

# ANGLICA

An International Journal of English Studies

Special Issue: William Shakespeare **25/3 2016**

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## ***Jaques and the Wounded Stag* by William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney: (Re)Painting Shakespeare's Melancholic Figure**

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### **Abstract**

The article discusses the representation of Jaques, Shakespeare's melancholic figure from *As You Like It*, in the painting entitled *Jaques and the Wounded Stag in the Forest of Arden* by William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney (1788–1789). The painting is analysed both within the context of the original play as well as in the context of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century discussions on the significance of nature. The presentation of the scene is understood to constitute a critical statement on the play, foregrounding the truly melancholy nature of Jaques. The painting is analysed within the framework of the psychological approach to images introduced by Rudolf Arnheim, the iconographical analysis proposed by Erwin Panofsky and the theory of intermediality.

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This article discusses the representation of Jaques, Shakespeare's melancholic figure from *As You Like It*, in the painting entitled *Jaques and the Wounded Stag in the Forest of Arden* by William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney. Scene 1.2 allows the painters not only to envision Shakespeare's dramatic character but to present their individual approach to the concept of melancholy in the artistic and literary dimension. Accordingly, the painters create a sincerely melancholy Jaques who – now a subjectively envisioned fictional figure – still corresponds with the original character from Shakespeare's comedy. The painting features also a strong juxtaposition of Shakespeare's figures and forest landscape, and reflects the 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics of nature.<sup>1</sup>

To fully appreciate the imaginative and critical strength of the discussed painting it seems reasonable to review some of the methods of studying artworks. Rudolf Arnheim, for example, argues in favour of a psychological approach and recommends detailed analysis of paintings even if one lacks professional expertise as regards art and art history. Arnheim claims that an “artwork is a form of visual thinking” and it “requires the ability to express by means of shapes, by means of patterns, certain things which are of relevance, not just to feeling but equally

to the intellect” (Pariser 182). In *Art and Visual Perception. A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, Arnheim reminds us that a recipient becomes intellectually and emotionally involved in the perception of art. Accordingly, a recipient perceives the composition of an image, the patterns of colours and shapes, and unconsciously experiences the forces that work on the surface of the painting. In turn the iconographic analysis of Erwin Panofsky provides viewers with procedures that allow them to investigate symbols, gestures, items and events represented in a painting. The investigation is conducted on three levels – the level of the natural perception of forms and their interactions (“natural subject matter”), the level of the culture knowledge where one recognises the allegorical meanings of introduced motives (“conventional subject matter”), and the level of the historical environment of an image (“intrinsic meaning or content”) (Panofsky 12–15). The synthesis of all the obtained results constitutes the meaning of an artwork. Finally, the studies of intermediality, popularized by the German scholars in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focus on the relationship between two or more media, which are conventionally considered to be independent semiotic realms. The scholars search for specific links and references that can be detected between at least two medially independent works such as, for example, a painting and a literary text which inspired it (Woolf 35–37). As a result of these intermedial relationships, it is possible to generate alternative ways of “reading” the painting and, consequently, the original text.

Significantly enough, the painting by William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney is often seen as a subversive reading of Shakespeare’s play. As many other paintings inspired by literary works, it proposes “a counter-reading, a displacement of interests, a shift in emphasis and affect” (Bal 37). Consequently, it plays down the main character, and refocuses our attention on the nature corrupted by people. Moreover, the interpretation of the painting may go well beyond Shakespeare’s original to encompass a broadly understood metaphysical domain. An inquisitive viewer can discover “an allegorical or mystical sense which is not intended by the accompanying text” (Sed-Rajna 28). The “mystical sense” concerns the emotional condition of Jaques and the metaphorical dialogue of people and nature.

## 1. Jaques as Shakespeare’s Invention

The majority of Shakespeare’s plots and characters are based on diverse literary sources. Regarding the comedy *As You Like It* written in 1598, the playwright draws extensively on the classical and pastoral traditions, the 16<sup>th</sup> century versions of “fabliau” by Rabelais and Chaucer, Petrarchan love poetry and romance, 14<sup>th</sup> century fairy tales and, above all, on the prose romance of Thomas Lodge, i.e., *Rosalynde* printed in 1590 (Bloom 212, Dusinberre 2).

However, Jaques belongs to a few characters who are Shakespeare's own invention. Possibly the figure reflects the real life characters such as Thomas Lodge,<sup>2</sup> Ben Jonson,<sup>3</sup> the Earl of Essex.<sup>4</sup> The biographies of all these characters show some similarities with the vicissitudes of Jaques's fate, however, Shakespeare's exaggerations made them seem ridiculous. Jaques might be also regarded as the first attempt at a Hamlet figure – a melancholic cynic and an outcast (Dusinberre 3).

Although a supporting figure not present until the second act, Jaques constantly seems to be of great attraction for the rest of the company and the audience.<sup>5</sup> As a disgruntled malcontent, he distinguishes himself among “a many merry men” who have moved to the Forest of Arden following their beloved or as banished Duke Senior to live there “like the old Robin Hood of England” (1.1.110–111). The information about Jaques's life revealed throughout the play by Duke Senior, his daughter Rosalind and Touchstone, allow us to construct a familiar but unfriendly character.

Rosalind, who teases Jaques due to the foreignness, implied, for instance, by his name<sup>6</sup> and his constant sadness, is the one to whom he expounds the uniqueness of his melancholy. This particular disposition does not find its source in competition, romantic feelings, noble pride, ambitions, opportunism, pedantry, or all of these, as is in the case of lovers (3.5.10–14). As Jaques himself explains his melancholy is “compounded of / many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed / the sundry's computation of my travels, in which my / often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness” (3.5.15–18), which means that the memories of foreign countries, people and things he saw there, cause the “volatile heaviness” of his soul (Dusinberre 287). Another reference to the travels can be found in a stanza skilfully composed by Jaques, where he declares the readiness to share the bitter experience gathered during sea-voyages with other fools, i.e. young people who once believed in the myth of wealthy exotic lands and abandoned their pleasurable lives to face the adventure:

If it do come to pass  
That any man turn ass,  
Leaving his wealth and ease  
A stubborn will to please,  
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame!  
Here shall he see gross fools as he  
An if he will come to me. (2.5.44–50)

Based on this poem and subsequent Rosalind's comments (4.1.19–24), one may assume that Jaques has sold his estate and all belongings, not unlike many real Elizabethan travellers, for instance, Sir Walter Raleigh, and sailed for “mythical and for real gold” (Dusinberre 91). This assumption is further strengthened by some rather pessimistic allusions to sea-voyagers, such as the dry brain of Touchstone

compared to “the remainder biscuits / After a voyage” (2.7.39–40) or the unsteadiness of Touchstone and Audrey’s love *voyage* which seems to be “for two months victualled” (5.4.188–189).

Although apparently impecunious, Jaques remains an ambitious person with a dream of “a motley coat” (2.7.43), the possession of Touchstone, the jester. The coat stands for the freedom of speech – a privilege of licensed fools – necessary to heal humanity. However, Duke Senior immediately reminds Jaques what kind of man he used to be: “Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin. / For thou thyself hast been a libertine, / As sensual as the brutish sting itself” (2.7.64–66). Consequently, and to the amusement of spectators, the Duke accuses Jaques of being a hypocrite and points out his sins committed in the days of yore: libertarianism, misconduct and lust.

Nevertheless, the philosophical nature of Jaques outbalances his vices. The great monologues on the harshness of life in the Forest or at court (2.1.26–63), the role of the fool (2.7.45–61) or the nature of humanity (“All the world’s a stage,” 2.7.140–167) are remembered better than his aversion toward people, asperity and indolence. His final decision of abandoning court life and remaining in the Forest to accompany Duke Frederic in his religious transformation might be an indication that his seriousness is not pretended.

## **2. Jaques as a Melancholic Hero by William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney in *Jacques and the Wounded Stag in the Forest of Arden***

Jaques is the main figure in several paintings from the Romantic period; among others, *Jacques and the Wounded Stag in the Forest of Arden* (1788–1789) (Martineau 102). The painting is an outcome of a collaborative project of William Hodges – a painter of landscapes (Cust 10), Sawrey Gilpin – an animal painter and a portraitist (Wilmot-Buxton 81), and George Romney – an eccentric, self-centred painter and portraitist who regarded the works of Shakespeare as an inexhaustible supply of his artistic inspirations (Chamberlain 142). The scene featuring in the painting derives from the episode recalled by First Lord in scene 1, act 2 of the play:

Today my Lord of Amiens and myself  
 Did steal behind him as he lay along  
 Under an oak whose antic root peeps out  
 Upon the brook that brawls along this wood;  
 To the which place a poor sequestered stag,  
 That from the hunter’s aim had ta’en a hurt,  
 Did come to languish; and indeed, my lord,  
 The wretched animal heaved forth such groans  
 That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat

Almost to bursting, and the big round tears  
Coursed one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase. And thus the hairy fool,  
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
Stood on th'extremest verge of the swift brook,  
Augmenting it with tears. (2.1.29–43)

The lines offer a vivid description of the situation and introduce the atmosphere of the seriousness that is undermined with triviality. Thus, a melancholic pose of a thinker is contrasted with the peeping pair of Lords crouching behind a bush; the liveliness of the “brawling” waters clashes with the image of a mortally wounded deer, and even a powerful oak is diminished with an adjective “antic” meaning not only “ancient” but also “grotesque” or “comic” (Dennis-Bryan, Hodgson & Lockley 94).

The continuation of the First Lord’s report reveals some comments of the Melancholic (2.1.44–63). With “thousands of similes,” Jaques provides the audience with the vision of humanity hidden behind the image of the wounded deer and its herd. First Jacques highlights the pointlessness of the deer’s weeping: the water in the brook remains unchanged despite its tears and the stream will continue to flow undisturbed. Secondly, he compares the deer to a “worldling,” i.e., a person whose values are shaped by their worldly wealth and consequences (Dusinberre 193); someone who is dependent on social conventions, blinded by his own affluence and, consequently, not able to decide about himself. The stag/human possesses nothing that might be desired by “velvet fiends” – wealthy nobles, who already have a lot and feel free to leave their now invalid companion behind. The lethal wound separates the deer from the healthy “fat and greasy citizens” of the forest. The misery and bankruptcy of a human being prompt others to escape as if the condition was contagious. Despite deer/man’s “statement,” the “careless,” satisfied, full and blind herd/court ignores such an unwelcome company. Persisting in his accusations against people, Jaques is “swearing that we / Are mere usurpers, tyrants and what’s worse, / to fright the animals and to kill them up / In their assigned and native dwelling-place” (2.1.60–63). Jaques refrains from further commenting on the relationship between man and nature, but the image already serves to expose human vices such as meanness, inherent destructiveness, etc.

### **3. The Painting**

Relying on the picturesque account featuring in the original play, William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney construct their own interpretation of the dramatic figures and their attitudes towards nature. The character of the language employed by Shakespeare to build the scene and Jaques’s figure is crucial for the work of the mentioned painters:

[...] it seems that what focuses attention and creates seeing in the play is language of two sorts, both intensely figurative language (which often approaches the emblematic) and the overtly emblematic language of ekphrasis. [...] Moreover, ekphrasis seems often to provide characters with a kind of etched-in depth, enabling us to “see” more fully and completely; it seems to import or project some form of otherness, even subjectivity, to character (if paradoxically) by shifting codes from dramatic to allegorical. (Ronk 258)

Ekphrasis – the verbal picture of the Forest of Arden – “stops the forward movement of the plot in order to allow contemplation, spatial exploration of a specific character or moment” (Ronk 257) and allows painters to discover their understanding of the scene and its participants.

Now, however, Shakespeare’s visual imagery is translated into a language of painting and thereby endowed with concreteness and medium-specific means of signification. The vertical line (established by a pair of tree trunks) crosses the central point<sup>7</sup> of the image and divides it into two sections: the left side is occupied by the deer and the right side features men. The left side of the painting depicts exclusively wild nature with only a tiny indication of human bestiality suggested by a bleeding wound in the deer’s back. Placed along the left vertical frame of the painting, the wall of trees is kept in the dark subdued shades, and the two stags exposed by sunny rays breaking through the thicket instantly attract the attention of observers. Exposed only partially, the deer in the background seems to be in motion, but the more impressive animal (impressive due to its “heaviness”) stays frozen above the brook. This sense of impressiveness and significance derives partially from the position of the animal i.e. it stands almost in the middle of a diagonal structural line where two forces, one produced by the vanishing point and the other generated by the left down corner, are balanced. However, the stability is not entirely preserved here because only the animal’s head is situated exactly in the central point of this line, but the heavy croup is equiposed by a brighter stone located just behind the deer. Consequently, the achieved stillness emphasises the idea that the animal is dying. In contrast, the smaller animal which turns its head to look at the wounded “friend” seems to be thriving. The impression is produced not only by the vivid arrangement of its legs or the significant turn of its muzzle, but also its very position in the painting. The stag is situated near the edge of the composition and, as a result, the inner forces push it out of the frames. However, two vertical trunks that gain their significance from a distinctive stream of light, separate the animal from the edge of the painting. In addition, the stag is kept in place due to the fact that its head is turned in the opposite direction than its body i.e. facing right. By choosing this particular location for this small figure, the artists manage to expose the difference between the condition of the wounded stag, which is just about to die, and his “velvet friends,” i.e. the lively, careless, fat and greasy herd.

As for the background, three distinguishable areas of horizontally arranged leaves and branches, vertically ordered trunks and a diagonally (from left to right) flowing stream, seem to provide a picture of the natural order. This combination differs in shape, proportions and directions but, at the same time, establishes a homogeneous pattern pulsating with life, where all elements seem to be necessary and in their right places. Nothing tends to dominate or disturb the attention of the observers (Arnheim 35). Consequently, the composition makes it easier to accept the cruel law of nature which forces the healthy animals to abandon the dying members of the herd.

The right side of the painting is definitely more chaotic. By foregrounding this aspect, the painters might have been hinting at Shakespeare's idea of nature invaded by human beings and therefore threatened with their destructiveness. The potent and stable figure of Jaques is trapped between two forces that have their sources in the central point of the painting and in the bottom right corner. The notion of imprisonment is additionally emphasised by the fact that the figure's body is positioned along the line that separates the bright and dark areas in the painting. This arrangement – bright but heavy colours up and dark but lighter colours down – stands against the law of gravitation, which is why it might be perceived as disturbing and therefore attracts the viewer's attention.

Due to his isolation and colours, the heavy figure of Jaques seems to be more distinctive than a man peeping from behind the oak's trunk. The forces which pull the small figure of the First Lord (or Lord of Amiens) in the direction of the frame, appear to be strong, as if he were an unwanted person in the image. However, the painters stabilize the figure by positioning him with stretched arms and turned head against the forces generated by the frame.

The right side of the painting is governed by the combination of vertical, horizontal and irregular lines. The diagonal band of light marks a wide stripe of dry ground and separates the dark patches of grass and withered trunk beneath from the colossal trees above. The intersecting trunks (two vertical lines) and deformed roots (irregular lines) of these old trees dominate the image and, consequently, introduce an uncomfortable sensation of encumbrance. It is difficult to find here the regularity or gentleness characteristic of the "natural" part of the painting. What is more, it seems impossible to unite these two parts – as if the animal kingdom could not coexist with the human domain. In this way, the painters manage to emphasise the destructive force (underlined also by the dryness of trees and barrenness of sandy clearing) of humanity that ruins the natural order of the forest.

Although, the melancholic character and the wounded animal dominate the left and right sides of the painting respectively, it is Jaques who draws the attention of the viewer. In comparison to other figures, he occupies a distinctive part of the painting, the heavy red colour of his jacket contrasts with other shades, and he is positioned in a well-balanced point. However, the figure of the wounded

stag appears also significant. The animal is obviously nearer the vanishing point – almost in the centre of the forces that determine the layout of the whole image – and thus it gains weight. The sense of the animal’s significance is further reinforced by Jaques, the First Lord and the other stag all looking at it. Although, the stag’s positioning in the left part of the painting makes it more impressive, it is not enough to balance Jaques’s heaviness.

Significantly enough, Arnheim points to some other aspects of the perception of weight, directions, and dynamics in paintings and to the subjective way of valuing the right and left side of paintings. Citing fellow art theorists, Heinrich Wölfflin or Mercedes Gaffron, he states that an image is “read” from the left to the right side. The diagonal line that goes from the bottom left corner to the top right corner is normally seen as a rising line. Therefore, all objects located on the right side of the painting seem to be heavier or compressed. Also, owing to the dominance of the left hemisphere of the human brain (responsible for speech, writing and reading), ordinary viewers perceive the objects located on the right side as something easy to recognise and, at the same time, heavier. Nevertheless, the left side is regarded as more essential and positive; and the viewers subconsciously identify themselves with everything which is depicted there. Consequently, what they see there becomes more important than the figures/actions located in the right side of a painting (Arnheim 46–49). Accordingly, by positioning the animal world on the left side of the image, the potential viewer is encouraged to perceive nature as something positive. The right side of the painting, occupied by humans, is more readable (Jaques’s size, colours, the exact location) but negative. The generated impression stays in agreement with 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophy stressing human destructiveness and an inability to adjust to our natural environment.

Also Sillars underlines the connection between Shakespeare’s melancholic figure and the 18<sup>th</sup> century nature philosophy as represented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He discovers in Jaques’s pose the references to Joseph Wright’s portrait of Sir Brook Boothby from ca. 1781, featuring “the aristocrat lying before a brook beneath a tree, clutching a slim book with one word on its spine: Rousseau” (Sillars 283). By alluding not only to Shakespeare but to contemporary art and philosophy, William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney elucidate the liaison that exists between individuals and nature. “The allusion validates Jaques’s sadness by placing it within a Rousseauiste statement of the unity of the natural world. That Jaques is presented beneath a large, dead oak tree confirms this: all nature mourns the wounding of the stag” (Sillars 283).

#### **4. The Artistic Reading of Jaques as a Character**

Although Shakespeare’s original scene takes place in winter, the painters decided to introduce Jaques in the autumn ambience of a hunting season, surrounded by

yellowish brown and yellowish green bush. Without the title defining the place and characters, it would be challenging to recognise in this middle-aged man (probably in his 60s) Shakespeare's Jaques. He is posing underneath a dead tree "in the position historically sanctioned for the melancholic"<sup>8</sup> (Sillars 283), with his head resting on his left hand and the distinct expression of irritation and boredom or pretended sadness<sup>9</sup> in his face. His face is partially overcast by a shadow that gives his complexion a dark sallow colour. The red-brown-green composition of Jaques's garments distinguishes itself against the yellow dry ground. The colours are symbolically associated with earth. The dryness and homogeneity of the background is juxtaposed with the rippling waves of the brook.

William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney composed their painting in strict compliance with the historical conventions of representing Melancholy. An early graphic example of the representation of Melancholy can be found in the collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman emblems published by Cesare Ripa in 1593. The emblem features an old forlorn figure sitting on the bare rock with the head propped on both hands. Next to the figure, a leafless tree rises from an infertile soil (Ripa 272).

Another source of their inspiration could have been Albrecht Durer's *Melancholy I*.<sup>10</sup> Analysing Durer's work, Erwin Panofsky refers to Gallenic theory of four humours "based on the assumption that both the body and the mind of man were conditioned by four basic fluids" (277): yellow gall (choler), phlegm, the blood (a sanguine) and black gall (melancholy). Based on this theory, the nature of a melancholic figure was associated with earth, dryness and coldness: "it was related [...] to autumn, evening, and an age of about sixty" (Panofsky 277). All these features assigned by Panofsky to a melancholic nature can be seen in the painted figure of Jaques:

melancholics [...] are both unfortunate and disagreeable. Thin and swarthy, the melancholic is *awkward, miserly, spiteful, greedy, malicious, cowardly, faithless, irreverent and drowsy*. He is *surly, sad, forgetful, lazy and sluggish*; he shuns the company of his fellow-men and despises the opposite sex; and his only redeeming feature [...] is a certain inclination for solitary study. (278)

Panofsky supplies the explanations of particular gestures, symbols and visualisations appearing in art and literature. For instance, the image of a head resting on a hand is derived from ancient Egyptian art and proliferates in Byzantine paintings. "As an expression of brooding thought, fatigue or sorrow this attitude is found in hundreds and thousands of figures and had become a standing attribute of melancholy" (Panofsky 282). Furthermore, one of the main features of melancholics – their dusky, sallow complexion, occasionally turning black – is also "in Milton's mind when he described his *divinest Melancholy*" (Panofsky 283) in the poem *Il Penseroso* ['The Serious Man'] from c.1631. Melancholy –

Whose saintly visage is too bright  
 To hit the sense of human sight,  
 And therefore to our weaker view  
 O'erlaid with black, staid wisdom's hue. (l. 11–16)

In Milton's verses resounds also Aristotelian doctrine concerning the health condition of great individuals – "All truly outstanding men, whether distinguished in philosophy, in statecraft, in poetry or in the arts, are melancholics – some of them even to such an extent that they suffer from ailments induced by the black gall" (Forster 953, Panofsky 285). Traditionally, to prevent the development of this psychological indisposition, the patients are advised to surround themselves with aquatic plants. An iconographic equivalent of such a treatment is to situate Melancholy near the source of water, for instance Durer's Melancholy is sitting near the sea, and William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney's Jaques is posing along the brook.

It the Renaissance tradition Aristotle's insight became somewhat reversed: it was not genius that was causing Melancholy, but Melancholy was to liberate genius:

persons with social ambitions were as anxious to *learn how to be melancholy*, as Ben Jonson's Stephan puts it, as they are today to learn tennis or bridge. A climax of refinement is reached in Shakespeare's Jaques who uses the mask of a melancholic by fashion and snobbery to hide the fact that he is a genuine one. (Panofsky 286)

The image of Jaques introduced by Shakespeare is ambiguous and the audience cannot be certain (like in the case of Hamlet and his madness) whether his melancholy is pretended or real. Paradoxically enough, by employing the traditional patterns of art, it was the painters who managed to endow Shakespeare's malcontent with stunning suggestiveness and true melancholy.<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney follow Shakespeare's picturesque description of the scene 1.2, focusing on all details indicated by the text. The Forest of Arden, as they might imagine it "is breathtakingly beautiful, with great oak trees, running brooks, green pastures, banks willows, flowers, birds, sheep and deer" (Dusinberre 51) seems to be an Arcadian garden, where the banished Duke and his fellows "fleet the / time carelessly as they did in the golden world" (1.1.112–113). However, "it is also a working environment, with shepherds, a goat-girl [...], foresters and locals [...]" (Dusinberre 51) and a shadowy place marked by suffering.<sup>12</sup>

Shakespeare employs the image of natural landscape in order to expose the condition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century society with, on the one hand, its mendacity, destructive notions, lack of humility, and on the other hand, its fondness for hunting, playing, writing love letters, and escaping into a pastoral world. Even Jaques's scene, though it might be considered as one of the saddest in the play, is reported upon in a comic convention.

The painting dramatizes this scene, firstly, by confronting the audience with a dying animal, and secondly, by releasing Jaques of the comicality that constitutes a common feature of his in the play. William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney rely on the Renaissance aesthetics of the Melancholy, but also on the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophy of nature presented in the works of Rousseau and contemporary literature.

Consequently, the pictorial interpretation of the scene 1.2 might be derived not only from Shakespeare's picturesque lines or the contemporary art whose examples are mentioned above, but also from Nature Poetry. The 18<sup>th</sup> century marked by the political turmoil, the cultural development of society, and the Industrial Revolution and all its consequences stimulates the poetic vision of the natural landscape as a place of retirement. The image similar to that described by Shakespeare appears in the numerous neo-classical writings. For instance, Steele "in one of his essays [...] pictures the personified figures of Solitude, Silence, and Contemplation seated at the 'end of a range of trees' 'on a bank of moss, with a silent brook creeping at their feet'" (Willson 596); or Mark Akenside, who in his *Preface to the Odes*, "associates reading Latin poetry with a 'verdant hillock,' 'oaks and elms,' and a 'falling stream'" (Willson 600). The second significant source is Rousseau's philosophy and Romanticism. Rousseau takes one step further in his appreciation for nature, "the Rousseauist sees in wild nature not only a refuge from society, but also a suitable setting for his companionship with the ideal mate, for what the French term is "la solitude a deux" (Babbitt 280):

Oh! That the Desert were my dwelling-place  
With one fair Spirit for my minister,  
That I might all forget the human race  
And, hating no one, live but only her!

(Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV,  
stanza CLXXVII, qtd. in Babbitt 281)

Wordsworth in his religious approach to natural landscape also sends everyone to the woods but with another purpose: "Let us get wise without thought or effort. For there in the woods is "spontaneous wisdom" to be acquired, and a raven will come to feed your minds (Cerf 624). Finally, both the poet and philosopher, preach the "communings with nature" (Babbitt 284), the unity between a human being and wild dwelling in an autumn costume and, what is almost obligatory, with "the sight and sound of water" (Babbitt 281).

Considering all the sources of the painters' inspiration which I have mentioned, the audience of William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney's *Jaques and the Wounded Stag in the Forest of Arden* experiences the painting where nature is presented with the assumption of being more idyllic than in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Jaques<sup>13</sup> in a costume of emblematic Melancholy but understood as a Romantic mood, becomes an individual who stands against civilized society and seeks for "Rousseau's reverie," i.e. "[the] imaginative melting of man into outer nature" (Babbitt 269).

## Notes

- \* All quotations are taken from Arden edition of *As You Like It* edited by Juliet Dusinberre and published in 2006 in London.
- 1 The engraved version of William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin and George Romney's *Jaques and the Wounded Stag in the Forest of Arden* by Samuel Middiman (1791) is mentioned by Stuart Sillars in his publication *Painting Shakespeare. The Artist as Critic 1720–1820*. Sillars signalizes that the artwork "establishes a critical dialogue on the affective relationship between individual and landscape as it is presented in the play and as it appears in contemporary writing and philosophy" (281). The present article develops Sillars's argumentation by elaborating on the design of the painting and its relations to the history of art and the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophy.
- 2 Thomas Lodge had passed a libertine youth. His conversion to Catholicism in the mid-1590s and his leaving England in 1597 to study medicine at Avignon offer an interesting gloss on Jaques the 'convertite' (5.4.182) (Dusinberre 82).
- 3 Dusinberre claims that "If *As You Like It* was involved in the 'purging' of Jonson [Jonson killed Gabriel Spenser, an actor, in a duel], Touchstone's excursions on how to avoid duelling with an 'if' (5.4.95–101) could be quite specifically levelled at the watching Jaques – a figure with characteristics which some scholars associate with Jonson" (371).
- 4 The Earl of Essex – due to his melancholy and satirical attitude to the world (Dusinberre 104).
- 5 Jaques has at least eleven entrances and is also discussed by other figures.
- 6 According to Bloom, "the Shakespearean pronunciation of his name plays upon a jakes, or privy" (212).
- 7 The vanishing point is determined by the intersection of four structural lines; it constitutes a place where all forces are in balance and establishes an impression of rest (Arnheim 25–27).
- 8 Dusinberre presents the Renaissance examples of men portrayed in melancholic poses such as Henry Percy, the 9th Earl of Northumberland painted by Nicholas

- Hilliard (1590–1595), with an unidentified book situated just next to his head, or Lord Herbert of Cherbury painted by Isaac Oliver (1610–1614) (104).
- 9 As it is explained by Jacques himself, these visible features of “sadness” are closely associated with “the sundry contemplations of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness” (4.1.1812–1814).
- 10 The exhaustive analysis of the Melancholy is presented by Erwin Panofsky in *The Life and Art of Albrecht Durer*, in the chapter devoted to *Melancholy I*. The chapter is translated and included in *Studia z historii sztuki* edited by Jan Białostocki.
- 12 In Renaissance art and literature, the motif of deadly shadows in the Paradise/Arcadia was becoming increasingly popular. The pastoral surroundings were eagerly disturbed using “memento mori” themes such as a skull, or animals like a mouse, a tawny or a lizard, traditionally associated with Satan or the Darkness, exactly like in the painting by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (Guerchino), *Et in Arcadia ego*, c.1618 (Eco 414).
- 12 The concept of melancholy is comprehensively discussed in a well-known contemporaneous treatise by Robert Burton *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).
- 12 The figure of Jacques might be also interpreted in reference to the Elizabethan courtly cult of melancholy connected with people such as J. Dowland. This connection has been kindly brought to my attention by the reviewer of this article.

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