viola's disguise falls away and Olivia and the Duke can make their marriage choices wisely.

The audience, of course, has known all along that such a resolution would take place. Sebastian's first appearance followed immediately after Olivia had first fallen in love with Caesario, giving a hint that he was somehow to be involved in the love entanglements. The audience itself was confused for 17 lines by Sebastian's resemblance to Caesario. After he identifies himself they are relieved of their own uncertainties and can get ready to appreciate how deliciously confusing life will be for the others in the play. There is no doubt, however, that all will result in the proper pairings expected in comedy. For the moment, however, Sebastian represents the resolution toward which Olivia is heading and Viola represents the chord that is almost right. The result is the tension of dissonance which grows in complexity to include as many others as possible until the resolution is reached.

The audience not only has the assurance of having heard the resolving chord in advance, but also has a preparation for this resolution in the words of Feste's song:
O mistress mine, where are you roaming?

O, stay and hear, your true-love's coming...

Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know. (II,iii,40-41; 44-45)

But this confidence that Time is benevolent, that it will sort out all confusion and reveal the reality beneath appearance, does not go unqualified. Shakespeare celebrates a comic vision but seeks to make it secure against denial by innoculating it in advance with counter considerations. These, in addition to the tragic overtones mentioned earlier, help make this comedy more "true to life"; that is, more accommodating to a variety of attitudes.

Shakespeare reminds the audience through Viola that the "pregnant enemy" often uses appearance to deceive mere mortals and when Malvolio is deceived into a mistaken belief that Olivia loves him, Maria draws a parallel with chilling overtones for Shakespeare's audience: "There is no Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness" (III,ii,70-73). Appearances can be damnably deceiving as Othello found out too late and as Hamlet was wise to be cautious of. He knew the power of the devil "t'assume a pleasing shape" (Hamlet II,ii,628-629) and to mislead people who had the best of intentions and the most co-operative of imaginations. In this play, Antonio's bitter remark that "the beauteous evil/ Are empty trunks o'erflourished by the devil" reminds the audience of a deceiver at work whose success can be measured by every example of ingratitude in those who had seemed to be friends. There may not always be enough time to bring in convincing evidence against such an adversary, as the tragedy of Othello illustrates.
There is also the sober consideration that while Time can bring in a "flood of fortune", making "salt waves fresh in love" (III,iv,296), it can also bring in "the rain that raineth every day" (V,i,394). Time brings change, and this can be for the worse as well as for the better. If it is logical for Feste to credit the "whirligig of time" with bringing about revenge on Malvolio, it is also logical for Malvolio to appeal to Time and to say: "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you" (V,i,380). His curse stings and sticks, all the more so since the audience realizes, with Olivia, that "he hath been most notoriously abused" (V,i,381).

Time can bring with it changes that qualify festivity and which test the vows of love. Sebastian can promise that "having sworn truth (he) ever will be true" (IV,iii,33) and Viola can promise Orsino that she will keep her vows to him "as true in soul/ As doth the orbed continent the fire that severs day from night" (V,i,270-271). But Viola knows how unstable vows can be. She has already reminded Orsino "man" to man: "We men may say more, swear more; but indeed our shows are more than will; for still we prove much in our vows but little in our love" (II,iv,117-119). And the Duke's earlier advice to Caesario to marry a woman younger than himself "or thy affection cannot hold the bent" (II,iv,37) implies a recognition of the difficulties of fidelity which will come in time. The Clown's song is ample commentary on this sad fact:

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet, and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

(II,iii,48-53)
Viola has also had a long discussion with Feste on the deceptiveness of language; as Feste says:

To see this age! A sentence is but a chev'ril glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turned outward! (III,i,11-13)

And he adds:

Words are grown so false that I am loth to prove reason with them. (III,i,24-25)

Deceptions abound in time and they work on people who have the "strong corruption" of vice tainting their "frail blood" (III,iv,368-369), and who are therefore prone to misinterpret appearances because of their own preconceptions and self-interest. These considerations strongly qualify the optimistic assertion that reality can be recognized when it appears and that reality will, in fact, appear in time to enable people to make wise choices.

But the festive tone holds, despite threats to the contrary, because Sebastian and Viola are very much on the stage for all the maddened citizens of Illyria to see. There is even hope that Malvolio can be entreated to a peace and, if not, there is at least the assurance that he knows his hopes will lead nowhere. The audience has known all along who was who and could use its superior awareness to enjoy the comedy. When the players catch up with the audience, there is nothing more for them to know and they too can laugh with the audience in retrospect.

The moment when Sebastian arrives next to Viola is like the resolving chord which creates harmony out of dissonance and which is "right" according to the logic developing from within the movement of the music. Their mutual recognition, like a moment of discovery, is a liberation from puzzlement, however short lived. For the moment, the
corroding effects of Time can be forgotten and some hard won insight can be celebrated. No matter what else is true about illusion, deception, and human frailty, this moment is also true. The audience and the citizens of Illyria would be foolish not to catch the mood of the moment and to adopt the Clown's advice:

Then come and kiss me, sweet, and twenty
Youth's a stuff 'twill not endure.
CHAPTER IV

AS YOU LIKE IT

In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare explores the thought that Nature is an unimpeachable legislator of human conduct and that love, even though often foolish, is a worthy as well as natural expression. Touchstone, as usual, cites the cynical view of things: "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" (I,iv,51-54). But his voice is only one among a polyphony of others. Nature and Love will be strong enough, in this play, to withstand the tests and changes brought by time.

Shakespeare develops this thought in two movements: One, the dark world of Frederick's court and the other, the lighter world of Arden. The two themes of Nature and Love are sounded for the first time at Court and are echoed for the rest of the play until they reach the resounding resolution of four marriages and a massive conversion to natural behavior in Act V. On the way toward that resolution, Shakespeare counterpoints Nature and Love with considerations which threaten to create dissonance. For example, Love is counterpointed with infidelity, symbolized by the cuckold's horns often alluded to and Nature is contrasted with what is unnatural, what is gentle is contrasted with the villainous. The result of such counterpointing is disharmonious but, by Act V, Shakespeare resolves the polyphony of voices into a harmony with Nature and Love and the dissonance along the way only makes the resolution more welcome.
The two movements through which the themes are developed are analogous to one another in structure, thus capable of reflecting on one another point by point. The difference between the two is one of tone: Duke Frederick's world is tyrannical and oppressive; Nature and Love can never define themselves positively in this world. The tone in Arden is different: more encouraging to the positive expressions of Nature and Nature in Love. The tones are different but the structure of court and country is the same. Each is governed by a Duke and assorted nobles; there is a hierarchy of command, however much Duke Senior's benevolent rule may obscure the fact. Each world is ruled by a usurper, however much Senior regrets having to admit that he is one:

Come, shall we go and kill us venison?  
And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,  
Being native burghers of this desert city,  
Should, in their own confines, with forked heads  
Have their round haunches gored. (II,i,21-25)

Both courts are entertained by truth-telling fools, Touchstone and Jacques. And in both the worlds of court and country there is the eviction of loyal old men - Adam and Corin - who have given a lifetime of service only to be ungratfully banished or evicted in their old age.

The similar structure of the two worlds or movements is important. In so far as Arden resembles the court, the testing of peoples' Nature and Love will stand them in good stead when they return to court life. Arden is not simply a "Fantasie" or "Reverie"; it is a world very much like the ordinary world but more favorable to the expression of themes which are too often suppressed there. A change in tone will allow for a different treatment of a theme; it will colour attitude and will make positive, lively, and exuberant expressions possible. At the end of As You Like It the tone of the court world changes by a surprising
and daring conversion into a new key. And with this conversion, first of Oliver and then of Frederick and his soldiers, Shakespeare makes it possible for the society of Arden to move back into court life where the tone they have established in the forest will echo within a healthier society.

Before this conversion is reached, however, Nature and Love will have to achieve some expression; they will have to define themselves by showing some recognizable shape. For this reason, Shakespeare arranges a series of counterpointings which reach a crescendo in Act III. These help to define Nature and Love by showing, at least, what they are not, which is probably as far as one can go without sounding platitudinous or simplistic. Shakespeare does not explicitly define Nature or Love but respects them as mysteries in which he and the audience are necessarily involved. He respects the silence which surrounds these mysteries and which guards them from ever being adequately expressed or understood. But in order to say something about them (for what goes completely unmentioned risks being completely disregarded) Shakespeare presents a number of theses, all of which are valid but inadequate. The force of Nature and Nature in Love defines itself by the way it disposes of these theses, much like the force field of a magnet proves its strength and reveals its shape by the way it rearranges iron filings while itself remaining invisible except in its effects. The silence of the mystery is counterpointed by several debates in the forest and what cannot be said turns out to be the shape of Nature and Love.

The first theme to be sounded is that of Nature. Orlando feels "the spirit of (his) father" rise up in him when he is denied the rights to an education left to him in his father's will. He is being kept as a
peasant by his brother, Oliver, and has nothing to show for his time on
the farm but growth. Although "the custom of nations" has made
distinctions between first born sons and others, it has not erased and
cannot erase the bonds between brothers. Each brother has an
inalienable right to respect for what he is - his father's son or, in
other words, for being what "God made" (I,i,32). Even if, in fact,
these rights are violated, they remain binding as a law to which the
beleagured party can appeal. The father's will remains valid and
normative, however much it is disregarded. Oliver's attitude is
"unnatural", which he will admit later in the play (IV,iii,125) and
it is ironic that he calls Orlando his "natural" brother and claims
to be speaking brotherly of him when he anatomizes his supposed faults
to Charles the wrestler. The audience recognizes Oliver's attitude
as villainous not only by his plotting to do damage to Orlando but by
his soliloquy in which he shows that, like Edmund in King Lear, he has
an irrational hatred for the good only because it is good:

...my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing
more than he. Yet he's gentle, never schooled
and yet learned, full of noble device, of all
in the heart of the world, and especially of
my own people, who best know him, that I am
altogether misprized. (I,i,157-163)

Orlando's goodness shows itself more by contrast with Oliver's
behavior than by any positive expression at this point. The counterpointing
of Oliver and Orlando shows that whatever "nature" will mean, it will not
be reducible to biological terms. The two are "natural" brothers but
have entirely different "natures". Adam is even hesitant about what to
call Oliver when he has to reveal his villainous plans to Orlando:
Some indication of a more natural way of acting — and certainly an alternative to Oliver's plotting against Orlando — is the behavior of Celia and Rosalind "whose loves are dearer than the natural bond of sisters" (I,ii,265-266). Celia, instead of being jealous of her cousin wants to share her own fortunes with her:

You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have; and truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir; for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection. (I,ii,16-20)

Celia's father, the Duke Frederick, is like Oliver in his unnatural behavior because he has usurped the place of his older brother, Duke Senior. He is also as jealous of goodness as Oliver is and banishes Rosalind from court because "her very silence and her patience/ Speak to the people and they do pity her" (I,iii,76-77). Clearly, unnatural behavior is not only the vice of older sons; and brotherly or sisterly love is not limited to "natural" siblings. Natural or unnatural is beginning to take shape as a certain kind of behavior though, as already mentioned, the outlines of that behavior must of necessity be dim. Rosalind is not a traitor just because she is her father's daughter and Celia does not have to hate Orlando because her father does. What is natural, then, is not necessarily what "comes naturally" as if by some kind of biological determinism. "Natural", as it is taking shape in the first two scenes, is a freely chosen way of acting and looks like love.
Some further refinement of what natural behavior might look like emerges by comparing Oliver's treatment of Adam with the treatment given to Corin by his landlord. Both situations are analogous and therefore throw light on one another. We are shown the eviction of Adam and will learn later what to think of it when he is brought to Senior's banquet and Amiens sings the song:

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

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky
Thou dost not bit so nigh
As benefits forgot:

(II,vii,174-176; 184-186)

We are only told about Corin's eviction but learn explicitly what kind of behavior his master lacks:

My master is of churlish disposition
And little recks to find the way to heaven
By doing deeds of hospitality. (II,iv,80-82)

Gratitude and hospitality emerge as characteristic of "natural" rather than of unnatural or villainous or churlish people. Orlando's care for Adam, as well as Adam's loyalty to him and Rosalind's rescue of Corin (with Celia's offer to mend his wages) counterpoints the behavior of Oliver and Corin's householder and helps to define a natural way of acting.

It is in the forest that what is natural can find full expression. As a result, when Orlando finds Duke Senior at supper he learns that all he need do is to ask for food and he will get it. There is no need to adopt the bullying manners of an Oliver or Frederick. As Senior tells him: "Your gentleness shall force/ More than your force move us to gentleness" (II,vii,101-102). And this quality of gentleness receives further emphasis as Orlando asks:
Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you.
I thought all things had been savage here,
And therefore put I on the countenance
Of stern commandment... (106-109)

And the Duke replies: "Sit you down in gentleness" (124).

This episode is a further reminder that "natural" cannot be identified with "instinctive" since gentleness is a cultivated quality. Nor can Nature be identified with all gentlemen since the same fathers begot a Frederick and a Senior, an Orlando and an Oliver. The complexity of the question: "What is Natural" increases as each thesis is counterpointed with another and the shape of Nature emerges.

Nature is also counterpointed with Fortune - a familiar comparison. As Rosalind and Celia argue it, Fortune may be too powerful for Nature by so arranging events that some natural gift, like wit, gets stifled by circumstance. If this were the last word in the argument it would be an incentive to unnatural behavior. An all-powerful Fortune, making no distinction between natural or unnatural, good or bad, but regarding everything as either in or out, up or down, encourages the devotion of the cynical and the opportunist. Throughout the play there is a repeated concern for how one's fortunes are going or what they will be. Obviously, a turn of Fortune is important; it can defeat one's allegiance to natural behavior when such is no longer opportune. But Nature's defeat is not necessarily the result of a clash between these two mighty opposites. One's fortunes can be part of a natural process of learning from adversity. As Rosalind and Celia experience it, Touchstone arrives abruptly to cut off their debate about Nature and Fortune. One could regard this as a turn of fortune meant to confound their arguments. Or else, as Celia puts it: "Peradventure this is not Fortune's work neither, but Nature's, who perceiveth our natural wits too dull to reason
of such goddesses and hath sent this natural for our whetstone. For always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits" (I,ii,49-53).

The full expression of this ability to make the best of circumstance comes in the forest where Amiens congratulates Duke Senior:

> . . . happy is your Grace
> That can translate the stubborness of fortune
> Into so quiet and so sweet a style. (II,i,18-20)

And, indeed, the Duke sounds as if he has learned some valuable lessons from adversity, showing himself to be a comic inversion of King Lear:

> Hath not custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> Here we feel not the penalty of Adam;
> The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
> And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
> Which, when it bites and blows upon my body
> Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
> "This is no flattery; these are counsellors
> That feelingly persuade me what I am". (II,i,2-11)

Amiens' song will later echo this feeling of the Duke:

> Who doth ambition shun
> And loves to live in the sun,
> Seeking the food he eats,
> And pleased with what he gets,
> Come hither, come hither, come hither.
> Here shall he see no enemy
> But winter and rough weather.

Jacques will parody this with his version of what kind of people choose to live under such harsh conditions:

> If it do come to pass
> That any man turn ass,
> Leaving his wealth and ease
> A stubborn will to please.
>  Due dame, due dame, due dame.
> Here shall he see gross fools as he,
> An if he will come to me.
Jacques, however, like Touchstone, is only one voice among a polyphony of others. And although the notes he sounds add dissonance to theirs, his are clearly not dominant; they are too feeble to be sustained throughout the large "measure" of goodness shown by the Duke and also by Orlando who appears in the scene following this song, caring for Adam in his hunger.

Nature, then, can withstand and even profit from fortune of any kind. It is a kind of behavior resembling gratitude, hospitality and gentleness which is at home in court or country. Manners and customs are relative to each locale, as Corin asserts in his debate with Touchstone; and longstanding habit can make certain customs seem "natural". But truly natural behavior shows itself at work under any conditions. The behavior of Adam and Corin makes them more alike than their court or country origins makes them different.

Shakespeare adds a final voice in his attempt to "define" what is natural and to show how this Nature is an unimpeachable legislator of human conduct. This voice sings of the deterioration that comes to people in time; it sings of Nature in the sense of the "natural processes" which only enfeeble a man the older he gets. By giving expression to this voice, Shakespeare shows eventually that what he means by nature cannot be confined to this one version of it. There is no doubt that the natural processes are taking their toll and are a force to be reckoned with. Adam, for instance, has "lost all (his) teeth" in his master's service. Because of his weakness, he cannot sustain a flight into the forest as well as Orlando and, despite the care he took in his youth to remain vigorous, he is growing weaker with age. As Orlando remarks sadly but realistically:
Further echoes of this theme occur when Jacques, the forest fool, moralizes on the seven ages of man as seven pageants of increasing debility and Touchstone, the court fool, summarizes the effects of Time's progress in the merciless reminder: "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" (II,vii,26-28). Decay and debility come in Time and, like Fortune, impose severe limits on a person's behavior. But neither Fortune or decay need defeat "natural" behavior as this is shown in Adam's and Corin's continued service and in Orlando's and Rosalind's continued care for them.

Natural behavior, as it defines itself by disposing of all the "theses" counterpointed against it, and as it receives fullest expression in Orlando, shows itself to be a vigorous force. It cannot be overcome by unnatural behavior, though it can be disregarded; custom can put it into disuse, Fortune and various disabilities can discourage men from acting naturally. But Nature remains as a criterion to measure the worthiness of action and to embolden Orlando in his self-defense, even if its exact shape remains invisible and its exact definition remains unarticulated. It is fitting for the purposes of this play that Orlando defeats Charles at wrestling. Charles is the unwitting tool of an unnatural brother, while Orlando represents all that is good and that Oliver loaths. He is a fitting representative of Nature against Fortune, being young and tender and having the gentle wishes of two ladies on his side. His overthrow of Charles is consequently emblematic of Nature's strength. This power will be enough, in the end,
to sustain Orlando in his moral struggle to overthrow feelings of revenge and will prompt him to the merciful deliverance of Oliver from a lioness. This deed, in turn, will be enough to convert Oliver from his unnatural behavior into someone as generous toward his brother as Celia was to Rosalind and Senior was to Orlando and Adam. The movement of the play is such that it almost requires the final conversion of Frederick and his army on the fringes of Arden. All the other major court characters have come to the forest and have given free expression to natural behavior. Even Oliver's tune has changed and Hymen's song has commented on the action from a god's viewpoint:

Then is there mirth in heaven
When earthly things made even
Atone together. (V,iv,108-110)

Frederick's conversion makes sense in the logic of polyphonic development where all voices unite in a harmonic final chord. It makes little difference in polyphony how each voice has developed its part or has counterpointed with others in the course of its expression. It only matters that all end up together in harmony. When a dramatist wrenches a character into line with all the others by such an improbable conversion, he shows little respect for character but much regard for the demands of theme. To the extent that such a conclusion is dramatically improbable, the analogy to polyphonic development seems all the more helpful for seeing how Shakespeare is working. The logic of music is as valid for its own purposes as the logic of Aristotle.

Just as Nature received expression and definition throughout this play by a series of counterpointed theses, Nature-in-love will receive similar development, centering on Rosalind and dominating most of the attention in the forest.
Rosalind is the first one to fall in love, which she does simply by setting eyes on Orlando. He, in turn, falls in love with her when she gives him a token to wear and he slips into "the very exstasy of love", stammering and becoming inarticulate. The power of love has shown its force by overthrowing pride in Rosalind and by overthrowing Orlando who has become identified with Nature at its most self-assertive. It remains to be seen what this power is like in more detail and if it is strong enough to endure through time. At first sight, Rosalind and Orlando look like any pair of infatuated adolescents. An audience might laugh with condescension at their love wounds or adopt Celia's slightly skeptical attitude: "Is it possible on such a sudden you should fall into so strong a liking with old sir Rowland's youngest son?" (I,iii,27-29). Shakespeare will delineate the shape of this passion as he did with that of Nature, by counterpointing other voices with those of Orlando and especially of Rosalind and by showing how these voices are disposed of. As with Nature, the most fullsome development of the Love theme will occur in the "forest movement" where people are more free to be themselves, unrestrained by any arbitrary or tyrannical restraints.

The first thing to be learned about Rosalind's love is that it makes a total claim on her allegiance. When she first appears, she is mourning for her father and prattling with Celia about Fortune and Nature. When she falls in love, her only thoughts are for Orlando, and her own heart's ache. The openings of I,ii and of I,iii are similar enough to show the great extent to which the reason for Rosalind's melancholy has changed:
I,ii:  Celia:  I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

Rosalind:  Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of, and would you yet I were merrier? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

I,iii:  Celia:  Why, cousin, why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy, not a word?

Rosalind:  Not one to throw at a dog. . .

Celia:  But is all this for your father?

Rosalind:  No, some of it is for my child's father. (Orlando)

Love is a disruptive force, creating new alliances and modifying former loyalties. However common an occurrence it is, Love can threaten uncommon danger by blinding lovers to any other world but one of their own making. Since lovers, poets and madmen "are of imagination all compact", they have the artifice capable of constructing such a world and the danger they will do so is only too real. Shakespeare showed the tragic results of the self-sufficient isolation of lovers in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. In *As You Like It* he only hints at the disintegrating possibilities of a lover's passion by showing Rosalind's realignment of loyalties and by having her say in the Forest: "But what talk we of fathers when there is such a man as Orlando?" (III,iv,35-36). Such a sentiment has tragic possibilities (for *King Lear*, for example) and, as such, helps make this comedy worthy of serious attention. It is clear that Love makes serious claims and leads, eventually, to life-long commitments.

The audience gets a further look at what this Love might be like as soon as Rosalind announces "this is the forest of Arden" and the first of several spectacles comes into view: "a young man and an old
in solemn talk" (II,iv,19). Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone adopt a spectator's stance for a moment and let two local shepherds - young Silvius and old Corin converse about love. With Rosalind established as an audience the plight of Silvius appears more clearly as melodrama and, simultaneously, distinguished from Rosalind's. Shakespeare will further dissociate Rosalind's love from any pose by having her play herself for Orlando later and in that play adopt attitudes of petulance, testiness and coquetry which partly are and mostly are not true expressions of her love. Rosalind's play is a way of separating actor and act, of showing that her love is capable of infinite variety, while floating free of any pose. Meanwhile, the spectacle of Silvius and Corin helps to define what Rosalind's love is not.

Silvius insists that love delights in foolish behavior and that a true lover will remember every instance of folly done in youth. Corin claims to have loved "ere now" but to have long since forgotten the ridiculous actions into which fantasy had once led him. The audience, and Rosalind, can consider through this exchange whether love has to die when foolish actions do or whether it simply changes its mode of expression. There is no indication that Corin has grown cynical about love in his old age; he is tolerant of Silvius's excesses and admits that they once were his. But he has changed. It is tempting to see Corin as Love in old age as Adam was Nature in old age. The two men represent Love and Nature enduring through time, not overcome by it, but modified. Each age can express Love and Nature in a way appropriate to itself without one age having to be any worse than the other. An organic development can occur in time, up to and including old age, as in the parable of Marcus Aurelius: "Green grape, ripe cluster, raisin;
every step a change, not into what is not, but what is yet to be" (Meditations, Book XI, 35). To recognize that Love can change while remaining part of an organic development of one's personality is to insure oneself against the cynicism that comes when the first fires fade. Time will bring change and the wise person will be one who can "keep his time" and "lose not his time" as the singers mention in another context (V,iii,36-37).

Silvius breaks off the exchange by running off in passionate chase of his Phebe which gives Rosalind a chance to exclaim: "Alas, poor shepherd! Searching of thy wound, I have by hard adventure found my own" (II,iv,42-43). But Touchstone, ever the practical one in such matters - who will later entertain no idealized conception of what he is doing in love - deflates Silvius's plight and Rosalind's as well, to the extent that her love resembles Silvius's: "I remember, when I was in love I broke my sword upon a stone and bid him take that for coming a-night to Jane Smile; and I remember the kissing of her batler, and the cow's dugs that her pretty chopt hands had milked..." (II,iv,44-48).

Rosalind still identifies her passion with Silvius's: "Jove, Jove!, This shepherd's passion/ Is much upon my fashion" (II,iv,58-59). But by the next time we see her a subtle change has occurred. She is still very much in love with Orlando and grows out of patience with Celia to tell her for sure that it is he who has scattered love verses to her throughout the forest. She is bursting with eagerness to hear about him but when he arrives in conversation with Jacques, Rosalind harnesses her passion with self-control and begins the testing of Orlando's love. There is a bit of Touchstone's deflating wit in what she says and much
of Silvius's ardor in what she feels. Like Jacques' own melancholy, Rosalind's love is uniquely her own, "compounded of many simples" and identifiable by no one in particular. As she tests Orlando, Rosalind discovers him to be someone much like herself—more mature than he was when he was first struck by love and showing none of the conventional signs symptomatic of the lover he yet claims to be: he has no lean cheek, blue eye and sunken, unquestionable spirit or beard neglected (III,ii,366-369). He is not scrupulous about coming an hour late for a love appointment, nor will he desert his brother in need just to keep a rendezvous with Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede. Orlando is certainly in love but in a way that enhances his already gentle nature and not in a way that would reduce him to a caricature. It is true that he is the author of some exaggerated love verse which is parodied by Touchstone into typical bawdry. But he shows himself a more realistic man than the poetry suggests while never expressing himself on Touchstone's level. He considers love worth more than virtue, as he tells Jacques, and will not be cured of it, as he tells Ganymede. But his fervor is balanced by an ability to attend to other claims on his time and affection. He is a devotee of love, not an enthusiast.

Both Rosalind and Orlando show themselves as lovers who are able to withstand the test of many attitudes. Their love is not as fanciful as Silvius's:

Rosalind: Well, in (Rosalind's) person, I say I will not have you.

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

Rosalind: No, faith, die by attorney...

Orlando: I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind, for I protest her frown might kill me.
Rosalind: By this hand, it will not kill a fly.  

Nor is their love as cynical as Touchstone's. Rosalind is not as unmoved as Celia:

Rosalind: Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando. I'll go find a shadow, and sigh till he come.

Celia: And I'll sleep.  

And Orlando is not as cynical as Jacques:

Jacques: The worst fault you have is to be in love.

Orlando: 'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.  

The ability of Rosalind and Orlando to love without exaggeration or cynicism should steady them in advance against all the changes that will come in Time. And, in this play, there is special emphasis on the changes that occur when courtship turns to marriage: "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" (IV,i,140-142). With change there comes confusion and a possible realignment of loyalties which, in marriage, shows itself in extra-marital affairs. There is a hint of such infidelity as a possibility for the future in Rosalind's teasing with Orlando:

Orlando: Then love me Rosalind.

Rosalind: Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all.

Orlando: And wilt thou have me?

Rosalind: Ay, and twenty such.

Orlando: What sayest thou?

Rosalind: Are you not good?
Orlando: I hope so.

Rosalind: Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing? (IV,i,108-116)

And again:

Rosalind: Make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement... 

Orlando: A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say, 'wit, whither wilt!'

Rosalind: Nay, you might keep that check for it till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbor's bed.

Orlando: And what wit could wit have to excuse that?

Rosalind: Marry, to say she came to seek you there... O that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool. (IV,i,154-168)

Throughout the play, especially through Touchstone's courting of Audrey, there is the reminder that lust as well as love can lead to marriage plans and that these may not even be intended to last. There is a constant joking about horns that are the dowry of a man's wife: by Touchstone before he attempts to marry Audrey (III,iii,53-60); by Rosalind in teasing Orlando (IV,i,48-56); and by the song sung by the foresters returning from the hunt:

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn,
It was a crest ere thou wast born,
    Thy father's father wore it,
And thy father bore it.
The horn, the horn, the lusty horn,
Is not a thing to laugh to scorn. (IV,ii,14-19)

There are also many references to violated vows that are seemingly normal in the course of Time. Orlando mentions them in his love verse (III,ii,125-133); Celia blandly interprets Orlando's lateness as a sign
that he is out of love and therefore not accountable for the vows he
made when he was in it (III, iv, 30-31); and even up to the final marriages,
Touchstone alludes to the infidelity that rises as sexual interest falls:

I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the
country copulatives, to swear and to forswear,
according as marriage binds and blood breaks.

(V, iv, 56-58)

Orlando survives Celia's cynical accusation that he is faithless,
but he may nevertheless be well advised to say "a day" without the
"ever" when promising how long he intends to remain in love. Just as
there were Fortune and the debilities of natural processes to discourage
natural behavior, there are changes with Time that can make love mortal
in folly. From what they learn from the testing in the forest, Orlando
and Rosalind know that they may live happily but certainly not easily
ever after.

From this same testing, Love and Nature receive some definition
and, especially toward the end of the play show their force. From IV, ii
to the end, they become the dominating motifs of the action as, one by
one, the major characters change their tune until they are brought into
harmony with the natural and loving behavior espoused by Orlando and
Rosalind.

The first major change occurs at Oliver's entrance in IV, iii when
he comes to announce the reason for Orlando's lateness to Rosalind and
when he declares his "conversion" from his former unnatural self. At
the same moment, Celia is converted into love for him and leaves behind
her earlier cynicism and indifference. At one stroke, Nature and Love
gain fresh conquests and start a movement that will drown all voices
counterpointed against them.
In the next scene (V,i) Touchstone vanquishes William, the rival to his Audrey and promises her that they will find a time to get married, and not by "a most vile Mar-text" either. Touchstone seems to be taking practical measures to insure himself against the horns he has said are no disgrace to wear and to be joining, at least publically, in the kind of love ritualized by the other lovers.

In V,ii, Silvius and Phebe are paired off with Orlando and Rosalind, like a quartet, singing about "what 'tis to love". Silvius describes the qualities of a lover which he has adequately demonstrated throughout the play and then starts off on a round repeated by the others:

**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.  
(V,ii,83-87)

The round is one last chance to counterpoint Orlando and Rosalind with their look-aliases and opposites. It is a piece of recapitulated confusion and is deliberately artificial, but works as a similar movement in music does to signal the approach of the resolution. As in *Twelfth Night*, there are several frustrated relationships in precarious suspension and they will soon have to be satisfied.

The following scene with Touchstone and Audrey reinforces the forward movement toward resolution with the commentary:

**Touchstone:** Tomorrow is the joyful day, Audrey; tomorrow will we be married.

**Audrey:** I do desire it with all my heart.  
(V,iii,1-3)
And the song adds encouragement in the verse:

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crowned with the prime... (V,iii,29-31)

When all the couples are brought to the wedding day, it is fitting that Hymen, the god of marriage, should effect the resolution by pointing out the proper pairs and by singing the song in praise of wedlock. Even Touchstone does not seem completely out of place in such company. His marriage may be stormy and, as Jacques points out, undertaken out of some necessity; but it is as sure to last as winter and rough weather. Some people, it seems, are made for each other, if not for everybody. Phebe's marriage is not to her liking but, in view of the alternatives, (marriage with Rosalind) has more of a future in it. She cannot be satisfied by another woman and so gives in at last to someone who will care for her, however mawkishly: "so is the bargain". By including Touchstone and Audrey as well as Silvius and Phebe among the country copulatives, Shakespeare shows the extent and the variety of Hymen's dominion.

Love has led eight people into a variety of marriages. Two of these couples will no doubt prove themselves to be yoked but not pulling together. Oliver's and Celia's marriage is too quickly arranged to allow for predictions about its outcome. But Orlando has been tested by Rosalind and Rosalind has learned from the foolishness of Silvius, the cynicism of Touchstone and the indifference of Jacques. The two seem better prepared than the others to take each other as they are and the time as it comes; their marriage will change as they do. They show every sign of having deep love without illusions - of
being able to modulate from one key to another without losing their
time or changing their tune (a tricky accomplishment!). They remain
in love without having to remain as tongue-tied or as melancholy as
they were at first. And they remain in love despite what they already
know of violated vows and infidelity and of what Orlando knows of the
many moods it is possible for his Rosalind to assume.

With the final resolution of the Love theme and the final conversion
of Frederick to natural behavior, Shakespeare vindicates the power of
Nature and Nature-in-Love. They are the silent centers of concern for
everyone in this play and they show their force by disposing of whatever
person or opinion might contradict them. Nature and Love remain, in
this play, the unimpeachable legislators and arbiters of conduct and
the high mood of festive dance and music at the end celebrates their
vindication.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to analyze three romantic comedies—Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, and As You Like It—as if they worked on an audience like polyphonic music. The decision to do so was not made out of mere whimsy but, as explained in the introduction, was guided by two considerations: 1) the presumption that since dramatic words function like music in pursuing a pattern through time, a play might profitably be analyzed in musical terms; and 2) the awareness of how much Elizabethan thought about style and the cosmos seemed to keep several analogous relations in suspension at once, as does a piece of polyphonic music. At this point, several conclusions emerge about how helpful the musical metaphor has been for analyzing what Shakespeare has been saying in the three comedies under discussion.

The metaphor of polyphony, for one thing, helps keep steadily in a critic's mind Shakespeare's tendency to use analogous situations to develop his thought and to use words that echo from character to character throughout the play. If the critic is sensitive to these repetitions of sound and situation, he can more easily hear what Shakespeare is saying. Empson has done a famous study of the repeated use of "honest" in Othello; this thesis has suggested the beginnings of a similar study of "fashion" in Much Ado, of "nature" in As You Like It, and of "devil" in Twelfth Night. An ear that is sensitive to the repeated sounds of these words is following closely Shakespeare's concerns in each play. It should be mentioned parenthetically that
Shakespeare's tendency to pun is notorious and these echoed words work much like the pun: they are one sound used in and for two or more contexts. A pun shows a mind at play and may simply indicate a fanciful connection between otherwise unrelated realities. But, for the moment, the pun makes a connection and, in doing so, teases the mind to consider the worth of the synthesis. Is there a connection between fashioning a deception, concern with Hero's fashion, and the fashion of the world which is to itch after ever-changing fashions? If there is, the echoing word, analogous to the pun, has helped the artist and the audience arrive at the discovery of it.

The several analogous situations in a play, like different voices in polyphony, take up a theme in different ways. Through the repetition of a similar concern among the voices, one can learn what the concern is and can appreciate a variety of ways of considering it. Love looks different in *As You Like It* when expressed by a Silvius, a Touchstone, or an Orlando; overhearing and what it can lead to becomes more obviously a concern in *Much Ado* when it occurs differently for a Benedick, a Claudio, or a Dogberry; the deceptiveness of appearances and the wrong choices made because of them emerges as a concern in *Twelfth Night* by the analogous fates of Olivia, Orsino, Malvolio and, eventually, everyone in Illyria. The comparison of Shakespearean drama to polyphony keeps one alert to these analogous and echoing situations and prepares one as well to expect a good "measure" of complication before any resolution occurs.

The use of as many voices as possible also enables Shakespeare to conduct a broad exploration of his theme and, as a result, to make it richer and truer to the complexities of life. For example, there is
an upper class and a lower class way of deceiving and of being deceived and Shakespeare, characteristically, considers both: Viola's way and Maria's; the results may be ultimately beneficial or embittering and Shakespeare presents both of them. The variety of his considerations keeps Shakespeare's plays from being mere dramatizations of a thesis, such as Shaw might write. His variety shows a respect for complexity - a multitude of perspectives - without implying any cynicism about the futility of exploring what concerns him.

In his treatment of a theme, Shakespeare not only mingles "high" with "low" characters who show how much they are alike by how similarly they behave. He also mingles tragic with comic and vice versa, with good dramatic results in both cases. In the tragedies, the comic scenes help point up the darkness of the serious action, reiterate in a comic way the concerns of the main action, and allow the audience some relief from the tension of attending with intense interest and pathos to the hero's struggle. The Grave-digger in Hamlet allows an audience to relax after four acts of unremitting mental anguish and terrifying action, illuminates with his light banter how dark and serious Hamlet's struggle has been, and reiterates the play's concern with a brother's murder, the seeming that masks a villain, and the limitation to all human purpose as this was earlier expressed by the Player King: "Our wills and fates do so contrary run/ That our devices are still overthrown;/ Our thoughts are ours, their end none of our own!" (Hamlet, III,ii,221-223).

In his comedies, Shakespeare treats themes that have tragic possibilities and so gains serious attention for what will happen, in these plays, to turn out happily. Maria in Twelfth Night and Don John
in Much Ado work much like Iago in weaving deceptions for their victims; Rosalind in As You Like It, like Cordelia in Lear, will not think entirely of her father when the time comes for her to think of a husband. The fact that Shakespeare has treated the work of deceivers and the choices of daughters in tragic contexts is especially helpful to an audience familiar with these other plays. They can more readily recognize the tragic possibilities of actions done in a comic world and so give them more serious attention. But even an audience unable to counterpoint one play with another cannot fail to see the serious side to events in Illyria, Ardens and Messina. In each of these comedies there is a character who will not be integrated into the final action and who therefore creates a slight dissonance which makes the resolution more welcome while it also shows how the ending might have been otherwise. Don John, although made a prisoner, returns as a possible menace to Messina; Jacques abandons the celebration of wedded love in Ardens for a "nook merely monastic"; and Malvolio calls down curses on Illyria. These characters are reminders that the comic resolution holds only for the time being; life will go on happily for awhile but not necessarily ever after.

Besides these characters, there are also religious images in each play which help allude to a more serious perspective on situations raised in these comedies. Don John and Maria are called devils and Viola's disguise is explicitly compared to Satan's tactics of deception. Orlando's plight is passingly compared to that of the Prodigal Son and there are other commonplaces from the scriptures echoed throughout As You Like It: trees yielding bad fruit (III,ii,116), God's feeding of the birds of the air (II,iii,43), and the rejoicing in heaven over the conversion of sinners (V,iv,108-110). An audience that
is sensitive to these serious and even tragic "overtones" will appreciate the richness and complexity of Shakespeare's treatment of what concerns him in these comedies.

The use of a polyphony of voices also allows Shakespeare to counterpoint one thesis with another within his comedies and so to qualify any one version of his theme with another. It is expected that lovers, after overcoming all obstacles to their love, will vow eternal fidelity to one another. It is also expected that an audience will believe in this promise at the time if only because it wants to. But later, as the magic of the play wears off, disbelief can no longer stand the strain of being suspended. An audience, looking back, will usually remark, "It was only a play", and make a sharp distinction between that and the harsher, blander, unromantic realities they have to face every day. Shakespeare seeks to inoculate his plays in advance against being as easily dismissed as unreal by counterpointing unromantic assertions against the romantic ones within the play itself. Sebastian, for example, will vow everlasting fidelity to Olivia and Viola will do the same to Orsino but Viola and Feste have already had a witty conversation on the untrustworthiness of vows and language. Hero and Claudio will finally join hands in a solemn ceremony of everlasting love but they are soon joined by Beatrice and Benedick whose motives for marriage are less solemn and sentimental. Orlando and Rosalind rush to celebrate Hymen's rights over their love alongside Touchstone who admits that marriage binds but who also declares that blood breaks - and seems not inclined to worry about it either. Shakespeare accounts for cynical or less than ideal views by giving them an appropriate voice in his polyphony. By this device he also
shows that the more romantic assertions are strong enough to withstand whatever would deny their force. One might say that Shakespeare is playing a trick on his audience: making them swallow their objections to romance if they want to enjoy the main movement of the resolution. On the other hand, perhaps Shakespeare is demonstrating the strength of the romantic assertions once they are recognized and given a chance to succeed. If one is not "tone deaf" to all of the voices of the drama, one can appreciate its complexities as well as the strength of the more ideal assertions in at least several "real to life" cases.

The metaphor of music is also a reminder that the counterpointing and movement of the voices mentioned above follows a logic all its own. If a musician determines to make one melody his motif, he will work out harmonies and variations for it and structure it according to some received or invented pattern. His concern is with the development of that central motif and everything else will, in the end, resolve itself in the interests of the main theme. Even in polyphony, which does not develop motifs in this way, all voices will end harmoniously and together after a well controlled, mutually related exploration of the artist's felt insight. If Shakespeare's plays are evaluated musically, there should be less uneasiness about the improbabilities of some actions (for example, Frederick's conversion in As You Like It) and more attention to the motif that is asserted or the pattern that is repeated by such occurrences. I also suggest that Shakespeare favors multiple marriages at the conclusion of the three comedies because it is one way he has of resolving all the voices simultaneously and harmoniously while, at the same time, effecting a resounding, hyperbolic assertion of romantic values.
The metaphor of music also keeps the critic sensitive to the rhythm of a Shakespearean play. There are moments which move more slowly than others and these are often the times Shakespeare uses to tell clearly what is going on in the play. Such moments occur during the songs when the words, of necessity, must be prolonged according to the demands of a sung melody. And it is the songs which often comment on or anticipate the action of the play. As the song is sung, all the action pauses on stage and the actors sit around and listen which further slows down the rhythm and makes what is sung more noticeable. I suggest, too, that the garrulity of the clowns and their seemingly purposeless exchanges of wit are also ways of slowing down rhythm. They are certainly interruptions in the action; for one concerned with the fortunes of the hero and heroine, the clown talk can seem even longer than it is. Such a slow down in action makes time for commentary which Shakespeare inserts effectively through Dogberry, Feste, and Touchstone.

Finally, the comparison of Shakespeare's dramatic technique to a musician's makes one sensitive to the silences in drama which are part of its radically inexpressible meaning. Jill Levenson discusses this feature in a paper presented for "Shakespeare '71" at the University of British Columbia entitled: "What the Silences Said: Still Points in 'King Lear'":

At the end of Stravinsky's Les Noces, an extraordinary series of pauses punctuates the music. Creating and disappointing expectation almost simultaneously, the pauses compel the listener's attention, his energies, with at least as much force as the sounds. When the last vibration from the percussion blends completely with the stillness in which it began, we experience all the resonance of silence.

Silence in drama can create, disappoint, compel, and absorb as vigorously as the most eloquent musical pause. And this profound similarity exists because the dramatist
and the composer share the power to create silence. The poet and the novelist must invoke or describe stillness; the painter and the sculptor can express it through space or light. But, for the makers of drama and music, silence itself furnishes means to express, invoke, even define other kinds of reality.6

One might say that the purpose of sound is to make an audience aware of silence once the sound stops; and that in the depths of the silence the inexpressible point of an artist's communication lies hidden. To say this is not to advocate that playgoers and critics sit before a play like Job before the whirlwind, hands on the mouth, saying nothing about it. Rather, it is to recognize that there are often thoughts that lie too deep for words and that a wise playwright will not descend to bathos or fustian in an attempt to express them. He will lead an audience to the brink and show them the depths but say nothing further, hoping to elicit from them a corresponding silence which accompanies wonder and deep thought. The moments of silence are the point of the play; to use Eliot's phrase, they are the still points of an ever turning world. And a sensitive producer or a skillful reader of Shakespeare's plays will respect them and allow them to emerge.

In the three comedies studied by this thesis, the moments of silence emerge slightly during the songs mentioned above, when the stage business halts and a slower pace decelerates toward stillness. An even more noticeable pause occurs at the recognition scenes when the resolution becomes suddenly and luminously clear and exclamations such as "O wonder" and "most strange" surround the discovery which unravels all complications. It is interesting to notice that in each play the confusion of four or five acts is recapitulated only moments before the solution arrives so that wonder is increased by a sense of relief for the deliverance it
brings. No words are adequate to express what this deliverance means to people who are saved by it from madness, slander, or the frustration of unrequited love. And Shakespeare does not attempt to make words do the impossible. He creates the silence and lets it speak for itself, letting it elicit from the audience whatever response they are prepared to give it. In the case of these resolutions which are saving moments as well as discoveries, and which anticipate the deeper silences of the late romances, Shakespeare adopts the attitude of Claudio in Much Ado and retains a respectful silence about mystery. As Claudio says, "Silence is the perfectest herald of joy; I were but little happy if I could say how much" (II,i,303).

Shakespeare, in using a method analogous to polyphony in constructing his comedies has paradoxically used as many voices as he could to create silence. He has explored a concern or a situation from as many perspectives as possible, has counterpointed one attitude with another in each play, and has alternated action with commentary - all in an attempt to reach that moment of wonder and resolution where it is futile to say any more. The silence he constructs and respects not only shows the depths of Shakespeare's comic vision; it also shows that his confidence in it is such that he can let it alone to have what effect it will on an attentive audience.
FOOTNOTES


3. Ibid., p. 145.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


