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SHAKESPEARE LECTURE

Parks and Ardens

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IN 1702, a play called *The Comical Gallant: Or, The Amours of Sir John Falstaffe* was performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Its author, John Dennis, later claimed that because the actor entrusted with Falstaff failed to please, the audience 'fell from disliking the Action to disapproving the Play'.[1] Certainly, *The Comical Gallant* did not dislodge *The Merry Wives of Windsor* from the repertory. Shakespeare's comedy, un-adapted, had been one of the first plays performed after the Restoration. Revivals were frequent, and in 1704 Dennis had the humiliating experience of seeing Shakespeare's original, rather than his own 'improved' version, presented at court with a glittering cast that included Betterton, Mrs Bracegirdle and Mrs Barry. Yet he had worked hard to accommodate *The Merry Wives* to contemporary taste. Jeremy Collier's strictures in *A Short View* of 1698 clearly lie behind this Fenton's revelation to Master Page that he and Ann have not availed themselves (as they do in Shakespeare) of the confusion at Herne's oak to steal a marriage: having 'truly considered of the terrible consequences which attend the just displeasure of a Parent'.[2] Shakespeare

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Dates given for plays before 1700 are those suggested in *Annals of English Drama 975–1700*, by Alfred Harbage, rev. Samuel Schoenbaum (London, 1964). For the eighteenth century, I have relied upon the hand-list of plays supplied in Vol. 2 of Allardyce Nicoll's *A History of English Drama 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1961).

In quotations from old-spelling texts, i/j and u/v have been regularized to accord with modern practice.

[1] John Dennis, 'The Epistle Dedicatory' to *The Comical Gallant: Or, The Amours of Sir John Falstaffe* [Cornmarket Shakespeare Series, vol. 42] (London, 1969).

[2] Ibid., p. 48.

had reserved Windsor Park as a setting until this final, nocturnal scene. Dennis insists that his play should not only end but begin in the park. Moreover, as the assembled characters cross and re-cross the stage in Act I, greeting one another, scheming, exchanging confidences and billets-doux or, in the case of Ann Page, slipping away from her mother to snatch a meeting with Fenton, it becomes apparent that what Dennis really has in mind is not Windsor but London's St. James's Park: the Mall, to be precise, shortly before mid-day, the time of the pre-dinner promenade.

In his softened and more cautious way, Dennis was following the example of a great many late seventeenth-century dramatists in gravitating to the Mall. By 1702, park scenes had for decades been a staple of comedies set in contemporary London. Several of them, indeed, had contrasted St. James in its fashionable daylight hours with the same place seen at night: *The Mall: Or, The Modish Lovers*, for instance, of 1674, probably the work of John Dover, or Southerne's *The Wives' Excuse* (1691) and *The Maid's Last Prayer* (1693). If Wycherley's character Ranger, in *Love in a Wood: Or, St. James's Park* (1672), can be trusted, 'the new-fashioned caterwauling', 'this midnight coursing in the Park' as he calls it, was à la mode by the early 1670s.[3] A risky activity, associated with the illegal pleasures (and dangers) of actual deer coursing after dark, it had been anticipated in the nocturnal park of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—the first such scene, so far as I can tell, in English drama.[4] For Shakespeare's Windsor Park, where the younger generation deceives the old, and the heiress elopes with a libertine of 'riots past' and 'wild societies', is an oddly Restoration place.[5] Hence the anxiety it caused Dennis in 1702. Struggling to distance himself from the venery associated with parks, he omitted not only the clandestine marriage and all reference to Fenton's rakish reputation, but those shaggy-thighed satyrs originally involved in the hunting of Falstaff. Dennis's night park is more decorous than Shakespeare's. Partly for this reason, it brings into focus a real affinity between *The Merry Wives* and the urbane, tough-minded comedy of dramatists like Wycherley and Southerne—an affinity all the more surprising because of the rustic,

[3] Sir William Wycherley, *Love in a Wood: Or, St. James's Park,* in *The Plays of William Wycherley*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge, 1981), II.1.2–3.

[4] Hunting game (except for hares) at night had been illegal since the late sixteenth century. See P.B. Munsche, *Gentlemen and Poachers: The English Game Laws 1671–1831* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 175–6. The Game Act of 1671 excluded deer—now regarded as a gentleman's private property and so covered by Common Law—from its protection, while effectively restricting the right to hunt game to the landed gentry.

[5] III.4.8. Subsequent references to works by Shakespeare have been incorporated in the text. All are keyed to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans *et. al.* (Boston, 1974).

Warwickshire roots of this, as of Shakespeare's three other parkland plays.

What was the landscape of Shakespeare's boyhood? One haunted, I want to suggest, by the ghost of the Forest of Arden. In the thirteenth song of *Poly-Olbion*, published in 1612, Michael Drayton—himself a Warwickshire man—gave that ghost a voice: a lament for its destruction at the hands of those 'gripple wretch[es]' who spoiled 'my tall and goodly woods, and did my grounds inclose'.[6] Drayton's claim that Arden was once the greatest forest in Britain is often dismissed as antiquarian fantasy, sparked off by Camden's revelation that '*Arden* among the ancient Britans and Gaules signified a *wood*'.[7] A twelfth-century document, however, decisively supports Drayton. Colossal, on the scale of the greater French forests, Arden once covered Warwickshire and spilled over into Worcestershire and Staffordshire. It seems never to have been Crown property—protected by royal Forest as opposed to Common Law—and that, of course, was its undoing. Patchily but steadily, it was felled, cleared and cultivated, especially to the south of the Avon where the soil was more fertile.[8] Leland, writing in the reign of Henry VIII, observed that only the wooded country north of the river was still known as 'Arden'. It comprised the larger part of the shire, but by 1586 Camden, while recording the same division between felden (or fields) and wooded country, found that 'Arden', as a territorial name, had fallen into disuse. The part north of the Avon, 'much larger in compasse than the *Feldon*, . . . is for the most part thicke set with woods, and yet not without pastures, corn-fields, and sundry mines of Iron: This part, as it is at this day called *Woodland*, so also was in old time knowen by a more ancient name *Arden* . . .'[9]

Like Drayton's, Shakespeare's Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* has often been described as imaginary: a purely 'mythic and hypothetical' setting, as one critic puts it.[10] It is true that palm trees and olives, not to mention lionesses, are scarcely Warwickshire products. On the other

[6] Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion*, in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, vol. 4, ed. J. William Hebel (Oxford, 1933), p. 276.

[7] William Camden, *Britain, or a Chorographicall Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Ilands Adjoyning* . . . (English trans. of the 1586 edn, London, 1610), p. 565. See also the Warwickshire volume of *The Victoria County History* (London, 1908), vol. 2, 228.

[8] Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: Its History, Vegetation and Uses in England* (London, 1980), pp. 127, 175–82. See also Leonard Cantor, 'Forest, Chases, Parks and Warrens', in *The English Mediaeval Landscape*, ed. L. Cantor (London, 1982), pp. 80–1.

[9] Camden, op. cit., p. 565.

[10] David Young, *The Heart's Forest: A Study of Shakespeare's Pastoral Plays* (New Haven, 1972), p. 42. For an attempt to redress this view, see H. Stuart Daly, 'Where are the Woods in *As You Like It*?' (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34 (1983) 172–80).

hand, when Shakespeare, a man born and bred on the north side of the Avon, confronted the forest of Arden in his source, Lodge's *Rosalynde*, considerably more than just his mother's surname, or the French Ardennes intended by Lodge, must have sprung to mind. Shakespeare's Forest of Arden is the shifting and contradictory place it is because, unlike Lodge's, it compounds the fantastic with something native, real and intimately known. An 'uncouth forest' (II.6.6), a 'desert inaccessible, / Under the shade of melancholy boughs' (II.7.110–11), Arden presents itself initally to Orlando and Adam as untouched woodland. Wandering about helplessly, both nearly starve to death in a place apparently devoid of any settled human habitation. When Orlando fortunately stumbles upon Duke Senior and his fellow outlaws, he is anxious to know if they have ever been 'where bells have knoll'd to church' (II.7.114). And yet Arden is not only where William says he was born, the place he, Audrey, Corin, Silvius and Phebe call home, Touchstone has no difficulty in rustling up Sir Oliver Martext, 'the vicar of the next village' (III.43–4), and a chapel, when 'wedlock would be nibbling' (III.3.80–1).

Shakespeare's Arden, unlike that of Lodge, has experienced enclosure. In the source, Rosalynde and Aliena first encounter Coridon and Montanus sitting side by side 'in a faire valley', their two flocks of sheep feeding around them on common pasture.[11] As they talk, it becomes clear that Coridon is a tenant farmer who, as well as tending his 'landlord's' sheep on the common, supports himself by tilling arable land belonging to the cottage he rents. The landlord has now decided to sell, terminating the lease-hold. When Rosalynde and Aliena offer to buy both sheep and farm, Coridon gladly agrees to share the cottage he previously enjoyed alone, and relinquish to them the task of escorting sheep to the common. The position of Shakespeare's Corin is very different. A wage-earner, not a tenant, he is not only unable to 'shear the fleeces that I graze' (II.4.79)—the grazing itself—or 'bounds of feed' (II.4.83)—is up for sale too, along with the flock and the cottage. There is no 'landlord' in the case, only a churlish 'master' in whose cottage Corin, the labourer, is allowed a bed. Because this master is currently away, as Corin explains to Rosalind and Celia, there is almost nothing in this house on the 'skirts' (III.2.336) or 'purlieus' (IV.3.77)—Shakespeare uses the technical word for a cleared space on the edge of a forest—of Arden 'that you will feed on' (II.4.86), although he proposes to make them as welcome as he can.

Enclosure in Arden, unprotected as it was by Forest law, had begun early. Coridon's slide from tenant to hired man was a more recent phenomenon. In his study of 'Economic and Social Change in the Forest of

[11] Thomas Lodge, 'Rosalynde', in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare's Plays*, vol. 2, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, (London, 1958), p. 182.

Arden: 1530–1649', the agrarian historian V.H.T. Skipp identifies a steady rise there towards the end of the sixteenth century in the number of landless labourers, proportions of about twenty per cent already registering in one parish by 1605.[12] It would be more than forty per cent by the middle of the century. The change seems to have been linked to Arden's gradual abandonment of its traditional pastoral economy, based on sheep and cattle, in favour of those 'green corn-field[s]' and 'acres of the rye' (V.3.18.22) characteristic of the other side of the river. And Shakespeare's play faithfully reflects it.

In their sylvan exile, Duke Senior and his court subsist on fallow deer—'poor *dappled* fools' (II.1.22)—an imported species, associated primarily with parks, where they tended to be kept at least as much to supply venison for the table as for sport. The wild red deer, the hart, from time immemorial the noblest of quarries, which Drayton depicts being hunted 'at force'[13] (that is, with hounds) through the spacious tracts of an older Arden, makes only a distant appearance in *As You Like It*, by way of Touchstone's parodic verses: 'If a hart do lack a hind, / Let him seek out Rosalind' (III.2.101–2). Warwickshire from medieval times had been particularly rich in parks and, of those established before the sixteenth century, fifty out of fifty-two were located north of the river.[14] Charlecote Park, bifurcated by the Avon, may not have been enclosed and stocked with deer in time for the young Shakespeare, 'much given to all unluckinesse in stealing venison', according to Richard Davies in 1695, to have chosen it as the scene of his depredations.[15] There were plenty of others in the vicinity, including (of course) Kenilworth, greatly enlarged by the Earl of Leicester, where Queen Elizabeth in 1575 had spent more time slaughtering deer than attending to the ingenious shows and entertainments with which these ceremonial hunts were entwined. Shakespeare may or may not, like his own Falstaff in *The Merry Wives*, actually have beaten keepers, killed deer, broken open a lodge, and then (as the legend has it) been obliged to flee Warwickshire and become England's greatest dramatist. But parks, during the 1590s, when he was still close to his Warwickshire youth, do seem to have been much on his mind.

[12] V.H.T. Skipp, 'Economic and Social Change in the Forest of Arden', in *Agricultural History Review*, 18 (suppl.) (1970), 84–111.

[13] Drayton, op. cit., p. 278.

[14] Cantor, op. cit., p. 80.

[15] Sir Edmund Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1930), vol. 1, pp. 18–21, vol. 2, pp. 255–7.

I can find only one allusion to a park in Shakespeare's Jacobean work. The Queen, in *Cymbeline*, imagines all Britain as 'Neptune's park, ribb'd and pal'd in / With oaks unscalable and roaring waters' (III.1.19–20). The image is accurate, and ought never (though it often is) to be emended. In 1611, Arthur Standish, in *The Commons Complaint*, the first recorded book on English forestry, three slightly different versions of which, all dedicated to King James, appeared in 1611, 1613 and 1615, extended particular approval to park owners who reinforced their enclosures, whether hedge or the more usual cleft stakes, with living timber trees, a barrier of ash or oak, allowed to grow to full maturity, and 'once made, never to be made againe'.[16] The *Cymbeline* passage set aside, all Shakespeare's other park references or settings are Elizabethan: Talbot's dismayed exclamation in *1 Henry VI*, 'How are we park'd and bounded in a pale, / A little herd of England's timorous deer, / Maz'd with a yelping kennel of French curs!' (IV.2.45–7), Venus's unsuccessful attempt, in *Venus and Adonis*, to transform her body into a park, encircled by an 'ivory pale' (230), where Adonis might erotically and safely browse, or the complaint of Adriana in *The Comedy of Errors* about her husband's infidelities—'too unruly deer, he breaks the pale, / And feeds from home' (II.1.100–1). Other instances, literal rather than metaphoric, conjure up a shadowy park setting, just out of sight: Hotspur's park in *1 Henry IV* in which the crop-eared roan awaits his master, or Petruchio's in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the servants ought to be lined up to welcome Kate. Editors of *The Merchant of Venice* usually indicate that Lorenzo and Jessica listen to music, just before Portia's return, in the open air of a garden or 'avenue before the house'. Judging from the fact that she and Nerissa left for Venice by coach from 'the park-gate' (III.4.83), Shakespeare may well, in an interesting anticipation of *The Merry Wives*, have imagined, without specifying, a night park.

Far more concretely realized are the paired park scenes of *3 Henry VI*. At the beginning of Act three, King Henry, fleeing from the battle of Towton, is taken prisoner by 'keepers' concealed in a thicket beside the 'laund' (or open space) of what editors usually designate as a 'forest', but which must, given the vocabulary used, be a park. Armed with crossbows, they are out 'culling the principal of all the deer' (III.1.4), but succeed in bringing down a different kind of royal stag. The scene has a carefully constructed obverse in Act IV, when the imprisoned Edward IV manages to escape from the Bishop of York's custody while walking in his park, despite the efforts of the 'huntsman' accompanying him. There is no indication in Shakespeare's sources that Henry was taken prisoner in either a forest or

[16] Arthur Standish, *The Commons Complaint* (London, 1615), D3.

a park. For his rival's evasion of captivity, there is only Halle's testimony that because Edward 'spake ever fayre to the Archebishop and the other kepers', he had liberty to go hunting, and one day met 'on a playne' with such a large body of his friends that 'neither his kepers would, nor once durst, move him to retorne to prison agayn'.[17] Shakespeare has availed himself of the suggestive word 'keper' to turn Halle's aristocratic gaolers into the single 'huntsman' responsible for showing Edward 'where lies the game' (IV.5.14). He also turns Halle's 'playne' into an enclosed park, at the 'corner' (IV.5.19) of which Edward's horse stands ready. Across the space of nearly two acts, Lancaster's capture and York's escape are counter-balanced structurally by way of their shared parkland setting.

The park in *Titus Andronicus* seems also to have been Shakespeare's invention. The hunt, with 'horn and hound', of 'the panther and the hart' (I.1.494, 493) in Act II is usually said to take place, quite simply, in a forest. Richard Marienstras, in his 1981 essay, 'The Forest, Hunting and Sacrifice in *Titus Andronicus*', makes much of it as 'a place predestined by nature to the release of savagery'.[18] That is partly true. But it is also true that, like Arden later, this forest keeps shifting its character and identity. 'The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull' (II.1.128), as Aaron says, but they are also—and not just in Tamora's imagination—'green' (II.2.2), a 'pleasant chase' (II.3.255), full of bird-song, 'cheerful sun' (II.3.13), and of wide and spacious 'walks' where 'the lovely Roman ladies' (II.1.113–14) can saunter at their ease, like those fifteenth-century Flemish beauties in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Chatsworth tapestries, while the hunt goes on around them. Tamora's two contrasting vignettes of the particular spot that is at one moment a *locus amoenus* and, in the next, a 'barren, detested vale' (II.3.93), merely polarize a general ambiguity, one reflected in the different terms used to describe the scene of the hunt: 'woods' and 'forest', but also (on two occasions) 'chase'—a small, managed forest in private hands—equipped, in this instance, on 'the north side' with a keeper's lodge (II.3.254–5). Finally, Marcus tells his brother Titus that he found the raped and mutilated Lavinia, straying, 'as doth the deer / That hath receiv'd some unrecuring wound', 'in the park' (III.1.88–90).

T.J.B. Spencer once remarked of *Titus* that Shakespeare seemed determined to include in it all the political institutions Rome ever had, not so much to get Roman history right, as to get it all in.[19] That impulse

[17] Edward Halle, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancaster and York* (London, 1550), 'The viii yere of Kyng Edward the iiii', fol. xiiij^{r}.

[18] Richard Marienstras, *New Perspectives on the Shakespearean World*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge, 1981), p. 44.

[19] T.J.B. Spencer, 'Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans', in *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1957), p. 32.

also seems to lie behind the hunt in this play and its setting. Titus's proposal to the emperor and his bride, 'Tomorrow . . . / To hunt the panther and the hart with me' (I.1.492–3), is startling, especially when surrounded, as it almost immediately is, with ceremonial detail—the horn call when hounds were uncoupled, the baying of what the stage directions suggest must have been real dogs, the different 'horns in a peal' described in Turbervile's *Noble Arte of Venerie* of 1575 as appropriate to call 'a companie in the morning'—all things associated specifically with the singling out and hunting, *par force des chiens*, of the red deer stag.[20] Shakespeare must have been aware that panthers are as impossible in Italy as lions in Arden, unless (of course) someone imports them, like those Elizabethan lions languishing in the Tower of London, for a purpose. Certainly a 'solemn hunting' (II.1.112), as this one is said to be, is implausible with both the panther and the hart as intended and simultaneous quarry. Or at least it is in a forest or chase. The enclosed park is a different matter.

At this point, the vexed issue of Shakespeare's 'small *Latine*, and lesse *Greeke*' becomes more than usually troublesome. Like the fallow deer with which they became so closely associated, parks were of eastern origin. Persia in particular was renowned for them. *Pairidaeza*, the Old Persian word for park—it means to 'shape' or 'mould around'—was first Hellenized by Xenophon, in the *Anabasis*, when he wrote about the great royal *paradeisos* of Cyrus, full of wild animals.[21] This Greek word was destined to become complexly entwined with the ancient Hebrew *pardes* and end up signifying both heaven and the garden of Eden. Meanwhile, according to Quintus Curtius, Alexander the Great, entering a great walled park in the heart of Asia which had not been touched for four generations, ordered all the beasts to be driven from their cover, and despatched single-handed the huge lion that attacked him. It was largely as a result of Alexander's progress through Persia that parks, enclosing beasts of various kinds, soon began to appear all over the Mediterranean.[22] Some were really menageries. Varro writes admiringly of the park belonging to the Roman orator Hortensius, where guests banqueting on an artfully raised triclinium watched a slave, dressed up as Orpheus, with a long floating robe, gather stags, wild boar, and a multitude of other quadrupeds around him with the music of his lyre.[23] This wonderful spectacle, Varro claimed, could be

[20] Hereward T. Price discusses the hunting music, and its precision, in 'The Authorship of *Titus Andronicus*,' in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 42 (1943), p. 61.

[21] A. Bartlett Giametti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 11–15.

[22] Russell Meiggs, *Trees and Timber in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 1982), p. 272.

[23] Jacques Aymard, *Essai sur les Chasses Romaines, des origines à la fin du siècle des Antonins* (Paris, 1951), [Bibliotheque des Ecoles Francaises d'Athènes et de Rome], p. 71.

compared only to the great *venationes*, the hunts and other displays of the Roman circus, or at least to those which did not include African animals. They, according to Livy, had first appeared in the year 186 BC, in the form of a combat of lions and panthers.

In his *Historie of the Foure-Footed Beastes* (1607), Edward Topsell, assembling information from a wide range of classical and other sources, asserts that although the senators of Rome 'in auncient time' wisely forbade anyone to import panthers, the needs of the circus soon prevailed: Pompey the Great, we are told, brought in four hundred and ten of them, and Augustus four hundred and twenty.[24] These figures sound exaggerated, but there can be no doubt that panthers did feature prominently in the gory spectacles of the Roman circus, especially under the empire, and that a variety of other victims—including stags —were often hunted in the arena with them at the same time. In the most elaborate, moreover, of these *venationes*—they were known as *silvae*—the amphitheatre, at enormous expense, was landscaped: provided with trees and rocks, thickets, running streams, and artificial hills, so that the Roman crowd seemed to be looking down at a real forest or, given its protective barriers and circular shape, upon an enclosed park.[25] Some emperors—Nero, Caracalla—actually entered it themselves to display their prowess. I don't know whether Shakespeare had read or heard about the Roman *silvae* in Calpurnius and later Roman authors, but the mixed nature of the hunt, including the slaughter of human participants, in *Titus* eerily resembles them.

Tamora's son Demetrius assumes a shared experience of ordinary deer-stealing among Chiron, Aaron and himself: 'What, hast not thou full often strook a doe, / And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?' (II.1.93–4). But when he reminds Chiron that 'we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound, / But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground' (II.2.25–6), he has ceased to be the human hunter and become the hound, one of those masterless 'whelps, fell curs of bloody kind' (II.3.281) that Saturninus, speaking more truly than he knows, later accuses of having murdered Bassianus. Lavinia, in Act II, describes Tamora as a tiger, but the honey-tongued and treacherous conciliatress of the play's first scene is more concretely emblematized by that panther Aaron persuades Titus's sons they can surprise fast asleep in the bottom of a pit. 'As a Lyon doeth in most thinges imitate and resemble the very nature of man', Topsell misogynistically recorded, 'so after the very selfe-same manner doth the panther of a Woman, for it is a fraudulent though a beautiful beast'.[26] Panthers in the wild, as Topsell

[24] Edward Topsell, *The Historie of the Foure-Footed Beastes* (London, 1607), p. 583.
[25] Aymard, op. cit., pp. 189–96, 354.
[26] Topsell, op. cit., pp. 581–2.

also records (following Oppian) were taken in pit-fall traps, baited with carrion; this 'subtile hole' (II.3.198), its mouth 'covered with rude-growing briers' (II.3.199), is the place to which two young men, lured by the panther, come unsuspectingly and, when they have fallen helplessly into its depths, discover human carrion.

The 'loathsome pit' (II.3.176) in *Titus*, a 'fell devouring receptacle, / As hateful as [Cocytus'] misty mouth' (II.3.235–6), was already complicated enough before the Freudians got hold of it. A natural cavity, a trap, a grave, hell-mouth, the entrance to the underworld, it also provokes thoughts of a Warwickshire saltory, or deer-leap: an excavation, usually combined with a steep bank, which allowed wild deer to enter a park through a gap in its palings, but not to get out again. Edward Ravenscroft, adapting Shakespeare's tragedy in 1686, rejected all these associations. He turned it into an ice-house. Unlike Dennis's *Comical Gallant*, Ravenscroft's *Titus* was a theatrical success. Establishing itself in the repertory as 'a Stock-Play', it not only replaced the original, but continued to be performed well into the eighteenth century.[27] One reason for its acceptability may have been the drastic—and revealing—measures Ravenscroft had taken when confronted with the peculiarities of Shakespeare's hunt and its locale. The hunt he abolished entirely; the ambiguous forest he transformed unequivocally into a park, or pleasure garden.

'Come *Tamora*', Ravenscroft's Saturninus says near the end of Act I,

> this is a day of Triumph,
> All Pleasures of the *Banii* shall delight thee,
> Where every Sense is exquisitely touch'd,
> Pleasures that not the World affords,
> And yet is only known to Roman Lords.[28]

I owe to Jeremy Maule the suggestion that 'Banii' represents Ravenscroft's attempt to Latinize the famous sixteenth century Bagnaia Gardens attached to the Villa Lante, outside Rome near Viterbo. He may have visited them himself, as John Evelyn did. But although the same dreadful things happen in Ravenscroft's Banii Gardens as had in Shakespeare's ruthless woods, they are everywhere coloured by suggestions of a place closer to home. Whatever may have been painted on the stage shutters, this scene of public promenade, but also of 'close walks' and 'private Groves', 'Grottoes', and retreats for lovers, where 'none may hear / Their Amorous talk', is again (like Dennis's Windsor Park) really London's St. James's.[29]

[27] Edward Ravenscroft, 'To the Reader', *Titus Andronicus: Or The Rape of Lavinia* (London, 1969), [Cornmarket Shakespeare Series; vol. 71].
[28] Ibid., p. 15.
[29] Ibid., pp. 17–18.

In his poem, 'On St. James's Park, As Lately Improved By His Majesty', published in 1661, Edmund Waller had paid particular attention to the marvel of the royal ice-houses: those 'deep caves', 'Winter's dark prison', whose 'harvest of cold months laid up, / Gives a fresh coolness to the royal cup'.[30] There was, as it happens, an ice-house in the Bagnaia Gardens. Its presence is clearly visible in an engraving of 1612–14, from the *Antiquae urbis splendor Roma*.[31] One needs, however, to remember that although common in Italy, and beginning to appear in France, ice-houses (as opposed to rudimentary snow conserves of the kind King James had at Greenwich Park and Hampton Court) were unknown in Britain until John Rose in October 1660 constructed the ones in St. James' Park on the model of those recently introduced at Versailles.[32] Ice-houses were sufficiently novel and also rare for the Royal Society to hold a special meeting on the subject in 1662, at which Robert Boyle gave a paper incorporating some of the observations made by Evelyn during his travels in Italy, and for Charles II in February 1664 to swear in one Simon Menselli (significantly, an Italian) in a newly-created post as 'Yeoman of O[u]r Snowe and Ice'. For London audiences, it would have been these celebrated ice-houses in St. James's Park, presided over by Menselli and his successors, with which Ravenscroft endowed Saturninus:

> on the more Remoter parts
> Dark Caves and Vaults, where water crusted Lyes
> In ice, all the hot season of the year.
> As Chrystillin, and firm as when
> 'Twas taken from the Winter's frost.[33]

It is to the deepest and most gloomy of these vaults, now containing the body of Bassianus, that the sons of Titus are decoyed. The attraction is not a panther, but what Quintus calls the 'pleasant Secret' of an anonymous letter:

> Quintus, as soon as this comes to your hands, find out your Brother Martius, Bring him with you into the Banii Gardens, and attend a while at the Mouth of the Vault which is called the Serpents-Den, where once the mighty Snake was found: Your Expectations shall be rewarded with the company of two

[30] Edmund Waller, 'On St. James's Park as Lately Improved By His Majesty', in *The Works of Edward Waller Esq. in Verse and Prose* (London, 1729), p. 208.

[31] The engraving by G.Lauro, showing the ice-house, is reproduced by Bruno Adorni in his essay, 'The Villa Lante at Bagnaia', in *The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day,* ed. Monique Mosser and Georges Tessot (London, 1991), p. 92.

[32] Sylvia Beamon and Susan Roaf, *The Ice-Houses of Britain* (New York, 1991), pp. 12–19, 34.

[33] Ravenscroft, op. cit., pp. 17–18.

> Ladies, Young, and in our own opinions not unhandsome, whose sight shall not displease you; Love gives the Invitation, and we believe you both Gallant Enough to know how to use it, and to conceal our favours.[34]

Here, and for several ensuing lines of dialogue, as the deluded brothers await 'these kind and Loving ones', Ravenscroft begins to write Restoration comedy: the kind of play—*The Mall*, or Southerne's *The Maid's Last Prayer* are examples—in which one or two men are lured into St. James's Park by a note (usually deceptive) of assignation.

Waller's encomium on St. James's Park, a 'Paradise', as he calls it, another Eden, presided over by a benevolent shepherd king, had dealt entirely with its daylight hours and cheerful, public pursuits: 'the lovers walking in that amorous shade; / The Gallants dancing by the river's side; / They bathe in summer, and in winter slide'.[35] A decade later, in 1672, Rochester revisited the place, in his nocturnal 'A Ramble in St. James's Park', and saw something very different: an 'all-sin-sheltring Grove', where every 'imitative branch does twine / In some lov'd fold of Aretine / And nightly now beneath their shade / Are Buggeries, Rapes and Incests made'.[36] Ravenscroft has managed to invoke both Waller's *paradeisos* and Rochester's surreal landscape of violence and lust, translating Shakespeare's ambivalent forest into an equally ambiguous but recognizable contemporary place.

Titus, *The Merry Wives*, and *3 Henry VI* were all adapted in the later seventeenth century or early in the eighteenth. (Crowne's version of the last, *The Misery of Civil War*, of 1680, omitted the scenes of Henry's capture and Edward's escape.) *Love's Labour's Lost*—the fourth and last of Shakespeare's parkland plays that I want to discuss—remained untouched until 1762. Nor, although it appears (together with *As You Like It*) in the long list of works, formerly the property of Shakespeare's company at Blackfriars, that were 'allowed' to the King's Company at Drury Lane in January 1669, does it seem to have been performed after the Restoration. That, given its intransigently Elizabethan wit, combined with a plotlessness exceeding even that of *As You Like It*, is understandable. More surprising is the fact that this play, available only as a text for reading, should have exercised such an influence on the best comedies of the period:

[34] Ibid., p. 23.
[35] Waller, op. cit., p. 207.
[36] John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, 'A Ramble in St. James's Park', in *The Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Keith Walker (London, 1984), p. 64.

an influence, as I believe, far more profound than that of Fletcher or Shirley, whose comedies were frequently revived, and rivalled only by that of Jonson.

Love's Labour's Lost is usually said by its editors to be set entirely in the royal park of Navarre. That is not strictly true, although the unlocalized staging of Shakespeare's theatre must have blurred this fact. The anonymous author of *The Students* in 1762, however, who had experienced the comedy only on the printed page, displayed a rare flash of intelligence when he discriminated, in the scene headings of his version, between 'the fields' and 'the park'. The tents in which Shakespeare's Navarre lodges the Princess and her ladies stand in 'the wide fields' (I.1.93), somewhere close to that manor-house, the King's silent and 'un-peopled' court, whose gates they cannot enter. The park, abutting, as Armado tells us, on the manor's 'curious-knotted' garden (I.1.245–6), is a place slightly but significantly different. The women enter it for the hunt and then, at the end of Act IV, are escorted back to their tents ('from the park let us conduct them thither', IV.3.371) by men whose vows of asceticism and study have crumbled ignominiously in the parkland setting. It is a populous place, not only in terms of the deer, and the foresters in the 'lodge' who look after them, but because a variety of people like to walk there—the King and his three 'book-mates', Armado giving his melancholy some fresh air, Costard in amorous pursuit of Jaquenetta, or local villagers, the schoolmaster Holofernes and Nathaniel the curate, lost in erudite discourse.

The hunt arranged to divert a somewhat reluctant Princess is of the 'bow and stable', as opposed to *par force*, variety most often associated in the Tudor period with parks. As Queen Elizabeth did so often, she stands in an appointed place, armed with a cross-bow, while the deer are driven past, and her success is greeted by the shouts of assembled spectators. Meanwhile, Berowne is observing gloomily that while the King hunts deer, 'I am coursing myself', caught in a 'toil' of love he likens to the one set up in the park, the deer-haye forcing the animals towards the waiting archers (IV.3.1–3). This particular version of the Actaeon image (later elaborated by Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, in the context of a *par force* chase), in which the lover is both quarry and hound, is altogether more complicated than the brutally simple intention of Chiron and Demetrius in *Titus* to 'pluck down a dainty doe'. It links back, indeed, to the courtly love poetry of the fourteenth century, to Hesdin and the great *Jagd* of Hadamar—in which named hounds, sometimes in fell pursuit of the lover to whom they belong, are aspects of his self, or of his relationship with the lady. But it also looks forward to the Restoration.

It was once a critical fashion to assail even the best Restoration comedy for its supposed dullness and triviality, and to instance its repetitive imagery

of the sexual hunt. This imagery is not, in fact, either as monotonous or as fatuous as was claimed—although it could be used to signal either the inappropriateness of the love chase to the old (Sir Oliver Cockwood and Sir Joslin Jolly in Etherege's *She Wou'd If She Cou'd* (1668), for instance) or the habituated response of fashionable young philanderers before they fall under the spell of a genuinely witty and interesting woman. Although usually, it is by no means invariably the language of men. Crowne's heroine Christina in *The Country Wit* (1675) intends to pursue the outrageous Ramble to his lodging 'And hunt him dry-foot thence:—would odds were laid me, / I did not rouse my wild, outlying buck / This hour, and catch him brousing on some common . . .',[37] and Farquhar's Lucinda in *Love and a Bottle* (1698), catching sight of the aptly named Roebuck, in one of the walks of Lincoln's-Inn Fields, goes in pursuit, thinking 'He may afford us some sport'.[38] A great many of these hunting images appear in scenes set in London's St. James's Park, which did as it happens still contain deer. Even when they do not, the presence of that park still tends to be felt behind them, as a focus of daily life in town.

Although Shirley's *Hyde Park* of 1632 was revived after the Restoration—Pepys saw it in 1668, apparently with live horses—and although a scattering of comedies visit the New Spring Gardens in Lambeth, Lincoln's-Inn Fields, or Greenwich Park, St. James's was overwhelmingly the preferred park setting. (The Mulberry Gardens, used by Newcastle, Sedley and Etherege, on the site of what is now Buckingham Palace, were merely an extension of it.) St. James's was not, in fact, any more fashionable or more frequented than Hyde Park in the period. The latter, however, although much mentioned in comedy, had become useless as a dramatic setting, for the simple reason that the 'done' thing there after 1660 was for people to sit in a coach, equipped with footmen and six Flanders mares, and ride round and round in up to twelve concentric and very dusty circles, each revolving in the opposite direction to the one flanking it. This was called 'The Ring' or 'Tour', and apart from being unstageable, it reduced conversation outside the cramped confines of each coach to what Etherege's Harriet in *The Man of Mode* (1676) dismisses contemptuously as 'the formal bows, the affected smiles, the silly by-words, and amorous tweers, in passing'.[39] Some signals could be given in the Ring: Charles II and the Duchess of Castlemaine formally greeting one another, as Pepys noted,

[37] John Crowne, *The Country Wit*, in *The Comedies of John Crowne*, ed. B.J. McMullin (New York, 1984), [*The Renaissance Imagination*, gen. ed. Stephen Orgel], I. 1.317–19.

[38] George Farquhar, *Love and a Bottle*, in *The Works of George Farquhar*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny, vol. I (Oxford, 1988), I.1.130.

[39] Sir George Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, in *The Plays of Sir George Etherege*, ed. Michael Cordner (Cambridge, 1982), III.3.49–51.

at each revolution, or (on a different occasion) the Duchess expressing her superiority to the whole gilded and competitive show by allowing herself to be carried round fast asleep, with her mouth open. According to Stanmore in Shadwell's *A True Widow* (1678), Restoration Hyde Park had even invented a 'new method' of making love 'without speaking': 'your side glass let down hastily, when the party goes by, is very passionate. If she side *glass* you again, for that's the new word, ply her next day with a *billet doux* and you have her sure'.[40] It all depended, as Stanmore's interlocutor points out, on the two coaches *not* circulating in the same direction.

Etherege's Harriet, however, walking—as was the custom—in St. James's Park at 'high Mall', the second of the two fashionable times to be seen there, after the play and the Ring, observes that 'here one meets with a little conversation now and then'.[41] 'These conversations', her escort replies, 'have been fatal to some of your sex'. But Harriet likes to live dangerously. A moment later the park brings her face to face with Dorimant, the charismatic libertine of whom her mother is so terrified. Harriet has already seen and been fascinated by him at a distance. The Mall allows not only an introduction, but a tensely consequential crossing of verbal swords that she could have engineered nowhere else. It is also the arena Dorimant finds essential when he wants to quarrel with his mistress Mrs. Loveit, later in the same scene, severing their relations before the eyes of the whole town, and where she, at least briefly, is able to humiliate him.

'The hours of *Park-walking* are times of perfect *Carnival* to the Women', Sir Harry Peerabout later observed in an anonymous play of 1733 called *St. James's Park* and actually performed there 'Every Fine Day Between the Hours of Twelve and Two, During this Season':

> She that wou'd not admit the Visits of a Man without his being introduced by some Relation or intimate Friend, makes no scruple here to commence acquaintance at first sight; readily answers to any question shall be asked of her; values herself on being brisk at Repartee; and to have put him to it (as they call it) leaves a pleasure upon her Face for the whole day. In short, no Freedoms that can be taken here, are reckon'd indecent: All passes for Rallery, and harmless Gallantry.[42]

Almost half a century separates this passage from *The Man of Mode*, reflected not only in the later dinner hour and consequent advancement in the time of the morning promenade, but in the stiff response Peerabout's report of these manners elicits from Truelove: 'I should be sorry my Wife

[40] Thomas Shadwell, *A True Widow*, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell*, ed. Montague Summers, vol. 3 (London, 1927), p. 290.
[41] Etherege, op. cit., III.3. 49–51.
[42] *St. James's Park* (London, 1733), p. 3.

or Daughter were practis'd in them. But do any Women of real Honour take these Liberties?' The answer now, even from a Peerabout, is 'No'. It would have been 'Yes' before 1700, and not only in London's St. James's. Peerabout's account of raillery and repartee on slight acquaintance, bold skirmishes of wit in which women amuse themselves by putting down their male opponents, could also be a description of the Princess of France and her ladies, their mocking merriment at masculine expense, in that other royal park of Navarre.

Like Hyde Park, St. James's had been acquired and paled in by Henry VIII. He used it for hunting, as did Elizabeth.[43] Originally restricted to the royal family—St. James's Palace was incorporated in the grounds—it came under James I to be a place where other people, initially those attached to the court, came to stroll in the fresh air and admire not only the deer but the king's growing and expensive menagerie of wild animals. (The board of the elephant alone cost £273 a year, and that was exclusive of the gallon of wine a day his keepers said he required from September to April.)[44] Already fashionable under Charles I, St. James's continued to be frequented by Cromwell and his courtiers during the Commonwealth, and so escaped being sold off with the other royal parks. But it was only after the Restoration that it came into its own. Extensively re-designed and planted by Andre Mollet, 'Master of His Majesty of England's Gardens in His Park of St. James'—two copies of his book, *The Garden of Pleasure*, one with diagrams of the park, survive —this was the place where Charles II liked to exercise (and tended to lose) his spaniels, where he fed the ducks and played pall-mall, a form of croquet, on an avenue covered with powdered cockle-shells. Around him, Londoners with any social pretensions thronged to bask in the presence of this strikingly informal king and, even when he

[43] For Henry VIII's 'mania' for hunting in parks, see Oliver Rackham *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (rev. edn, London, 1990), p. 158 and 'The King's Deer' [Nonsuch Palace Centenary Celebrations], which the author has kindly allowed me to read in typescript. See also E.P. Shirley, *Some Account of English Deer Parks* (London, 1867), A.S. Barrow ('Sabretache'), *Monarchy and the Chase* (London, 1948), and Susan Lasdun *The English Park: Royal, Private and Public* (London, 1991).

Edward Halle's account (op. cit. fol. iiii) of the festivities following Henry VIII's coronation ('The first yere of Kyng Henry the viii') includes a description of the 'faire house' erected in the Palace of Westminster, into which was brought a pageant in the form of a deer-park, 'paled with pales of White and Grene, wherein wer certain Fallowe Dere'. When its doors were opened, the deer 'ranne out therof into the Palaice, the greye houndes were lette slippe and killed the Dere: the whiche Dere so killed, were presented to the Quene and the Ladies' by Diana's knights.

[44] Jacob Larwood, *The Story of the London Parks*, Vol. 2 (London, 1881), p. 72.

was only symbolically there, to see and be seen, to observe the follies of others and commit their own.

Thanks to the efforts of Mollet, the park was wonderfully diverse.[45] Dominating it were the new canal, nearly half a mile long and one hundred feet wide, that extended down the middle, with an avenue of trees on each side, and the upper and lower Mall, the place of public promenade. But there was also a multitude of lesser walks, some of them named—the Green Walk, or Birdcage Walk, featuring some of the inmates of the royal zoo—others anonymous alleys or cross-walks lined with dwarf fruit-trees and leading to arbours or, in some cases, into what Mollet calls the 'wild Wood' at one end of the park and the artificial wilderness he had created at the other. Couples with something other than the promenade on their minds tended to arrange assignations in remote and specific areas: on the Duck-pond side, or at the mysteriously named Rosamond's Pond. The latter, at the west end of the park, had existed for centuries, but it was Mollet who surrounded it with trees and also constructed an artificial mount in the vicinity. An evening rendezvous at Rosamond's Pond, whether proposed or merely accepted by a woman, was usually regarded as tantamount to sexual surrender, something which might take place there and then. Not that Rosamond's Pond had a monopoly on such scenes. Courtall and Mrs. Wouldbee, in Dover's *The Mall*, are on 'the Duck-pond side' when she tells him, 'Sir, you have prevail'd, and overcome, but methinks this Bench is a very undecent place'. 'Oh Madam!', Courtall replies, 'There has been many a worse shift made'.[46] *Exeunt*, hand in hand.

It was, however, as a setting for the chase, rather than for consummation, that St. James's usually figured in comedy of the period. Women sometimes go there to spy upon and pursue erring lovers or husbands, as Lydia and Amanda do in Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696) and Wycherley's *Love in A Wood*. Witty young heroines, cooped up at home by watchful parents or guardians, escape and range freely over the park in order to flush out and attract a young man to their taste. The young men themselves are the most habitual hunters. 'Yes faith, we have had many a fair course in this paddock', Freeman tells Ariana and Gatty in *She Wou'd If She Cou'd*, 'have been very well fleshed, and dare boldly fasten'.[47] Such predators often refer to their quarry as though they were female deer: 'does', a word that could mean 'prostitutes', but was also used of young women presumed to

[45] Andrew Mollet, *The Garden of Pleasure* (London, 1670), pp. 11–12. For the complicated history of this rare, posthumously published volume, see Blanche Henrey, *British Botanical and Horticultural History Before 1800* (London, 1975), pp. 198–203, 259.

[46] John Dover, *The Mall: Or, The Modish Lovers*, in *The Dramatic Works of John Dryden*, Vol. 8, ed. George Saintsbury (London, 1882), p. 537.

[47] Etherege, *She Would If She Could*, II.1.105–7.

be respectable.[48] Because upper class women, as well as whores, tended to wear vizard masks in the park, unless they were displaying themselves in the Mall, or were properly escorted, the chase often began with considerable uncertainty on the man's part as to the social standing, as well as identity, of the moving target. It was even possible to make the catastrophic mistake of pursuing one's own wife. The kind of embarrassment suffered by Navarre and his friends in *Love's Labour's Lost*, when the women mask and exchange love-tokens, and each man pays court to the wrong girl, is endemic in the park scenes of Restoration comedy.

But it is not only the masking and hunting in *Love's Labour's Lost*, its park setting and wittily realistic women, that make Shakespeare's play seem so uncannily to foreshadow those of a later period. As its title indicates, this is a work which concludes with the separation of people in love, with partings rather than marriage, and the reason is not to be found on the level of plot. The initial impediment—that league of study binding Navarre and his friends to shun female company for three years—crumbles midway through the comedy. What still holds Navarre and the Princess of France, Berowne, Rosaline, and the other two couples apart in Act V is not so much broken vows as attitudes of mind: chief among them, on the women's part, a deep distrust of the men's ability to sustain their love within marriage. That is why, in the final moments, they impose on their suitors penances designed to test the strength of their commitment and, in the case of Berowne, sent to jest a twelvemonth in a hospital, the validity of an accustomed social manner. Whether the men will return to claim their ladies at the end of the stipulated year of trial and waiting is unknown: something as much outside the limits of the play as the question of whether Etherege's Dorimant will survive his month of exile among the bucolic horrors of Hampshire and marry Harriet, or will flee after a fortnight, back to London and his bachelor life.

The ending of *Love's Labour's Lost* is unique in its period and, so far as I know, in English comedy generally before the Restoration. But between 1667 and 1700 versions of it turn up over and over again in plays by very different authors. In some comedies, the test is contained within the action. The man either passes it, or he fails. In the latter eventuality, if the woman accepts him, she does so with a measure of cynicism. In a number of plays, however, the ending is left open, as it is in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The woman turns aside the proposal of marriage finally elicited from the

[48] Sir Mannerly Shallow, the rustic fool in Crowne's *The Country Wit* (1676), finds London's Whetstone Park, now built over, and notorious for its brothels, puzzling because devoid of grass and deer. 'I . . . spoke for a pasty; and they told me the strangest thing, they said their rooms were full of cold pasties, so big two people might sleep in one, and that if I had a mind to a doe, they would put me in a pasty, and put a doe to me' (III.4.107–10).

man she loves, for a definite or indefinite period. This is what not only Etherege's Harriet, but his Ariana and Gatty, for instance, do in *She Wou'd If She Cou'd*, Miranda and Clarinda in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1676), Mrs. Sightly in Southerne's *The Wives' Excuse*, and Araminta in Congreve's *The Old Batchelour* (1693). A test, as the Princess of France puts it in *Love's Labour's Lost*, of whether an 'offer made in heat of blood' will 'bear this trial, and last love' (V.2.803), it can even (as in the Congreve and Southerne) suggest an impasse never to be broken.

Wellvile, in *The Wives' Excuse*, has been Mrs. Sightly's passionate, jealous but 'Platonick lover' for seven years. At the end, he offers to give up what he values most, 'my liberty'. Sightly, however, although she loves him, turns aside his proposal: 'This is too sudden to be serious'.[49] In the concluding moments of *The Old Batchelour*, when Bellmour and Belinda have agreed to marry, Araminta evades Vainlove's 'May I presume to hope so great a Blessing?' 'We had better', she tells him, 'take the Advantage of a little of our Friends Experience first'.[50] Bellmour's response to this—'O my Conscience, she dares not consent, for fear he shou'd recant'—is shrewd. Throughout the comedy, Vainlove has suffered agonies of desire for Araminta, but retreated in disgust as soon as he thought she might allow herself to be captured: 'I stumble ore the Game I would pursue.—'Tis dull and unnatural to have a Hare run full in the Hounds Mouth; and would distaste the keenest Hunter'.[51] Like Laelaps, the miraculous hound given by Minos to Procris, which never failed to pull down its prey—until it had the misfortune to meet up with an equally miraculous hare, which could never be caught—Wellvile and Vainlove seem forever frozen in pursuit, the distance between them and Sightly and Araminta impossible for either side to diminish. A situation frequently debated in those Restoration love poems which argue for and against 'fruition', it also reaches back to Hadamar's medieval *Jagd*, in which the lover, hunting in a park with fifty allegorical hounds, finds himself quite unable, when he has the deer at bay, to unleash the one called 'Consummation', but lets his quarry escape, to be once more and endlessly pursued.[52]

[49] Thomas Southerne, *The Wives' Excuse*, in *The Works of Thomas Southerne*, ed. Robert Jordan and Harold Love, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1988), V.3.294.

[50] William Congreve, *The Old Batchelour*, in *The Plays of William Congreve*, ed. Herbert Davis (Chicago, 1967), V.2. 172–6.

[51] Ibid. IV.1.175–80.

[52] For an account of this and related poems, see *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Mediaeval Literature*, by Marcelle Thiebaux (Ithaca, 1974). Also, for the symbolism of the hunt, see John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting*, (London, 1988), esp. pp. 68–83.

In 1762, the anonymous adaptor of *Love's Labour's Lost* permitted the Princess to enter Navarre's park accompanied by a forester, but not to be so unlady-like as to shoot anything. He also closed Shakespeare's ending. Although the women try in the final moments to exact the year of trial and penance, Biron needs only to break into the 'Have at you then, affections men at arms' speech, from Act IV of Shakespeare's play, for them to abandon the whole idea. 'My liege', Biron complacently points out, 'you see how / Woman yields, when woo'd in proper terms'.[53] And as they all leave for France to get married, Biron neatly inverts the words of his Shakespearean original: 'Our wooing now doth end like an old play; / Jack hath his Jill; these ladies courtesie / Hath nobly made our sport a Comedy'. Imbecile though it is, *The Students* is nonetheless indicative of its period in its nervousness about truly independent and witty women, its rejection not only of the love chase, but of any suggestion that comedy need not end in marriage, and on male terms. I have been arguing not only for Shakespeare's special Elizabethan interest in parks, but for suggestive links between the ones in *The Merry Wives*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, and those in some of the best comedies of the later seventeenth century: links which the three adaptations, by Dennis, Ravenscroft and the author of *The Students*, help (in their several ways) to define. In the course of the eighteenth century, that association was eroded, and so was a whole rigorous and sexually candid tradition of English comedy which had managed, in certain fundamental respects, to overleap the eighteen years of the theatre's interregnum.

Although St. James's (like Hyde Park) remained for some time fashionable, its appeal was gradually superseded by that of Vauxhall Gardens and the more various but theatrically not very assimilable entertainments in which it specialized. Fielding's Amelia, in 1751, takes the air in St. James's, but sees in Vauxhall the true *paradeisos*: fancying herself, on her first visit, 'in those blissful Mansions which we hope to enjoy hereafter'.[54] The transfer, under William and Mary, of the royal residence to Kensington (at least one park play, Leigh's *Kensington Gardens* of 1719 attempted to follow them) also diminished the centrality of St. James's. Most important of all, however, was what registers increasingly in eighteenth-century comedy as a real change and diminution in the comedic value of the park: one in which the imagery of the hunt was eventually to become obsolete. Already, in Steele's *The Lying Lover*

[53] *The Students: A Comedy altered from Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost and Adapted to the Stage* (London, 1969) [Cornmarket Shakespeare Series, vol. 33], pp. 74, 78.

[54] Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. Martin C. Battestin [Wesleyan edition of the Works of Henry Fielding] (Oxford, 1983), p. 395.

of 1704, an assignation at Rosamond's Pond has entirely lost its sexual implications. The anonymous author of *St. James's Park*, in 1733, does almost nothing with an enormous cast of characters clearly intended to mirror his actual outdoor audience but have them walk up and down the Mall slandering each other. Some of the dialogue, genuinely funny, looks forward to Sheridan's *The School For Scandal* (1777). Nonetheless, when five of them decide to march abreast down the Mall and 'as Congreve says, *Laugh at the great Vulgar and the Small* . . . Sneer all the Men we meet that are Strangers to us, out of Countenance. And jostle all the Women', it is impossible not to remember that in *The Way of the World* (1700) these were the very minor voices of Petulant and Witwoud, whose proposal to do just this Mirabell treated with contempt.[55] Certainly St. James's Park in Congreve's play, that miniature forest of the passions, of dangerous *éclaircissements* between the sexes, and snatched private meetings, had been, as it was in so many late seventeenth-century comedies, the scene of something far more consequential than mere backbiting.

To talk about the declining fortunes of London's parks in eighteenth-century literature would require another lecture. I want only to remind you that the risk and potential anarchy of parks becomes increasingly prominent in novels of the period, and is associated there with a more timorous kind of heroine. Amelia's Vauxhall paradise rapidly turns nasty, even though she has two male friends with her, as a young rake forces his way into a place opposite her at table and gazes 'in a Manner with which Modesty can neither look, nor bear to be looked at'.[56] Fanny Burney's Evelina and her two companions have to be rescued, again at Vauxhall, from an insolent ring of bullies, 'laughing immoderately'.[57] Earlier comedy heroines had, on occasion, positively invited this kind of situation. Fiorella and Violante, for instance, in Mountfort's *Greenwich Park*, coolly approach and 'rally' with a group of blustering strangers, summoning assistance only when the men, no match for them verbally, resort to violence.[58] The later women, far from relishing such encounters, are terrified even by pale equivalents, and tremulously grateful to the noble gentlemen who spring to their aid.

No longer fashionable, London's parks, like those of almost all great cities, are now dangerous by day and can be deadly at night. Individuals, outside the special fraternity of dog-walkers and pram-pushers, tend to think twice about striking up an acquaintance with strangers. Sociologists

[55] *St. James's Park*, p. 17.

[56] *Amelia*, p. 396.

[57] Fanny Burney, *Evelina: Or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, ed. Edward A. Bloom (London, 1986), p. 195.

[58] William Mountford, *Greenwich Park*, ed. Paul W. Miller [Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints] (New York, 1977), p. 4.

and psychiatrists produce complicated studies of why normal behaviour patterns should alter so radically within the gates of these public places. And parks have taken on a new and sinister lease of life as the setting for plays. Not even Rochester thought to list infanticide among the nocturnal crimes of St. James's, but in Edward Bond's *Saved* youths stone a baby to death in its pram, in a park 'at closing time'.[59] The London taxi-driver in Pinter's *Victoria Station*, whose cab has gravitated to the side of an unidentified 'dark park', is possibly mad; his woman passenger, silent and invisible on the back seat, seems to be dead.[60] When, in Pinter's *Old Times* (1971), Kate imagines a 'walk across the park', Anna shudders away from the memory: 'The park is dirty at night, all sorts of horrible people, men hiding behind trees and women with terrible voices, they scream at you as you go past, and people come out suddenly from behind trees and bushes and there are shadows everywhere . . .'[61] I want to end, however, with a different contemporary play: *Der Park* by Botho Strauss, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, first published in Germany in 1983, and recently performed at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.

Although Puck's wanderings, in Shakespeare, had taken him 'over park, over pale' (II.1.4) in Titania's service, the 'palace wood, a mile without the town' (I.2.101–2) appeared to be the equivalent of a royal forest. There is a forester in charge (IV.1.103), but no hint of any other human habitation, let alone of the sheep and goats pastured in Arden. Duke Theseus hunts there. Other people enter the wood on May Morning, or for special reasons such as an elopement, or the need to rehearse a play. Even the fairies are transients. When, in 1692, someone—possibly Betterton—turned Shakespeare's comedy into *The Fairy Queen*, a spectacular opera with music by Purcell, this forest setting survived for only one act. Titania then commands that everything should be transformed into Fairy-land: something which turns out to mean an enormous paradisal park, with grottoes, arbours, tree-lined avenues and delightful walks, a lake, a pretend forest, and a river with swans.

The park of *The Fairy Queen*, its different aspects revealed and changed through the use of movable scenes, stands in a fluid but organic relationship to the palace of Duke Theseus, where the opera ends. In the Strauss play, it has become a municipal green space paled in by an un-named city. Here, the stage is dominated by a large elder bush, its leafless twigs festooned with 'bits of paper, beer cans, tights, a shoe, a broken cassette-recorder with its tape flapping about, etc.'.[62] Animal noises emanate from the cages

[59] Edward Bond, *Saved* (London, 1965), scene 6.
[60] Harold Pinter, *Victoria Station*, in *Other Places: Three Plays* (London, 1982), p. 51.
[61] Pinter, *Old Times* (London, 1971), pp. 43–4.
[62] Botho Strauss, *The Park*, trans. Tinch Minter and Anthony Vives (Sheffield, 1988), p. 7.

of a sleazy circus. In the foreground: a shallow pit filled with dirty sand. Into this dispiriting setting, from some beautiful other planet 'where the wild thyme blows', comes Oberon, hunting Titania, his 'usual quarry', but also benevolently intent on teaching human beings how to make the most of the divine gift of sexuality. His project fails. The play's version of love in idleness only makes its quartet of young lovers more faithless and petty, while turning Titania into a bestial Pasiphae. The changeling boy, now a black park attendant, for whose sexual favours a gay sculptor called Cyprian (alias Puck) once competed with Titania, brutally murders Cyprian. Victimized and be-fouled by packs of young people who rove aimlessly through the park, the immortals gradually forget those talismanic Shakespearean lines about the 'bank where the wild thyme blows': the memory of which might enable them to return to their extraterrestrial paradise. They too are trapped, at the end, in a world epitomized by the litter-strewn city park and its elder bush, 'so dirty, sick and bare': a place from which wit and elegance have vanished as completely as the deer.

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