

## I

ARTHUR F. KINNEY

# John Lyly and the University Wits: George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge and Thomas Nashe

## Figures of rhetoric – figures of speech

Today John Lyly is the most neglected, underappreciated and misunderstood Elizabethan playwright. Lyly's understanding of the world, and of language, came out of his own personal heritage which he honoured throughout his uneven career. He was the grandson of William Lyly (also spelled as Lily and Lile), High Master of St Paul's School and, with John Colet, author of the grammar school Latin text that was required at all Elizabethan schools and that survived as the fundamental Latin text well into the nineteenth century; the two men added 'Godly Lessons for Chyldren' which began with the central theme of all of John Lyly's writings: 'It is the fyrst poynte of wyse-dome, to know thy self.'<sup>1</sup> William Lyly was a member of the leading circle of humanists, including Erasmus and Thomas More, and his son – John's father – was in turn a tutor in Canterbury or at the Queen's School connected to the cathedral. John Lyly (c. 1554–1606) followed his grandfather to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he stayed an extra two years hoping for a teaching post there or for preferment under William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Instead, Burghley got him a position as secretary to his son-in-law, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

Humanism taught Lyly to love the classics. His first play, *Campaspe* (1583) came from Pliny and Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*; it was phenomenally successful, going through three editions in a single year. His second play, *Sappho and Phao*, appeared two months later; it drew on Aelian and Ovid and immediately went through two editions. Lyly's mode of writing, too – what his editor Carter A. Daniel calls 'the ornately symmetrical prose style filled with fantastic similes and constructed in rhythmic swirls of alliteration and antithesis'<sup>2</sup> – is also classical. Lyly imported into humanist work the antique rhetorical use of *isocolon* (successive phrases or clauses of the same approximate length), *parison* (parallel placement of grammatical units), and *paramoion* (similar sound in parallel members including alliteration

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76754-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists

Edited by Ton Hoenselaars

Excerpt

[More information](#)

ARTHUR F. KINNEY

but also assonance, consonance, and rhyme).<sup>3</sup> To these patterns of sound, G. K. Hunter has added proverbs, rhetorical questions and extended similes drawn from genuine, fantastic, traditional or invented natural history.<sup>4</sup> For Greek and Roman writers, as for George Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* in 1589, these were known as *schemes*, figures of rhetoric. But that observation is only partially true; Lyly was just as interested in figures of thought, or *tropes*. His language is intellectually inquisitive and playful, complex and often intense. Jonas A. Barish has noted this: 'By using the anti-thetic pair "more bolde then wise" instead of the simple adverb "boldly," Lyly underscores the fact that Callimachus [in the formative *Euphues*] might have behaved otherwise than he did, that the situation contained equivocal possibilities.'<sup>5</sup>

Two innovations that Lyly bequeathed to his generation of playwrights and those who followed them were romantic love as the proper subject for secular comedy, and revelations through the art of rhetoric of the exercise of the mind, using examples from the natural world to reveal an individual consciousness. This is a subtle but pervasive matter. There are few outright villains in Lylian drama; the struggle is an interior one. While his language may seem at first excessive, its effects are in fact unspoken. He works not so much through exposure as through revelation, and the insights are shared, often at the same moment, by the actor and the audience. With explicit metaphors, his meaning is nevertheless nuanced. Robert Y. Turner has put this another way: 'his experiments with dialogue, guided by his sense of the limitations of language, put on stage probably for the first time conversations not about love but conversations that dramatize love.'<sup>6</sup> The famous, many-layered dialogue between Phillida and Gallathea, for instance, builds on the love each of the women, disguised as men, have for each other, love they both want to confess and dare not reveal; it is an extraordinary and unprecedented situation that Shakespeare will imitate both in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* (*Gallathea*, ed. Daniel, 125–6). Just as the undisclosed connections between series of thoughts or examples harbours a telling significance, so the asides – foreshortened, truncated soliloquies – provide what must be concealed. It is a dialogue ripe with inhibitions in which spontaneous hypotheses stand in for silenced desires.

In his constant search for figures of speech which can convey figures of thought, Lyly, in his plays, keeps returning to the inhibited, employing language to show how language is avoided and not used. In *Campaspe*, all three main characters – Campaspe, Apelles and Alexander – share a fear of spoken disclosure. Sappho and Phao, the princess and the ferryman, are silenced by their distance in rank. In *Mother Bombie*, the prohibition of love between Maestius and Serena, falsely thinking themselves to be brother and

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76754-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists

Edited by Ton Hoenselaars

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## John Lyly and the University Wits

sister, is what confounds and resolves the main plot. In each case, figures of thought reveal the sharp boundaries of figures of speech while figures of speech search for tactics that can relay figures of thought in unending patterns of schemes and tropes.

Lyly applied his innovative use of classical rhetoric to plots taken from the classical writers and cast them with classical heroes and pagan gods. This humanist compound inspired Lyly's innovations that broke Renaissance drama from earlier church drama, spectacular pageants and Lord Mayor shows and gave it inventive form and purpose that would last, in developing configurations, to the Restoration. And always there was the grounding in language. 'Whatever drawbacks of his method', Barish writes,

Lyly effected a revolution in the language of comedy as significant as Marlowe's was for tragedy. He invented, virtually single-handed, a viable comic prose for the English stage, something which could replace the clumsy, uncertain medium of Gascoigne's *Supposes*, the shambling invertebrate language of *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, and the varieties of broken-down tumbling verse that did duty for prose in the popular theatre. For the first time, dramatic prose rested on an adequate structural foundation; for the first time, it was able to support an intricate plot without confusion and without prolixity.<sup>7</sup>

Lyly brought to life a classical heritage and a classical language turned into English. And he provided comedy with a rich new sense of epistemology and psychology without sacrificing playfulness and wit.

## Boys' companies

In his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), William Webbe writes that 'I think there is none that will gainsay, but Master *Iohn Lilly* hath deserved moste highe commendations, as he which hath stept one steppe further therein that any either before or since.' Such bold innovations were made in spite of, or because, Lyly wrote seven and perhaps all eight of his plays not for an adult company but for the boys' companies of St Paul's and the Chapel Royal.<sup>8</sup> Initially writing several comedies for court performance by the company of his benefactor Edward de Vere (the so-called 'Oxford Boys'), Lyly was later to provide plays for the Boys of St Paul's. With the need to secure an income, they also gave public performances, and Lyly is likely to have profited as well. The companies he wrote for consisted of choirboys – often, in his plays, given to song – and they must have continued their musicality in the sound patterns and repetitive rhythms of his euphuistic language. His audiences came to *hear* his plays; as he remarks in the Epilogue to *Campaspe* pronounced at Blackfriars, 'We hope in the ears where our travails be lodged no carping shall harbour [our] tongues' and

ARTHUR F. KINNEY

in the Epilogue delivered at court, before the Queen, he hoped for appreciation of ‘sweet notes’.<sup>9</sup> He was keenly aware of performance. But he was also keenly aware of spectacle. Apelles falling in love while painting the portrait of Campaspe in the play named for her led to his witnessing a beauty that also captivated Alexander, King of Macedon, and their competition for her – the king too high in rank; the painter consumed with art – is the situation unfolding before the sceptic philosopher Diogenes. The play was set forth visibly by the staging, with Apelles’ studio at one end, and Diogenes’ tub at the other. At the conclusion, it is royalty that is unfit for a commoner; social hierarchy is upheld. Alexander looks elsewhere for companionship: ‘Diogenes, I will have thy cabin removed nearer to my court, because I will be a philosopher.’ But Diogenes also knows his place: ‘And when you have done so I pray you remove your court further from my cabin, because I will not be a courtier’ (5.4.78–83).

‘Our intent’, Lyly writes for the Prologue of *Sappho and Phao* at the Blackfriars, ‘was at this time to move inward delight, not outward lightness, and to breed (if it might be) soft smiling, not loud laughing, knowing it to the wise to be as great pleasure to hear counsel mixed with wit as to the foolish to have sport mingled with rudeness.’<sup>10</sup> The play is designed to be intellectually amusing and enlightening, without the satire and scorn portrayed in *Campaspe*, although now humans like Sappho and Phao will mingle with gods like Venus and Cupid. This intermingling of humanity and the gods in *Sappho and Phao* is prolegomenon to *Endymion, The Man in the Moon* (1591), Lyly’s best known play. This ‘comedy of ideas’ concerns Endymion’s love for Cynthia, the moon.<sup>11</sup> As he remarks to his close friend,

I find, Eumenides, in all things both variety to content and satiety to glut, saving only my affections, which are so stayed, and withal so stately, that I can neither satisfy my heart with love nor mine eyes with wonder. My thoughts, Eumenides, are stitched to the stars, which, being as high as I can see, thou mayest imagine how much higher they are than I can reach.<sup>12</sup>

Eumenides finds this ‘mad’ (1.1.20), idolatrous (78), blasphemous (78), ‘bewitched’ (88), ‘the crazed rhetoric of a lunatic’.<sup>13</sup> But the ‘mangled and disordered mind’ (2.1.27) of Endymion enhances the well-known story from Ovid or the lesser-known shepherd Endymion in Pliny’s *Natural History* by acknowledging his capacity for wonder and his interest in both the physical and the metaphysical; it has been read as a study in Neoplatonism or as a tribute to Elizabeth I. Such reactions, however, fail to account for Lyly’s mastery in a network of connections and reflections, dramatised in four parallel and corresponding plots. As Daniel has noted,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76754-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists

Edited by Ton Hoenselaars

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## John Lyly and the University Wits

the crossings and re-crossings of these four stories give *Endimion* a unity of plot unlike anything else in Lyly's plays. The magic spell cast upon Endimion, for example, is conceived by Tellus [his earthly lover] (level 3) and executed by the old enchantress Dipsas (level 4); later Eumenides (level 2) learns from Dipsas's husband Geron that the spell can be broken by a kiss from Cynthia (level 1).<sup>14</sup>

Such acts, all motivated by love, are further complicated by Eumenides' loyal friendship to Endymion and parodied by the braggart soldier Sir Tophas:

love hath, as it were, milked by thoughts and drained from my heart the very substance of my accustomed courage. It worketh in my head like new wine, so as I must hoop my sconce with iron, lest my head break and so I bewray my brains. But I pray thee, first discover me in all parts, that I may be like a lover, and then will I sigh and die. Take my gun, and give me a gown. *Cedant arma togae.* (3.3.23–30)<sup>15</sup>

Shakespeare will find in Sir Tophas the suggestion for Don Adriano de Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost* and the lunary bank on which Endymion sleeps under the spell of Dipsas a source for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but Lyly introduces something else Shakespeare will take up: before the spell is broken by Corsites, Endymion 'hath been cast into a deep sleep almost these twenty years' according to Eumenides (3.4.18–19) and then, later, 'Thou hast slept forty years' (5.1.56) while the rest of the play follows a normal time scheme. It is the first use in English drama of double time that will reappear later in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*.

Lyly's finest play is *Gallathea* (1588), and in its experiments with gender the most influential. It is one of the first English comedies making use of disguise – here boys playing girls playing boys. Like *As You Like It*, it retreats from the court to the pastoral. Like *Twelfth Night*, its plot is a response to the dangers of the sea. It concludes, like *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Winter's Tale*, with magical transformations. Gallathea and Phillida are disguised by their fathers to protect them from being made virginal sacrifices; but the play orchestrates this situation by Cupid's disguise to gain admission to Diana's nymphs and Neptune disguises himself as a shepherd to 'mark all, and in the end will mar all'; 'destiny cannot be prevented by craft', he later adds.<sup>16</sup>

Once again, Lyly manages four distinct groups – gods, parents, lovers, and commoners – and integrates the plots of the two women disguised as boys, boys whose flight to the woods is the result of a shipwreck, Neptune's ritual and Cupid's scheme. The incredibility of Neptune and Cupid assuming human form is reversed by the alchemist, the astronomer and the cozenor who con Rafe, Robin and Dick. Their comic exploits, alongside Cupid's

ARTHUR F. KINNEY

Puck-like tricks, help make the anticipation of Agar's savagery and the anxiety of Phillida and Gallathea bearable. Lyly's modulated figures of speech reverberate in his figures of thought. His final innovation is the play's incompleteness. Just as, later, it is not clear what interpretations Horatio will give to Hamlet's story or Lodovico to Othello's (if he ever tells one), so here it is unknown which disguised boy is transformed into a girl. Lyly's earlier experiments required his audience to interpret his prologues, plays and epilogues; now he asks them to complete the story as well.

*Midas* (?1589) displays Lyly's rare mastery of plot construction. The work is taken from two separate tales in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* xi – Midas' decision to choose the power to turn everything into gold when offered three possibilities by Martius (war and control), Mellacrites (wealth) and Eristus (love), and his judgement of a music contest between Pan and Apollo when, erroneously choosing Pan, he is awarded with the ears of an ass – and, employing sequential references, parallel themes and cross-cutting, brings the two disparate stories into a single cohesive narrative. The underlying form, drawing on the studies of the humanist classroom, is the debate, and at those pageant-like moments when all action is suspended for dialogue, his work looks forward to the court masque. Critics commonly assert that the play takes on more force as a guarded analogy between Midas and the aggressive Philip II of Spain whose Armada had only just been defeated by the English.

*A Pleasant Conceited Comedy Called Mother Bombie* (1588–91) is named for a minor character, a prophetess who is an outgrowth of Sibylla in *Sappho and Phao*, but the play, drawing on Plautus and foreshadowing *The Comedy of Errors*, has four fathers – Memphio and Stellio, wealthy landowners, and Prisius and Sperantus, two men of modest means – seeking marriage partners for their children. What is at stake is money – the fortunes of the children are determined by the fortunes of the families. 'Marriage among them', Candius, Sperantus' son, remarks, 'is become a market.'<sup>17</sup> T. W. Baldwin has seen the farcical placement of fathers and children as both balanced and contrasting.<sup>18</sup>

*Love's Metamorphosis: A Witty and Courtly Pastoral* (1595) is Lyly's last play and his shortest (1,150 lines) with the fewest characters (fifteen) in the fewest scenes (eleven). It now seems a deliberate signature piece, bringing together all his interests and contributions to Elizabethan drama: a love comedy mixing gods and humans in parallel situations that is dense, choric, and so transparent, memorably unfolding in pattern, structure and tone that give even its moral candour a haunting sense of beauty: 'it surely must be', Daniel judges, 'one of the most unjustly neglected plays in English literature'.<sup>19</sup> The play appeals to sight and to sound, to spectacle and to language,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76754-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists

Edited by Ton Hoenselaars

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## John Lyly and the University Wits

from the moment Ceres' sacred tree speaks in Fidelia's voice to the moment her three nymphs are transformed into their symbolic counterparts. Such magical moments, in this work, are psychologically sound and intellectually suggestive.

## University Wits

Lyly's sense of classical learning, already popularised in court performances and public pageantry such as the Lord Mayor shows, inspired him to write for a career. He was by far the most successful of the Oxford and Cambridge graduates who, in the 1580s, shared his ambition, a group now labelled the 'University Wits'. According to G. K. Hunter, they

revolutionized Elizabethan popular literature by bringing to its aid interests and expectations that had not previously been seen to be relevant, but which were close enough to the tradition to combine with it and create new wholes. The position of the university wits, caught between a lively vernacular culture that could be despised intellectually but not disregarded economically, and a humanist ideal of literary excellence that remained obstinately an ideal rather than a reality – this position is reflected in their lives, humble in origin and straitened in circumstances, continuously involved in the vernacular realities of earning, and not earning, a living. But at the same time they remained caught intellectually by the dream of the poet as a god on earth, the dream of eloquence as the key to power, the dream of a civilization in which the learning was the heart of kingship.<sup>20</sup>

After Lyly, the best of these University Wits writing drama was George Peele, the son of the clerk and teacher at Christ's Hospital, London, and the author of two works on bookkeeping, who as a student first at Broadgates Hall (now Pembroke College), Oxford, until he moved across the street to Christ Church, translated Euripides' *Iphigenia* plays from Greek, earning the praise of the Latin scholar William Gager. He took his BA in 1577 and his MA two years later. In 1589, Thomas Nashe would write of Peele in a letter 'To the Gentlemen of Both Vniversities' prefacing Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) that 'I dare commend him vnto all that know him, as the chiefe supporter of pleasance now liuing, the *Atlas* of Poetrie, and *primus verborum artifex*: whose first increase, of the arraignment of *Paris*, might pleade to your opinion, his pregnant dexteritie of wit, manifold varietie of inuention, wherein (*me iudice*) hee goeth a step beyond all that write' (sig. B3v).

Peele's best work is *The Old Wives Tale*, probably written in 1591, about the time he and Shakespeare were composing *Titus Andronicus*. Its plot construction is stunning, the most ingenious of all plays of the English Renaissance, although, as A. R. Braunmuller writes, 'In style, subject matter,



ARTHUR F. KINNEY

construction, and even in its very short length, the play seems to be utterly *sui generis*.<sup>21</sup> The work begins when three pages – Anticke, Frolicke and Fantasticke – are lost in the woods until there appears out of the blackness the blacksmith Clunch who invites them to spend the night at his cottage, where his wife Madge offers them cheese and pudding and then, at their request, offers ‘to drive away the time with an old wives winters tale’, such as Mamillius will request in Shakespeare’s late romance.<sup>22</sup> Madge brings a story of a conjuror who turned himself into a dragon and abducted a fair daughter, but here she falters: she was the daughter of ‘a King, or a Lord, or a Duke’,<sup>23</sup> she is unsure which. The girl’s two brothers go to seek her – and at this point, the two brothers come on stage and take over the story themselves. They introduce an old man who takes over the story himself. And so begins a plot in which nine successive stories unfold from their individual precedents, adding new characters, new plot twists and moments of magic and spectacle until the end, when, in reverse order, the scenes pile up to make a whole narrative: the daughter is sought by both her brothers and Eumenides, the ‘Wandering Knight’ who is her lover,<sup>24</sup> and finally rescued. The separate episodes turn out to be interlocking parts of the same winter’s tale. But during the intervening period, time itself is interrupted and fragmented, uprooting customary linearity, turning fluid. Moreover, the present narrators recall individual portions of the past in their present retelling which involve unrealistic spectacles (a man changes nightly into a bear; two furies appear out of the conjuror’s cell; two heads are pulled out of a well), and various prophecies come true, mixing past, present and future, suspending chronology. All of life’s reference points are removed, unmooring events to give the play an increasing magicality. The presentation ends when Madge, who has fallen asleep in the course of it, awakes and offers her departing guests some bread and cheese. Along the way all forms of popular writing – romance, folktale, chivalric adventure, ghost story, witchcraft, pageantry and, most of all drama itself – are parodied and particular works, like the anonymous play *Mucedorus*, are subjects of burlesque. No other English Renaissance play is so complex or asks so much of its audience, while at the same time providing frequent intervals of song and dance that give playgoers time for reflection.

Peele’s first play, *The Araynement of Paris* (1584), taken from Ovid, reaches a level of poetic mastery he was not to match again. In this his most Lylian work, the theme is love and loyalty, bringing together on stage Olympic and country gods and pastoral characters. The play concerns Paris’ award of a golden apple to Venus (love) as the most beautiful goddess rather than to Juno (majesty) or to Athena (wisdom) and begins with a prologue by Ate (discord) who likens Paris’ disastrous choice to ‘the Tragedie of



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76754-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists

Edited by Ton Hoenselaars

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## John Lyly and the University Wits

Troie'.<sup>25</sup> The remarkable centrepiece is '*Paris oration to the Councell of the gods*' (III, 102–4) which Braunmuller demonstrates is a classical declamation complimenting the court, offering self-deprecation, promising brevity, admitting the deed but then excusing himself, suggesting others might do the same, rejecting partiality, making concessions and offering extenuating arguments.<sup>26</sup> Asked to tell a story, he tells one much as Othello will before the Venetian senate:

And thus, thryse reverend, have I tolde my tale,  
 And crave the torment of my guiltless soule  
 To be measured by my faultles thought.  
 If warlicke Pallas, or the queene of heaven  
 Sue to reverse my sentence by appeale,  
 Be it as please your majesties devine,  
 The wronge, the hurte not mine, if anie be,  
 But hers whose beauty claymed the prize of me. (III, 104)

Venus surrenders the apple to Diana who in turn awards it to Queen Elizabeth:

This Paragon, this onely this is shee,  
 In whom do meete so manie gifts in one,  
 On whom our countrie gods so often gaze,  
 In honour of whose name the Muses singe. (III, 111–12)

The Children of the Chapel, in performing this play with its songs and several dumb shows, must have been at court in the Queen's presence.

Peele's history play *The Battle of Alcazar* (?1589) comes down to us in a mutilated text that introduces, for the first time in English drama, a Presenter to open each act, anticipatory of the Choruses in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part Two* and especially *Henry V*. The play traces Muly Mahamet's bloody rise to the crown beginning with a dumb show in which two murderers smother the young prince in bed and then strangle their uncle, the staging of such crimes looking forward to events in *Richard III* and to the dumb show in *Hamlet*, and concluding with the title battle bringing down Sebastian, King of Portugal; Abdelmelec, King of Morocco; and his nephew, Muly Mahamet, the Moor. Following Lyly's practice of subplots, the English gentleman adventurer Thomas Stukeley, having aborted a papal mission to fight in Ireland in order to join a Portuguese expedition to Africa, is stabbed by an unidentified Italian and 'Dies in these desert fields of Africa' (5.1.122). Sebastian fails to enlist the aid of King Philip of Spain in the battle with the Moors. Shakespeare may also have recalled Muly Mahamet's final lines – 'A horse, a horse, a villain, a horse / That I may take the river straight and fly' (5.1.96–7) – when writing *Richard III*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76754-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists

Edited by Ton Hoenselaars

Excerpt

[More information](#)

ARTHUR F. KINNEY

The most prolific of the University Wits was Robert Greene (1558–93): in his thirty-five years, he produced an unusually large number of romances and pamphlets, four single-authored plays, and one in collaboration with Thomas Lodge. He was born in Norwich where he attended grammar school before entering Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, as a sizar in 1573; at Michaelmas term 1575 he transferred to St John's College, Cambridge, where he was awarded a BA in 1580, followed by an MA from Clare Hall, Cambridge, in 1583 and an MA from Oxford in 1588. He proudly put on the title-pages of his publications 'Master of Arts in both universities'. His best-known play is *The Honorary History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* which brings together the historic Roger Bacon, a thirteenth-century Oxford philosopher and alchemist whose name was connected with magic and heresy, and the wholly imaginary Friar Bungay, an underplot (following Lyly) with an overplot about the historic Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry III, and the wholly imaginary fair Margaret of Fressingfield, a country milkmaid and daughter of the Keeper of Fressingfield, Suffolk. The two narratives are stitched together as studies in the vanity of human wishes, of human presumption, and of intolerance with patient understanding.

In his visit to England, Emperor Frederick of Germany praises Oxford to King Henry:

The town gorgeous, with high-built colleges,  
And scholars seemly in their grave attire,  
Learnèd in searching principles of art.<sup>27</sup>

This follows (as with Lyly) a similar, echoing observation by Edward Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, Prince Edward's friend who praises the Surrey landscape:

Alate we ran the deer, and through the launds  
Stripped with our nags the lofty frolic bucks  
That scudded 'fore the teasers like the wind,  
Ne'er was the deer of merry Fressingfield  
So lustily pulled down by jolly mates,  
Nor shared by the farmers such fat venison,  
So frankly dealt, this hundred years before;  
Nor have I seen my lord more frolic in the chase. (scene 1, 3–10)

This is a pastoral land of peace, plenty, and community. When the Prince asks Lacy to court Margaret for him, he turns euphuistic when writing to her:

The blooms of the almond tree grow in the night and vanish in a morn; the flies hemerae, fair Peggy, take life with the sun and die with the dew; fancy, that slippeth in with a gaze, goeth out with a wink; and too timely loves have ever the shortest length. I write this as thy grief and my folly. (scene 10, 123–8)