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*A Shakespearean Pastoral. Poetry on Stage in As You Like It*

ABSTRACT: The paper sheds new light on the connection of *As You Like It* with its main source, *Rosalynde* by Thomas Lodge, and with the recent, late Elizabethan genre of pastoral romance inspired by Sidney's *Arcadia* and by Lyly's *Euphues*. The treatment of Arcadian conventions and Petrarchism in the Shakespearean comedy shows clearly a critical reply to those models. Taking a further step in the Shakespearean experience of poetry after the so-called 'lyric phase', *As You Like It*, its characters and situations, and the practices of reading written poems and singing ballads in the realm of Arden, are to be read as an ironic reworking, in terms of acting and performance traditions, of contemporary patterns, collections, and conventions of lyric. Some final considerations focus on the traces of pastoral poetry connecting the common players to the royal entertainments and their settings.

KEYWORDS: Shakespeare, Pastoral Romance, Elizabethan Prose Fiction, Elizabethan Lyric

In late Elizabethan theatres, contemporary lyric poetry was recited, tested and discussed on stage. Through the actors' recitation in public theatres, it was possible to draw original comparisons between the practices of reading aloud and of listening to lyric pieces. The conventions and models of pastoral poetry entailed a unique relationship between orality and writing, implied in the archetypes of the eclogue, and subsequently revived in the imitation of classical and Italian examples. The circulation of manuscripts first, and then of the printed copies of the versions of Sidney's *Arcadia* resulted in hybrid texts, between the prosimeter and the prose fiction, in which poems were embedded in a pastoral romance narrative frame. The narrative genre of pastoral romance was practiced around 1590 by Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge. These two writers embodied the new professional figures of literates, writing narratives for the market of prints and plays for public theatres. This essay will examine some aspects of *As You Like It* regarding the hybridisation of comedy, poetry, prose fiction and pastoral conventions. It will especially focus on the direct relationship between Shakespeare's play and its primary narrative source, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*.

*Embedded Poems*

Thomas Nashe's introduction to Greene's pastoral romance *Menaphon* (1589) is widely known, in particular the part in which Nashe criticises the Senecan influence on contemporary tragedy, with probable indirect hints at Kyd and Marlowe. Inviting "the gentlemen readers of the two universities" to compare the stylistic differences of contemporary rhetoric and genres, Nashe intended to set Greene's work (*Arcadian Menaphon*) as a valuable example of pastoral literature, opposite to the excesses of the dramaturgy of common stages<sup>1</sup>. This opposition is illustrated in

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<sup>1</sup> THOMAS NASHE, *The Works*, edited by RONALD B. MCKERROW, with correction and supplementary notes by FRANK PERCY WILSON, 5 vols., III, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, pp. 311-325.

synthetic and straightforward terms in Thomas Brabine's commendatory verses of *Menaphon*, following Nashe's preface:

Come forth, you wits that vaunt the pomp of speech,  
And strive to thunder from a stageman's throat;  
View Menaphon, a note beyond your reach,  
Whose sight will make your drumming descant dote;  
Players, avaunt, you know not to delight;  
Welcome, sweet shepherd, worth a scholar's sight<sup>2</sup>.

The common target of Nashe and Brabine was "this kind of men that repose the eternity in the mouth of a player"<sup>3</sup>. The stylistic level advocated by Nashe as opposed to the tragic emphasis and Senecan imitations of playwrights, openly referred to the *temperatum dicendi genus*, or middle style, recommended by Cicero<sup>4</sup>.

In 1589 Brabine contrasts in his verses the dignity and expressive moderation of pastoral style with the magniloquent language of tragic actors, which he defines using similar words to those employed by Nashe against playwrights and actors of contemporary theatre. Thanks to the combination of the Greek romance format and the poetic inserts inspired to the bucolic model, *Menaphon* could be rightfully considered as the successor of Sidney's *Arcadia*, whose first printed version, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (actually a revision) was published in 1590; in subsequent editions *Menaphon* took the title of *Greene's Arcadia*<sup>5</sup>.

The word 'pastoral' refers to a nebula of writings and symbols, rather than to a literary genre or a constellation of factors and models. In the late Elizabethan age, the pastoral nebula became a container. This definition applies to both the general notion and the individual texts. The general notion draws upon several influences: ancient romance, classical and vulgar eclogue, narrative situations of prose and verse chivalric romance, Petrarchan metrical models and tropes, aspects of Italian experimentation with the pastoral drama as a 'third theatre genre'<sup>6</sup>. Each text can, in its turn, enclose a mosaic of diverse components, crossing the boundaries among different genres and registers and merging their characteristic elements. Originating from the model of Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, and referring to the recent Spanish revival of Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (1558), the evolution of the pastoral romances around 1590 offered fertile ground for discussing

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<sup>2</sup> ALEXANDER GROSART, *The Life and Complete Works in Verse and Prose by Robert Greene*, 13 vols., London, Huth Library, 1881-1886, VI, p. 31 ; cf. NASHE, *The Works*, IV, p. 445 (see n. 1).

<sup>3</sup> NASHE, *The Works*, III, p. 312.

<sup>4</sup> About Greene and Nashe's preface, some recent assessments in KATHARINE WILSON, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives. Euphuës in Arcadia*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2010, pp. 5-7, 126-137.

<sup>5</sup> For Sidney's influences and imitations, and the circulation of *Old Arcadia's* manuscripts, cf. *A Sidney Chronology : 1554-1654*, eds. MICHAEL J. BRENNAN, NOEL J. KINNAMON, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> About pastoral as a dramatic and narrative genre cf. WALTER W. GREG, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama*, London, Bullen, 1906; WILLIAM EMPSON, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1935; SUKANTA CHAUDHURI, *Renaissance Pastoral and its English Developments*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989.

identities and models of the University Wits. In the recent extensive bibliography on this genre, in which late Elizabethan prose fiction is no longer limited to the inventory of the imitations of Sidney and the sources of Shakespeare, a crucial importance is given to Greene's *Pandosto* (1588), and even more to Greene's *Menaphon* and Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590), in the selection of models and sources for the development of literary profiles<sup>7</sup>. In order to understand how *As You Like It* was conceived and created, this renewed interest has to focus on proportions and relations between narrative frames and embedded poems in the fiction of the pastoral setting. In a famous essay which has become a reference work, Paul Alpers, analysing the cyclical structure of the eclogues in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*, and comparing it to the eclogues and poems embedded in Sidney's *Arcadia*, reconsidered the meaning of narrative frames and contexts created around the simulacrum of pastoral poetry, based on the model of Sannazaro's *Libro Arcadio*. According to Alpers the creation of context, and of the relative comment, in Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*, responded to the need to find a 'domain of lyric' for contemporary poetry. "Just as for the humanist poet writing eclogues was his own justification, so the fictions and conventions of pastoral resolve problems of motivating lyric utterance. A literary shepherd is by definition a singer, and pastoral poems are characteristically singing contests or funeral songs or songs in praise of a ruler or love laments"<sup>8</sup>.

By reworking the pastoral narrative frame of the prosimetric pattern (pseudo-classical in *Menaphon*, chivalric in *Rosalynde*), Greene and Lodge attempted to reduce the tension among divergent opinions on the functions of poetry. This intention was consistent with the connotation of conciliation or mediation which recurs in the ideological values of pastoral poetry. The production of pastoral romances around 1590 was clearly related to the circulation of manuscripts of Sidney's *Arcadia* and sonnets, but at the same time reveals the direct influence and the legacy of the pedagogical narration of John Lyly's *Euphues*. The subtitle of the *Menaphon* was *Camillas Alarum To Slumbering Euphues In his Melanchonic Cell*. The extended title of Lodge's romance was *Rosalynd. Euphues' Golden Legacie, Found After His Death in His Cell at Silexedra. Bequeathed to Philautus Sonnes, Nourshed up With Their Father in England*.

The importance of the embedded poems is a dominant trait in both *Menaphon* and *Rosalynd*. *Menaphon* contains a sequence of lyric texts based on diverse models (roundelay, jig, eclogue,

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<sup>7</sup> STEVE MENTZ, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England. The Rise of Prose Fiction*, Burlington and Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006; ID., "A Note Beyond your Reach". *Prose Romance's Rivalry with Elizabethan Drama*, in *Staging Early Modern Romance. Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, eds. MARY ELLEN LAMB, VALERIE WAYNE, London, Routledge, 2009, pp. 75-90; *Writing Robert Greene. Essays on the First English Notorious Professional Writer*, eds. KIRK MELNIKOFF, EDWARD GIESKES, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008; KATHARINE WILSON, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives. Euphues in Arcadia*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> PAUL ALPERS, 'Pastoral and the Domain of Lyric in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*', *Representations*, 12 (1985), pp. 83-100, p. 91 in particular.

sonnet). The philosophical sonnet on the definition of love, *What is This Love? It is a Divine Power*, is an explicit Neoplatonic authorial intrusion in the “report of the Shepherds” supporting the narrative frame. These texts need a frame and the creation of a ‘domain’, but require an independent dimension and attention. The lyric work of Lodge for *Rosalynde* is even more substantial – for its size and variety of situations and metrical models. Lodge derived chivalric meanings and characters from the main plot of the anonymous *The Tale of Gamelyn*. The range of verse texts embedded in the romance is extremely large and differentiated<sup>9</sup>, also involving a vast assortment of lyric utterances. In the first place, it includes the testament of John of Bordeaux to his sons, “a scroll to be portrayed out”<sup>10</sup>. During the funeral, his son Saladyne “set up the schedule, and hanged about his father’s hearse many passionate poems”. The testament is followed by *Rosalynde’s Madrigal*, which is sung, accompanied with the lute, by the protagonist in love with Rosader. Walking through the Forest of Arden, the two escaped friends Rosalynde – Ganymede and Alinda-Aliena (they are not cousins like in Shakespeare’s version) read some passionate poems engraved by the shepherd Montanus on the bark of trees. The long eclogue between Montanus and Corydon about the shepherd’s love laments introduces the sonnet sung by Montanus in praise of the charms of the nymph Phoebe. At this point, the hero Rosader appears in the forest, carving a sonnet for the phoenix Rosalynde with his knife “on the bark of the myrtle tree”. After reading the long poem in praise of Rosalynde to Ganymede, Rosader reads three sonnets to the two disguised girls. His verses rekindle, reviving and elevating Montanus’s laments, the conversation on the authenticity of love suffering, started by the ironical and cynical comment made by Ganymede on the lyric modules as artefacts of seduction: “I can smile at the sonnettos, canzones, madrigals, rounds and roundelays, that these pensive patients pour out when their eyes are more full of wantonness, than their hearts of passion”<sup>11</sup>.

After the sonnets, Rosalynde cunningly invites Rosader to sing together “an amorous eclogue”, while Aliena plays the recorder. Montanus still attempts to court Phoebe, singing a French poem by Philippe Desportes, *Hélas, tyran, plein de rigueur*<sup>12</sup>, but she refuses him in English verses. After the Saladyne’s sonnet, *If it Be True that Heaven’s Eternal Course*, written for and read by Aliena, the female version of the lover’s words is then offered by the letter Phoebe writes to Ganymede. To the letter is attached a sonnet, “My boat doth pass the straits / of seas incensed with fire, / filled with forgetfulness”, which translates Petrarch’s sonnet 189 (*Passa la*

<sup>9</sup> The best *excursus* about the ‘poetic interludes’ in *Rosalynde* is in DONALD BEECHER, *Introduction to THOMAS LODGE, Rosalind*, edited by D. BEECHER, Ottawa, Dovehouse, 1997, pp. 56-64. See also CHAUDHURI, *Renaissance Pastoral*, pp. 209-211 (see n. 6).

<sup>10</sup> *Lodge’s Rosalynde: Being the Original of Shakespeare’s As You Like It*, edited by WALTER W. GREG, London, Chatto and Windus, 1907, pp. 7-8. We quote from Greg’s edition, which follows the original spelling.

<sup>11</sup> *IBID*, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> On Lodge and Desportes, cf. the Beecher’s note in LODGE, *Rosalind*, p. 246 (see note 9).

*nave mia*). Lodge's version is distinctly different, in its structure and lexical choices, from the translation by Thomas Wyatt printed in the *Tottel's Miscellany* in 1557. Following more verses recited by Montanus, the shepherd Corydon concludes the lyric collection with a rural story about love sickness and marriage-as-happy-ending, *A Blithe and Bonnie Country Lass*. *Rosalynde* is a collection of metrical exercises on the topic of love, embedded in a romance of exiles and lovers lost in the Forest of Ardennes. *Rosalynde* was reprinted three times, in 1592, 1596 and 1598, before the probable date of the version worked by Shakespeare. Its distinctive feature of romance-prosimeter has to be juxtaposed to other collections of lyric repertoires. The publication in 1593 of *The Phoenix Nest*, an anthology of poems dedicated to the memory of Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester and Astrophel-Philip Sidney, contains fifteen poems by Thomas Lodge, included in the miscellany as representative of the contemporary combination of Petrarchism and pastoral. Three of the poems by Lodge in *The Phoenix Nest* also appear, still in 1593, in his collection *Phyllis*. The discourse on poetry on stage and the reading and reciting modes of this hyperliterary orality cannot neglect the context of 'social textuality', reconstructed by Arthur Marotti as regards the composition of manuscript collections of poems<sup>13</sup>. This horizon of collective transmission has to be compared to the function and features of lyric in the body of prose romances. In addition to prints and compilations, and to the explicit use in dramatic poetry, it is important to remember that the critical adoption of the pastoral verse at the time of *As You Like It* chronologically coincides with the printing of miscellanies which comprised pastoral repertoires, such as *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), referred in the title page to William Shakespeare; and, most importantly, *Englands Helicon* (1600), an essential document on the constellation of authors sharing the loci of the poet-shepherds. This aspect will be further discussed later on.

In *Menaphon* and *Rosalynde* the narrative of the pastoral romance was used as a frame to embed lyric pieces taken from personal collections of poems. Although the evaluation of the Ovidian and Petrarchan imitations was tinged with irony, as it emerges in the moralistic considerations made by Lodge's *Rosalynde*, prose fiction recognised it as a field of expressive exercises and repertoires of metaphors, and translated it into distinguished works inspired to the recent models of Sidney and Lyly. The use and adoption of *Rosalynde* as a narrative source of Shakespeare's comedy is explained as the fundamental and clear premise of a mediation between the preceding lyric tradition and a dramatic invention, which Shakespeare developed by distancing himself from contemporary collections of poems, and at the same time mastering them as models. *As You Like It* is the answer of professional theatre to the debate on the hierarchies of style

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<sup>13</sup> ARTHUR MAROTTI, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1995, pp. 135-207.

involving writers and playwrights, marked by Shakespeare's work on verse and theatre in the mid-1590s, and by the new lyric dimensions opened up by Spenser and Marlowe. The romance plot and the situation of the exiles of Arden exemplified the original intervention of the culture of playwrights and actors not only in the bucolic motifs and the mythical context of Arcadia, but also in the elaboration of the lyric repertoire which, on stage, came to meet other traditions and interpretations of poetry and singing.

### *Actors and Shepherds*

By dealing with poetic languages and modules, *As You Like It* explores and discusses a world created around the various uses of poetry. Using their talents to imitate the lovers and shepherds of literary fiction, the actors of the Chamberlain's Men did not just perform a pastoral romance, but the whole pastoral universe as a 'domain of lyric'. Arden is a setting characterised by mockery and harshness, but is also the ground which offers the suitable conditions and occasions for singing and supporting jokes and speculations on verse techniques and reading practices. When Jaques interrupts and continues Amiens's first song (Act II, scene 5), the word *stanzo*, on which Jaques himself makes ironical remarks, recalls the term used to introduce the first Menaphon's *Song* in Greene's romance<sup>14</sup>. The text that Orlando declaims, hanging love poems for Rosalind on the trees of the theatrical forest, is a sonnet lacking the first quatrain, which refers to the recurring use of the metrical form in *Romeo* or in *Love's Labour's Lost*; but translates it into the variant of the *dizaine*, adopted by Maurice Scève in *Délie*. Spenser's debt to Clément Marot was recalled through the name of Colin. Rosalind was the name of the 'country lass' loved by Colin in the collection of Spenser. The distance from Lodge's text also means a renovation and a return to the roots and variety of the bucolic genre. The part of the text which offers the key to the transformation is the situation in which Orlando scatters the 'tongues' with the verses for Rosalind on the trees of the forest (Act III, scene 2); and then Rosalind and Celia read and comment on them as traces of his passage. The writing on trees, inherited by Vergil and Sannazaro, referred back to Ariosto, and Angelica and Medoro celebrating their love by carving their names on the bark, which drives Orlando mad. This episode had been applauded by the audience of the Rose in 1591 in the performance of Greene's *Orlando Furioso* acted by Edward Alleyn. The structure of embedded poetry prompted the conversation on the use of love codes. The same detachment characterises the observation and listening of Silvius's (Lodge's Montanus) lament of love. Although in Lodge the adoption of the bucolic motifs was pervaded by "tonic irony"<sup>15</sup>, Rosader's poems and other verses

<sup>14</sup> GROSART, *The Life and Complete Works of Robert Greene*, VI, p. 40 (see n. 2).

<sup>15</sup> CHAUDHURI, *Renaissance Pastoral*, p. 311 (see n.6).

were displayed and read as sung or recited poetry. The verses of Orlando in love melted into the moods and profiles of the melancholic and buffoons, into the distorting imitation of the peasants and into the moral and stylistic objections of the runaway cousins. In the script of the Chamberlain's Men, the options of Lodge's (implicit) collection of poems were transformed into comical interludes proclaiming the predominance of the scenic fragment on the dramatic narrative frame. The utterance of lyric on stage, together with the dramatic use of verse, resumed the lyric experimentation of pastoral romance with a parodic approach, as a dimension of poetry, and its 'social textuality', which had been downgraded to mere formal convention while dispersed in the consumption of social conventions. In Arden this double convention is rendered through the contradictions and misunderstanding characterising the discourse of love, through the cultural gaps among different communities, and through the hard relationship between man and nature. It is not our purpose here to delve into a comprehensive analysis of Shakespearean pastoral. Our intent is to observe how the constellation of verse texts constitutes the molecular structure of the treatment of pastoral setting. Besides the ironic distancing characterising the game of courtship and disguise, and Touchstone's continuous counterpoints, the transformation also results from the juxtaposition with other verse forms and traditions. Shakespeare's Arden derives from Lodge the recourse to the fictional stratagem of writing and reading poems in the forest. In the passage from the narrative frame to the stage, the narrated orality of embedded poetry becomes the relationship between performative discourse and singing, verse recitation and reading aloud practices. The sequence of poetic texts, printed in italics in the folio, determines a solid and clear plot, exploring the wide range of linguistic experiments characterising the acting style of the Chamberlain's Men. In the stage context, the romance frame is translated in a peculiar way in comparison with the generic function of pastoral prose. After the cruel and deadly episodes of the first part, inspired to *The Tale of Gamelyn*, Arden is not merely the opposite of the court: it is also a place for disguise and adventure. Arden is nature seen as a tremendous, open space, a place of cruel hunting, of hunger and the dark side of power and eroticism, which seem to bring salvation and liberation after the abuses, usurpation and violence of the prologue at court. In this dimension, instead of disguised collections of poems and embedded poems, Shakespeare explores another material condition of poetry. Shifting the boundaries among genres and cultures, *As You Like It* acquires the sense of a vision, from the cultural agency of professional theatre, on the practices of recited poetry. In Shakespeare's work (in *As You Like It* and, in different ways and accents, in *Love's Labour's Lost* and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well) the words of love relations are the writing of readers who act, and the voice of actors who read satirical versions of manuscript or printed collections of poems. Instead of idealised writers disguised as shepherds in romances and eclogue series, the actor-shepherds distort

the symbolic apparatus of the Arcadian tradition. They conquer and adapt it to the stage, converting poetic and singing occasions into a plot of interludes. We are in the field of secondary orality, in which Shakespeare experiments with the range of prose and verse, from euphuistic preciousness and its clownish inversion, to the sound quality, metrical modules and repertoire of metaphors of lyric poetry. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, in the poetic licenses of the knights, Shakespeare had tried different configurations of love poetry and knowledge, but had also explored the widespread practice fostering the exercise of writing and reading lyric poetry among professionals and amateurs, as well as reading aloud practices and the compilation of miscellanies of manuscripts<sup>16</sup>. There was a settled practice of reading aloud in courtly and aristocratically settings. The matter appears even more pressing in the specific reproduction of the sounds, figures and voices of pastoral conventions.

“The rhetorical balance and fine-tuning of the language of *As You Like It* may suggest reading aloud, a skill that Elizabethans practised enthusiastically. Sidney's *Old Arcadia* and Harington's translation of *Orlando Furioso* were both read aloud by their authors for admiring audiences. Harington at one point was employed as a virtually official reader to the Queen”<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the vague but crucial notion of ‘secondary orality’ in the comparison between the traces of theatre writing and the contemporary manuscript and printed inventories of lyric poetry. Shapiro appropriately related the writing of *As You Like It* – presumably dating to the first months of activity of the Globe – with the publication of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, the collections of lyric texts printed by William Jaggard in the spring of 1599<sup>18</sup>. Displaying on the title page the name of Shakespeare, *The Passionate Pilgrim* only included two of his sonnets, which were subsequently reworked before being published in the collection of 1609. It also contained the verses recited by Longaville, Dumaine and Berowne from *Love's Labour's Lost*, as well as other sonnets inspired by *Venus and Adonis* and, among other pieces, *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*. Only later, starting with *Englands Helicon* and a series of imitations and sequels, this last poem was attributed to Marlowe.

A textual reference by Phoebe, shepherdess in love, to *Hero and Leander* pays homage to Marlowe, deceased poet and shepherd and translator of Ovid (“Dear shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, / Who ever loved, that not loved at first sight?”, *As You Like It*, Act III, scene 5, ll. 82-83; *Hero and Leander*, II, 176). As it famously appears evident from Meres's *Palladis Tamia*,

<sup>16</sup> ADAM FOX, *Oral and Literate Culture in England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 36-39; Cf. MAROTTI, *Manuscript, Print*, pp. 2-4 (see note 13), about the occasional character of the Renaissance lyric verse and its contexts; and MURIEL BRADBROOK, *The School of Night*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1936.

<sup>17</sup> W. SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It*, edited by JULIET DUSINBERRE, Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series, London, Bloomsbury, 2006, pp. 116-117.

<sup>18</sup> JAMES SHAPIRO, *1599 : A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, London, Faber and Faber, 2005, pp. 212-27.



Shakespeare's fame as a poet was respected and suited to the title page of a mixed collection of love verses. In the title page of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, the deception about authorship was balanced by a credit of authority on the genre. Being a comedy about prose fiction and reborn Arcadia, *As You Like It* was a proposal of scenic synthesis destined to become a critique of the same lyric conventions through which Shakespeare himself had gone in *Romeo*, the *Dream* and obviously *Love's Labour's Lost*. The adoption of *Rosalynde's* setting and prose as a context becomes a convention that adheres to the identities and moods of the characters. As a factor of the parts and of the respective identities, it is introduced in a wider repertoire which exposes fragments, materials and accents of the lyric of 1590 to voices, songs and accents of the verse and prose of 1599. Rosalind, Orlando, Celia, Phoebe, Silvius and Corin are creatures of the pastoral. Their characters, and the chivalrous plot of the court, change their colour with the invention of Touchstone and Jaques. They represent the pastoral convention as a cultural artefact, reshaped by the writing and acting practices of theatre. Each close reading of *As You Like It* cannot but suggest that it was a form of theatre meant for men of letters, but the multitude of involved traditions takes us back to the characteristic and vital contrast between *élite* and general audience of dramatic repertoires around 1600. This contrast was made evident by the contamination of uses and sources of lyric and singing. The reading or recitation of written verse in theatrical speech was one of the common layers of memory for those actors who memorised texts. The change revolved around the way in which the sphere of embedded lyric was developed. In Lodge's *Rosalynde* we can devise the recitation and listening of a kind of protected lyric. In Shakespeare, the landscape of Arden dissolves the pastoral setting into the scenic dimension, transforming voices and profiles of lyric through the contact with other traditions.

### *Mixed Consort*

The contrast between the Petrarchan and Arcadian precedents and other inflections also stems from the intertwining with other forms of dramaturgy. The first reference to the woodland exile in the prologue at court (in a line spoken by Charles in Act I, scene 1, *l.* 110) draws on Arden the comparison with Sherwood, Robin Hood's exile and the repertoire of the Admiral's Men, the Rose's rival company. Henslowe's diary records that, in 1598, the Admiral's Men staged two dramas by Munday (on which Chettle likely collaborated) about the legend of Robin Hood, named *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* (for texts, chronology and authorship, see Meagher's edition)<sup>19</sup>. Studies on the subject have obviously

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<sup>19</sup> *The Huntingdon Plays. A critical edition of The Downfall and The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, edited by JOHN CARNEY MEAGHER, New York and London, Garland, 1980.

generated a multitude of comparisons between the two plays by the Admiral's Men and the tendency of London theatres towards hybrid genres, including pastoral variations adapted to folkloric substrates<sup>20</sup>. Shapiro underlines that, in the same period as *As You Like It*, other dramas about Robin Hood were printed, while Chaudhuri points out the recurrent inspiration to the themes of popular ballads<sup>21</sup>. Arden's affinity with Sherwood emerges in the episode of the song on the stag-head trophy (Act IV, scene 3). The killing of the stag (the agony of which is witnessed by Jaques according to the narration in Act II, scene 1, ll. 29-42) resembles, besides *Love's Labour's Lost*, the hunt for the hundred-year-old stag in *The Death of Robert*, scene IV, in which Friar Tuck is "carrying a Stag-head, dauncing". The singing show of Arden meets the grotesque ballad of the hunters on the prey's horns. The hunting ritual is associated, in rural British ethnography, to the mocking of conjugal infidelity and to the "rough music" of the English *charivari*<sup>22</sup>. Minimizing the copious symbolic references to the deer, among which the Bible, Petrarch and the Elizabethan theory of sovereignty<sup>23</sup>, the hunters' intermission realises a folkloric incursion into the pastoral perspective which is well-suited to the harshness of life and the burdens of the food chain in the world of Arden. From Sannazaro on, the text of pastoral fiction acquired a modular character. The dissemination of sung and recited elements and the variety of their extraction determine a dramatic tempo which is based on counterpoint between contrasting literary and oral traditions. The refuge of the domain of lyric becomes ground for the disintegration of the principles of love lyric poetry. *As You Like It* has the form of a disintegrated pastoral and of a theatrical debate on poetry.

Rosalind's and Celia's adventures and the exile of the usurped duke do not weave, as in Lodge's romance, a framework that supports the use of the bucolic code. Instead, they build the path that leads to its disintegration. The alternation and variety of the couples and of the respective registers of amorous dialogue shape new rules and meanings in the balance between lyric poetry and ethics. Touchstone's presence holds the purpose of permeating the entire text with the trait of distortion, and of triggering the discrepancies between symbolic repertoires and dramatic motifs. It is a presence that persuades us to transcend the debate on casting, and on who played the role of the fool. The studies on the subject identify Touchstone's part with William Kempe (Dusinberre)<sup>24</sup> or

<sup>20</sup> Cf. ASHLEY THORNDIKE, 'The Relation of *As You Like It* to Robin Hood Plays', *Journal of Germanic Philology*, 4 (1902), pp. 59-69; TOM RUTTER, *Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men. Reading Across Repertories on London Stage, 1594-1600*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> CHAUDHURI, *Renaissance Pastoral*, p. 354 (see n. 6); SHAPIRO, *1599: A Year in the Life*, p. 216 (see note 18).

<sup>22</sup> EDWARD P. THOMPSON, ' "Rough Music" : le charivari anglais', *Annales. Economie, Société, Civilisations*, 27 (1972), pp. 285-312.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. GILBERTO SACERDOTI, *Sacrificio e sovranità. Teologia e politica nell'Europa di Shakespeare e Bruno*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> JULIET DUSINBERRE, 'Topical Forest: Kempe and Mar-Text in Arden', in *In Arden: Editing Shakespeare. Essays in Honour of Richard Proudfoot*, eds. ANN THOMPSON, GORDON MCMULLAN, London, Bloomsbury, 2003, pp. 239-251.

Robert Armin (the prevailing tradition from Bradbrook to Wiles)<sup>25</sup>. In 1599, in the months of the possible season of *As You Like It*, Kempe leaves the Chamberlain's Men. There is no definitive proof that allows us to choose one option over the other, or to determine a hand-over of the part between the two. Touchstone is the counterpart that attracts the melancholy Jaques and, at the same time, is the embodiment of the court that exposes the gap between the bucolic code and the rural condition of Silvius, Corin and William. As in the hunters' song, another form of theatre of eroticism appears in the exchange between Touchstone and Oliver Martext about the marriage with Audrey ("O sweet Oliver/ O brave Oliver", Act III, scene 3, ll. 91-92). Oliver Martext is the flagbearer of the parody on the rural (puritan) clergy. His nickname is Mar-text, which means 'the one that mars the text'. In addition to the reference to the satirical use of ballads in the religious controversy between Martin Marprelate and the Anglican bishops<sup>26</sup>, the trail of written and oral memory, of the themes and melodies of ballads opens up. Oliver Martext's appearance to celebrate the wedding between Audrey and the fool leads Touchstone to mention *Rowland's Ballad*, the association of which with Kempe dates back to the tours of the Leicester's Men in the Netherlands. By mentioning the text of the ballad, Touchstone accesses, through William Kempe (either through his person or through Armin's and Shakespeare's reference to his repertoire), the autonomous, consistent background of the jig. In this territory, explored by Baskervill's fundamental survey on ballad and dramatic plot<sup>27</sup>, the skeleton of the comic-erotic dialogue of the jig surfaces. The importance of this part of the text regards both structure and tradition. In the text of *Rowland's Ballad* the evocation of the lover who fakes his own death and then returns to take his woman back, lets us grasp the macabre and grotesque background of the Elizabethan *ars amandi*, between return of the dead and erotic rivalry. The structure of the contest between the 'rival wooers', a fundamental content of *Rowland's Ballad*, is later reused in the brief and prosaic three-way dialogue on the possession of women between Touchstone, Audrey and William (Act V, scene 1). The motif of the rival wooers is recurrent in the performance of clowns; it traces back to the root of ballad and intertwines, with a parodic accent, with the erotic frame of eclogue. The fragments and clauses of singing expose layers of other performance cultures or reveal the 'social textuality' of the acts of reading behind the convention of the poet-shepherds, exposing and violating the border between the

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<sup>25</sup> DANIEL WILES, *Shakespeare's Clown. Actors and Texts in the Elizabethan Playhouse*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

<sup>26</sup> This reference, with the related chronological closeness to the Marprelate controversy, entails for J. Dover Wilson an evidence for a first version of the comedy, written around 1593 and eventually revised. Cf. JOHN DOVER WILSON, *The copy for As You Like It, 1623*, in *As You Like It*, edited by ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH, JOHN DOVER WILSON, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1926), 1957<sup>2</sup> (The Cambridge Dover Wilson Shakespeare, 3), pp. 103-107.

<sup>27</sup> CHARLES R. BASKERVILL, *The Elizabethan Jig and Related Song Drama*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929, pp. 219-288. About ballads in print, cf. also FOX, *Oral and Literate Culture*, *passim* (see note 16).

memory of the performance and the memory which is intrinsic to writing. To read Phoebe's epistle in verse means to transmit the love code, inferred from the ambiguous mismatch of the passion for Ganymede/Rosalind, to a female audience. Ballads, which were fixed and spread through printed materials in order to reinforce the oral transmission of singing, do show other branches of the living system that connects the stage and the printed text.

### *Poetry and Truth on Stage*

Playing with the pastoral clichés of love lyric poetry essentially meant raising the question of the effectiveness of theatrical verse in radical terms. The fleeting, discontinuous development of situations and the multitude of lyrical intermissions encouraged a revision of the oral and written traditions of contemporary poetry, which made active and exposed on the stage a discriminating awareness of the literary instruments. Brian Vickers identified in *As You Like It* the most brilliant example of Shakespeare's intertwining of prose and verse<sup>28</sup>. Recent studies, which stemmed from the awareness of the material constitution of the parts in theatrical practice, pointed out the conscious and continuous shift between verse and prose in Rosalind/Ganymede's part as an essential factor in the creation of the main character and in the acting of the young actor<sup>29</sup>. The theatrical ground claimed the efficacy and plausibility of a kind of poetry which was marked by the coexistence with other accents, rhythms and sounds. The creation of Arden, according to Yves Bonnefoy's interpretation, identifies the pivotal moment of this passage. By introducing his own translation of *As You Like It* through an essay named *Une décision de Shakespeare*, Bonnefoy interpreted Rosalind's comedy as the moment in which Shakespeare, poet and man of theatre, breaks free from the static and unreal nature of poetic forms in order to convert the abuse of lyrical patterns to the manifold truths of poetry within theatre.

En présence des risques qu'il découvrait dans l'écriture des poèmes, toujours si vite séduite par le travail sur la forme et ses douteuses promesses métaphysiques, il pouvait reconnaître qu'il y avait au théâtre une vérité qui pouvait mener à la poésie de façon plus droite, par dissipation d'au moins un certain nombre de leurres<sup>30</sup>.

Albeit formulated in rather categorical terms (which further elaborate and characterise Bataille's accents in *La Haine de la poésie*, as well as a complex tradition of dissidence between soul and form), Bonnefoy's vision does coincide with the background of our hypothesis. The truth of theatre in the Globe's first months of activity in 1599, adopted a pastoral setting in order to convert the patterns of lyric poetry and deliver them from formal autonomy, using them as material

<sup>28</sup> BRIAN VICKERS, *The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose*, London, Methuen, 1968, pp. 202-220. For the *verse fossils* as a result of revision, cf. WILSON, *The copy for As You Like It, 1623*, pp. 94-98 (see note 26).

<sup>29</sup> SIMON PALFREY, TIFFANY STERN, *Shakespeare in Parts*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 408-414.

<sup>30</sup> YVES BONNEFOY, *Shakespeare, théâtre et poésie*, Paris, Gallimard, 2014, p. 37.

for moral and psychological description and exposing them to a coexistence with heterogeneous cultures of song and recitation. This critic distancing corresponded to a knowledge of the rhetorical instruments needed to adapt words to their speakers. In a way, this was about providing a delayed reply to Nashe's argument, creating space for an original interpretation of lyric speech within the performance and finding the key of the harmony between poetry and scenic truth. Leaving factors like the suspension of time and the autonomy of the segments of the drama to a broader analysis of the Shakespearean pastoral, we will limit ourselves to the observation of the circumscribed tradition of recitation which absorbed the heterogeneous paths of writing, declamation and singing. The solution of *As You Like It*, focused on the inspection of lyrical models and options, is not a generic 'lyrical dramaturgy' but rather an objection to the relationship between memory and text function. This objection appears evident in the comparison between poetic anthologies and dramas which we have suggested, starting from Lodge's appearances in *The Phoenix Nest* until *The Passionate Pilgrim* and to the establishment of the pastoral tradition in *Englands Helicon*. *Englands Helicon* is a selection of poems in which the recent tradition of pastoral motifs is collected. The studies mention the passage of the sonnets of the knights in *Love's Labour's Lost* between *The Passionate Pilgrim* and the anthologies flourished around 1600<sup>31</sup>. Even the verses of the unfortunate Montanus and of the reluctant Phoebe resurface in the printed census of pastoral which is *Englands Helicon*, together with Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love* and the lyrics of *Arcadia* and *Menaphon*. In the collection, edited by John Bodenham for John Flasket, the reader recovered the genealogy of bucolic eroticism: Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* and *Arcadia*, the lamentations of the Spenserean Colin Clout; Watson's research on the Sonnet in *Ekatompathia*, Dumaine's ode from *Love's Labour's Lost* – including the lyrics from Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana*, another important ascendant of the chivalrous-pastoral constellation, the translation of which (by Bartholomew Yong, completed in 1583) was printed in 1598. In the printed anthologies of poetry, there emerges a relationship between memory and reading the purpose of which is the preservation of texts. *As You Like It* works by memorising and transforming texts and modules which create dramatic impulses. Thus, we find ourselves crossing the boundary between literary repertoire and scenic material. The clearest example, in terms of textual data, is the way in which the pages' song, "It Was a Lover and His Lass" (Act V, scene 3, ll. 16-35) is inserted into the text. Set aside the implications of the singers' introduction and the subsequent dialogue with Touchstone, let us only remember that what we can read in the first folio is a version (probably part of a manuscript of the song which was removed, then mistakenly reintegrated in the prompt-book or for the printing copy) in which the

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Love's Labour's Lost*, edited by HENRY WOULDHUYSEN, Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series, Walton-on-Thames, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1998, *passim*.

first and the last stanzas overlap<sup>32</sup>. Many editions adopt (and all of them cite) the complete and ‘correct’ version, with regard to the order of the stanzas, which was printed in Thomas Morley’s *First Book of Ayres* (1600), and reported in the manuscript from Edinburgh in which it is transcribed with the melody composed by Morley. The composition and the eventual printing of *As You Like It*, in the age of the anthologies of lyric repertoires, testify to the autonomous treatment of a sung text in that specific domain of lyric that was the stage.

In Shakespeare, scenic poetry is distilled by hybridisation. The raw materials for this process are the tendencies and *clichés* of the poets of his time. Theatre was a cultural agency which created areas of contact and specific ways of publishing. Pastoral romance, in this case *Rosalynde*, may well be considered as the intermediate layer of a synthesis of the pastoral ancestry, which became a mediation for the autonomous, specific synthesis of staged poetry. The pastoral setting put into play concrete experiences and passages. The culture of professional companies had come into contact with the spaces of poetic declamation, influenced by the Arcadian and pastoral repertoires during the participation of the Leicester’s Men to the performances of 1575, on the occasion of Elizabeth’s visit to Kenilworth<sup>33</sup>. For other festive occasions, the themed competitions devised by Henry Lee were organised to celebrate the anniversary of Elizabeth’s coronation. Frances Yates identifies the meetings of hermits, shepherds and knights that animated the Royal anniversaries as sources for the tournaments in the second book of Sidney’s *Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*<sup>34</sup>. Those events have been interpreted as concentrations of allegoric meanings and manifestations of the symbolism of monarchy. They have, however, been overlooked as areas of contact between performative crafts, literary conventions and symbolic repertoires. The scenic Arcadia did not draw nourishment solely from the literary Arcadias, but also from the Elizabethan chivalric tournaments, their pastoral adaptations and the living allegories that populated them. The fusion between chivalrous setting and pastoral environment on the background of Lodge’s Arden was a solution which was acknowledged, during the Queen’s celebrations, in its performative identity. For the actors of the Globe, reciting and reshaping verses from written pages meant asserting the transition of the symbolic world of celebration within their realm. The ceremony and the ‘still music’ that accompany Hymen’s verses and seal the weddings of the couples of Arden is a premature solution of the dialogue between comedy and *masque*. In this regard, the transition of verses into the collections becomes a validation ground for the theatres’ references to celebrations. The traceability

<sup>32</sup> EDMUND H. FELLOWES, ‘“It Was a Lover and His Lass”’: Some Fresh Points of Criticism’, *The Modern Language Review*, 41 (1946), pp. 202-206.

<sup>33</sup> MURIEL BRADBROOK, *The Rise of the Common Player*, Cambridge (Ma.), Harvard University Press, 1962, pp. 142-161; WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It*, Arden Shakespeare, ed. JULIET DUSINBERRE, 3rd series, London, Bloomsbury, 2006, pp. 95-96.

<sup>34</sup> FRANCES AMELIA YATES, *Astraea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 85-111.

of the confluence of verses into poetic miscellanies is essential to understand the recurrence of the pastoral themes that animated Elizabeth's visits to the rustic residences of her patron subjects. The comparison between the texts by Watson and Breton which were included in *Englands Helicon* and the descriptions of the celebration in Elizabeth's honour, organised extremely quickly and with great splendour by Lord Seymour Earl of Hertford in September 1591, proves that Nicolas Breton's pastoral sketch between Phillida and Coridon and Thomas Watson's song of the nymphs to Elizabeth as 'their May Queen' (both included in the *cento* of Bodenham) both had an oral version which was sung on the occasion of the Elvetham festival, probably by musicians and actors belonging to the troupe of Hertford, reportedly at court in 1592<sup>35</sup>. *As You Like It* gathered poetic materials and performance profiles derived from poetry both sung and set to music, from pastoral romance, from the circulation of ballad prints, from the practices of the court and of the *élite* of lyric declamation, and finally from the occasional poetry of the pastorals, staged for voices and instruments, on the occasion of Elizabeth's glorious excursions.

Interpreting *As You Like It* means to restore a spectrum of voices. The transition from *Rosalynde* to *As You Like It* implies the reworking of frames and repertoires. In the exchanges and transformations occurred between collections of lyrics, celebrations, romances and performances, the comparison between the reproduction of texts within the collections/anthologies and dramatic composition highlights opposite decisions and directions when using homogeneous or similar materials. There exist dimensions of writing which aim to the preservation and reproduction of texts. The reproduction of written text is one of the instruments of dramatic writing, however it pursues goals which transcend text preservation *per se*. Lodge's French Arden is the mythical setting that encloses in a narrative form the preservation of lyrical texts in a repertoire which integrates literary genres and profiles. At the Globe Theatre, the forest of Arden combines documents and gestures of writing and recitation with musical interludes of songs and ballads. Experiences and recollections of contemporary poetry become broader in action and time. They become the repertoire of a theatre culture which employs, with a logic of its own, the repertoires of writing and the memory embedded in the texts. The intertwining of scenic verse and disintegrated pastoral was, for Shakespeare, a horizon of creation of theatrical speech, as well as a personal answer to the disputes over authorship and dramaturgy in literary evaluations. By creating a theatre based on a consistent and elaborate literary repertoire, Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's Men

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Englands Helicon*, ed. HUGH MACDONALD London, Etchells and Macdonald, 1925, pp. 225-230. About the Elvetham festival, AMY L. TIGNER, *Literature and the Renaissance Garden from Elizabeth I to Charles II. England's Paradise*, London, Routledge, 2012, pp. 52-63; MARTIN WITTINGS, CATHERINE RICHARDSON, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue. Volume 3: 1590-1597*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 104-107. For the troupe of Hertford, ANDREW GURR, *The Shakespearean Stage Companies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 210-215.

mobilised and blended the grotesque nonsense of clowns and the emotional education of the actor-shepherds. Creating the voices of Arden amounted to containing, memorising, destroying and reshaping certain – more or less recent – versions of the pastoral universe.