

**Types of Dramatic Rhythm in *Much Ado about Nothing*:
Some Thoughts on the Possibilities and Limits
of a Temporal Analysis of Drama**

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At least since Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laokoon or on the limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), we have known that the nature of poetry is above all determined by its existence in the dimension of time. The fundamental difference between the sister arts of painting and poetry lies, in Lessing's opinion, in the contrast between the temporal succession of one word after the other in poetry and the static spatial juxtaposition of signs in painting. It is therefore characteristic of the nature of poetry that it alone is apt to describe actions, that is¹, "objects which follow one another or parts of which follow one another." If time is, however, the original dimension of poetry, the temporal form of drama should also receive particular attention from its interpreters. This is a demand which in many respects has not yet been met.

A promising starting point in this direction would be an investigation of the phenomenon of rhythm in drama. Analyses at the level of the micro-structure, that is of the rhythm of verse, as they have been carried out in the past for instance by J. W. Draper are not really helpful². In Shakespeare criticism, surprisingly little attention has been paid, to rhythm at macro structural level, in other words, in the development of the action although this is an issue which every director of a theatre production needs to address³. Rhythm is, however, of crucial importance for the unfolding of the action in Shakespeare's plays even though this is less striking than in contemporary dance theatre or in performances such as Beckett's screen play, *Square*, where the theatrical discourse is reduced to rhythmic movement. I should therefore like to sharpen our awareness of the rhythmic notation inherent in Shakespeare's texts with an analysis of dramatic rhythm in his comedy, *Much Ado about Nothing*⁴.

The use of the term 'rhythm' as an epistemological instrument is hampered, however, by the broad range of its meanings. In classical Greece the word 'rhythm' was not only applied to music, but also to poetry, dance and drama. It therefore seems legitimate that in the following I employ the word in the broad sense of "temporal order in art which structures the relationship of the parts to one another."⁵ Rhythm breaks up the continuity of time into segments

by means of signals such as the change between arsis and thesis, diastole and systole, fast and slow⁶, ascent and descent, luck and misfortune⁷. A piece of music, a dance or a play thus adopts its particular temporal form in performance. The term rhythm can therefore refer only indiscriminately to a regular segmentation of periods of time by means of repetition and contrast into varying proportions and patterns, but I wish to examine how patterns of recurrence can stimulate, fulfil and contravene specific rhythmic expectations and create suspense. The aim is to explore how rhythmic order in the temporal development of the dramatic action can be perceived and described.

Shakespeare's Concept of Rhythm

In English Renaissance rhetoric the term 'rhythm' was exclusively related to metre in poetry. Shakespeare never used the word⁸. He employed the words 'numbers'⁹ or 'time' as in the expression "to keep time" e.g. in *Hamlet* (III.iv.140) and *King Richard II* (V.v.42 ff.). The word 'measure', which he also used, originates in mediaeval mesural music¹⁰. It signifies not only the duration of a musical note, but also metre in verse and rhythm in dance¹¹. It implies a particular significance of the variation between long and short notes and, further, of the absolute evenness of order, symmetry and proportion. 'Measure' as the rhythmic movement of dance¹² is also a basic principle of cosmic order in the Renaissance¹³. During a dance Beatrice alludes to this in *Much Ado* (II.i.61. ff.), when she ironically makes rhythm, order and measure the precondition of the success of Don Pedro's intended ceremonial wooing of Hero:

The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time. If the Prince
be too important, tell him there is *measure* in everything and so dance out the answer.

Her comparison of the process of wooing, wedding and repenting with the rhythm and the tempo of popular dances underlines the importance of the rhythmic pattern which is formed by the sequence of these basic situations in this comedy of love (II.i.64 ff.):

For hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting, is a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinquepace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinquepace faster and faster till he sink into his grave.

Can this passage be taken as a director's guideline for the rhythmic structuring of the play¹⁴? Beatrice's observation corresponds only very incompletely to the

sequence of the main plot. Adopting her interpretation would confer absolute authority to a point of view which is patently biased, for this statement, like most of her other comments in the first part of the play, merely reflects her fundamental scepticism in affairs of love. Her assumption that after marriage repentance is inevitable is denied by the end of the comedy, which promises happiness ever after. The Prince, it is true, woos very fast and successfully during the dance at the beginning of the play, but not for himself. Claudio's courting of Hero makes steps forward and backwards as in a dance, for Don John, the melancholic villain, who is "out of measure sad" (I.iii.2) and keeps aloof from the dance, deceives Claudio into believing that he has lost Hero. With his intrigue all music dies away. Claudio moreover, repents after his wooing and before his wedding, Beatrice and Benedick's fear of repenting afterwards prevails so much in the first part of the play, that in spite of their concealed sympathy for each other they avoid courting altogether. When, at the end of the play Benedick insists on a ritual dance, he formally closes a frame which was set at the beginning with the masked dance. This emphasizes the sequence of harmony, disharmony and harmony as the comedy's overall structure, which meets the audience's expectation¹⁵.

Neither Elizabethan rhetoric nor Shakespeare's metaphorical use of the concept of 'measure' in *Much Ado* convey more than a vague idea of the significance of rhythm in Elizabethan dramaturgy. However, a reading of *Much Ado* clearly shows that Shakespeare conceived sequences of action as rhythmic unities, and that he evinces a distinct awareness of rhythm as a formative principle for the macro-structure of the action in drama.

Rhythm, a Polymorphic Phenomenon

The search for objectively reliable signals which mark the rhythm of dramatic action has led to the insight that dramatic rhythm like rhythm in orchestral music can be formed on a variety of levels¹⁶. A range of different categories has been suggested by critics for the description of rhythmic unities in drama. Northrop Frye proposed as basic unity the rhythm of the spoken verse as constituted by the particularities of the speech of the different characters. He calls this the "rhythm of decorum" (268 ff). J. L. Styan sought to determine rhythm in the form of variations of speed in the proceeding of the action (1960, "Tempo and Meaning":141 ff), and P. M. Levitt suggested we take the frequency of peripeties, the repetition of situations and motifs, the change between suspense and its relaxation as signs on which a description of the rhythm of dramatic action could be based (Levitt). Keir Elam's thesis that the basic semiotic unity in drama is defined by the change in the deictic orientation of the characters' speeches could equally provide a yardstick for the determination of rhythmic patterns (144 ff).

Rhythm, however, also manifests itself in the periodic change of the constellation of characters on stage, in the dramaturgy of exits and entrances, in the alternation of focus, perspective and location. Rhythmic periods can be shorter parts of scenes, but also form larger units beyond the limits of a scene. In Elizabethan drama important elements in establishing rhythm were the unit of the scene and the alternation between different levels of plot. This has been extensively researched, but has not been investigated under the aspect of dramatic rhythm (Weimann). With these possibilities of establishing the rhythm of drama in mind, I should like to work out some rhythmic particularities of *Much Ado* starting from empiric impressions.

Rhythmic segmentation: the alternation between different levels of plot

At the beginning of the comedy, immediately after a short exposition, a repeated change of focus between the two contrasting couples, Hero and Claudio, and Beatrice and Benedick, establishes a basic rhythm in the presentation of the action. This regular to and fro between the representatives of the two semantic poles of the story emphasizes the play's point-counterpoint opposition of an immature, blind love¹⁷ and a playfully exaggerated disdain of love¹⁸. The movement starts with the focus on the Beatrice-Benedick relationship even before the latter arrives on stage, when Beatrice counters a messenger's report of Benedick's heroism with a satirical portrait of the victor. The following arrival of the soldiers is in turn dominated by Beatrice's and then by Benedick's rhetorical fireworks whilst Claudio stands silent by. Then the focus of the action turns to the Claudio-Hero-relationship. The latter relationship dominates the action, however, only for a short time until after 130 lines from I.i.269 to II.iii, the focus of the dialogue oscillates eight times between Beatrice and Benedick's battle of the sexes fought out as a battle of wit and Claudio's wooing of Hero for which he recruits his friend and liege, Don Pedro, as his advocate. During this sea-sawing, in which verse alternates with prose, the length of the sections which are devoted to each perspective gradually shrinks from about 50 to 60 lines to about 20 to 30 lines. This conveys the impression of an acceleration of the rhythm and enhances the climax of suspense in the first part of the play.

The dynamics of the Hero-Claudio relationship is shaped by the symmetry of the two enemy brothers' conflicting influences. The lovers' rapport therefore hovers between hope and deception, bliss and despair, rupture and union. The parts of the dialogue focussing on Beatrice and Benedick change between three verbal skirmishes (I.i.105-137; II.i.11-140; 215-251) and two monologues in which they emphatically reject marriage (I.12; 213-68; II.ii.1-73). In spite of the turbulence of Beatrice and Benedick's verbal exchanges their attitude towards

each other remains unchanged. After the first phase of suspense, which ends with Hero's father, Leonato, assenting to her marriage with Claudio (II.i), the alternation of the focus between the two couples is continued. New intrigues are set in motion on *both* levels of the action, this time by Don Pedro and Don John. As before, the two brothers have opposite aims. Whereas Don Pedro, assisted by Hero, tries to make Beatrice and Benedick overcome their pretence of mutual disdain, Don John once more attempts to disrupt Claudio and Hero's union by pretending that Hero is unfaithful. In spite of the contrary nature of their intentions, both use the same strategy to reach their ends: a fake eavesdropping scene. As in the first part of the play, Don John's intervention is developed in three steps. He secretly plots with his accomplices; for a moment he joins the couple in order to implement his intrigue; he withdraws again. Although Claudio should have been forewarned by Don John's first attempt to thwart his love he allows himself to be deluded a second time.

The Alternation of Tragicomedy and Farce

After the second scene of act III, the focus of the action no longer oscillates between the contrasting couples of lovers. The undermining of the Hero – Claudio relationship occupies the stage for about 500 lines. Its tragicomic development from Claudio's delusion to the mourning of Hero's death in V.iii, is, however, regularly interrupted and brightened up by the farce of the Dogberry – Verges scenes¹⁹. These changes of focus establish a new rhythm of to and fro between tragic and comic action from scene III.iii to scene V.i. During this period, the audience is torn between anxious apprehension and hopeful merriment. The watchmen's appearance creates a comic frame for the disquieting report of Claudius' infamous deception. Thanks to this information the constables possess the necessary knowledge for the revelation of Don John's insidious plot and the audience can hope for a happy end. Before Hero's defamation at the wedding ceremony and immediately afterwards Dogberry and Verges come close to discovering the truth. Claudio's erroneous indictment of Hero finds a burlesque echo in Dogberry's bungled accusation of the real culprits (IV.ii). The constables' hustle and bustle, however, does not bring about any change until the first scene of act V. Like Don John's negative impulse, the impetus for the positive turn of the Hero-Claudio relationship comes from the outside. Like Don John, the watchmen Dogberry and Verges don't appear in the same scenes as the lovers. In contrast to the rapid planning and implementation of Don John's intrigues, the revelation of the truth which reunites Hero and Claudio is delayed. It is brought about as much by accident as by the constables' efforts. From the third scene of act III to the first scene of act V, the inexorable progression to misfortune thus alternates with comic stagnation. Immediately

after the rupture between Hero and Claudio, the focus of the action returns to Beatrice and Benedick. The breaking up of the former couple incites them to a hesitant confession of their mutual love. They come closest to each other when the love of the other two seems to be shattered. The quality of the relationships of both couples is inverted. Whilst Beatrice and Benedick have achieved mutual trust, Claudio's love has turned to blind mistrust. When he has at last recognized Hero's true nature, Claudio can only recover her 'blindly'. Hero's seeming death is echoed by Beatrice's menacing demand on Benedick: "Kill Claudio!" (IV.i.285). Whilst Claudio sings a dirge for his Hero, Benedick tries in vain (V.ii) to impress Beatrice with his love poetry.

The precipitation of comic and tragic events in V.i accelerates the rhythmic oscillation between the two extremes. In rapid succession, Leonato and Benedick's challenge of Claudio to duel is followed by the news of Don John's flight, the discovery of his intrigue, Hero's rehabilitation, and the reconciliation of Don Pedro and Leonato with Claudio, which bring about the happy end.

The Rhythmical Frame and Overall Patterns

In the play's final phase the action resumes the rhythm of its beginning. Once more, the perspective alternates between the concerns of Claudio and Hero and those of Beatrice and Benedick. When in V.i, V.ii and V.iv the concerns of the latter come to the fore they are, however, given less space (35 lines, 95 line, 51 lines) than the fate of Hero and Claudio, to whom the greater part of the dialogue is devoted (140 lines, 121 lines and 104 lines). The couple's rapprochement stagnates after Benedick's challenge of Claudio. After the watchmen's exit the symmetry of the plot requires that Beatrice and Benedick once more return to their old battle of wit habits (V.ii), and adopt the role of the litigious, comic couple contrasting with Hero and Claudio. Only in V.iv do they finally profess their feelings and become united.

The oscillation between the two contrasting couples produces a basic rhythm, which structures the overall development of the action. It is sustained by the tension between their contrary attitudes towards love. This rhythmical movement comes to a standstill only with the suspension of this opposition through the marriage of the four lovers. In particular, the beginning and the end of the comedy are structured by the regular frequency of the to and fro of the focus. It is due to the dialogue's segmentation into semantically contrasting periods of equal length. This basic rhythmic pattern is already disrupted in the protasis when Claudio, whose wooing is supported by Don Pedro and thwarted by Don John, is torn between hope and despair. In the middle of the comedy

the basic rhythm is suspended as in turn the fate of one of the two pairs of lovers is focussed on during long periods of time.

The action of *Much Ado* is thus structured by four phases of different rhythmic quality. The first period runs from I.i to II.ii, the second from II.iii to III.i, the third from III.ii to V.i, and the fourth from V.i to V.iv. As already mentioned the alternate focus of the action at the beginning and at the end marks the two couples' contrasting attitudes to love. In the first phase this rhythmic movement is overlaid by Don Pedro's and Don John's impact on Claudio's courting. The fourfold reiteration of eavesdropping scenes constitutes a new rhythmic sequence in the middle of the play. These scenes provoke the crucial turns in the development of the action. After the first scene of act four the couples' positions are inverted. Claudio's blind love has turned into blind distrust whereas Beatrice and Benedick come to trust each other. In the third phase the scenes of the seemingly tragic development of the Hero – Claudio relationship are counterbalanced by their alternation with the farcical Dogberry and Verges subplot. The final phase resumes the initial change of perspective between the two pairs of lovers. As in the beginning of the play masquerade and dance reappear at the end (V.iv). Along with the prospective wedding, this establishes the rhythm of the continuity of life which transcends the drama.

Variations of a Motif: Eavesdropping

The deception of others for good or bad purposes unites the heroes and villains of the play in similar actions such as the numerous eavesdropping scenes²⁰. The scenes of Beatrice and Benedick's trumped-up eavesdropping proceed in identical manner. First step, the allurement of the imaginary 'eavesdropper'; second step: the intriguers' ostentatious proclaiming of the concealed Benedick's secret love for Beatrice and Beatrice's concealed love for Benedick; third step: the lovers' confession of their true feelings in a monologue to the audience and their resolution to change their behaviour. The stereotyped recurrence of the setting and succession of events, the imagery and the effect of the strategy²¹ with only a change of the *dramatis personae* from men to women establish a rhythm of repetition which creates and fulfils audience expectations. It enhances the scenes' comic effect (Bergson : 403 ff.) and ridicules Beatrice and Benedick's superior attitude as they react predictably like puppets. In two consecutive parallel scenes (III.ii.1-72 and III.iv.35-90) the pair of satirists, who used to make fun of the lovers, become the laughing stock of the Hero-Claudio group. They are unmasked and betray their secret feelings. Benedick is converted into a lover and shows the same doting for which he made fun of Claudio. Once they have confessed their love their quick and witty repartee disappears. The

contrast between them and Hero and Claudio now consists in the positive development of their relationship when the love of the other two seems to be ruined.

In a third repetition of a fake eavesdropping situation, which is, however, not shown on stage, Don John gulls Don Pedro and Claudio. Instead of gaining superior insight through secret information, the former intriguers are deluded by a trumped-up love scene. Don John's follower Borachio's revelation of his master's trick leads to a fourth variation of the same motif as he is 'unintentionally' overheard by the watchmen, Dogberry and Verges. This information eventually renders the play's happy end possible. The same type of scene thus brings about Beatrice and Benedick's union, the catastrophe of the fourth act, and the revelation of the truth in the end. The rhythmic period of the fourfold *mise en scene* of eavesdropping variably devised with good and bad intentions leading to comic and tragic consequences provides the impulses for the main peripeties of the comedy's action and structures its epitasis. The same motif is already introduced by narration in the protasis. The rhythmic sequence of its threefold variation, in three consequent scenes (I. ii, I. iii, II. i) has of course a far less formative effect on the action than the later fake eavesdropping scenes. Its repetitions from the beginning of the comedy forestall, however, its thematic importance. It shows love as a social hazard, a game which is not controlled by the lovers²².

Comedy and Tempo

No close scrutiny is needed to perceive that the rhythm of Beatrice's and Benedick's dialogues differs from those of Dogberry and Verges. The former couple's verbal skirmishes depend on their quick and witty repartee. They volley each other's arguments like players in a tennis match. Their repartees are short and sharp. In their first exchange, for instance, the words 'disdain' and 'courtesy' ricochet (I.i.110):

Benedick: What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

Beatrice: Is it possible disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Benedick: Then courtesy is a turn coat.

Whilst Beatrice and Benedick play with words, the constables mistake their meaning. Whilst the former banter with finesse, the latter are language's victims. The watchmen's malapropisms and verbosity parody Beatrice and Benedick's elegant game and thwart the disclosure of the truth. They practise unknowingly what the other two do intentionally when they wilfully distort the meaning of words. Dogberry, it is true, amuses the audience; but he tries Leonato's patience,

for at a moment when quick and precise information is vital, he prevents the revelation of Don John's intrigue through his pompous verbiage rendered incomprehensible by malapropisms (III.v.19ff).

Leonato: Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogberry: It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; But truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.

Leonato: All thy tediousness on me, ah?

The extreme length of his circumstantial utterances contrasts with Leonato's hasty remarks. Exaggerating Beatrice and Benedick's game to absurdity he disappoints the spectators' expectation that the catastrophe could be prevented. In spite of their speed and intensity, Beatrice and Benedick's skirmishes of wit have as little effect on the state of their relationship as Dogberry's blundering officialdom can prevent Claudio from repudiating Hero. Like the two litigants verbal jousts Dogberry and Verges' fumbling with words turns in a circle.

The analysis of the tempi of the comic and the farcical strands of the action shows that even periods of stagnation can be structured by rhythmic recurrences²³. In this case rhythmical dynamic resembles a movement on the spot²⁴ in contrast to the succession of union, separation and reunion in the Hero - Claudio - relationship, which structures the linear progression of the comedy's action. The impression of rhythmic acceleration and deceleration of the dramatic movement is evidently not correlated with the frequency of reversals of the protagonists' relationship. So while it may be tempting to associate the tempo of rhythm with the development of the action the two can prove to be independent of one another.

The Spatial Time of the Reception of Drama

The analysis of the rhythm of the action of *Much Ado* was guided by the hope that it could avoid the usual practice of transforming temporal succession into the spatial juxtaposition of a "pattern in the carpet"²⁵. Our aim to do justice to the reception of a theatrical performance as a phenomenon which evolves in the dimension of time, has, however, only partially been attained. Our discussion once more had recourse to spatial images. This raises the question whether rhythm, that is temporal succession and order, can be analysed at all without transposing duration into spatial contiguity and thus into simultaneity.

According to Henri Bergson's *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1 ff), which distinguishes between an interior and an exterior notion of time and duration (*durée*), any attempt at translating the subjective impression of duration

into objective categories will necessarily lead to a projection of the subjective experience to the outside, that is a transformation into a spatial juxtaposition of reiterated or varied units that can be imagined, counted and measured²⁶. Even the to and fro of a clock pendulum translates the duration of time into spatial succession. Since the objective analysis of time will always attempt to verify the subjective impression of duration by analysing it parts, which for this reason are juxtaposed, it cannot avoid being translated into the dimension of space. This means, however, that the notion of objective time lacks an essential aspect of duration which is subjectively experienced as *durée pure*. Bergson explains this by referring to the impression a melody leaves in our consciousness (Bergson, *Essai* : 67 f.) :

Néanmoins les uns dans les autres, et que leur ensemble est comparable à un être vivant, dont les parties, quoique distinctes, se pénètrent par l'effet même de leur solidarité? La preuve en est que si nous rompons la mesure en insistant plus que de raison sur une note de la mélodie, ce n'est pas sa longueur exagérée, en tant que longueur, qui nous avertira de notre faute, mais le changement qualificatif apporté par là à l'ensemble de la phrase musicale. On peut donc concevoir la succession sans la distinction, et comme une pénétration mutuelle, une solidarité, une organisation intime d'éléments, dont chacun, représentatif du tout, ne s'en distingue et ne s'en isole que pour une pensée capable d'abstraire.

If Bergson is right a purely temporal analysis of a text must therefore remain subjective. In fact, we already abandon the dimension of "pure" temporality when we attempt to discuss rhythm in drama as an order in temporal succession.

The heuristic use of categories of spatial time in our investigation is, however, not only justified because of the lack of concrete clarity of the notion of "pure duration". Hermeneutic theory, for instance, explains the process of understanding and visualizing of a dramatic text by the spectator through images which fuse temporal and spatial categories. Lessing emphasized the important role of imagination and memory in the interpreter's effort to form an idea of the whole from the concepts of the parts (Lessing, XVII : 97). He held that the recipient, through synthesizing the individual phases of a play's action, translates its temporal succession into a spatial juxtaposition. In his theory of the representation of motion in painting he enlarged this thesis by the notion of the recipient's imaginary anticipation of what is to follow²⁷. For Lessing the moment of understanding thus transcends time since the spectator dissolves the succession of actions in time in a vision fusing recollection and anticipation. He also forms, however, an idea of the individual segments of an action²⁸, an act which is favoured by their rhythmical structuring.

This impression is corroborated by hermeneutic philosophy, which conceives the process of understanding drama as an act in which the dimensions of time and space are fused²⁹. In Hans Georg Gadamer's view, the general preconditions for the constitution of understanding in the act of reading are the remembering of the past and the anticipation of what is to come. He compares the spectator's understanding of a theatre performance with the spreading of concentric circles. This image does not mean, however, the extension of a partial to a complete understanding. Gadamer is thinking of a mutation ('metabolé'): that is of a movement which happens outside the dimension of time. He distinguishes the temporal form of what is visualized in the present from objective time conceived as succession. As he puts it (Gadamer :17), "this kind of presence has not the quality of a present moment, but includes simultaneity in space." Gadamer is thus also referring to the ambivalence of this process of imagining, which embraces the dimensions of space, time and timelessness. Although the rhythm of repetition and variation, which shapes the formal structure of a play, refers to its extension in time, it can only be objectified in terms of the relationships of its parts to one another that is, in terms of the symmetry of their proportions. The spatial categories in our interpretation of the rhythm of *Much Ado* thus ultimately reflect the fundamental ambivalence of the acts of imagination implied in the understanding of a text.

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NOTES :

¹ Lessing (89), my translation.

² Draper, (1957). See also W. Nowottny, *The Language Poets Use* (London, 1962), W. Dürr, *Untersuchungen zur poetischen und musikalischen Metrik* (doctoral dissertation, Tübingen, 1962) A. Heusler, *Deutsche Versgeschichte*, 3 vols. (Berlin,² 1925).

³ See M. Pfister, "'Proportion Kept': Zum dramatischen Rhythmus in *Richard II*" and R. Stamm, "Die theatralische Physiognomie der Haupt- und Nebenszenen in Shakespeares *Richard II*" in *Shjlb West* (1983).

⁴ All citations from the play refer to the New Penguin edition by R. A. Foakes.

⁵ Seidel, (1976 : 12).

⁶ Plato, *Leges* vol. II 665 and *Symposium* 187 b/c.

⁷ This meaning of 'rhythm' can be found in the works of Archilochos (7. cent. b. C.), Aischylos and Aristophanes.

⁸ According to the *OED*, s. v. "rhythm" I. 1 and II. 4 the meaning of the term in Elizabethan prosody changes between that of metre, rhythm, rhyme in contemporary usage. Cf. G. Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, G. D. Wilcock, A. Walker, eds. (Cambridge, 1936), II, v, p.77 and II, iii, p.69: "This *rithmus* of theirs, is not therefore our rime, but a certaine musicall numerositie in utterance, and not a bare number. ...".

⁹ See *OED* s.v. "number" 17: "Conformity in verse or music, to a certain regular beat or measure; rhythm", in T. Wilson, *The Art of Rhetorick*: "He maie apere to keepe an uniformitie, and (as I might saie) a number in the uttering of his sentence" and s. v. "number" 18 "Musical periods or groups of notes". E. K., *Glossary of Spenser's Shepherdes Calender*, Oct. 27 "Plato and Pythagoras, held for opinion, that the mynd was made of a certaine harmonie and musicall numbers". Shakespeare employs it only in the meaning of 'metre' or 'verse' as in *Love's Labours Lost* (IV.ii.120) and in *Hamlet* (II.ii.119f).

¹⁰ *OED* s.v. "time", 12: "The duration of the breve in relation to the semibreve; ...hence, the rhythm or measure of a piece of music, now marked by division of the music into bars. ...", and *OED* s. v. "measure" III. 18a: "the relation between the time values of a note of one denomination and a note of the next, determining the kind of rhythm..."

¹¹ *OED* s. v. "measure" 16: "Poetical rhythm" and "metre" refers to Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (II. iii., p. 67): "Meeter and measure is all one, for what the Greekes

call *Μέτρον*, the Latines call *Mensura*, and is but the quantitie of a verse, either long or short”, and meaning 19: “Rhythmical motion, esp. as regulated by music; the rhythm of a movement.” such as in Sir John Davies, “Orchestra” stanza 66, l. 6f.: “Yet all the feete whereon these measure go, / Are onely Spondeis, solemn, grave and sloe!”

¹² W. Kayser, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk* (Bern, 1948), p. 241 ff.; J. Chailley, “Rythme verbal et rythme gestuel. Essai sur l’organisation musicale du temps”, *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique*, 1 (1971), pp.5-13.

¹³ Sir John Davies, “Orchestra”, in R. Krueger, ed. *The Poems of Sir John Davies* (Oxford, 1975), stanza 17, l. 3, 6 f.: The Fire, Ayre, Earth and Water did agree.../And in a daunce such measure to observe/As all the world their motion should preserve.

¹⁴ Following her words J. R. Mulryne, Shakespeare: *Much Ado about Nothing*, Studies in English Literature, 16 (London, 1965), p. 14 distinguishes three *movements* in this comedy, to which he attributes the following tempi and tonalities (p.26), “vivacious *allegro* in a major key”, “a slow minor”, “(..in a major key) a full, if brief, resolution.” R. Foakes, *op. cit.*, p. 24 recognizes the symphonic form in the structure of the play “...beginning animatedly in a major key, drops into a minor key, clouded for a time with discords and anguish, only to finish in the gayest *allegro vivace*.”

¹⁵ Langer, (1963: 326 ff), R. Nevo, *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (London, 1980), p.123 and N. Frye, (1957).

¹⁶ M. Yeston, *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm* (New Haven, 1976) and W. Seidel, *Rhythmus: Eine Begriffsbestimmung*, p.11.

¹⁷ J.R. Brown, *Shakespeare and his Comedies* (London, 1957) calls Claudio’s love “fancy” and P.G. Phialas, *Shakespeare’s Romantic Comedies* (Chapel Hill, 1966), p.184 emphasizes that Claudio’s love of Hero is initially based on appearance and he equally relies on appearance when he accuses Hero of unfaithfulness.

¹⁸ The questions whether Claudio’s concept of marriage agrees with his Romanesque idealisation of love, whether Beatrice’s and Benedick’s scepticism concerning love is only feigned, and whether they hide affection behind their rough facade have been widely discussed in research literature. A.R. Humphreys sums up this argument in his preface of *Much Ado* (London, 1981 : 54 ff). D. Horowitz, *Shakespeare: An Existential View* (London, 1965) analysed the ontological implications of the contrasting sceptical and romantic attitudes of both couples in relation to the leitmotif of deception in the play. H. Berger in “Against the Sink-a-Pace: Sexual and family politics in *Much Ado about Nothing*”, *S&S*, 33 (1982), pp.302-313 discussed the issues from the perspective of gender criticism finding that both couples’ problems are caused by the patriarchal character of the society of Messina and the concept of love and marriage related to it.

¹⁹ Craik, (1952-53 : 316) explains that the events on the level of the watchmen cause a “comic detachment” of the audience even in critical moments such as the church scene (IV.i). A detailed discussion of the tragicomic mood in *Much Ado* can be found in A.P. Rossiter, *Angel with Horns* (London, 1961).

²⁰ E. Krieger, "Social Relations and the social Order in *Much Ado about Nothing*", *ShS*, 32 (1979), p.49 summarises the discussion on the pun in the title of the comedy (*nothing* / *noting*) and the central theme of deception.

²¹ Humphreys, (62 f) offers a detailed description of the parallels in the two scenes.

²² D. Cook, "The very Temple of Delight", A. Coleman, A. Hammond, eds., *Poetry and Drama 1570 – 1700* (London, 1981), pp. 42 f.

²³ Blaicher, (16) emphasizes that rhythmical 'movement' must not necessarily be constituted by dynamic action. For him the rhythm of comedy is the movement from one pole of a contrast to the other.

²⁴ D. Cook, "The very Temple of Delight", p. 36 seems to allude to this when he points out that *Much Ado* is "a play which is so heavily dependent on dramatic patterning as opposed to the linear development of a story".

²⁵ F. Fergusson, Shakespeare: *The Pattern in His Carpet*, (New York, 1970).

²⁶ H. Bergson, (*Essai*:77): "En dehors de nous, on ne trouverait que de l'espace, et par conséquent des simultanités." and p. 68: "nous juxtaposons nos états de conscience de manière à les apercevoir simultanément, non plus l'un dans l'autre, mais l'un à côté de l'autre; bref, nous projetons le temps dans l'espace, nous exprimons la durée en étendue..."

²⁷ In "Laokoon" (III; p. 21) he talks about the fruitful moment "in which what preceded and what follows becomes most comprehensible" (xvi; p. 90). my translation.

²⁸ Bayer's hypothesis (53 ff) that the impression of movement is generated by the oscillation of the interpreter's imagination between the timeless 'super-icon' and an individual part of the sequence of the action seems particularly interesting.

²⁹ Gadamer (250 ff.) and "Hören – Sehen – Lesen" in H. J. Zimmermann, ed. *Antike Tradition und Neuere Philologien* (Heidelberg, 1984), pp. 9-18.