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# Masculinity, Desire, and Disarmament in Four of Shakespeare's Comedies

Jennifer L. Basye

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# MASCULINITY, DESIRE, AND DISARMAMENT IN FOUR OF SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

by

JENNIFER BASYE

Under the Direction of Dr. Calvin Thomas

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation sets out to explore Lacan's idea of the paradoxical condition of the masculine gender construction. As privileged, favored, powerful, entitled, and hegemonic as it may seem, masculinity does not come without its awareness of what Lacan has most accurately labeled the "threat or even [...] the guise of deprivation." In fact, this construction not only assumes threat and deprivation to its identity but goes so far as to rely upon these potential attacks as necessities in order to perform itself. In other words, the masculine role can only be identified, recognized and/or mean when presented with a threat. As with any identity, masculinity is not autonomous nor is it essential in signification; it must confront that which is not masculine, that which is always a potential threat to its identity, if it is to appear in any way privileged, favored, powerful, entitled, hegemonic or whatever any culture construes masculinity to be. This argument is applied to four of Shakespeare's comedies in terms of the male characters' ability or reason to speak.

INDEX WORDS: Masculinity, Desire, Anxiety, Freud, Lacan, Shakespeare, Comedy, Language, Performance, Gender

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by

JENNIFER BASYE

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

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2013

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MASCULINITY, DESIRE, AND DISARMAMENT IN FOUR OF SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Arthur.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 1. PETRUCHIO IS KASTRATED: THE TAMING OF THE MASCULINE.....	24
CHAPTER 2. AS YOU (MAY NOT) LIKE IT, ORLANDO: MALE FANTASY AND ITS LACK OF ANXIETY.....	53
CHAPTER 3. THE MASQERADE OF VENICE: FEIGNING FEMININITY AS MEANS TO MASCULINE POWER IN <i>MERCHANT OF VENICE</i> .....	77
CHAPTER 4. SCREWED INTO HIS TRUE PLACE: MASCULINE (LACK OF) CONTROL IN <i>TWELFTH NIGHT</i> , OR WHAT YOU WILL .....	101
CONCLUSION .....	125
WORKS CITED .....	133



## INTRODUCTION

“There is an antinomy here that is internal to the assumption [assumption] by man (*Mensch*) of his sex: why must he assume the attributes of that sex only through a threat or even in the guise of a deprivation?”

-Jacques Lacan *Signification of the Phallus* (par. 1)

This dissertation sets out to explore Lacan’s above question – the paradoxical condition of the masculine gender construction – in four of Shakespeare’s comedies. As privileged, favored, powerful, entitled, and hegemonic as it may seem, masculinity does not come without its awareness of what Lacan has most accurately labeled the “threat or even [...] the guise of deprivation” (*Signification* par. 1). In fact, this construction not only assumes threat and deprivation to its identity but goes so far as to rely upon these potential attacks as necessities in order to perform itself. In other words, the masculine role can only be identified, recognized and/or mean when presented with a threat. As with any identity, masculinity is not autonomous nor essential in signification; it must confront that which is not masculine, that which is always a potential threat to its identity, if it is to appear in any way privileged, favored, powerful, entitled, hegemonic or whatever any culture construes masculinity to be. What is most significant about masculinity is that this codependence creates an anxious paradox for the masculine identity, which Western history and culture have deemed most independent and dominant.

Specifically, the four Shakespearean comedies that I have chosen for the purposes of this exploration invite such a study. *Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night* end with an ironic twist—the male characters that get the rewards that they have sought throughout the play do not display any sort of triumph in their lines. More oddly still, the male character (Duke Orsino, *Twelfth Night*) that is denied the object of his desire ends the play with a lengthy speech

that hints at a sort of waiting and making due with what he has received as a substitute.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Petruchio (*Taming*), Orlando (*As You Like It*), and Antonio (*Merchant*)<sup>2 3</sup> all remain dumbfounded after getting or reclaiming their objects of desire. In fact, Antonio's final line speaks (or does not speak) for the nearly silent or stricken response given by the others: "I am dumb" (5.1.279).<sup>4</sup> This theme within these four plays opens questions about masculinity and what allows or orders its performance. From a psychoanalytic perspective, these characters' masculinity thrives more on not having than having, thereby leading to the assumption that the masculine construction requires a degree of denial, threat, and, most significantly, desire to perform. These qualities of masculinity parallel the desire, deferment, and lack of satisfaction that post-structuralism has found to be the main constituents of language itself.

The psychoanalytic approach to identity construction involves an exploration of how a subject posits himself within the symbolic realm that, according to theoretical studies after the linguist turn, constitutes human existence: Nothing exists outside the text, and nothing exists outside of language. Lacan famously maintains that the unconscious is structured like a language, an argument that presupposes language's crucial significance in identity formation. If nothing human exists outside of language, no human identity can perform without it. From this linguistic foundation, Lacan affirms that language is desire and therefore consistently and constantly unsatisfied. Metaphors and metonyms constitute the

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<sup>1</sup> Orsino's final lines indicate a sense of deferment, waiting, and settling for Cesario: "Pusue him, and entreat him to a peace; / He hath not told us of the captain yet. / A solemn combination shall be made / Of our dear souls. Mean time, sweet sister, / We will not part from hence. Cesario, come -/For so you shall be while you are a man; / But when in other habits you are seen, / Orsino's mistress and queen" (*Twelfth Night*, 5.1.380-88). Orsino must accept Viola as a second choice to Olivia, his most consistent object of desire. Also, his language indicates a deferment of information from Malvolio. Yet, at the same time, he is giving orders and directing Viola, as if he is in the height of masculine authority.

<sup>2</sup> Petruchio's final lines are as follows: "Why there's a wench! Come on and kiss me, Kate," and "Come, Kate, we'll to bed. We three are married, but you two are sped" (5.2.180, 84-5). These lines indicate more of a submission to Kate's (not Petruchio's) previous definition of both her own and his place within their marital institution.

<sup>3</sup> Orlando merely mimics the duke's words in the final act of *As You Like It*.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio does speak one more line in the final scene. However, it is only an affirmation of what Portia has already told him. Therefore, it does not indicate any sort of victory, triumph, autonomy characteristic of masculinity. I go more in depth in my third chapter about why Antonio is the character who has received the most privileges at the end of *Merchant*.

endless signifying chain that refuses to extinguish desire (at least completely) and yet commands that all desire, identity, and performance be spoken only through it. This tension creates a human reality that both refuses and is refused any direct connection or wholeness. Rosalind Minsky comments:

We cannot view the world without the mediation provided by language which silently directs how we think about external reality. We are subjects without any subject-matter or stuffing of our own. In that sense, for Lacan, we are like dead creatures who can only be enlivened by the force of our own repressed desire. Although the meanings of language which represent us rest on arbitrary signs and the absence of those things to which they refer, the powerful dynamo of our Desire brings them to life, making intersubjectivity through language possible. (140)

This same tension constructs masculinity. My argument here will focus on the masculine desire to maintain and fear of losing superiority as a fundamental necessity of its identity. On one hand, masculinity relies upon resistance, upon a threat to challenge it and provide it with a “good reason” to demonstrate authority. On the other hand, when any identity othered by masculinity consciously submits to masculine authority and satisfies its desire, that very submission ironically silences and negates masculinity, leaving the male identity disarmed and useless. Masculinity, then, can only be as powerful as that which threatens it. More appropriately, and ironically, that which has the potential to satisfy masculine desire also carries the potential to extinguish its very existence. Therefore, masculinity can perform only in the presence of tension and the absence of that which it explicitly claims to be, much like language itself. If language is desire, as Lacan insists, then masculinity is language’s most explicitly unsatisfied and anxious identity. The four Shakespeare comedies that I have selected to prove this argument (*Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night*) all depict male characters that, in effect, do not speak in the final act, at least not autonomously and authoritatively. Oddly enough, they

have received whatever they have desired throughout the play. The one male character who speaks freely in the final act and has the final word is the one who does not get what he has desired throughout the play. As I will argue in the following chapters, these four comedies suggest that satisfaction of masculine desire shuts it down and shuts it up, taking away its vehicles for performance-threat, impending loss and fear. The delivery is the death.

One of Sigmund Freud's most fundamental theories involves the assumption that the fear of losing (his penis) is not only a part of but a necessity in the formation of the normal masculine identity. Freud argues that this fear must dissolve the Oedipal complex so that males can perform their heteronormative identities. Freud's castration theories provide a basis for studying masculinity in terms of fear and loss:

But now his acceptance of the possibility of castration, his recognition that women were castrated, made an end to both possible ways of obtaining satisfaction from the Oedipus complex. For both of them entailed the loss of his penis- the masculine one as a resulting punishment and the feminine one as a precondition. (Freud *Dissolution* 318)

Freud's argument about castration anxiety supposes that not only do males fear loss but also that they must live with a constant reminder of the possibility of loss. Those already lacking have experienced the loss, to whatever degree they have accepted it, if at all; those still in possession must wait and defer the "punishment" as an impending possibility. Freud explicitly states the difference between the development of girls and boys in terms of "accomplished" (girls) and "waiting" (boys) (Freud *Dissolution* 318). Notably, Freud's distinction here implicitly compares the conditions of masculine identity to the conditions of language –waiting, deferment, desire, dissatisfaction, unfulfilled possibility, etc. Yet, should any one of these conditions cease to be in effect, so too would the identity that conditionally rests upon it. The long-awaited possibility, should it be delivered, would prove to be death, the termination of identi-

ty. This theory solidifies Rosalind Minsky's connection between language and identity most accurately and most specifically for the construction of masculinity: "Since Lacan sees language as a vehicle for unconscious desire, psychoanalytic theory becomes inevitably the study of the construction of a subject" (138). Conspicuously, Minsky's claim involves "a" subject. More appropriately, however, it is "the" masculine subject that remains most inevitably bound in desire, fear, and pending punishment/loss.

Of course, Freud's castration theories as fundamental in the masculine identity formation are by no means a new idea in the field of identity studies. However, while clearly dated, they are far from dead, even in the field of psychology. Since Freud's time, several clinicians and scholars have continued to rely upon his arguments as foundations in their own identity studies, particularly those of masculinity.<sup>5</sup> With the intent to publish clinical and research-based texts, Peter Fonagy and Mary Target have edited a series of psychoanalytic-based studies for practicing clinicians, as well as for academics and graduate students. Among these studies, *Psychoanalysis: Science and Masculinity*, 2001, begins with a tribute to Freud:

After the first hundred years of its history, psychoanalysis has matured into a serious, independent intellectual tradition, which has notably retained its capacity to challenge established truths in most areas of our culture. [ . . . ] Today's cultural commentators, whether for or against psychoanalytic ideas, are forced to pay attention to considerations of unconscious motivation, defenses, early childhood experience and the myriad other discoveries which psychoanalysts brought to 20<sup>th</sup> century culture. (vii)

Fonagy and Target emphasize the significance of psychoanalysis in the 20<sup>th</sup> century not only for practitioners but for cultural studies as a whole. Specific to the purposes of my study of masculinity, Karl

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<sup>5</sup> Examples follow.

Figlio's book, *Psychoanalysis, Science, and Masculinity*, examines the male subject as one whose identity must be formed from fear and insecurity, making this identity fragile from the beginning. Still relying upon the concept of the castration complex, Figlio's seventh chapter, "The Insecurity of the Male Identity," assumes an inherent discord within masculinity, that the male's "sense of self [ . . . ] is as unsettled in its core [ . . . ] as his phantasy of mother is disturbed by the appearance of the father" (115).

Scholars continue to link anxiety and fear as fundamental elements, if not the most significant and defining elements, of the masculine construction. Adam E. Jukes continues what the above scholars (and, more primarily, Freud) began. Jukes's 2010 study, *Is There A Cure For Masculinity?* explores the masculine subject as fundamentally disordered. The title alone suggests that masculinity must be pathological, something to be cured, and therefore that masculinity is a malady or, at least, something that is not quite right. Jukes introduces his book as follows: "This is a book about men. Specifically, a great deal of it is about therapeutic work with what I have come to regard as the norm for men –deviant behavior" (13). Jukes's study comes from the point of view of a clinician, not that of a cultural theorist or a literary scholar. Even so, his book challenges the cultural expectation of the straight, white male as the norm that marginalizes other categories, especially other gender categories. Many in the field of literary studies encourage the same endeavor. Though published some one hundred years after Freud's work, Jukes's practical conclusions still reaffirm Freudian fundamentals about the formation of the masculine identity:

The desire to defeat other men and humiliate and shame them is an attempt to project the original feelings of shame and humiliation he felt when he realized that he could never defeat his father and that his father would always be more powerful than he could be insofar as the child could never possess the ultimate object of his desire, his mother. (43)

This observation of contemporary masculinity repeats the same concepts that Freud discovered, i.e. that masculinity is based upon the fear of loss:

So masculinity is predicated on the experience of loss and failure, shame and humiliation, and the fear of more of the same if the little boy does not identify with his father and resolve his castration anxiety. Much of his life, the boy-become-man will occupy himself with activities, or fantasy which has at the centre the search for status and power. This drive for status and power is fundamentally a defense against the underlying truth, the already existing castration with all that this implies and against which so many men struggle to defend or attempt to deny. (43)

Jukes's recent quote implies that masculine privilege, as it is assumed throughout history, is more of a "defense" than a permanently settled sense of entitlement. Also, the masculine performance is not one of already accomplished "power and status," but rather a "struggle" for those very entitlements. Without the tension that this subjectivity warrants, the masculine construction would be anything but masculine. Threats and that which undermine its supposed power in turn constitute the perceived power of masculinity. Formed through ongoing possibility, potential, and impending punishment, masculinity can only exist within desire. The lack is not feminine, as one would imagine, but masculine: Desire comes from lack not having. These four plays that I will consider here are not about appearing masculine through what the male characters have but about masculine performance via the display of lack. Those who do not speak in the final acts of their respective plays have, possess, while the one who speaks finally (or continually, rather) retains his masculinity precisely by *not* having his desire fulfilled. Lack of language demonstrates a satisfaction of desire; silence proves the disarmament of the masculine.

Finally, Jukes states (or restates) a fundamental argument that both psychoanalysis and this dissertation have built their points upon: "Much, if not all, of masculine activity is motivated by wounded

phallic narcissism; by the shame, humiliation and vulnerability of failure, impotence, fear and weakness masquerading as its opposite –the big M as I have called it” (43). It is interesting that Jukes uses the term “masquerading” to describe the assumed aggression and power which have been performed by those constructed as masculine throughout history and even in contemporary culture, a performance that for so long has reigned as the gender of power. Much of social construction relies upon unconscious motivation, that which the subject does not realize. Masquerading does imply a sort of knowledge of the performance; however, it also hints at a much grander sort of performance that necessitates a history of repetition played out to the point that the masquerade becomes like second nature within culture and to the subject himself. This implication is most fitting to masculinity due to both the high level of fear that must be masked with an equally high level of what Jukes calls “its opposite.”

Viewing masculinity from this perspective places it in a much more compromised state than marginalized categories of gender. The conditions of masculinity most closely resemble the conditions of language and include a necessary tension that cannot be extinguished. Such an extinguishment of this tension (desire) would bring about an end to both the construction of masculinity and language alike. The refusal to end the desire defines what masculinity most wants, then. This argument is proven in four of Shakespeare’s comedies, which collectively depict both silenced males who have claimed or re-claimed their privileges and speaking males who have not had their perceived entitlements delivered.

If there were to be anything essential about identity, Freud would argue that disturbance is the essence of human sexuality (Freud *Civilization and Its Discontents*). In this project, I relate the term “disturbance” specifically to anxiety and desire, both of which perpetuate signification in its entirety. Signification relies upon the tension of what is unbound, what is not static, and what is constantly moving toward “the next,” while lacking any certainty as to what that “next” could finally be. In order to mean and have meaning, one must accept that stability and stasis play no part in meaning. Instead, anxiety over instability and constant, unfulfilled desire perpetuate meaning, language, and signification:



What is at issue is to re-find—in the laws that govern this other scene (ein anderer Schauplatz), which Freud, on the subject of dreams, designates as the scene of the unconscious—the effects that are discovered at the level of the chain of materially unstable elements that constitutes language: effects that are determined by the double play of combination and substitution in the signifier, according to the two axes for generating the signified, metonymy and metaphor; effects that are determinant in instituting the subject. (Lacan *Signification* par. 689)

Language, meaning, and signification are inherently instable yet paradoxically the foundation for identity. Therefore, in order for a subject to designate himself within signification, i.e. to have a meaningful identity, he must be caught up in the slipperiness of an “unstable” chain of signifiers, that metaphorical and metonymic movement. One must mean in order to be recognized. One must speak/mean in order to have any place within signification.

Speaking of speaking, the subject is at the mercy of predetermined signifiers that others recognize: “For it is the signifier that is designated to designate meaning effects as a whole, insofar as the signifier conditions them by its presence as a signifier (Lacan *Signification* par. 690). The continuation of meaning is the ultimate motivation of signification, not fulfillment and stasis. Such “things” would shut down language altogether, because language is “nothing,” an emptiness, the presence of the absence of things. Therefore, anxiety and desire drive signification and beckon the subject to keep speaking desire (for the next signifier). As long as a subject can speak/desire, he can mean and continue to constitute himself within signification, albeit in a state of anxiety. Any fulfillment of desire, any contentment and alleviation of anxiety stops signification. The end of desire is silence; alleviation of all anxiety is the end of language; stability is the death of signification.

Like language and signification, masculinity cannot rest in peace. Its very state is characterized by necessary tension, whether that tension involves a threat to its power or a fear of losing its power. Anxiety and desire drive the masculine identity, leaving it in a paradoxical state: It is either threatened or fearing loss, or it is disarmed, useless and shut down. Its stasis is its negation. Ultimately, getting what it wants cancels out its need to function. In the face of a threat, whether real or imagined, it can find a reason to assert its authority and aggression, characteristics that culture and history attribute to its gender class. In his book *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*, Mark Breitenburg argues that any identity formed upon the assumption of its own privileged state must have inherently within it an anxious fear of losing its privilege. Breitenburg sees anxiety not as a secondary effect of the masculine identity but as a necessary and enabling condition of masculinity. The term “assumption” indicates an unstable crux upon which to locate masculinity within culture and signification, lending to its anxiety and creating an irony of the masculine construction. An assumption of power is not power, and it can be disproven more easily than it can be substantially and securely proven. Enter anxiety.

The difficulty of proving masculinity as inherently insecure and somehow hindered lies within the historical and cultural depictions of it as something brutal. John Stoltenburg’s definition of masculinity attributes a deceptive guise of security to masculinity: “[U]nder patriarchy, the cultural norm of male identity consists in power, prestige, privilege, and prerogative as over and against the gender class women. That’s what masculinity is. It isn’t something else” (41). Stoltenburg’s depiction emphasizes the most culturally inexcusable qualities of masculinity. However, there is also a degree of superficiality in his definition. In *The Image of Manhood in Early Modern Literature: Viewing the Male*, Andrew P. Williams acknowledges the difficulty of exploring a cultural construct whose identity relied and still relies upon the oppression of all other categories. He notes that such a territory “is not a neutral site of discourse” (xi). Then again, no study can remain neutral when exploring how discourse works within culture.

Moreover, the dangers of patriarchy have led to misogyny and violence, which cannot be excused, as Williams admits. However, if we are to look at the terms “masculine” and “masculinity” as a one-dimensional identity and force, then we would be making assumptions about an entire gender which are superficial, presumptuous, and, in some ways, incorrect, even as presumptuous and erroneous as patriarchal discourse itself may be. As mentioned above, we would run the same risk as masculinity does in merely assuming. Gender, after all, is a construction based upon preexisting circumstances, an ideal up to which individuals must live. Williams’ book compiles essays that explore the several “masculinities” displayed in Early Modern literature and “[t]he numerous and multifaceted ways by which masculinities emerge and are expressed within culture” (xii). My study proposes a look at how the male identity offered(s) complications despite the discursive power offered to its subjects.

After all, Sigmund Freud bases the entire normative development of the male upon a fear of loss, upon the castration complex. Freud stresses that the fear, not the actual castration, is the motivation for behavior: “Above all, it is not a question of whether castration is really carried out; what is decisive is that the danger is one that threatens from outside and that the child believes in it” (Freud *Anxiety and the Instinctual Life* 86). Likewise, culture assumes the privileges of masculine subjects and, as history has proven, the power of the masculine gender class has been explicitly protected. Implicitly, however, lies this fear, which is exponentially more significant to masculinity than any tangible symbol of power or cultural recognition of power. The threat, in fact, is what gives masculinity a reason to be aggressive and to assert power, authority and dominance. Without that threat, masculinity cannot perform.

The four plays chosen for my study prove that speaking is performing, particularly the performance of masculinity. J. L. Austin’s radical conclusions support speaking as performance. As Austin claims, “performative utterance” resists being classified as either true or false. Until his 1962 study, *How To Do Things With Words*, logical positivists held fast to the claim that statements could be classified simply as either true or false. Austin revolutionized the fields of speech ethnography by emphasizing

another classification of speaking—speech performance. The statement “It is raining today” could be verified; however, statements such as, “I apologize,” or “I give and bequeath this watch to my brother,” indicate an action that cannot necessarily be verified. The latter examples define what Austin terms performative utterances. Within these statements, the acts are performed. Kira Hall summarizes how Austin includes even statements that can be verified as performative by the fact that they, too, *do* something:

By the end of his book, Austin cleverly argues that all utterances are performative, even those that merely appear to describe that state of affairs, since all utterances do the act of informing. This is a revolutionary conclusion, for all utterances must be viewed as actions, an equation which linguistic anthropologists have of course embraced with fervor.

(184)

Austin’s leap from coining some phrases as performative to the claim that all phrases are performative begs the argument, then, that speaking is a performative action. Although this assertion is not new, Austin’s argument lends much to the theories that have shaped the topic of identity construction and were the first of their kind in philosophy departments. In fact, in *How To Do Things With Words*, Austin explicitly states that, until his perspective, philosophy was wrong in assuming that there could be any occasion in which saying something could only and merely be saying and that only *sometimes* do statements demonstrate performance. According to Austin, a statement does or allows the speaker to do so much more in terms of performance/performativity:

We were to consider, you will remember, some cases and senses (only some, Heaven help us!) in which to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something. This topic is one of development—there are many others—in the recent movement towards questioning an age-old assumption in philosophy—the assumption that to say

something, at least in all cases worth considering, i.e. all cases considered, is always simply to *state* something. This assumption is no doubt unconscious, no doubt is precipitate, but it is wholly natural in philosophy apparently. We must learn to run before we should walk. If we never made mistakes how should we correct them? (14)

Here, Austin is aware of his revolutionary claim and forgives philosophy for making the mistake in assuming that speaking could ever be separated from performing, i.e. doing something. We see how Austin laid tracks for Lacan's theories about language and identity construction and for Derrida's arguments about there being nothing outside of the text.

Although Austin's argument should immediately be thought of as a foundation to speaking and identity (just as fundamental to theory as Lacan or Freud, in fact), many 20<sup>th</sup> century theorists neglect to recognize his influence. Martin Gustafsson points out that if any reference is made to Austin, it is "very much second or third hand, via Derrida, or via Derrida and Butler" (16). Gustafsson furthers his concern by noting that even *Gender Trouble* does not outright mention Austin and makes the observation that "[Austin's] influence has been greatest outside philosophy departments" (16). Even so, Gustafsson does recognize that significant theorists, such as Soshana Felman and Eve Kosofsky do directly engage with Austin. Judith Butler does the same, at least in her later works. One example is *excitable speech*.

In her book *Excitable Speech*, Butler begins with the assumption that humans are objects of language, and thereby, language has an agency and power to act. Her assumption confirms Austin's claims that all speaking/language is an action: "We ascribe an agency to language, a power to injure, and position ourselves as the objects of its injurious trajectory" (*Introduction* par. 1).<sup>6</sup> Here, Butler emphasizes the negative and injurious elements of language. Considering the arbitrary, tense, yet completely necessary conditions of language in human identification, then in fact it does more harm than good in terms

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<sup>6</sup> Butler's book does not include page numbers. The editor has numbered in paragraphs.

of construction. This consideration supports Butler's term "linguistic vulnerability," which is the heading of the first section of her book. She continues: "If we are formed in language, then that formative power precedes and conditions any decision we might make about it, insulting us from the start, as it were, by its prior power" (*Introduction* par. 2). She notes that the first injury one receives from language is that of being called a name but that not all name-calling is insulting. The supposed recognition received from having a name is how one manages to situate himself/herself into language. She then refers to Austin in explaining the force and effects of language and in coming to understand it: "J. L. Austin proposed that to know what makes the force of an utterance effective, what establishes its performative character, one must first locate the utterance within a "total speech situation" (*On Linguistic Vulnerability* par. 4). Therefore, in order to have some sense of control, whether real or imagined, one must first be situated in language.

Both Austin and Butler assume that same paradox about language that I emphasize in this study in terms of masculinity. The preconditioned power and insult of language that Butler mentions above are the exact ingredients that form masculinity. Within my chosen texts, I observe that the male characters that get what they want, i.e. power and ownership, do not speak. They simply do not have any reason to speak, as their desire has been quenched. Likewise, their masculinity has also been quenched. They no longer have any location within language.

Most of Shakespeare's career was one of heightened patriarchal and masculine power that performed (or was made to perform) on a stage directed by a female ruler, Queen Elizabeth. The Early Modern period in England favored all things patriarchal, hierarchal and, by extension, masculine. Additionally, William Shakespeare wrote during a time when the power of the father and husband only increased from its already fortified state. Lawrence Stone describes the Early Modern father as "a legalized petty tyrant within the home" (in Kahn 14). Coppelia Kahn claims that outside the family structure, patriarchy formed "the basis of all social thinking," including political and religious ideologies (13). Clear-

ly, the masculine identity reigned as the privileged category. However, as Breitenburg points out, these privileges were awarded based only upon an assumption of masculine superiority, not upon solid and proven ground. The constant fear of losing its favored position, whether real or imagined, lies at the foundation of Early Modern masculinity.

In my dissertation, I will explore how masculinity performs within Shakespearean comedy and how it demonstrates its anxiety by which masculine characters are left speaking. I have chosen comedy because comedy generically reinforces normative social structure and standards, primarily those of patriarchal masculine discourse. Though arguably all genres do this, none forces a “happy ending” in the way that comedy does. The feast at the end of a comic piece celebrates the union or reunification of a heterosexual couple in marriage. Of course, this celebration happens only after the alleged villain, the threat to heteronormative happiness or success, is banished. As opposed to tragedy, in which an admirable character faces a downfall and the audience is left with an unraveling of societal preaching, comedy seeks to correct social corruption. (In tragedy, bad things happen to good people; in comedy good things happen to good people.) The earliest comic writers, such as Menander and Terence, “became adept at attacking corruption at all social levels without antagonizing the authorities” (Maslen 17).

Shakespeare, too, demonstrates an “adept” method of making his own social suggestions by allowing a generally happy ending yet not *too* happy of an ending. Shakespeare’s comedies often leave a loose end, something that sticks out of the appropriate structure and leaves the reader with a sense that not all completely fits into the accepted social model. The uneven closures often leave more unanswered questions than absolute compliance with social expectations. For example, Kate may humbly bow before her husband at the end of *Taming of the Shrew*, but her change is so sudden and happens after she has proven her unruliness, which could not have possibly just vanished. Also, in *As You Like It*, Orlando never proves that he is completely secure after he secures Rosalind as his wife. He still does not speak face-to-face to her in the final scene. Shakespeare leaves Antonio “dumb” at the end of *Merchant*.

The only main male character in my study that is able to speak at the end of his respective play is Orsino. Oddly enough, Shakespeare denies him his object of affection and provides him with a substitute for his beloved Olivia.

My first chapter focuses on Kate's sudden submission mentioned above. Throughout the majority of *Taming*, Kate resists Petruchio's taming. Considering the time period of the play, she could not simply have the marriage annulled and create a life of her own as a single woman. Therefore, Shakespeare gave Kate another means of overthrowing male power within marriage. He allowed her to implicitly negate Petruchio's authority over her by two distinct means. First, Kate pronounces that she is Petruchio's servant. She expresses her frustration "that women are so simple / To offer war where they should kneel for peace" (5.2.161-2). Here, Kate announces that the way to quiet male authority is to submit instead of offer resistance. At first, this advice appears as defeated effort. However, considering Kate's shrewdness and shrewness throughout the play, more skeptical audiences should hesitate to take her words at face value. Instead, a theoretical perspective takes Kate's speech as a shutdown of Petruchio's masculinity; she has taken away his reason to exert his authority, thereby dismantling his male identity. Secondly, by recognizing herself as having a clear, solid identity, she strengthens her construction on her terms in contrast to blurring Petruchio's construction, which was at the mercy of Kate's resistance. Although Petruchio's response is one of glee, it pales in comparison to Kate's lengthy proclamation. I suggest that his jubilant, "Why there's a wench!" resembles the same unfixed and disjointed expression of the infant on Lacan's mirror stage, jubilantly responding to his reflection, yet sensing the awkwardness of his body.

Chapter Two continues exploring this disarmament in *As You Like It*. Here, Orlando's desire for Rosalind is more satisfying than actually having Rosalind. The only two times that Orlando comes face to face with her (unmediated by her disguise), he cannot speak. On one level, Rosalind castrates Orlando, reducing him to a blubbering schoolboy. On a more specific level, Orlando's inability to speak, at least



coherently and autonomously, results from a disarmed masculinity, not necessarily by Rosalind but by getting his rewards. Orlando can only fight and exert his masculinity as long as he has something for which to fight and exert force. Otherwise, his *raison d'être* is gone, along with his masculinity. The final act of *As You Like It* depicts a fulfilled Orlando who expresses no enthusiasm or triumph, suggesting that Orlando prefers the anticipation of his rewards to the receiving of them. This underwhelmed reaction is indicative of an individual who has no further reason to speak or perform his masculinity in an authoritative manner. All is done for Orlando.

In my third chapter, I explore the idea that either a male or a female can access the phallus and perform the masculine role. I use *Merchant of Venice* to demonstrate that a position of power can, at times, be submissive or feminine. In *Merchant*, Antonio and Portia compete to be the object of Bassanio's desire, a feminine endeavor. In the end, Portia's aggressive display in the courtroom scene renders her unfit, so to speak, to be a submissive object for her husband. Therefore, Antonio is left with the victory of this position. However, as with Petruchio and Orlando, his victory leaves him speechless, as he has nothing else to prove. He also receives word that his ships have returned, securing his financial state.

Finally, the fourth and final chapter provides evidence of how continued desire and dissatisfaction allow the masculine identity to continue its performance. In *Twelfth Night*, Orlando does not get his object of desire; he must settle for a substitution for Olivia and take Viola as his wife. Yet, Orlando continues to speak at the end of the play. In fact, he speaks the final lines of the fifth act, which indicate deferment and waiting for further word from Malvolio. I argue that his ability to speak indicates his ability to continue to perform; he indicates that existence within language relies upon desire, dissatisfaction, and the willingness to accept substitutions.

## CHAPTER 1

### PETRUCHIO IS KASTRATED:

#### THE TAMING OF THE MASCULINE

“In the logic of early modern conceptions of gender, the woman was to achieve wholeness by linking herself – through marriage - with a male subject of wholeness.” (45)

-Unhae Langis, “Marriage, the Violent Traverse from Two to One in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Othello*”

This epigraph suggests the dangerous yet not surprising early modern assumption of female subordination to male domination. The idea that women had to solidify themselves through unification with a male is not unique to early modern culture. Even so, as Unhae Langis points out in his article, the early modern culture explicitly fostered the notion that men were fundamentally autonomous and women were just as fundamentally incomplete (45). Certainly, *Taming of Shrew*, if only by its title alone, suggests a similar assumption to the culture in which Shakespeare created it. The “shrew” does not offer much hope of being allowed to link with a man; therefore, she cuts her quest to completeness bleakly short. Yet, Kate ultimately proves that these gender expectations not only cripple women when they are put into extreme practice. They also have the potential to shatter the male identity when cleverly performed. Through submissively linking herself to Petruchio, Kate flips the comedic unification into a tragic loss for Petruchio. At the close of the play, Petruchio has lost his means of demonstrating his dominance and, ultimately, his entire masculine identity is negated and useless. Once it has acquired total female submission, masculinity has nothing to dominate. Therefore, the early modern assumption of male autonomy is undercut when we find that its identity can be recognized and performed within the presence of that which is neither whole nor autonomous. Thus, a co-dependence happens: masculinity must construct itself against something that is not masculine. Furthermore, that something must constantly give

masculinity a reason to project its dominance. A completely submissive feminine object offers no stability against which the masculine subject can perform and be recognized as masculine.

Much criticism about *Taming of the Shrew* focuses on the role of Kate, the curst and unruly woman whose character must be corrected in order to fit into the early modern expectations of female obedience, silence, and submissiveness. Linda Bamber notes that, no matter how often the play might attempt to reevaluate the Early Modern limits to gender equality, it ends “by strenuously reaffirming those limits” (163). Petruchio is often depicted as a power-hungry tyrant, a bully, a sadist whose taming methods involve “physical deprivation and psychological torment exhaustively commented upon by critics” (Christensen 333). Critics such as Natasha Korda and Ann C. Christensen observe the economic aspect of the relationship between Kate and Petruchio. Korda claims that *Taming* concerns itself with a “shift in modes of production,” while Christensen notes that Kate is starved not only for meat but work as well (Korda 277, Christensen 333). Margaret Loftus Ranald allows for the most equality between Kate and Petruchio and claims that the play depicts a fight on the “psycho-sexual level” between two independent persons (318). Ranald, along with other critics including Frances E. Dolan, points out the fact that nowhere in the script does Shakespeare indicate that Petruchio hits Kate or even touches her (Ranald 318, Dolan 16). Thus, any rendition of the play that depicts Petruchio with a whip or boxing gloves cannot be supported by the original text. Whether the play is celebrated or hated, Camille Wells Slight ends her essay on a hopeless note: “By presenting Kate’s transformation in a play-within-a-play, [Shakespeare] also allows the unsettling implication that this happy reconciliation of individual freedom [...] is possible only in a work of art” (177). Clearly, criticism is varied and reflects the ideologies of its own time, just as the literary text itself does.

When simplified, the play depicts a man who exerts his authority over a rebellious woman and transforms her into an obedient wife, a patriarchal delight in which masculinity serves its greatest purpose, holding absolute power. Kate’s speech in Act 5 is usually the most notoriously criticized. John C.

Bean argues that Shakespeare's purpose is unclear within the play, that the play provides a confusing mix of farce and romance. He notes that the play could have offered a "festive conclusion" if not for that final scene: "The problem, as we know intuitively, is Kate's last speech" (Bean 74). In this speech, Kate explicitly relinquishes her rebellious and independent character in favor of a completely submissive and subservient one. She proudly announces that women should serve their husbands, their lords; she makes no mistake in noting that men undergo much labor and much labor should they receive from their wives. Her reasoning highlights all of the characteristics of female gender construction that feminism (and Kate herself at the beginning of the play) has tried so vigorously to counter:

Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,  
Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,  
But that our soft conditions and our hearts  
Should well agree with out external parts? (5.2.165-68)

Here, Kate illustrates a feminist's worst nightmare and at the same time "articulates the ultimate fantasy of male power, a kind of moral pornography for patriarchs" (Maslen 57). Bean attempts to analyze the speech's dangerous prescription in a way that does not completely dehumanize Kate but that still demonstrates an awkward awareness of her submission:

But what should bother us about the speech is not what Kate actually says [ . . . ]  
but the way she is forced by Petruchio to say it. Shakespeare has tried to invest  
Kate with some dignity, and yet she is compelled to come on stage at the end of  
the play, to stomp obediently on her new hat, and to lecture on cue about the  
duties of wives, she still has some vestiges of a trained bear. (74)

True. Even the critics who try to lend Shakespeare as much credit for humanizing the original folktale as possible still stumble over his final dehumanization of Kate. However, more thoughtful readings cannot allow this explicit and dangerous reaffirmation of masculine triumph over women. Something more

complicated and implicit lies beneath Kate's words. After all, the play "repeatedly show[s] how easy it is to construct and demolish male fantasies like this one" (Maslen 57). The construction and demolition not only applies to male fantasy but also defines the process of what happens to Petruchio's entire male identity; Kate provides its construction then tears it down.

The relationship (or lack thereof) between Kate and Petruchio demonstrates that the dependence upon another in order to maintain authority creates an inescapable paradox in terms of establishing and maintaining a masculine identity. It also illustrates the continuation of the opening quote of this chapter—that, if a woman must define herself by a man, then a man must need a woman to define his own identity. In order to recognize himself as whole and autonomous, he needs that which is not considered whole and autonomous to structure his self against. With *Taming*, we see this dependent independence played out in one of the most fundamental binary constructions—that of husband and wife or, in broader terms, man and woman.

*The Glasse of Godly Love*, a pamphlet by Herman von Wield, dated 1588, defines the early modern marital institution in biblical terms found in the teachings of Paul in Ephesians 5.22-23. The pamphlet advises that the union between husband and wife should model itself according to the church's submission to Christ.<sup>7</sup> Von Wield states that wives must submit to their husbands in the same way in which the church must submit to Christ. In the next section, the pamphlet indicates that husbands should love their wives as themselves; men should care for their women as they would their own bodies. Langis finds an opposition between the two biblical references incorporated in von Wield's *Glasse*. He notes the "parity and hierarchy" that "simultaneously" exist within von Wield's prescription (46). These opposing expectations complicate the conjugal expectations of the early modern culture, as well as its gender expectations. Both feminine and masculine roles perform for and identify themselves through another. If women can only become complete by linking to a man, then men, too, must only be

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<sup>7</sup> As noted in Langis' article.

able to identify themselves in terms of the woman who has linked herself to him. Masculine autonomy and completeness can be identified only in contrast to something that has neither. Autonomy, then, paradoxically relies on something dependent.

The early modern notion of marriage provided a contradictory venue of “negotiations of equality and dominance within the gender relationship” (Langis 46). The marital union seemed to be one of the most defining elements of an individual’s identity, whether male or female. Much more fatalistic than modern perspectives make it, early modern conceptions of marriage gave it the potential to either create or crush an individual:

Marriage for the early moderns involved an existential anxiety far more perilous to personhood than what we would call today wedding jitters. On the husband’s side, the marital dyad at worst posed a grave threat to male authority and at best his successful adjustment to a loving, working partnership. On the wife’s side, marriage was a gamble resulting at worst in her loss of identity and at best in a mutually loving and respecting union defined by male headship. (Langis 46)

Both sides indicate a constant shift between the dreadful and the delightful. The conditions of marriage provide an uneasy venue in which males had to contend with threats to their authority. This description highlights Petruchio’s battle with Kate throughout most of the play. Langis’ above description of the early modern wife’s station depicts a state “defined by male headship.” Whether a battle or bliss, the husband was still in charge and any supposed equality was undercut by the hierarchal positions of dominant male and submissive wife. In *Taming*, the dangers of such a union are exploited. Even more dangerously, those watching the display of Petruchio’s taming of Kate receive it as an entertaining spectacle. Just after Petruchio announces that Kate is his “goods,” “horse,” “ox,” and “ass,” he carries her away from her own bridal dinner and practically kidnaps her, stealing her away from the supposed celebration and into

his own private disciplinary domain. Her own father, sister and acquaintances laugh and jest at the arrangement of the marriage:

Baptista: Nay, let them go, a couple of quiet ones.

Gremio: Went they not quickly, I should die with laughing.

Tranio: Of all mad matches never was the like.

Lucentio: Mistress, what's your opinion of your sister?

Binaca: That being mad herself, she's madly mated.

Gremio: I warrant him, Petruchio is Kated. (3.2.240-245)

Their reactions show that they find Petruchio's harsh and potentially dangerous treatment of Kate to be expected, considering that Kate herself has harsh and dangerous tendencies. To them, Kate is finally getting what she deserves. The more she resists and hollers the more Petruchio has cultural permission to discipline and break Kate. She has no hope of finding marital peace without relinquishing her entire identity. The others find this situation amusing.

Though explicitly Kate's show of subordination to her husband/owner might seem to be a disappointing loss of her independence, the result proves implicitly to be even more disappointing and horrifying for Petruchio. The patriarchal power that he seemingly achieves at the end of the play is just as undercut as Bamber argues are the challenges to limits of sexual equality in the play. The paradox in which Petruchio is caught demonstrates Mark Breitenburg's point that "anxious masculinity" is a redundant term, for anxiety is engendered into masculinity, an identity constructed on mere assumptions of power (1). Kate's resistance to conform to the male expectations of feminine construction offers Petruchio the opportunity to exert force over an unruly female. As long as she resists, he has this opportunity. However, Kate's final declaration of submission to him takes away the very thing that Petruchio needs in order to assert his power; she takes away his threat.

The state of masculinity itself is paradoxical. The subject who identifies with the masculine gender is trapped within a consistently anxious state; it is either threatened and performing or it is unthreatened and silent, useless, unable to voice its authority, and neither side of this either/or provides a completely secure state. Also, basing itself on the mere assumption of privilege, masculinity must constantly look for proof of this secure and privileged position. Culture, history, and femininity fail to provide definite proof of masculinity's entitlement to power. Again, entitlement is only ever assumed. This "pure" assumption creates an anxious state for the masculine subject.

The entire function of masculinity is an anxious endeavor. In psychoanalytic terms, anxiety is a productive condition; it is protective, self-preserving, and instrumental. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud argues that anxiety prepares its subject for a danger, whether real or imagined, and attempts to protect him from fright: "Anxiety" describes a particular state of expecting the danger or preparing for it, even though it may be an unknown one" (12-13). Here, Freud distinguishes "anxiety" from "fright" and "fear," a point that Lacan carries into his studies. In *Anxiety and the Instinctual Life*, Freud clarifies that anxiety is linked to the feeling of something missing, of something not being quite whole:

Anxiety, it seems, in so far as it is an affective state, is the reproduction of an old event which brought the threat of danger; anxiety serves the purposes of self-preservation and is a signal of a new danger; it arises from libido that has in some way become unemployable and it also arises during the process of repression; it is replaced by the formation of a symptom, is, as it were, physically bound—one has a feeling that something is missing here which would bring all the pieces together into a whole. (546)

Freud's description of the function of anxiety exposes the insecurity and incompleteness that I argue is inherent within the masculine construction. This idea does not necessary counter my opening quote by Langis. Early modern masculinity might have been expected to appear as though it was whole and au-



tonomous, even though, under the surface, it was lacking and missing something, constantly having to guard itself from the danger of a threat. This indication of a missing piece is the specific element of masculinity upon which Kate plays in order to reduce Petruchio's authority, as well as his identity. The moment that she identifies Petruchio as having a complete masculine identity, she reminds him of the potential loss of this identity.

Lacan furthers Freud's study of anxiety and incorporates the idea of fragmentation. Lacan's studies of anxiety also rest upon this fundamental function of preservation. In his seminar on anxiety, Lacan indicates that the threat of fragmentation produces anxiety and can only exist once the subject can contemplate himself as a unified whole, a unification that "is made possible exclusively through the mediation of the other, due to the identification of the ego with its mirror image" (Harari 47). Along with the unification of the body, the mirror stage inevitably evokes the imago of the fragmented body. Anxiety, then, is located within this constitutive process; the constitutive process can only provoke such a possibility of both gain and loss. The Lacanian split "I" falls into this process, as well. The disjunction between the awkward, teetering body of the infant and the coherent image standing on its own provides the possibility of identity expectations. The infant sees the unified him in the mirror, yet his uncoordinated body does not seem to live up to that image. He becomes aware of two selves –himself as in his body and this other self in the mirror. Roberto Harari states that, "[t]he 'conflict' in anxiety is not a matter of conscious or unconscious thought but rather a matter of discontinuity between the real of the organism and the imaginary unity of his body" (lix). Anxiety, in a broad sense, serves to protect an individual from the fright of losing the unification of his identity and to preserve that imaginary identity, which the individual strives to maintain. It can only function, then, when a threat is present. Masculinity can be recognized and can perform only when threatened.

All of this protecting and preserving of a unified identity sounds harmless enough. The question then is not so much that anxiety protects but, especially in Petruchio's case, what kind of identity his

anxiety is protecting and preserving. As Andrew P. Williams states, the male identity “is inherently bound to the history of gender inequality, patriarchy, and the exploitation of both men and women” (xi). Because of its historical associations with “misogyny and violence,” masculinity may not appear as an identity whose unification is worth protecting (Williams xi). As a matter of fact, the coherence of the masculine identity historically has proven itself to be a dangerous construction, since “domination apparently remains the largest part of [masculinity]” (Thomas 187). John Stoltenburg’s definition of masculinity incorporates the most decisive, yet negative, attributes: “[U]nder patriarchy, the cultural norm of male identity consists in power, prestige, privilege, and prerogative as over and against the gender class women. That’s what masculinity is. It isn’t something else” (41). In the case of Kate and Petruchio, Kate provides every opportunity for Petruchio to dominate her. She is brash, haughty, rebellious, and completely resistant to the expectations of what femininity should be. At least, she resists throughout most of the play. Throughout most of the play, too, Petruchio gets to assert his control over her. He gets to tame the shrew but only as long as Kate acts like a shrew. When she no longer resists, the binary between aggressive male and insubordinate female goes smooth, if not limp, leaving Petruchio with a lifeless puddle of a wife and thus with no structure “over and against” which to frame his masculinity.

As inherently dangerous and violent as these definitions would seem to make masculinity appear, each also includes the inherent dependence that both Breitenburg and Coppelia Kahn point out. Kahn also recognizes the dependency of men on women during the Early Modern period. She mentions that “[p]aradoxically, their power over women also makes them vulnerable to women” (Kahn 17). At this point, let me state that I do not attempt to excuse these patriarchal exploitations and absolve masculinity from its past and continuing control, an awareness of which Williams also explicitly notes in the introduction to his own study. However, we cannot deny that masculinity is still a construction that includes its own insecurities and expectations, with both of which the male subject must contend. Masculinity needs something to dominate, something to form itself “over and against.” Kate’s final speech has the

power both to give Petruchio all that he wants and, in the same breath, to rip it all away. *Taming* depicts the exact paradox in which masculinity resides, even and especially at its utmost peak of authority.

Kate is not the “real object” that Petruchio fears. As a matter of fact, Petruchio does not demonstrate any type of fear at any point in the play, even of Kate. What Petruchio has at stake, rather, is the unification of his own imaginary identity. This potential loss of unity, which Lacan situates at the brink of the imaginary register, lies at the root of his anxiety. To say that Kate herself is an external threat to Petruchio’s masculinity would be misinterpreting his anxiety. Instead, Kate provides the nothingness, the void that threatens to fragment the identity that Petruchio constructs and must maintain. By resisting his authority, she gives him something that maintains a more solid, unified, dominant identity. By submitting to his authority, she gives him nothing upon which to stabilize his identity.

Petruchio’s behavior throughout the play, even before he begins his taming, hints at a sort of madness, an unpredictable and unstable indication that something is out of joint. In fact, Petruchio conforms to societal expectations about as much as Kate conforms to her gender expectations. His attraction to Kate is certainly unique and alarming, especially to those characters who know her best. The other male characters in the play covet the lovely Bianca, Kate’s sister, who is subservient, pretty, kind, pleasant, and possesses the many other qualities that define an ideal commodity on the marriage market. On the other hand, Petruchio’s immediate desire for the less favorable Kate strikes awe in his friends and shocks her father. As the plot progresses, Petruchio’s temper and extreme protectiveness of Kate evidence a certain level of paranoia within Petruchio. R.W. Maslen observes these unstable tendencies and notes that they have the potential to “overthrow not just petty social conventions but entire moral systems” (59). By the end of the play, Petruchio calls the sun the moon, the moon the sun, a man a woman, and a woman a man. Overall, Petruchio’s constitution radiates certain instability.

One question that arises from the beginning of the play is why Petruchio chooses Kate the curst for his counterpart. He confesses to Hortensio that wealth is his first priority and will overshadow any

defect in a possible bride. However, the fact that he has come to Padua in search of a wealthy match indicates that he needs to “wive” in order to “thrive” (1.2.55). Further, his reason exposes a peculiar dependence within his masculine independence. Moreover still, Petruchio hints at another vulnerability. At first sight of him, Hortensio asks what brings Petruchio to Padua and uses the metaphor of a storm: “what happy gale / Blows you to Padua here from Old Verona?” (1.2.44-5) The metaphor is furthered by Petruchio who admits to the wind which “scatters young men through / the world” (1.2.48-9). With a recently deceased father to boot, Petruchio’s identity appears insecure and in need of a supplement to solidify his scattered and blown state of mind. He describes having “thrust” himself into a “maze” (1.2.54). Certainly, then, one possible way for him to regain his assurance is to find an object over which he could exert dominance and re-establish his masculine identity. The more unruly the object, the better chance Petruchio gets to exert force.

Though Hortensio provides him with an unattractive image of Kate, Petruchio’s image of the potential mate is more detailed and ferocious. Hortensio merely mentions that Kate is “intolerable curst / And shrewd and forward, so beyond all measure” and would make a “shrewd ill-favored wife” (1.2. 88-9; 59). Petruchio is more descriptive with his hypothetical shrew: “Be she as foul as was Florentius’ love, / As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd / As Socrates’ Xanthippe or a worse” Petruchio would still want her for a bride (1.2.68-70). He speaks in sexual terms when he continues that “were she as rough / As are the swelling Adriatic seas” he would “board her though she chide as loud / As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack” (1.2.72-3; 94-5). After reading his construction of a possible spouse, one wonders whether Petruchio would merely tolerate these characteristics or if he really *hopes for* this sort of deviance in a woman. He wants to stabilize his identity through the challenge that Kate poses.

Petruchio’s ultimate goal fits nicely with the Early Modern conventions of gender construction. In his article, Unhae Langis introduces conceptions of gender during *Taming’s* composition. He notes that gender distinctions between male and female were much more distinct than in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>

century conceptions. Early Modern culture “largely conceived the male self in terms (and ideals) of wholeness, completeness, autonomy and self-sufficiency” (Langis 45). As we’ve seen, Petruchio’s initial state at the beginning of the play falls short of such clarity and viable confidence. His need to become what his culture expects of him has an obvious air of desperation and “vexed pursuit” about it (Langis 45). In order to situate himself within the expected construct of masculine certainty, Petruchio must find something against which to solidify himself, something that will allow him to be perceived as the “default state” of masculinity, no matter how “delusory,” this state may have been (Langis 45). His projection of a scattered consciousness disproves that gender is necessarily default in any way. If it were, Petruchio would not have to wive in order to thrive in fair Venice. Also, Petruchio’s urgent need to find a woman to tame suggests that Early Modern masculine expectations had just as many obligations for males to perform as the feminine expectations had for females to perform. Petruchio must become the dominant husband, whether his desire to do so is greater or lesser than Kate’s desire to become the submissive wife.

In order to be a man, Petruchio uses that which his culture has conveniently provided for him. He uses a female or, in Early Modern terms, “a receptacle, a concavity,” distinctly and definitively opposite of male autonomy (Langis 45). Langis observes the “incompleteness and nothingness” associated with the conception of the female during this time (45). In order for Petruchio to distinguish himself from this assumed weaker identity, to which he is dangerously close to being at the beginning of the play, he paradoxically must find a means to demonstrate his authority.

The paradox of this Early Modern gender distinction is the unexpected twist that Kate turns on Petruchio at the close of the play. Sure enough, she submits to this incompleteness and nothingness that Langis indicates. However, in submissively becoming the very thing that Petruchio needs, she renders his dominance extinct, null, and void. The nothing that she becomes cannot provide any substance for Petruchio to overtake, thereby shrinking his own identity into a nothingness as well. Con-

versely, Kate fuels or animates Petruchio's masculinity only by resisting her expected feminine role and giving him something over which he can exert his authority or manliness.

Petruchio implicitly indicates that Kate's resistance is exactly what he needs, not her submission. In the final lines of this conversation between these friends, we see that Petruchio has become impassioned at the opportunity of taming a shrew. Already, he begins to reconstruct a solid and aggressive masculine identity even before meeting Kate. At this point, the metaphors change from those of an individual tossed in a storm to an individual with the experience of male domination. Gremio asks if Petruchio will "woo this wildcat" (1.2.196). Petruchio's response demonstrates a coherence of identity lacking in his first lines:

Why came I hither but to that intent?  
 Think you a little din can daunt my ears?  
 Have I not in my time heard lions roar?  
 Have I not heard the sea, puffed up with winds,  
 Rage like an angry boar chaffed with sweat?  
 Have I not heard great ordnance in the field  
 And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?  
 Have I not in a pitched battle heard  
 Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?  
 And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,  
 That gives not half so great a blow to hear  
 As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?  
 Tush, tush, fear boys with bugs. (1.2.198-209)

Suddenly, Petruchio is not a young man scattered around the world but a composed and experienced man of the world. The vulnerability of the orphaned boy has given way to the self-assertiveness of mas-

culinity. However, this change is possible only when the idea of a feminine object allows Petruchio to imagine assuming control. Now, the very possibility of having Kate turns to an impatient lust to possess her. Upon hearing of Baptista's other, fair, modest and well-behaved daughter, Petruchio greedily announces, "Sir, sir, the first's for me; let her go by" (1.2.255). Even more so, such a feisty feminine object provides him with a favorable space to exert maximum dominance, thereby securing his masculine identity.

The interesting thing, though, about Petruchio's measures to tame Kate is that they demonstrate a slight degree of submission with the implicit attempt to overthrow her means of dominance. Margie Burns states that a significant theme in the play is the "conversion of oppositions into dialectics, so that initially adversarial relationships or hierarchies become vehicles of reciprocal exchange" (84). Petruchio's plan to "kill a wife with kindness" sets up the very game that Kate must figure out in order to beat him, so to speak (4.2.202). He denies her food, sleep, and proper dress because the choices at hand simply are not good enough for her. He would rather see her have nothing than something beneath his provisional standards. After he resolves that he should wed her, Petruchio begins using favorable terms to describe her, both to her father and to Kate herself. In Act Two, upon meeting Kate's father, Petruchio describes Kate as Baptista's "fair and virtuous" daughter (2.1.43). Maslen argues that Petruchio's method indicates the masculine desire to "force her into the mould of his perfect woman by making a conscious decision to do what the other men do without knowing it: that is, to ignore her utterly as an intelligent and articulate being" (59). However, in Petruchio's case, the concept of the "perfect woman" differs greatly from those male characters, who prefer the sweet and pleasing Bianca. Also, Petruchio cannot ignore Kate's autonomy; it is the thing that perpetuates his masculinity. Therefore, his construction of what he wants Kate ultimately to be is not "fair and virtuous," nor is it anything like what the others want in Bianca. Petruchio's plan is much more complex. The more Kate rails, frowns, resists, and denies, the more he will reward her with loving words and affection (2.1.170-80). Petruchio's plan

to tame Kate, then, is to subvert her disobedient temper by ironically pretending to appease her. This plan, however, severely backfires on him when she subverts his power with the same concept.

The irony within *Taming* is twofold. On one hand, we see a dominant female identity threatened with negation by kindness. On the other hand, we have a dominant male identity threatened, not by the aggressive female, but by the possibility of her total submission. From her first appearance in the play, Kate lives up to her “curst” name. The second act opens with Bianca, the younger and fair daughter, pleading with Kate to untie her hands. Apparently, Kate has bound her sister and demands to know which suitor the sweet Bianca loves. She strikes Bianca right in front of their father, attempts a second offense, breaks a lute over Hortensio’s head, and slaps Petruchio. In fact, Kate demonstrates the most physical violence of any character in the play. Petruchio immediately begins his taming when he introduces himself to her. He flatters her by describing her as “bonny Kate,” “prettiest Kate in Christiandom,” “daint[y],” and “Kate of [his] consolation” (2.1.185-94). These amusing words are a far cry from the man who claims that he is “rough and woo[s] not like a babe” (2.1.137). Likewise is Kate’s final speech different from that of the hotheaded woman of this second act. Petruchio belittles the very force that Kate uses to overtake others. To dominate her by physical means would make Petruchio somewhat resemble Kate, an act that would erase the distinguishing line between himself and his object.

In fact, the distinction between what is male and what is not male must remain clear in order for masculinity to perform its role. Breitenburg notes that the power and privilege associated with the masculine identity is intended only for that identity and potential male/female sameness cannot be tolerated. This sameness is “a possibility that would render meaningless both the gender/status system (and) the individual subjectivities within it” (Breitenburg 153). Masculinity must always express its own distinctness and distinguish its own expression. In Petruchio’s case, the female demonstrates physical domination, behavior that designates Kate as negatively feminine and as a shrew. In his attempt to distinguish his own behavior from Kate’s shrewish feminine behavior, he must implement other methods to



formulate his own distinct masculine brand of dominance and authority. Another point that Breitenburg reveals about masculinity is its exclusivity in regards to understanding, both itself and the feminine. He notes that masculinity can identify itself only when differentiated from the feminine. What is feminine, too, is a matter of what now masculinity defines it as (Breitenburg 154). Therefore, masculinity aspires to know and understand both genders – the male because it is not female and the female because it is constructed out of the masculine perception of what femininity should be. Since Kate is a woman, her aggressive behavior could not be applauded but must be defined as something negatively feminine; it must be defined as shrew.

This is not to say that, though not directly physical, Petruchio's measures are really kind and that Kate has it good. After all, Stoltenburg's definition of masculinity encompasses the self-gratifying elements of dominance. None of these elements indicate concern for or care of women. Interestingly enough, though, they do indicate a certain dependence on women. This dependence is what generally threatens Petruchio's male identity. In *Taming*, we see Petruchio caught within this paradoxical state of power. In order to build and maintain his identity, he needs a resistant female object against which to build his male identity.

This is also not to say that Petruchio would allow Kate too much resistance, either. In theoretical terms, the binary of male/female is not based upon equality. Kate's resistance must serve only as means of bolstering the opportunity for Petruchio to dominate. Again, the object of the game is that Petruchio consistently remain dominant to some degree, no matter what method he employs. Even his kindest words must serve to maintain his identity. Affection, then, becomes not a submissive or gentle act; it is an example of Petruchio's choice to take that prerogative. Even more in Petruchio's case, affection and feigned concern are his means of undermining Kate's aggressive behavior, demonstrating the need to distinguish his own identity from hers and attempts to reconstruct Kate into his own perception of what she should be.

In order to serve Petruchio's identity, Kate must be resistant enough to provide Petruchio with an arena in which to exert his authority but not so resistant that he loses control over the situation. Considering that Kate's unruly and aggressive qualities provide favorable potential for Petruchio, too much resistance would involve completely refusing to be in contact with him at all and the denial to provide him with any situational friction. From the initial meeting and greeting, Kate never explicitly refuses to be with Petruchio. She merely makes negative comments about the union, as if she too wants her own venue in which to play out her identity. After Petruchio announces to her that " [he] must and will have Katherine to [his] wife," Kate does not say anything directly to Petruchio. Her first response after the union has been set is directed to her father, and even then is only a sarcastic observation:

Call me your daughter? Now, I promise you  
 You have showed a tender fatherly regard  
 To wish me wed to one half lunatic,  
 A madcap ruffian and a swearing Jack  
 That thinks with oaths to face the matter out. (2.1.278-82)

Though not marked with absolute submission, neither are these words marked with a definite refusal, either. She then mentions that she would rather see Petruchio hanged than at her wedding but then offers no protest when they exit together. In other words, Petruchio does not exactly carry Kate kicking and screaming away from her father's house. In fact, Kate weeps at the thought that Petruchio may not wed her at all. His tardiness at the wedding causes her to break and wish that she "had never seen him though" (3.2.26). At this point in the play, Kate submits to being Petruchio's non-submissive and untamed wife. "'Tis a match!" (2.1.312).

When Petruchio arrives late to the wedding, dressed in a ridiculous outfit and indicating that he cannot even stay for the reception, Kate's father and several other characters question and object to his behavior. He simply explains his reasons. However, when Kate objects to leaving the wedding early with

him, he launches into a speech that defines his clear and complete control over her. Her objections provide the framework for him to state and restate his clear and precise masculinity. When she politely entreats him to stay for the reception, as the others do, he tells her to “entreat [him] how [she] can,” as if implicitly asking her to put up a fight. The dialogue that takes place here indicates Petruchio’s desire for Kate to resist his authority. She announces that she will not leave until it pleases her. To this, Petruchio tells her not to be angry. She boldly states that “a woman may be made a fool / If she had not a spirit to resist” (3.2.220-1). The word “resist” coming from the mouth of his new wife causes Petruchio to launch into a speech highlighted with the discourse of ownership:

I will be master of what is mine own.  
 She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
 My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
 My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything,  
 And here she stands. Touch her whoever dare,  
 I’ll bring mine action on the proudest he  
 That stops my way in Padua. (3.2.229-35)

Here, Petruchio establishes a coherent masculine identity similar to that which he established by his speech in the first act (1.2.189-220). Both instances are perpetuated by unruly femininity. In the above example, too, we see Petruchio inviting more attempts to undermine his authority, not necessarily from Kate but certainly as warning to her. He then twists his domination into a feigned protective measure over his “goods.” He tells Gremio to prepare to “rescue” her from the surrounding “thieves,” and molds Kate into a discursive damsel in distress: “Fear not, sweet wench; they shall not touch thee,” though no one at the ceremony attempts to detain her (3.2.237, 36, 38). Petruchio’s overly enthusiastic demonstration here offers him several points of advantage. First of all, it states his ownership and authority over Kate. Second, it makes this jurisdiction appear pseudo benevolent as he pretends to care for Kate’s

safety. Finally, he alerts her of the extent of his masculine domain, as he makes examples of others around them. In other words, his dominance does not begin and end with Kate.

This final point is proven when the newlyweds arrive at Petruchio's house. The owner walks into his parlor and immediately begins making demands to his servants. He strikes them and indicates his dissatisfaction to the meal brought to the table by throwing it and the bowls. Here, Petruchio performs for Kate, showing her his capacity to control everything around him. At this point in the play, Petruchio goes into detail about his plan to tame Kate, how he will find something wrong with everything she eats, deny her a bed for sleep because of some minute flaw in the sheets, keep her starved and tired, all done "in reverent care of her" (4.1.198). He expresses the height of his masculinity and certainty, as his plans become practice:

This is the best way to kill a wife with kindness,  
 And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humor.  
 He that know better how to tame a shrew,  
 Now let him speak- 'tis charity to show. (4.1.202-5)

And from here, Petruchio's masculine authority begins to unravel, taking with it his imaginary coherent identity. The success of this process is ironically the death of his subjectivity. When Kate is killed, so is his venue to demonstrate his masculinity. He will have no one upon which to frame his identity, nor will he have anyone to affect or impress with his performances of dominance. Also, his servant's observation marks the breakdown between Petruchio's identity and that of Kate: "[Petruchio] kills her in her own humor" (4.1.174).

Kate's protests after this scene are too weak to cause Petruchio reason to state his masculine authority. He remarks that she is "all amord" (4.3.36). The display with the haberdasher and tailor proves the anticlimactic triumph of Petruchio's taming. The argument between Gremio and the tailor is more emphasized than the play between Kate and Petruchio. Petruchio strikes no one, nor does he raise his

voice when Kate attempts to demand the newly made gown and cap. She makes an observation about how he has the timing wrong for the visit to her father's house. Petruchio's response is just as lifeless as he describes his wife to be: "Look what I speak or do or think to do, / You are still crossing it. Sirs, let't alone" (4.3.190-1). This response is quite timid compared to Petruchio's bold statements to Kate's past objections.

En route to Baptista's house, Kate offers a prelude to her final speech. She agrees with Petruchio's bizarre claim that the sun is really the moon. "And if you please to call it a rush-candle, / Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me" (4.5.14-5). Her consistent agreement with Petruchio's words begins to confuse the once sure and unbending ruler. Petruchio begins changing his mind several times in order to rebuild some sort of resistance in Kate. With every attempt, Kate immediately agrees and even asks pardon for her mistakes. Toward the end of their journey, Hortensio remarks that "[t]he field is won," but does not mention by whom (4.5.23). Kate begins to figure out the way to quiet Petruchio's masculinity and, by extension, fragment the short-lived coherence of his male identity. By giving no resistance, she also erases the distinction that Petruchio once used to define himself in contrast to her. No longer does Kate hit and yell, nor has she from the first moments at Petruchio's house. Instead, Petruchio was the one throwing fits and tantrums about Kate's meals, bedding, even dresses. In his ironic attempts to placate Kate's aggression and subvert it with kindness, Kate now subverts his attempts at authority by placating and subverting him with kindness.

This scene indicates that the war is over and that Kate has finally figured out how to survive within the confines of her marriage. She has converted Petruchio's aggressive taming into an unnecessary and pointless endeavor that borders on the ridiculous. Moreover, she seems to be enjoying her clever conversion. Charlotte Artese indicates the manner in which Kate turns the tables in the play. She is no longer the caricature; Petruchio is: "While Katherine initially responds with resentment, as well as

she might, to Petruchio's insistence that she succumb to his accounts of the world, ultimately she enters into his world imaginatively and playfully" (320).

The imaginative and playful way that Kate responds to Petruchio proves that she not only does not fear him (assuming, of course, that she ever did) but that she has become the manipulator. Kate triumphs in changing the masculine identity from what Stoltenburg describes as empowered, privileged, and entitled over women into an object of amusement for herself. She does not submit to Petruchio; she merely placates him and "playfully" strokes his ego. Artese also draws attention to the manner in which Petruchio addresses Vincentio, a "wrinkled, faded, a withered" old man, in this scene:

Good morrow, gentle mistress; Where away?  
 Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,  
 Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?  
 Such war of white and red within her cheeks!  
 What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty  
 As those two eyes become that heavenly face?  
 Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee  
 Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake." ( 4.5.43, 27-34)

Here, Petruchio's over exuberant claim about Vincentio's female beauty clearly invites a correction or objection from Kate. First of all, he is admiring another's beauty. Secondly, and most erroneously, Vincentio is a man. Yet, Kate responds with all of the agreement and with as much exuberance as Petruchio. In fact, as Artese notes, Kate even outdoes Petruchio's "ornate [yet inappropriate] compliment" with even more hyperbolic jubilation:

Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet,  
 Wither away, or where is thy abode?  
 Happy the parents of so fair a child!

Happier the man whom favorable stars

Allots thee for his lovely bedfellow. (5.4.36-41) (Artese 320)

Again, Petruchio attempts to correct Kate in her misguided compliment to Vencentio, further inviting his wife to threaten his authority and speak against him. Again, too, does Kate merely concede her husband's uncertainty of her sanity and accusations that she must be crazy to address this old man as a "young budding virgin." She even apologizes for her mistake with the same complaisant vigor. At this point, "[w]e can gather that Katherine is enjoying herself" (Artese 320). Not only does the "high-flown hyperbole of her verse" indicate a sense of amusement, but Vincentio's comment that Kate is a "merry mistress" proves her mood to have lightened (Artese 320-21). Clearly, Kate has changed from the brooding and harsh shrew to one of Shakespeare's merry wives.

However, Kate's merriment does not stem from a sheer and genuine delight in marriage. Instead, it comes from her ability to manipulate Petruchio into believing her tamed, as she makes a mockery of both their union and his masculinity. From this perspective, Kate has not become tamed; she has found a way to tame masculinity, if not dissolve it. The scene sets the stage, so to speak, for her final and ultimate clincher, her final speech, in which she implicitly negates Petruchio's entire masculine identity by explicitly submitting to him. She provides him with an image of a submissive woman, which gives him the identity of a dominant male. At the same time that Petruchio can identify himself as having a secure masculine identity, he must also realize the potential loss of that identity.

After this scene, Petruchio makes no more explicit affirmations about his dominance. He has no reason; Kate has taken it away. Now, Kate submits to be Petruchio's submissive and tamed wife, taking away all opportunity for Petruchio to maintain his masculine identity. In her final speech, Kate's discourse highlights the breakdown of Petruchio's identity, as well as builds the security of her own. Her description of what women should be here is just as certain and coherent as the masculinity of Petruchio's earlier words in Act One when he finds security in the possibility of marrying such a shrew.

She tells women to smooth their “threatening unkind brow / And dart not scornful glances from those eyes” (5.2.136-7). She notes that “A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, / Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty” (5.2.142-3). This blurry description of a “moved” woman resembles the scattered state of Petruchio’s initial identity in the play. However, just as Petruchio found a way to solidify himself, Kate has now found her way. This show might superficially appear to be a self-dissolving display of puppetry, a disappearing act of independent feminine values vaporized by patriarchal victory. Beneath the surface, though, lies the destruction of Petruchio, not Kate. She might be advocating feminine submission, but she advocates publicly, through her own autonomy and with utmost certainty and command. Meanwhile, she publicly announces that Petruchio need not continue his taming; it is done, as is his masculinity.

Kate indicates that other women should use her solution to masculine dominance. Considering the cultural assumptions about femininity, clever submission would allow an explicit adherence to gender expectations, while implicitly undercutting the need for masculine authority. Since Kate’s only hope of gaining respect in her time was by proving her abilities as a wife, she would have to contend with her own identity, and that of Petruchio, in the domestic sphere. In order to lessen her husband’s constant taming, she would have to appear tamed. Yet, she has become like her sister Bianca, whom Petruchio initially rejected in the play. Ironically, Bianca looks more like the shrew in the fifth act when she refuses to respond to her husband’s beck and call. Kate, however, responds and preaches her agenda:

I am asham’d that women are so simple  
 To offer war where they should kneel for peace,  
 Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,  
 When they are bound to serve, love, and obey. (5.2.161-64)

Here, Kate has turned the tables for women, as well. To her, resisting is the simple and idiotic approach to the feminine condition. After all, only Kate knows how futile feminine resistance to masculine author-



ity is. Her comment that women are “bound to serve, love, and obey,” indicates the inevitable servitude that early modern women were destined to perform. Yet, in order to contend with these cultural constraints, Kate has found a way to silence masculine authority and keep its aggression at bay. The more complex and thoughtful solution is to “kneel for peace.” Kate’s words indicate that she will give Petruchio just what he did not want in Bianca at the beginning of the play—a fair and submissive woman who offers no invitation for masculine authority.

Within her speech, too, Kate emphasizes the differences in physical strengths of men and women. She highlights the physical toils of men: “To painful labor, both by sea and land; / To watch the night in storms, the day in cold” (5.2.149-50). In contrast, women’s strength does not lie in their physical ability:

But now I see our lances are but straws,  
Our strength as weak, our weaknesses past compare,  
That seeming to be most which we indeed least are. (5.2.173-75)

Instead, women must find another strength. Explicit offenses and physical resistance do not offer a wife much hope. Women must use their mental capacity to manipulate. Kate gives credit to men’s bodily toils, and if we look at the underlying warrant of her speech, we find an unspoken continuation of her logic. If men are physically stronger, then women must be mentally stronger. Kate allows masculinity its credit then subtly hints at the resources that femininity can use. Her proposal that women’s “soft conditions, and [their] hearts, / Should well agree with [their] external parts” is ended with a question mark. Should they? I venture that Kate would answer “no.” On the contrary, her question appears more like a rhetorical prompt for women, as if to point out that is no reason why their minds should be as weak as their bodies in comparison to men. Therefore, Kate proposes that women can manipulate their situations and preserve their safety by cleverly giving the appearance of submitting and, thereby, removing men’s most prized tool: their physical and explicit domination.

Furthermore, Kate's description of the "painful labor" that men must endure appears like a condescending recognition of Petruchio's efforts to maintain his masculinity. She notes how men must "watch" both day and night to consistently protect that which they have "warm at home, secure and safe" (5.2.151). At least, from Kate's perspective, they must protect what they only believe is safe and secure. These lines indicate the same anxiety that Breitenburg finds inherent within the masculine identity. The privileged position of the masculine identity comes at the cost of realizing its potential loss. Masculinity becomes a constantly anxious state of having to maintain, protect, and explicitly demonstrate that position. The security of manhood comes with the inherent insecurity of losing it. Kate's remark about men's continued watch implicitly jabs at this insecurity, indicating that she has successfully figured out how to manipulate it.

At the end of her tirade/speech, Kate performs a most submissive move that, after examination of her words, demonstrates an ultimate diminishment of masculinity. She tells women, "Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot / And place your hands below your husband's foot" (5.2.176-77). After recognizing how feeble women are seen during her time, Kate shows how dependence on such a weak hand indicates the insecurity of the masculine identity. Petruchio relies on Kate's hand to bolster him. Kate plays up and tears down Petruchio with her backhanded compliments to his gender. She offers her hand to him: "My hand is ready, may it do him ease" (5.2.179). Here, we see Kate's pity rather than her respect for Petruchio.

She has taken her agenda one step further. She relieves Petruchio of his masculine duty and goes so far as to mock his gender by appearing to respect her husband. The initial command that Petruchio ordered of Kate at the beginning of the scene indicates a cultural symbol that audiences of the time would have recognized. Petruchio orders Kate to remove her hat and throw it at his feet. According to Artese, this gesture was taken from many of the original folktales from which Shakespeare took his *Taming* tale, and early modern playgoers would have recognized it. Artese asserts that the hat toss is

“Katherine’s penultimate act of obedience before her long speech on wifely duty” (321). Jan Harold Brunvard provides some background on Shakespeare’s version of this behavior:

[T]his is a less bawdy version of the concluding episode in some versions of the folktale in which the wife is ordered to undress before the group, or in which the summons from her husband comes while she is in the bath, and she wins the wager by arriving immediately, without taking the time to dress. (Artese 321)

The original order by the husband of the folktales upon which Shakespeare’s *Taming* was based had the intent to humiliate the wife by making her expose herself and appear completely defenseless and vulnerable. Furthermore, the wife was made to put her husband’s summons over her own modesty and appearance. Obviously, Shakespeare could not script Kate to appear unclothed on stage. First of all, nudity was prohibited on stage. Secondly, Kate’s role would have been played by a young boy, as women were also prohibited on stage. Audiences would not behold a naked woman but a naked boy (Artese 321). Thus, Shakespeare’s play would have taken a different direction. However, his Kate gets to remain fully clothed and only hint at the original vulnerability of the folktales. Kate tosses only her hat to Petruchio’s feet before delivering her speech. Within Shakespeare’s context, Kate’s obedience to Petruchio’s command appears just as hyperbolic and overly done as both her earlier compliment to Vincentio and, as Stephen Roy Miller notes, the playwright’s adherence to the folktale: “Shakespeare was not adapting the folktale straightforwardly, but ironically” (14). Especially as it precludes her final speech, Kate’s gesture with the hat is done “overenthusiastically,” making Petruchio into more of a caricature than a dominant male character (Artese 321). Certainly, Kate’s speech and submission are not to be read as genuine female subordination.

Another twist from the original folktale can be seen in this final act. As Brunvard points out in Artese’s above quote, the wife was to undress in front of “the group.” Although neither Brunvard nor Artese clarifies exactly who comprises the group, Shakespeare’s version does. Kate emerges onto the

stage with the other wives who refused to come to their husband's call. Here, Kate creates her own audience. She addresses her final speech to the wives. Of course, Petruchio is the one who orders her to "tell these head strong women / What duty they owe their lords and husbands" (5.2.130-31). So, Kate does as she is told, and opens her speech by telling them the way to approach their husbands: "Fie, fie, unknit that threatening unkind brow" (5.2.136). Immediately, Kate advises these women to remove their "threatening" appearance. Again, this threatening action is too simple and futile for early modern wives, who Kate has made "prisoners to her womanly persuasion" (5.2.120). While the act of removing the hat might remind audiences of the stripped and vulnerable woman from the original folktale, Shakespeare's Kate intends quite the opposite. She strips herself of the overlying expectations and emerges as more confident than vulnerable, implying that she is capable of making her speech in a stark and definitive manner.

Petruchio's reaction to this sudden admittance rings with all the joy of patriarchal bliss: "Why there's a wench! Come on and kiss me, Kate" (5.2.180). However, within this jubilation, like that of the infant looking excitedly at his unified self in the mirror, awaits the potential of losing it just as suddenly. With the construction comes the realization of destruction. At the very moment that Kate identifies Petruchio as her absolute lord and master, she removes the need for him to act, perform or state his role as lord and master. She completely negates Petruchio's masculine authority. Her submissive gestures leading up to this moment do not provide the same acknowledgement as when she defines Petruchio and explicitly labels him as her lord and master and labels herself as his servant. Kate is the one doing the identifying and is the one unifying Petruchio. "Unification is made possible exclusively through the mediation of the other" (Harari 47). Likewise, Petruchio's unified existence depends upon Kate's recognition.

Lacanian psychoanalysis describes this process of both unification and fragmentation happening simultaneously:

The mirror stage has, as it is known, an empirical correlate of affect: the jubilation of the child facing its own image in the mirror, contemplating itself as a whole. The Lacanian conception is far from being evolutionary, since it does not even propose that at the beginning there are dispersed pieces that consolidate into one at some moment. Indeed, the imago of the fragmented body (*corps morcele*) that Lacan also postulates [ . . . ] has no initial stage but rather, starting from the unification determined by the mirror, a possible corporal fragmentation is created in the imaginary retroactively. Only the appearance of the one-unifier can account for the viability of its loss. (Harari 47-8)

Kate has taken Petruchio through this process. He is able to conceive his own unified identity only at the same time that he can contemplate its fragmentation. To this, Kate adds the reminder that his identity depends on hers and that she can manipulate it by ironically giving him what he wants. Petruchio is left with unsatisfying options: He can constantly have need to enforce his masculine dominance over her as long as she behaves like a shrew, or he can be silent and disarmed while Kate behaves exactly like the submissive wife. Neither option allows for Petruchio to be masculine without discontentment. Both, however, create an anxious state; masculinity is either threatened or it is unnecessary, redundant and lost. Even if he found another woman to tame, he would still have to ensure that she never submits. Her speech also hints at the ironic vulnerability of the masculine subject, which she patronizes and persuades other women to do likewise.

Therefore, Kate has affected Petruchio on more than one level within her speech. First, she indicates that masculinity depends upon femininity, an acknowledgement that opposes the early modern conception of masculinity mentioned in the opening quote of this chapter. Secondly, she takes away Petruchio's threat, making his masculine expressions of dominance pointless, unnecessary, and redun-

dant. Finally, she adds a tone of mockery to masculinity, making it a pitiable rather than enviable position of assumed privilege and power. Kate renders the spoils of masculinity as mere illusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### AS YOU (MAY NOT) LIKE IT, ORLANDO:

#### MALE FANTASY AND ITS LACK OF ANXIETY

“I drave my suitor from his mad humor of love to a living humor of madness,”

-Rosalind, *As You Like It* (3.2.417-19)

The above quote indicates an exchange, a shift from one state to another, both equally unsatisfying, chaotic, and fantastic. Yet, the quote also indicates that something has been accomplished, however ridiculous or incredible as it may be. The same exchange happens within romantic comedy. One of the functions of romantic comedy is to appropriate sexual instinct.

What Sigmund Freud calls “libido,” present at birth, must somehow be channeled into a culturally accepted union that consummates and officiates sexuality as an appropriate performance of the masculine and feminine:

Popular opinion has quite definite ideas about the nature and characteristics of this sexual instinct. It is generally understood to be absent in childhood, to set in at the time of puberty in connection with the process of coming to maturity and to be revealed in manifestations of an irresistible attraction exercised by one sex upon the other; while its aim is presumed to be sexual union, or at all events actions leading in that direction. We have every reason to believe, however, that these views give a very false picture of the true situation. If we look into them more closely we shall find that they contain a number of errors, inaccuracies and hasty conclusions. (Freud *The Sexual Aberrations* par. 2)

Freud’s argument indicates that the fulfillment of cultural expectations, which he calls “popular opinion,” leads to a diminishment of individual satisfaction, whether the individual is male or female.

Here, I emphasize that heterosexual desire, assumed to be appropriate and correct, is still one of the “hasty conclusions” of patriarchal appropriation. Normative culture not only assumes that sexual desire is heterosexual but also that it must be played out in the appropriate context of marriage. What actually happens, Freud says, is that an individual exchanges his own satisfaction for the assurance of cultural and social acceptance.

The ending of a comedy assumes that the marital union of man and woman is the fulfillment of a wish, that the fantasy has become a reality, and that both can live respectfully now that sexuality has been sanctioned. It assumes that all desire has the ultimate goal of unification. However, the cultural expectations of gender, accepted unification, and the appropriate performance of sexuality merely perpetuate both anxiety and a fantasy, different from that of the individual and belonging to a more encompassing cultural function and myth. Here, of course, I focus specifically on the perpetuation of masculine anxiety but also on the exchange of one fantasy for another or rather an exchange of one’s own fantasy for (an) other’s fantasy. I have chosen Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* as a demonstration of how the assumed patriarchal reward of the masculine position ultimately degrades males as well as females. In this sense, masculinity becomes a mere representation and mechanism of the patriarchal fantasy or what Lacan calls phallic representation. Orlando must abandon his own fantasy and become a part of the patriarchal fantasy. The romp in Arden is meant as a deferment of his own place within the patriarchy. Ironically, it is through the reestablishment of Orlando’s masculinity that he becomes diminished within codified patriarchal representation.

While in Arden, Orlando resides in a fantasy world where he can imagine both Rosalind and himself to be whatever he wants. This world is outside of the city and its codified expectations of how sexuality and love should be appropriated. Rosalind dons a disguise that both provides a venue for Orlando to map onto it his own construction of her and perpetuates his fantasy by shielding her actual self. Orlando desires Rosalind, yet when he returns to reality and is wed to her in the comic ceremony that



sanctions their union, his reaction is less than jubilant. Instead, the same anxiety that prevented Orlando from speaking directly to Rosalind at the beginning of the play returns, leaving him silent and at a loss for more than words. His fantasy is over, and he must accept his masculine role as husband, landowner, and patriarch. Though he ultimately receives everything that he desires throughout the play and reclaims a sturdy masculine subjectivity, he can no longer fantasize. Instead, he must exchange his own fantasy and become a part of the patriarchal fantasy.

*As You Like It* does not necessarily remind us of the simple difference between sexual fantasy and reality. It forces us to reevaluate the established constructions that we call reality and consider them as mere representations themselves. That the wedding ceremony in the play takes place in Arden, a world of chaos and fantastical happenings, suggests the play's diminishment of cultural codification into a notion just as mythical and unstable as the forest itself. Freud's above quote hints at the faulty nature of socially accepted sexual unions. Harari explains Lacan's interpretation, which is far more discouraging:

That every sexual union is condemned to fail ends up providing little encouragement for hedonistic utopias; also, this is a basic milestone on the path that later allows Lacan to state—in a formalized way—his classic negative aphorism: *'There is no sexual relation.'* Man and woman do not "fit" fully; there is not an even proportion between the two, since *'the other is either the other or the phallus, in the sense of exclusion.'* Nevertheless, this does not hinder their believing that a complete union is feasible, despite the fact that it cannot be written. (Harari 224)

The fantasy of finding the "other half," as mentioned in Plato's *Symposium*, attempts to naturalize that which is merely constructed. The search for "the one," "the soul mate," is a performance meant to inscribe subjects into their intended, normative roles. Orlando's interaction with Rosalind (as Lacan would forbid the term "relationship") is never satisfying for him. He is either a tongue-tied fool or making love

to a disguise called Ganymede, while envisioning his construction of Rosalind but never the actual Rosalind. In the final act, when again face to face with undisguised Rosalind, he becomes mute again. The free-flowing dialogue comes to a sudden halt, anxiety returns, and he once again fears for his ability to live up to masculine standards. His myth of Rosalind ends, and his inscription into the sacred myth of man/woman unification begins. Orlando comes to the same discouraging realization that Lacan describes. In Arden, his construction of himself and Rosalind is merely fantasy, and their union is impossible. Yet, when he enters the socially recognized and accepted world of marriage, he still encounters a myth of possible unification. The former at least allows Orlando to manipulate it as he sees fit. The latter requires that he be manipulated by and into phallic representation.

*As You Like It* differs from Shakespeare's other pastoral comedies in its ambiguity involving Rosalind's disguise as Ganymede. In her essay, "The Education of Orlando," Marjorie Garber asks why Rosalind remains clad as a boy for so long in the forest of Arden. She observes that Rosalind has safety, assurance of Orlando's love, and no clear reason to hide herself in the disguise of Ganymede for as long as she does.<sup>8</sup> Garber argues that Rosalind keeps up her charade as Ganymede in order to "educate" Orlando (62): "It is for Orlando, not Rosalind, that the masquerade is required" (62). As Ganymede, Rosalind teaches Orlando about women, men, and how to love. Garber's study is useful in its highlights of the freedom and control that Rosalind has over Orlando while she remains behind the façade of Ganymede. Rosalind even manages to make Orlando woo her as if Ganymede were his beloved. Furthermore, Orlando calls the Ganymede character "Rosalind." Since Rosalind's unnecessarily extended disguise prompts and attempts to perfect Orlando's ability as a companion, then the romp in which the two lovers engage provides a prelude to something more fixed, structured, and ultimate than their play-

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<sup>8</sup> Garber distinguishes Rosalind from other Shakespearean women who have more explicit reasons to dress as males. Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* "is trapped in her male attire because of the perfidy of her erstwhile lover" (60). In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia gains employment and service to Duke Orsino. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia must dress as a man in order to enter the courtroom and save Antonio. All of these women could not have perpetuated the outcome of their respective plays if they did not don masculine dress.

ful wooing and courting. Garber's argument that the disguise is for Orlando is relevant, here. However, my study does not assume that the wooing is necessary to turn Orlando into a stronger companion for Rosalind. Rather, the wooing that takes place while Rosalind masquerades as Ganymede is more of a deferment of the lovers' ultimate union than practice for it. Rosalind and Orlando both delay the comic promise of unification, specifically the ironic reward of marital bliss.

The most recent studies of *As You Like It* continue to comment on the fact that Rosalind remains disguised as Ganymede far longer than warranted. Many critics emphasize the male disguise of Ganymede as proof of a homoerotic desire or, at least, display a curiosity that the two characters perpetuate the disguise. Stanley Wells considers that "the unrealistically and artificially long-drawn-out game of courtship that [Rosalind and Orlando] play" demonstrates the opportunity for the two to explore sexuality and love in an unconventional manner (106). The sexual ambivalence of the courtship game does deserve attention, especially when considering the name "Ganymede," which was "a common term for a man's young male sexual partner" (Wells 107). The play even incorporates a scene in which Orlando asks Aliena to unite him and Rosalind (at the time disguised as Ganymede) in matrimony. Wells emphasizes that Aliena's response depicts the horror that such a suggestion ignites, even when done in supposed jest: "I cannot say the words" (4.1.116-7) (Wells 107). However, audiences cannot be sure whether Aliena's response is fueled by the resistance to the matrimony of two males or merely a matter of fact that she could not sanctify such a vow.

Certainly, the courting and wooing that ensue between Rosalind/Ganymede and Orlando invites a study of the sexual ambiguity portrayed in the play. Maurice A. Hunt argues that the "approach to the play through transvestite gendering easily qualifies as the most popular among late twentieth- and twenty-first century commentators on *As You Like It*" (133). Hunt assumes Rosalind's as a "transvestite role," which makes the exploration of male and female sexuality possible within the play (133). Bruce R. Smith sees the sexual confusion running more deeply than Orlando's allowance that Rosalind take the

aggressive role in their courtship: “Orlando, unless he breaches all the rules of romantic comedy and sees through Rosalind’s disguise, plays along with the game far more eagerly than his counterpart in Lodge and trades the come-hither dares with someone he thinks is a boy” (146). Another more recent study by Arthur L. Little, Jr. takes *As You Like It* as an “elaborate” example of how, “[i]n romantic comedy, Shakespeare deals his most extended and most theatrical challenge to heterosexual marriage and insists upon marking out space for the possibility of queer matrimony” (212, 210). The play does open itself to the possibility of homoerotic desire.

Yet, as inviting as a study of the homoeroticism might be, an obvious fact surfaces: Orlando consistently and explicitly wants Rosalind the woman, not Ganymede, the boy. Wells accentuates Orlando’s confusion “between desire for an imaginary Rosalind and for the boy Ganymede whom the real Rosalind impersonates” (106). Sure, Orlando does have a confused mentality in the play. However, the confusion is not between an imaginary woman and a boy but between the woman of Orlando’s imagination and the real woman. The wooing that happens provides a venue for Orlando to play out his desire for Rosalind. He uses the name “Rosalind,” while he courts and within all discourse meant to imply sexual and romantic desire. Orlando’s willingness to play out his anticipation of Rosalind in front of Ganymede does not completely prove homoerotic desires. Rather, it proves his incapability of performing a masculine role in front of the opposite sex, preferring the idea to the actual application of it. Wells’s emphasis on the “long-drawn-out” courtship supports the argument that both Orlando and Rosalind make an attempt to resist the realization of their desires, which involve heterosexual expectations more so than homosexual tendencies. The unconventional manner in which they court is still heterosexual in nature but lacking the appropriate patriarchal approval of official marriage.

In fact, even while in disguise, Rosalind still impersonates herself. Most importantly, she impersonates herself so that she and Orlando can carry on a mock courting session in the safety of the woods. Here, Orlando is free to act on impulse and speaks volumes to her, in contrast to his tongue-tied display

at the wrestling match. She convinces Orlando that she, as a young magician named Ganymede, can cure his love sickness, which she claims is an all too common disease:

Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you,  
deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen  
do; and the reason why they are not so punished and  
cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the  
whippers are in love, too. Yet I profess curing it by  
counsel. (3.2.391-96)

Here, Rosalind notes the unruly nature of love and sexual affection and suggests that this type of energy cannot be codified without its merely being beaten out of an individual. Her description indicates the impossibility and ridiculousness of attempts to codify such an emotion and drive. Sexual feeling and love should be allowed to go unbridled in such a place as Arden, the world that resists cultural dictation of appropriate behavior. A complication arises in the appropriation of pure sexual affection. In order to be accepted, it must be molded and shaped to fit appropriate and specific circumstances; it must be cleaned up, so to speak.

Within her description, she also indicates that the cure lies within talking, something that Orlando was unable to do with her within the confines of the city. Now, however, he is able to converse with a fantasy Rosalind. Instead of locating a cure to Orlando's sickness, Rosalind's implicit expectation is that their interaction will fuel Orlando's desire for her and that she can seek satisfaction from his verbal acrobatics. She commands Orlando to "call [her] Rosalind and come everyday to [her] cote and woo [her]" (3.3.416-17). The prolonged wooing of the Ganymede disguise would only increase Orlando's desire for and anticipation of Rosalind.

Rosalind's attempts to "cure" Orlando of this lovesickness are clearly ironic. She wants Orlando to stop desiring her about as much as she wants him to fall in love with the Ganymede disguise. Her

proposal to Orlando, instead, suggests that the two stay unfettered within Arden and allow their mutual sexual affection for one another to exist without the demands and expectations of societal appropriations as long as it can. She then describes how she cured a past sufferer of love. Within this description, Rosalind describes the social construction of the feminine:

He was to imagine me his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to woo me. At which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconsistent, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this color; would now like him, now loathe him, then entertain him, then forswear him, now weep for him, then spit at him. (3.3.398-408)

Here, Rosalind suggests that this type of feminine construction would make any man want “to forswear the full stream of the world and to live in a nook merely monastic” (3.3.410-11). She bitterly mocks the feminine manner in which females are taught to perform. Her implicit warning is that, should she and Orlando return to the structure of the city, she would be expected to act according to societal codes of gender. Orlando, too, would have his own expectations, once they entered a codified union.

Rosalind’s recognition of gender roles emphasizes the freedom that both she and Orlando have outside of the city structure. In the unstructured world of Arden, both characters can act on their impulses and engage in their sexuality however they please. The interesting thing about them, though, is that they both want each other: Rosalind wants Orlando, and Orlando wants Rosalind. However, Orlando’s stunted speech when face to face with Rosalind in the city and his free-flowing words to her within Arden suggest that he is aware of an inappropriate means of indulging his feelings for her. Although heterosexual in nature, the confrontation with the real Rosalind causes anxiety for Orlando. He would

rather fantasize about her than actually have her, and the fantasy land of Arden offers such a venue for him.

If Orlando can control and construct the fantasy Rosalind, then he can also imagine himself to be something more than he really is in the city. Treated like an animal by his brother and left with little or no money or land, Orlando would obviously prefer to imagine his world as something outside of reality. Jean E. Howard notes this advantage to manipulate one's own construction taken by Rosalind in Arden. Howard argues that the complexity of Rosalind is not that she dons a disguise but "is in a close consideration of the particular *way* in which Rosalind plays with her disguise" (197). Howard states:

Somewhat like Portia, Rosalind uses her disguise to redefine (albeit in a limited way) the position of woman in a patriarchal society. The most unusual aspect of her behavior is that while dressed as a man, Rosalind impersonates a woman, and that woman is herself – or, rather, a self that is the logical conclusion of Orlando's romantic, Petrarchan construction of her. (197)

So, Rosalind can be a better version of herself. Howard considers Rosalind's better version to be, sadly, a more perfected Petrarchan construction of Orlando's male fantasy. Sure, even within fantasyland images are still culturally constructed. Yet, both Rosalind and Orlando still prefer their masquerade as whatever they want to be, even if what they want to be is the cultural epitome of their own constructions. The same thing happens with Orlando. In Arden, he is verbally adept, entitled to all that the land offers him, and free to roam as his own master and master over all. If Rosalind is Orlando's perfected Petrarchan object in the forest, then Orlando can pretend to be masculinity's perfected subject.

In fact, this sort of mental manipulation is fantasy's greatest mechanism—the subject can choose to be anything, even if it means performing one's own constructed subjectivity better:

Marianne Doane has argued that ‘masquerade,’ the self-conscious staging, parody, exaggeration of cultural constructions of the self, offers women a choice between simple identification with male selves—which is how she reads the meaning of cross-dressing—or simple identification within patriarchal constructions of the feminine. (Howard 197-8)

We can apply Doane’s observation of female masquerade to Orlando; he, too, can masquerade as the perfect man having the perfect female object. While Rosalind wears a literal disguise to perpetuate and manipulate Orlando’s fantasy, Orlando can disguise and manipulate his self-perception.

Both Rosalind and Orlando appear to prefer the fantasy of one another, and Orlando’s comfortable courting of Ganymede, as opposed to his uncomfortable and clumsy interaction with Rosalind, indicates that he enjoys chasing his desire more so than the reception of it. However, the playful romp cannot last for too long. Orlando cannot continue to court an imaginary woman forever, especially when audiences have identified Rosalind as the prime candidate destined to become “wife” and Orlando as her prime counterpart: “The principle love focus in this play is on Rosalind and Orlando” (Wells 106). After all, Shakespeare’s comedies anticipate marriage from their first act, even if the unification is forced or ironic. Their smooth and happy courtship while Rosalind is in disguise must end, and their sexual innuendos must be appropriated within the codified bonds of marriage. The demise of their play demonstrates not necessarily the end of inappropriate homoeroticism but the end of any sexual and romantic desire between unmarried individuals.

Just as feminist critics cringe when Rosalind surrenders her disguise and falls into the patriarchal bonds of marriage, *As You Like It* reminds us that the submission to these cultural expectations does not quite satisfy Orlando, either. By giving up her disguise, Rosalind ends the fantasy that protected Orlando from his anxiety when face to face with her. Orlando must give up his own fantasy to become a part of



the patriarchal fantasy of a perfect marital union. In the end, Orlando has not transformed into a confident lover but into a representation of the phallic and patriarchal order.

Though the culmination of sexual and romantic desire into appropriated positions is an almost forced comic mechanism, Rosalind and Orlando do have some time to bask in the initial attraction and foreplay. Ruth Nevo highlights the freedom of their initiation into Arden:

With no parental obstacles, no separating misprisions or vows or oaths, with no reason (as has often been pointed out) for Rosalind's continuing disguise once she is safe in the forest and the writer of the execrable verses identified, *As You Like It* is the only play in which the two chief protagonists fall in love not as victims of blind Cupid, or of plots of one kind and another, or against their own conscious will, but freely, open-eyed, reciprocally and as if in godsent fulfillment of their own deepest desires. (21)

Nevo describes the exact bliss that the lovers try to prolong in the face of both the dramatic and cultural expectations. Audiences allow Orlando to frolic with a young boy but only as long as the playfulness leads to an ultimate positioning of Orlando into his masculine place, as husband, landowner, and recognized patriarchal representation. Outside the city and structure, Orlando easily acts as both a lover and individual. He leads a safe existence in the forest, just like Rosalind, and even has a counterpart that can answer his flirtations. Yet, this haven is only a temporary sojourn from the identity up to which Orlando must live.

His recognition of the safety of the forest renders him comfortable, yet somewhat feminine. When he comes across others within the forest, his first reaction is one of aggression. This aggression quickly dissolves to gentle tidings:

Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you.  
I thought that all things had been savage here,  
And therefore put I on the countenance of

stern commandment. But whate'er you are  
 That in this desert inaccessible,  
 Under the shade of melancholy boughs,  
 Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;  
 If ever you have looked on better days,  
 If ever been where bells have knolled to church,  
 If ever your eyelids wiped a tear  
 And know what 'tis pity and be pitied,  
 Let gentleness my strong enforcement be;  
 In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword. (2.7.106-119)

Here, Orlando is free to pity, blush, and hide his "sword" without the hindrance of time and free from religious and "stern" commands. This scene allows a softer existence for Orlando, in contrast to the expectations within the city, to which he falls pathetically short.

From the beginning of the play, we see that Orlando is in weak condition, at least as far as his masculinity is concerned within the structure of the city. Several critics have identified Orlando as the character most in need of a makeover in *As You Like It*. Orlando himself realizes the need for a reordering of his identity. The play opens with his harsh self-perception, one that resembles an animal more so than a human. Moreover, he blames this lot on his brother: "He lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and, as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education" (1.1.18-20). Orlando contemplates his "mutiny against this servitude" (1.1.22). Along with Garber's claim that Orlando must be educated, other critics note that Orlando's character needs work. Ted Hughes argues for the analytical way in which Shakespeare reforms Orlando. "The play dismantles his entire being into its component parts, rearranges them correctly, as if rearranging disordered chromosomes, then reassembles the whole, with the ego and soul reunited in perfect love" (Hughes 90). Harold Bloom emphasizes

that, “Orlando, a youthful Hercules, is certainly not Rosalind’s human equal” (145-6). Martha Ronk indicates that both Rosalind and Orlando need preparation before their marital union yet is not confident that both have completely achieved a significant degree of self-awareness (266). Ronk also observes the pedagogical play-within-the-play structure that supposedly perpetuates the lovers’ knowledge of one another (266).<sup>9</sup> Confirming, then, that Orlando must go through some sort of transformation, we must then evaluate the outcome and conclusion of this transformation and rearrangement of his identity.

Like Ronk’s, my study of *As You Like It* intends to examine the change that happens to Orlando. Yet, I will look more closely at the ways in which fantasy works both to protect Orlando from anxiety and as a deferment of his own submission to the masculine expectations within a patriarchal existence. Also, I intend to demonstrate that masculinity, just like femininity, is not phallic but is a mere representation of the phallus and requires a degree of submission to it. Rosalind’s disguise as Ganymede offers not so much a lesson for Orlando but a short period in which she and Orlando can resist codified masculinity and femininity. Orlando’s change, then, is about giving up his fantasy and becoming a part of another fantasy. It is a surrender to, not an establishment of security and dominance. Though he gets all for which he longed at the beginning of the play, his wish fulfillment is a mere codified representation.

Both Rosalind and Orlando defer the inevitable surrender to the reality of their social constructions, yet only a supposed reality relying upon the assumption of a perfect male/female match. This reality warrants their inscription into the economy of Same, the patriarchal old dream of symmetry in which the Other is the symmetrical Other of the Same. Rosalind and Orlando both become inscribed into this dream when they relinquish their escapades in Arden and “make all this matter even” (5.4.18). (Rosalind sheds her boy disguise and returns to female to be Orlando’s symmetrical Other; Orlando gets a more symmetrical match than the boy Ganymede; Phebe receives a male as a companion instead of

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<sup>9</sup> Ronk’s study denies that the union between Rosalind and Orlando is successful in fulfilling both of their expectations. Her argument focuses on the “disjunction between the scenes of courtship and the ending” (266). She highlights the irony, contradictions, and impossibilities of the play.

receiving Rosalind.) Calvin Thomas argues that, “subjects who are constituted as others can resist being scripted as the symmetrical Others of the Same by recognizing and insisting on their difference from this paradigm” (*Male* 48). While in disguise, Rosalind resists this symmetry by allowing Orlando to woo the him of Ganymede instead of the her of Rosalind or the symmetrical Other of Orlando. While Rosalind is in disguise, too, Orlando can create his own reality of what Rosalind is.

Orlando comes face to face with Rosalind on only two occasions in the play, at the wrestling match and after she sheds her Ganymede disguise in the final act. Both occasions depict Orlando as rhetorically and romantically inept. He speaks his first words to Rosalind right before the match, wherein he asks that her “fair eyes and gentle wishes go with [him] to [his] trial” (1.2.175-6). As flattering as they may be, Orlando speaks these words seconds before he overthrows Charles. At that moment, he is more passionate about breaking Charles’s ribs than about impressing Rosalind. This statement and his final line of the entire play are the only words that Orlando speaks directly to Rosalind. The rest are spoken to himself, to Ganymede or to other characters. Orlando does a fine job of overthrowing Charles, only to have Rosalind render him speechless afterwards: “Can I not say ‘thank you’? My better parts / Are all thrown down, and that which here stands up / Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block” (1.2.239-41). His tongue suddenly wears heavy weights, and he confesses that he has no idea what has caused his inability to talk to Rosalind: “What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? / I cannot speak to her, yet she urges conference” (1.2.247-8). This dialogue demonstrates the extent of Orlando’s wooing capability when directly before Rosalind.

His anxiety when face to face with Rosalind indicates Orlando’s insecurity of his own position within the structure. The irony is that, on both occasions, Orlando is at the height of masculine expectation. During the wrestling match, he proves his physical strength. Le Beau comments about Charles’s state after Orlando has thrown him: “He cannot speak, my lord” (1.2.209). Orlando renders Charles both

physically and rhetorically helpless. Yet, he cannot speak to Rosalind when she compliments his masculine display.

At the end of the play, too, Orlando's rhetoric falls short of romantic applause. In the final act, after Rosalind appears to him as Rosalind, his only words are a matter of fact: "If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind" (5.4.119). Moreover, Orlando merely mimics the Duke Senior's reaction to Rosalind in the previous line: "If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter" (5.4.118). Somehow, these words do not quite live up to the "articulate and (relatively) self-knowledgeable husband" into which Marjorie Garber argues Orlando has "transformed" (71). The final act depicts Orlando just as lifeless, if not as "tongue-tied" as he was during his first meeting with Rosalind (71). Garber's argument is valid in highlighting the same "superior wit" that Peter Erickson finds in the heroine (Erickson 43). Erickson observes that Rosalind "is strong and manipulative as she uses [...] the advantages given by her circumstances to disabuse Orlando of his stock notions of male and female roles in love" (43). Yet, I do not see any textual evidence indicating that Rosalind's education of Orlando "about himself, about her, and about the nature of love" has sufficiently taken with him (Garber 62).

Here, too, Orlando is in the height of masculinity again. He has regained his land, acquired the woman that he has wanted, and received recognition from her father, the duke. Yet again, too, he does not say anything. Here is the demonstration of the connection between masculinity and anxiety that Breitenburg finds. It is also specifically the anxiety that Lacan describes in the context of male/female relations, or lack thereof. Renata Salecl notes that men created the Adam and Eve myth for this reason. The rib was only a part of Adam; therefore, he was "essentially not missing anything" (94). Eve was an object created from a mere part of Adam. However, this myth does not completely sooth male anxiety: "Anxiety often arises precisely when a man encounters a woman who becomes an object of his desire" (94). He receives a loss along with his gain. Orlando's method of deferring this realization is through fantasy.

Orlando is much better at talking about Rosalind than talking to her. His fantasy of Rosalind is much clearer throughout the play than his behavior when face to face with her. He vocalizes this fantasy freely to Ganymede and even woos Ganymede as he would Rosalind. Yet, he does all of this romancing ignorant of the knowledge that Ganymede is in fact Rosalind. When the actual Rosalind stands before him, Orlando allows himself to be castrated, speechless, and with varying degrees of stage fright. In this situation, Orlando displays the melancholic's state of mind, a state of mind that binds an individual in both early modern and postmodern perceptions of anxiety.

Orlando consistently and finally prefers his own, imagined reality/the fantasy of Rosalind to the reality of Rosalind. Her disguise perpetuates Orlando's fantasy, protecting him from the anxiety of having to face the real Rosalind. The escapades in Arden provide the self-preserving mechanism of Freud's definition of anxiety as a protection from fear of a real or imagined threat. Furthermore, Orlando confesses in the first act that he does not know what causes his uneasiness and inability to speak around Rosalind. Yet, he woos and speaks to Ganymede with ease while they reside within Arden.

Admittedly, the make-believe world of Arden allows for such fantasies. To a certain degree in *As You Like It*, the forest is a fantasy in contrast to the horror of the city. Maslen describes the city structure in this play as a place where "the powerful are without exception corrupt and the weak without exception are exploited" (176). The first act sets the stage for corruption and exploitation, a reality to which Orlando is no stranger. He defines his life as one of an animal: "For my part, [Oliver] keeps me rustically at home or, to speak more properly, stays me here unkept; for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox?" (1.1.4-10). Oliver, Orlando's own brother, refuses him education and proper room and board. Further, Oliver orders Charles, his wrestler, to "break [Orlando's] neck as his finger" (1.1.141). After Oliver's plan backfires, and Orlando overthrows Charles, Oliver sets fire to Orlando's meager lodgings and makes plans to kill Orlando himself, leaving Orlando

homeless and hopeless. Yet, the forest provides a relief from this tyranny. Arden, too, is the setting for the final act in which Rosalind makes all the chaos supposedly “even” (5.4.25).

As critics have noticed, if Rosalind can gender bend and cross-dress in such a place, then Orlando can play out his own altered world, as well. After all, the forest provides for “that most evasive and potent of imaginative constructs, freedom” (Maslen 177). “Arcadia is a middle country of the imagination [...] a place of Becoming rather Being, where an individual’s potencies for the arts of life and love and poetry are explored and tested” (Marinelli 37). Ruth Nevo compares Arden to the same Arcadia that Peter Marinelli describes (29). Arden perpetuates chaos forbidden within the societal and structural codes of the city.

Amid the permitted chaos of Arden, the degree to which Orlando buys the Ganymede disguise is insignificant. He tells the duke, “My lord, the first time that I ever saw him / Methought he was a brother to your daughter,” indicating an arguable degree of awareness that Ganymede displayed a hint of Rosalind (5.4.28-9). The duke, too, admits that he saw “in this shepherd boy / Some lively touches of [his] daughter” (5.4.26-7). Yet, just like the manner in which Orlando mimics the duke about truth in sight, his acknowledgment of Ganymede’s resemblance to Rosalind occurs after the duke makes the initial observation. Twice in this final act Orlando makes a statement about Rosalind that repeats what the duke had just stated. Audiences cannot tell for certain whether Orlando means these lines or if he simply copies the duke for lack of better words. Besides, “[i]t is a convention of Shakespearean comedy that husbands and lovers do not recognize their ladies when those ladies are dressed in male attire” (Garber 65). Whatever the case, Orlando acts his best role as a lover when Rosalind dons the disguise of Ganymede.

Bruce R. Smith argues that Rosalind and Orlando woo one another “face to face, in words that come perilously close to peeling off the one thin layer of disguise that separates lovers from their desires” (146). This layer (no matter how thin) between the two, though, is what allows Orlando to play

out his fantasy. Again, audiences cannot be sure as to how much Orlando falls for the Ganymede façade, especially when she receives so much critical applause for her excellent portrayal of both a female and a male. Nevo observes that Rosalind seizes the chance “to satisfy a girl’s tomboy fantasy” (29). She further notes that “Ganymede releases in Rosalind her best powers of improvisation, intuition, and witty intelligence” all of which express her “ebullient, versatile and polymorphic energies” (30). Peter Erickson finds Rosalind’s role “flexible and accommodating” as she portrays both male and female ability (43). Finally, Harold Bloom gushes that Rosalind “is superior in everything whatsoever,” devoting the entire introduction of his book of essays on *As You Like It* to the “miracle” of Rosalind’s cleverness “fused with such benignity” (4, 2). Peter Erickson, however, takes a more realistic view on Rosalind and acknowledges how over sensationalizing her can undercut other issues within the play: “Rosalind’s androgynous allure can appear so attractive, her linguistic virtuosity so engaging, that all our attention becomes focused on her, as if nothing else happened or mattered” (39).

With all due respect for Rosalind and her fan base, her performance as Ganymede only serves to perpetuate Orlando’s fantasy and diminish her role as an autonomous character. It is her mutability, flexibility, versatility, “polymorphic” ability and gender crossing that leaves her open for Orlando to map on to her his own reality of what she is. Orlando mutates, flexes, and morphs her into what he wants her to be, rather than what she is. In fact, Bloom’s critique that Rosalind “is as integrated a personality as Shakespeare created,” confirms that she does not have a consistent identity of her own throughout the play (149). She is the ultimate patriarchal people pleaser. She is the good daughter, a faithful friend/sister/cousin to Cecila; she delivers to Phebe an appropriate husband and fulfills all “that [s]he hath promised” at the end of the play (5.4.2). Rosalind demonstrates best Jaques’s famous line:

All the world’s a stage,  
 And all the men and women merely players;  
 They have their exits and entrances,



And one man in his time plays many parts. (2.7.139-42).

Erickson notes that she is paradoxically “the architect of a resolution that phases out the control she has wielded” throughout the play (46). Unlike Kate in *Taming of the Shrew*, “Rosalind’s submission is explicit but not ironic” (46). What is ironic about the ending, however, is that Orlando does not get the girl of his dreams; he gets to end his own, as Freud calls it, “correction of an unsatisfying reality” (*Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* 439). Orlando’s acceptance of Rosalind is an acceptance of a reality that falls short of his deified woman, even as she serves to placate and amuse his gender class with her own. In this sense, Rosalind’s entrance into matrimony appears to please the patriarchal order, not to please Orlando. This appeasement is what Orlando has tried to resist while in Arden.

Rosalind’s best role is the one that she plays within Orlando’s mind. When Orlando retreats to Arden, he begins writing his version of a love story:

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love;  
 And thou, thrice-crowned Queen of Night, survey  
 With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,  
 Thy huntress’ name that my full life doth sway.  
 O Rosalind! These trees shall be my books,  
 And in their barks my thoughts I’ll character,  
 That every eye which in this forest looks  
 Shall see thy virtue witnessed everywhere.  
 Run, run, Orlando, carve on every tree

The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.” (3.2.1-10)

Self-absorbed, self-fulfilling, and self-projected, Orlando is able to play out the expression that he could not upon his first meeting with Rosalind. More importantly, Orlando can define and create an expression for the once “unexpressive she.” He will write his own thoughts of Rosalind into the bark. He can

control and know what he once could not. The anxiety that he once had in the presence of Rosalind is deferred by his mental alteration of her. Like anxiety, the narcissistic manner in which Orlando romances his Rosalind has the purpose of self-preservation. Moreover, Orlando can freely move about the forest singing the pleasures of the lover instead of having to fight and remain contained within the confines of the city.

Ironically, while in Arden, Orlando has more control as a refugee than at the end of the play when he is given land, wealth, and his woman. Ironic, too, is the fact that, despite critical arguments about Rosalind's manipulation of Orlando, Orlando has the control over Rosalind while she dons her disguise. He can shape her into whatever vision he wants. Nathaniel Strout observes the self-absorbed dialogue that Orlando uses throughout the play. "[He] is the character in the play whose lines have the highest frequency of the personal pronouns- *I, me, and my*" (209). His time in Arden is a time to turn "everything toward himself," including Rosalind (Strout 209). Orlando can construct his own reality, instead of having to live up to expectations of a construction placed upon him.

To Ganymede, he confesses that he is "so love-shaked," and pleads to him, "I would I could make thee believe I love" (3.2.360,377). Within his expression of love, he asks Ganymede for a remedy, a cure. Rosalind/Ganymede offers to take him "from his mad humor of love to a living humor of madness" (3.2.408-10). In order to do so, Orlando must woo Ganymede as he would Rosalind. She does, in fact, do this. Orlando is free to pretend that he has whatever relationship with Rosalind that he desires as long as Rosalind is free to pretend that she is Ganymede.

Meeting Ganymede only emphasizes the "deifying of the name of Rosalind" (3.2.356-7). Orlando now has someone to engage in the dialogue of his fantasy. Rosalind dons a disguise that keeps her true identity concealed and enables Orlando to speak as well. He confesses his love of Rosalind to Ganymede and continues to tell him about what he would do with Rosalind. Rosalind, too, perpetuates this masquerade by asking him to call her "Rosalind" and "woo" the Ganymede character. Granted, Rosalind's

wit as both herself and Ganymede comes through in her dialogue and actions. Yet, Orlando credits only Ganymede with the display and still assumes Rosalind to be a threat. Even at the end of the play, she still renders him speechless. He only has three lines in the final scene, only one of them a pseudo reaction to Rosalind's appearance, one that resembles more a mimicry of what the duke spoke in reaction to the same event. We cannot be sure that Orlando is at all happy to receive Rosalind as his wife or the restoration of his former inheritance. We can be sure of only the textual fact that Orlando does his best speaking and acting while playing along with the Ganymede sham:

Orlando: I would not have my right Rosalind of this

Mind, for I protest her frown might kill me.

Rosalind (as Ganymede): By this hand, it will not kill a fly. But come,

now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on

disposition; and ask me what you will, I will grant it.

Orlando: Then love me, Rosalind.

Rosalind (as Ganymede): Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all.

Orlando: And wilt thou have me?

Rosalind (as Ganymede): Ay, and twenty such. (4.1.83-91)

Here, Orlando's bold proposal and demand of Rosalind's love contrasts his initial speechlessness at the wrestling match when in contact with Rosalind without her disguise. The next lines depict Orlando and Rosalind/Ganymede participating in a mock wedding ceremony. Orlando directly and willingly partakes but as long as Rosalind has her disguise. Again, whether or not Orlando knows that this is the real Rosalind or not does not change the fact that he more easily romances the disguise than the woman. Now, he has a participant to respond to his rhetoric and perpetuate his pretend world.

At the end of the play, however, Orlando's fantasy is over. He must now become a part of another fantasy. Orlando and Rosalind unite as man and wife, returning to their appropriate gender roles:

Rosalind removes the disguise and submits as Orlando's wife; Orlando must also submit to his position within the feigned reality of the patriarchal structure. Not only has he been given a wife, but he also has received his land, holdings, and brotherly recognition. His wishes have been fulfilled in reality. Yet, we see no indication of triumph in Orlando in the final scene.

Orlando opens the play with a clear recognition of his state. He speaks plainly and fluently about his liking to an animal (1.1.1-25). Though this state does not amuse him, it does indicate a level of self-knowledge and awareness:

OLIVER: Know you where you are, sir?

ORLANDO: O, sir, very well. Here in your orchard.

OLIVER: Know you before whom, sir?

ORLANDO: Ay, better than him I am before knows me.

[. . .]

OLANDO: I am no villain. I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys. (1.1.39-55)

Orlando ends the play, however, speechless and as invisible as Rosalind has become. He shows no jubilation about his supposed triumph and says nothing, even after he hears of his restored lands.

Just like Rosalind, Orlando has been inscribed into the patriarchal fantasy, the old dream of symmetry, the economy of the Same. Rosalind masquerades as Ganymede, then converts into a feminine masquerade to be Orlando's Other. Likewise, Orlando must give up his fantasy in order to have Rosalind in an appropriate way and become interpellated into the Same. The ending of *As You Like It* depicts Lacan's somewhat tragic explanation of this comic anti-climax: "For Lacan, it is crucial that a man give up as lost the hope of finding in his partner his own lack, that is, his fundamental castration" (Salecl 94). When face-to-face with Rosalind again, the anxiety returns, if even it is in the form of a lack of lack. Orlando is only made to believe that all of his wishes have been fulfilled, as he becomes a part of the patriarchal fantasy, the production of the invisible phallus and "the power that attempts to stand behind

all representations in order to fix and finish them” (Thomas 49). Lacan points out this function: “The fact that the phallus is not found where we expect it to be, where we require it to be [...] is what explains the fact that anxiety is the truth of sexuality [...]. The phallus, where it is expected as sensual, never appears except as lack, and this is its link with anxiety” (Seminar X, Anxiety, June 5, 1963, unpublished seminar). As Orlando now has supposed phallic power, he is only a representation of the phallus and its power.

Strout emphasizes the illusion of wish fulfillment in the final act, exemplified by the following lines:

Silvius: It is to be all made of fantasy,  
 All made of passion, and all made of wishes,  
 All adoration, duty, and observance,  
 All humbleness, all patience, and impatience,  
 All purity, all trial, all observance. (5.2.93-7)

Silvius indicates the exact anti-climax of the grand union at the end of the play. As all get what they think that they have wanted, they also must give up their fantastical play in order to find their appropriate places within the codified structure. The fantasy that they must play now is the patriarchal fantasy, not their own.

Orlando has achieved the culmination of comic promises in the form of his newly acquired recognition of masculinity and power:

But whoever understands the human mind knows that hardly anything is harder for a man than to give up a pleasure which he has once experienced. Actually, we can never give anything up; we only exchange one thing for another. What appears to be a renunciation is really the formation of a substitute or surrogate. (Freud *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* 437-8)

This recognition of his place within society requires an exchange. His entrance into a masculine position

requires him to give up the pleasure of his fantasy. Just as Freud indicates, the renunciation is a substitution. The only way for Orlando to make up for the lost pleasure of his fantasy of Rosalind is to partake in the pleasure of his appropriate masculine position over Rosalind. Though a position of privilege and prestige, the position is still forced upon him and leaves him with no other choice. Now that their romantic desires have been officiated by marital union, the two cannot return to their previous state in which both could play out their desires happily and without expectation.

The most tragic element of *As You Like It* is that Orlando and Rosalind never experience a romantic or sexual relationship. They court one another well enough but only as long as Rosalind dons her disguise. As soon as the disguise is removed, they are flung into their roles as husband and wife, a union that requires more performance than when Rosalind was acting as Ganymede. Salecl highlights the Lacanian paradox of the lovers: "In Seminar XX, Lacan makes the puzzling statement that 'there's no such thing as a sexual relationship'" (93). She furthers the thought: "He also views love as the subject's attempt to cover up the impossibility of the relationship" (93). Orlando must play his role as man, a mere representation of the phallus, which he himself does not control but instead is controlled by. "A man thus constantly tries to take on his symbolic function, since he knows that the symbolic function is what the woman sees in him. However, he necessarily fails in this attempt, which causes him anxiety and inhibits him" (Salecl 93). Thus, with the establishment of Orlando's masculinity comes the reestablishment of his anxiety. At the beginning of the play, Orlando was anxious about not having recognition as a man. At the end of the play, he is anxious about being recognized as a man. The middle acts of the play depict his and Rosalind's attempts to defer their inevitable inscription into their gender roles.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE MASQUERADE OF VENICE:

#### FEIGNING FEMININITY AS MEANS TO MASCULINE POWER

In her essay, *Femininity and Limits of Theory*, Paola Mieli stresses what she calls a “simple point,” yet one that is often “misunderstood:” “If the phallus is a pure signifier, the symbol for the lack in the Other, [then] nobody ‘has’ it, but anyone might have access to it, independently from its gender” (269). Mieli’s point involves the fluidity of gender in regard to its access to power, as the phallus is not had but accessed. Either gender might have a turn. The irony that Mieli might have unintentionally created is that she has somehow feminized the phallus by describing it as something that is to be passive and accessed, a female characteristic. Since no one ‘has’ it, psychoanalysis rests upon the assumption that everybody seems to want it. Even so, then, this phallus is something to be desired, much as is the case with femininity or, at least, what femininity is told to be. Therefore, the competition to access the phallus could be considered one that attempts to make the phallus a somewhat feminine object. In this sense, the phallus is what is desired, the desired object, and what is to be had. Here, in this chapter, the same point is made and proven by Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*. Within *Merchant*, both Portia and Antonio compete to be the desired object for Bassanio. First of all, the play proves the fluidity of gender in terms of its access to the phallus and power. The most dominating character in the play is Portia, a female. Therefore, the play demonstrates that dominance, a culturally and theoretically masculine performance, is not a role designated merely for males. However, the more complex point within the play is the means by which Portia and Antonio compete in order to gain a dominant role over one another. They attempt to hold power over one another by playing a feminine role for Bassanio, in whom they share a common interest. Being the phallus for an other (Bassanio, specifically) is not only a feminine construction to which both Portia and Antonio must feign to be. They also feminize the phallus itself,

objectifying it as they willingly objectify themselves. They attempt to gain dominance over each other by feigning femininity, blurring gender roles as well as the gender of the phallus itself.

Continuing to blur gender lines, *Merchant of Venice* not only insinuates that a female can dominate and hold power over others. It also portrays this domination as cumbersome and not necessarily the way to get what one wants. Although Portia remains the most powerful character at the end of the play, and throughout the play, for that matter, she does not have that for which both she and Antonio compete from the beginning of the play. She does not manage to be for Bassanio; she cannot be his feminine object in the fifth act after her aggressive and masculine display in the courtroom, which provides the solution to the play's conflict. Portia is the hero of *Merchant of Venice*, and therefore is not allowed to revert back to a submissive and feminine position in the final act. By demonstrating her superiority in the fourth act, she loses her place as the woman, so to speak, specifically Bassanio's woman. Instead, Antonio is ultimately the vulnerable, passive, and docile feminine object whom Bassanio can have. Ultimately, too, Antonio has won the right to this submissive position over Portia, making him both feminine and masculine simultaneously at the play's end. Despite (or rather because of) this victory over his competitor, he must recognize that he no longer has the venue in which to prove what a man and woman he can be. Portia surrenders to him, leaving him to face the loss within the gain, as he confesses his speechlessness at having acquired this phallic recognition, this implicit power over Portia, and this realization that after the threat is removed, he has nothing left to maintain his acquired power.

Much scholarship regarding Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* focuses on the economic and religious themes within the play. Amanda Bailey explores the ideas of owing and owning, at what point a creditor actually possesses his debtor, and the circumstances surrounding lending and borrowing in her article "Shylock and the Slaves: Owing and Owning in *The Merchant of Venice*." William O. Scott argues that, "the litigiousness of [Shakespeare's] era reflects a sense of unease and a desire to seek protection in formalities, sanctions, precedent, and (legal and other) custom; and, very broadly, analogues to the



concepts of conditional bonds and forfeiture might answer to such desires” (287). Gary Rosenshield emphasizes the disparity between Christian belief and capitalistic gain: “The question that the play implicitly asks is not whether Shylock can become a Christian but whether Antonio can be both a Christian and a merchant” (29). Again, Shakespeare scholars emphasize the themes of Antonio’s debt, Shylock’s Jewish construction, and whether or not the play perpetuates or challenges an anti-semitism argument. A common denominator found among these arguments is that they all revolve around the idea of hierarchy and the power structure—who owns whom, who has more power, and how one goes about maintaining power within a particular dynamic.

Although socio-economy and religious views are significant themes both within *Merchant* and during the early modern period (or any period in culture for that matter), readers can find a more implicit yet equally important thread running through the play, one that continues the ideas of ownership, hierarchy, and the anxiety over winning, maintaining, and losing power. The dynamic for this chapter, of course, will be the dynamic of gender, specifically regarding privileged positions. Here, however, the coveted position of privilege is not the masculine position of authority. Rather, it is the theoretically submissive feminine position that both Portia and Antonio desire. Both want to be wanted by Bassanio and compete to prove who can better perform the feminine masquerade to become the object of Bassanio’s desire. Ultimately, Antonio performs a better feminine role than Portia. However, instead of demonstrating security and authority, Antonio is disarmed, insecure, and speechless in the final act.

My first two chapters explore how the masculine construction is silenced by ironically getting what it wants. Petruchio finally tames his shrew. Yet, as I have proven, *Taming* makes the implicit and ominous point that Kate is the one who ultimately holds the power by submitting to her husband and negating his authority over her. As in *Taming*, the ultimate recognition of Orlando’s power at the end of *As You Like It* leaves him less joyous than Petruchio, as shown in his inability to speak independently in the fifth act. Orlando recognizes the anticlimactic reception of finally getting all that he wants more so

than Petruchio. Both men are fooled by the assumed power of a recognized role of masculine privilege. The same paradox happens in the *Merchant of Venice*; the ultimate win, so to speak, leaves the victor speechless. *Merchant* depicts a competition between Portia and Antonio. Both want to be the object of Bassanio's affection, a theoretically feminine position yet one that also defines implicit power over Bassanio as well as the other competitor. The play not only proves that gender is performed and fluid. It also provides an explicitly silenced victor at the end. When Antonio realizes that he has won Bassanio's affection and that Portia has stepped aside, his response does not ring with victorious arrogance. Instead, Antonio's remark is one of inability and insecurity: "I am dumb" (5.1.279). After proving that he can perform a feminine role better than Portia, Antonio is left in a similar state as Petruchio and Orlando. He gets power over his competitor, but without any further threat, he loses the venue in which to prove his power.

In *Merchant*, Portia and Antonio create a unique competition with one another. Both want to be the object of Bassanio's affection, as opposed to having Bassanio. This type of performance is categorically feminine. Colette Soler describes the difference between "being" and "having" in terms of which one is feminine and which one is masculine. Soler emphasizes Freud's "scandalous" claim that sexual identification depends upon having and not having a penis, upon fear of losing it and the fear of having lost it. Fundamentally, Freud's theories about sexual development rest upon the castration complex:

Making male and female development hinge upon the castration

complex, Freud introduced, implicitly at least, the idea of a denaturing of sex in human beings. There is certainly a sexual being of the organism that cannot be reduced to anatomy, but it is nevertheless insufficient to constitute the sexual being of the subject. (Soler 100)

Freud reduces the female role to one of fundamental phallic lack that causes women to compensate by finding a male as replacement for her missing penis; "she expects or waits [attend] to receive the phallus

from the person who has it” (Soler 100). Freud places his arguments about sexual development in terms of having or not having.

Lacan uses this same binary yet places it in terms of having and being. Like Freud, Lacan embraces the “phallogentrism” of the unconscious (Soler 100). Though Lacan argues that the penis is not what is involved in sexual development, he still focuses on the phallus, a signifier that continues to perpetuate the masculine as primary and the feminine as secondary. Although Lacan goes further than Freud in his explanation of femininity, Freud’s foundations are still apparent from the beginning of Lacan’s “The Signification of the Phallus:”

We know that the unconscious castration complex functions as a knot, first in the dynamic structuring of symptoms [...], and second in regulating the development that gives its ratio to the first role: namely the instating in the subject of an unconscious position without which he could not identify with the ideal type of his sex or even answer the needs of his partner in sexual relations without grave risk—much less appropriately meet the needs of the child who may be produced thereby. (as quoted in Soler

101) Lacan defines femininity in terms of its relation to masculinity, specifically through the difference between “being” and “having” the phallus. Soler finds three disguising characteristics of what Lacan finds to be feminine –“(1) being the phallus, that is, the representative of what man is missing; (2) being the object that serves as the cause of his desire; and (3) being his symptom upon which his jouissance is fixated” (102). All of the above is in opposition to the having of the phallus, which Lacan defines as masculine.

Culturally, the masculine gender is the privileged gender. Lacan emphasizes masculinity as the gender that dictates what the feminine construction is or should be. What makes the competition between Portia and Antonio unique is that the position that both want to occupy is not one of explicit

masculine privilege but of feminine submission. Both want to be for Bassanio as opposed to having Bassanio. Portia and Antonio conform to what Bassanio wants. Although they both provide for Bassanio, they do not take authority over him. Instead, they use their resources to place themselves in submission to Bassanio and assign all that they have and possess, including their own selves, to him.

Audiences can find a connection between Portia and Antonio, from their introductory lines in the play to the final act. Both confess to a similar condition, and after the second scene, we see that the two also have a common interest, Bassanio. Both display a desire to please Bassanio and to satisfy some sort of desire within him, definitively feminine endeavors. Most significantly, each expresses a weakness that adds to a submissive subjectivity that they both attempt to perform. However, Antonio's display makes him appear meeker, more passive, and more emotionally needy than Portia. Theoretically speaking, Antonio is more feminine than Portia. As a result, Portia's performance as the feminine object of Bassanio's desire requires more artifice than Antonio's.

The whole feminine performance is one that must be learned and perfected, as Collette Soler argues. Lacan, too, remarks about how a subject might "play the part of a woman" or "play the part of a man" (as quoted in Soler 103). The term "playing" argues that gender roles are merely those—roles that must be learned. Therefore, anatomy does not dictate which sex can perform which role. *Merchant* also proves that, at times, a male is capable of performing the feminine role more fully than a female. The play's example of this learned gender performance is Antonio. He exhibits the seductive qualities that Soler describes as "not a technique but perhaps an art" (103) that is a part of the feminine masquerade:

The ability to 'make [the Other] desire' that is characteristic of women does not escape interference by the unconscious, the latter not being collective. Their response is thus the masquerade that adjusts to the Other's demands in order to captivate that unknown named desire. (103)

Lacan's description of the character of women, i.e. that they attempt to perfect the ability to make an

other/ the Other desire them, is the same function that Antonio serves in *Merchant*. He does not explicitly attempt to manipulate, control or have Bassanio. Rather, he attempts to make Bassanio desire him, or, in Lacanian terms, he attempts to be for Bassanio. Antonio's feminine performance in the play demonstrates the fluidity of gender and that females are not the only individuals allowed to masquerade as feminine.

In this case, Portia and Antonio must both feign their submissive positions and appear vulnerable to Bassanio, despite their explicit economic and social privileges over him. Early in the play, audiences find that Portia and Antonio have a common interest (Bassanio) and self-pity. Critics draw similarities between Portia and Antonio, specifically from their first lines. These similarities depict a common condition and goal between them, despite their contrasting sexes. Both characters comment on their compromised state:

Antonio: In sooth I know not why I am so sad.

It wearies me, you say it wearies you. (1.1.1-2)

Portia: By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aware

of this great world. (1.2.1-2)

Their in-

troductory lines indicate commonalities between Portia and Antonio. However, a closer look at what Portia and Antonio describe about their states reveals a level of contrast between the two. Though both express weariness, they indicate that they are weak in different ways. Antonio describes his mood, which remains consistently passive and unexcited throughout the play. Portia, on the other hand, emphasizes the weakness of her body. The cause of her condition is easier to locate, and she is more self-aware than Antonio, who surrenders to the ignorance of his own condition.

Antonio cannot locate the reason for his melancholy. He confesses that he knows not how he "caught it, found it, or came by it" (1.1.3). His friends attempt to prompt him into a definitive cause but are futile in their efforts. He denies the possible reasons that they provide, money and love. Antonio's

response when Salerio offers that one cause of the downhearted mood is that his “merchandise” is scattered throughout the sea resembles the ubiquitous nature of Antonio’s sadness (1.1.40). Antonio says that his “ventures are not in one bottom trusted / Nor to one place” (1.1.42-3). That his capital is not located in one recognizable place reflects the omnipresence of Antonio’s sadness, i.e. that it occurs everywhere within him and cannot be easily located or “fixed.” Antonio’s reaction when Salerio then questions that love must make him melancholy is simply, “Fie, fie,” as if being in love were merely scratching the surface of his condition (1.1.47). Being in love might be an element of Antonio’s downheartedness, but it certainly does not explain his entire construction. As a result, Antonio’s sadness is more deeply engraved than Portia’s and more inscribed into his identity.

Others recognize Antonio’s condition, confirming that it has become his subjectivity. Salerio offers both an attempt to understand it, as well as sympathy for it. He tries to identify with Antonio, allowing that if the circumstances were the same for him, he too would be upset:

Salerio: Shall I have the thought

To think on this, and shall I lack the thought

That such a thing bechanced would make me sad? (1.1.36-8)

Solanio, too, notes that if his ventures were as tossed as Antonio’s he “should be still / Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind” (1.1.17-18). Aside from Solerio and Solanio, Gratiano’s first words to Antonio are, “You look not well, Signior Antonio” (1.1.73). That his condition is so ambiguous, difficult to isolate and recognized by others proves that this temperament has become Antonio and is much more inscribed into his identity than Portia’s complaint. Daniel Drew explores Antonio’s condition as that of melancholy yet avoids any Freudian interpretation. In his article, Drew sees Antonio’s melancholy as more a masochistic desire.

As I am not avoiding Freudian interpretation, I argue that Freud’s study of melancholia has much to do with Antonio. Freud attributes the “puzzling” nature of the condition to the fact that “we cannot

see what it is that is absorbing [the melancholic] so entirely” (*Mourning and Melancholia* 246). Because no apparent cause can be found, Antonio displays his condition as his entire being. He is entirely absorbed by melancholy, dislocating it from an apparent site and identifying it with his ego, “an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, and impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale” (Freud *Mourning* 246). Freud also distinguishes the difference between the consciousness and the body. In the melancholic state, the individual concerns himself less with the physical body and more with his ego as a whole:

The patient’s self-evaluation concerns itself much less frequently with bodily infirmity, ugliness or weakness, or with social inferiority; of this category it is only his fears and asseverations of becoming poor [in the moral sense] that occupy a prominent position. (*Mourning* 247)

Freud’s observation here provides a significant difference between Portia and Antonio. Portia displays a more concrete and temporary state of sadness; Antonio has become his sadness, much like Freud’s melancholic.

Though Freud does not define melancholy explicitly as feminine, his study does place the melancholic in a weak state and more willing to allow an other to objectify him. Freud’s study explains a process in which a love-object was denied to the melancholic. As a result, the melancholic did not displace his libido for the object onto another object. Instead, the libido “was withdrawn into the ego” (Freud *Mourning* 248). By absorbing this libido into his ego, Antonio converted himself into the love object for Bassanio, who we could say was at one time Antonio’s love object but denied to him. In this sense, Antonio already has more of a chance to be the object of Bassanio’s desire. His entire identification is one of passive submission, which Lacan describes as feminine.

Additionally, Antonio places himself in the ultimate position of vulnerability for Bassanio. Antonio suggests his will to die for him in a painful manner, by having a pound of his flesh extracted for Bas-

sanio's sake. His bond with Shylock goes beyond any level of self-degradation and vulnerable display that Portia could hope to attempt. With respect to Drew's anti-Freudian look at Antonio's melancholy as a masochistic desire, Freud's study of masochism furthers my argument that Antonio is consistently the more passive, i.e. feminine of the two. In fact, Freud explicitly defines masochism as a passive and therefore vulnerable position, much like that of the feminine construction:

Similarly, the term masochism comprises any passive attitude towards sexual life and the sexual object, the extreme instance of which appears to be that in which satisfaction is conditional upon suffering physical or mental pain at the hands of the sexual object. (Freud *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* 24)

In fact, Antonio's desire to allow Bassanio to dominate him and to play the feminine role to Bassanio's masculinity veers on perversion. Here, Antonio willingly allows himself to enter a bond in which he risks losing a pound of flesh for Bassanio's sake and, further, derives a sense of satisfaction at having pleased Bassanio and fulfilled his wishes. Although Shylock's are the "hands" which potentially extract the pound of flesh and thereby inflict the pain, the display would be played out for Bassanio's sake. Antonio both "exaggerate[s] and fixate[s] [his] [...] passive sexual attitude," allowing Bassanio to dominate (Freud *Three Essays* 24). Portia does not go so far.

In contrast, Portia maintains a masculine position of both authority and dominance throughout the play and only displays vulnerability at brief points. She knows exactly what wears her. She has located the site of this mood as her body. In fact, Portia does not say that she is sad, as Antonio does. Rather, she describes a more physical and temporary condition, the weariness of her body. Though Portia's complaint, that her father's will has forbidden her to choose a husband, is valid, it is still only temporary in the play. She solves her dilemma in the third act and continues to gain the upper hand in every situation that she encounters. She triumphs in the courtroom, strips Shylock's entire identity, and ends up



with all of her father's riches and the husband of her choice. Again, her initial complaint is cancelled out as the play progresses. Furthermore, she approaches her dilemmas with more aggression than Antonio.

Unlike Antonio's friends, Portia's waiting woman does not cater to her condition. Nerissa's immediate response to Portia's indication that she is weary is a shot at Portia's grumble: "You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries / were in the same abundance as your good fortunes" (1.2.3-4). Even though Portia's father has created a game for her suitors, Nerissa assures the lady that it was with good intention, since Portia's father was "ever virtuous," and "holy" (1.2.27). Nerissa's impression of Portia's father transforms him from a controlling beast into a kind man with concern for his daughter's future, displayed in the appropriate manner of the time. The casket lottery does hinder Portia's right to choose her own husband. However, audiences never meet Portia's father, and neither Portia nor Nerissa describe him as a horrible individual. The worst that even Portia can do to vilify him is merely to describe the situation: "[S]o is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father" (1.2.23-5). She uses a less threatening word, "curbed," than one that expresses a complete crippling of her freedom and hobbling of her autonomy. Portia's introduction does not convey the same deep-seated and externally recognized sadness as Antonio's does.

If Antonio is the most melancholically passive character, then Portia is the most aggressively active character throughout the play. Portia is stronger-minded and stronger-willed than Antonio. She performs a more masculine role than Antonio. Ultimately, Portia turns her initial position in the first act from that of "a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father," to that of a successor of the same ideology that keeps less fortunate individuals under the thumb of hierarchal power distribution (1.2.24-5). During her first scene, Portia indicates that she understands how to use power for her own purposes. While she complains about her father's final testament, she never says anything negative about her father himself. Her predicament proves more of a chance to carry on her inherited upper class position than a reduction of her autonomy. Specifically, she only laments a submissive female position briefly in

favor of a more masculine position of power. Portia's actions in the play do not resemble the feminine masquerade as much as they do the virile display that Lacan attributes to the masculine construction. She does not intend to be any man's fantasy, nor can she feign a submissive position for long: "Portia is unapologetic about her privileges" (Levin 31). By her own observation of the under privileged, Portia suggests that she, too, would take advantage of whatever power that she could acquire. Furthermore, she proves herself familiar with coloring exploitation as righteousness.

Ultimately, Portia's performance demonstrates an empowered woman who breaks through any attempt to hinder her autonomy, as opposed to an objectified female who gives into patriarchal control. Corinne S. Abate's article about Portia fittingly labels her role as one of "Wifely Empowerment." Abate describes Portia as a female who "does not have dependent and submissive inclinations, those traits traditionally associated with women, to turn to a man for anything" (283). Abate also interprets Portia's response to a particular proposal from Nerissa into a horrified refusal to Nerissa's suggestion that they rely upon a man. When Portia tells Nerissa that they shall travel to Venice disguised as men, Nerissa asks, "Why, shall we turn to men?" (3.4.78). Portia's answer to her is "Fie, what a question is that!" (3.4.79). Obviously, Nerissa means that they shall turn into men, yet Portia's response suggests her inherent refusal to turn to a man for help (Abate 283). Portia clearly cannot be easily subordinated or marginalized, as her role in the play "short-circuits the [sex/gender] exchange, mocking its authorized social structure and hierarchal gender relations" (Newman ctd. in Abate 126). Therefore, Portia's goal to be the feminine object to Bassanio's desire goes against her entire role.

In order to be desired by Bassanio, Portia must feign a feminine and submissive performance more than Antonio. She has access to the privileges of the masculine gender class. Antonio's capital is scattered, fluid and instable. His bond with Bassanio depends on friendship and credit. Portia's capital is secure, and she directly inherits her father's wealth. Her bond with Bassanio depends upon the fact that she can readily hand her wealth over to Bassanio. Still, Antonio's sacrifice is greater than his bank ac-

count, thereby making his promises to Bassanio more of a risk. While Portia can claim that she stands for sacrifice, Antonio is more willing to put up his life as credit for Bassanio.

The position to which both Portia and Antonio want access is that of the object of Bassanio's desire. Both want Bassanio to want her/him. Though Portia and Antonio have a certain degree of authority over Bassanio, in terms of financial support, they each covet to be for Bassanio. In this case, they use their finances as means of making Bassanio want one or the other, instead of using them as means to power over Bassanio. This position of being for Bassanio places each in a feminine position. Their financial strength is converted to a vulnerability that they offer up to Bassanio and of which they allow Bassanio to take advantage. Their performance for Bassanio makes both appear to occupy a position that Lacan defines as a feminine performance in terms distinguished by what the masculine other/subject (Bassanio) wants, i.e. Lacan's formulation of woman.

Portia and Antonio compete with one another to be for Bassanio, ironically trumping one another in their attempts to appear as the more vulnerable of the two. Colette Soler argues that both Freud and Lacan position the feminine in terms defined by the masculine: Freud defines a woman through her "partnership with a man;" Lacan's formulations of "'woman' make her a partner of the masculine subject" (100-102). The idea of "having" and "being" arises in the distinction of gender acting, as to whether an individual should act like a man or act like a woman. Who has the phallus and who can be the phallus (or at least try) designates male/female roles. Freud concludes that what the woman does not have (i.e. her "phallic lack") "causes her to turn to love for a man" (100). Likewise, Lacan's definitions of woman lead her to be the phallus or what is missing for a man (102). Furthermore, this "being for" must make her the object of the masculine subject's desire. Again, the man/woman designation is a construction created through performance and not a biological command. Thus, individuals act like man or woman. Furthermore, this "being for" makes her the object of the masculine subject's desire.

Both Portia and Antonio construct their authority by appearing vulnerable to Bassanio. They

gain power by allowing Bassanio to take advantage of their capital. The one who can win Bassanio's heart is the one who can provide the most of what he wants—usually money in Bassanio's case. However, Antonio and Portia want his affection as repayment, an affection that designates one as the object of his desire. Being the object of Bassanio's desire is the ultimate position for both Portia and Antonio. As competitors, Portia and Antonio gain masculine authority over one another by appearing vulnerable to Bassanio.

Both Portia and Antonio have more financially secure positions than Bassanio, a designation that immediately appears masculine. Both could be Bassanio's provider, which places each in a more authoritative position over Bassanio. Obviously this is the case, as Bassanio subscribes to both throughout the play for his financial means. Initially, he goes to Antonio for money in order to compete with Portia's other suitors. He describes Portia as "a lady richly left" before he calls her "fair" (1.1.161, 62). We also know that Bassanio has taken much from Antonio in the past and that "[his] chief care is to come fairly off from the great debts" that he has accumulated (1.1.127-8). Bassanio needs money, and both Antonio and Portia can provide that to him. This arrangement places Bassanio in a weaker position than the two competitors for his affection.

Yet, what Bassanio can provide for both is his affection, which becomes a greater value to Portia and Antonio. Both can afford to buy Bassanio's affection. However, both are also aware of his interest in the other, i.e., his access to both Portia and Antonio, which designates the two as competitors. No doubt that each has authority over Bassanio. More importantly, though, each wants exclusive access to his affection. In order to gain this access to Bassanio, each must play a weaker (feminine) role in order to be desired by Bassanio and receive his love. This dynamic is not so much about Bassanio as much as it is about Portia and Antonio gaining power over one another and exclusively winning Bassanio's love.

Gaining this access means that the "winner" is the one of whom Bassanio can take the most advantage. In this case, the weaker (wo)man wins. Both offer everything that they have to Bassanio and

become the one who begs to be desired:

Antonio: I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,  
 And if it stand as you yourself still do,  
 Within the eye of honor, be assured  
 My purse, my person, my extremest means  
 Lie all unlocked to your occasions. (1.1.135-39)

As Bassanio comes to Antonio to ask for money, he finds that Antonio is the one asking for something from Bassanio. Antonio performs as the beggar for Bassanio's goods. Likewise does Portia place herself in a position of submission to Bassanio:

Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours  
 Is now converted. But now I was the lord  
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,  
 Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,  
 This house and these servants, and this same myself  
 Are yours, my lord's. (3.2. 166-71)

Portia and Antonio make themselves appear to beg for Bassanio's desire, as if both are asking, "Look at what I sacrifice for you; love me more!" They prove that their capital means nothing compared to Bassanio's love. In fact, Portia explicitly states that "[she] stand[s] for sacrifice," as Bassanio chooses a casket (3.2.57). She makes a reference to the sacrificial Hesione, whom Hercules saved from the sea monster. Both Portia and Antonio place themselves in desperate positions as means of being desired by Bassanio.

Although Bassanio owes much to Antonio, the bond between the two friends places Antonio in a position of vulnerability. First of all, Antonio's assets have not solidified, as all of his "fortunes are at sea," a gamble that Solanio comments would make him fearful and sad (1.1.177, 1.1,15-22). Bassanio

indicates that he has uselessly lost a significant amount of Antonio's money in the past yet has come back to ask for more. His manner flatters Antonio and suggests that he would be heartbroken if Antonio refused him:

I owe you much, and like a willful youth  
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
 To shoot another arrow that self way  
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both,  
 Or bring your latter hazard back again  
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first. (1.1.146-52)

Antonio's concern is not money but Bassanio's indication that he might not fulfill Bassanio's wishes:

You know me well, and herein spend but time  
 To wind about my love with circumstance;  
 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong  
 In making question of my uttermost  
 Than if you had made waste of all I have. (1.1.153-7)

Antonio would rather lose money than risk losing Bassanio's affection. He cannot deny Bassanio the favor out his own desire to please his friend. Lending Bassanio the funds, or credit in this case, indicates that Antonio can fulfill what Bassanio wants, even but especially so if it means sacrificing beyond a comfortable loan.

The first scene defines which man plays the feminine role. Bassanio's request incorporates a metaphor that indicates lover's affection. He asks that Antonio "shoot another arrow," as if asking that Antonio make Bassanio love him. His request also carries the indication that Antonio has done favors for Bassanio in the past; we can assume that Antonio was just as willing then as he is in the present scene.

Though Bassanio was careless with him in the past, Antonio is more eager than ever to offer everything for him. Antonio performs as the object of Bassanio's desire, a performance that Lacan defines as feminine. What Lacan defines as masculine, then, is which one can enjoy the pleasure of the object of his desire performing for him. Bruce Fink highlights Lacan's argument about enjoying in this manner:

To enjoy in this way, reducing one's partner to object *a*, is to enjoy like a man –that is, in the sense of someone characterized by masculine structure. Lacan even makes a pun here, saying that this kind of jouissance is “hommo-sexual,” spelling it with two *m*'s, *homme* being the term for man in French. Regardless of whether one is male or female [...] and regardless of whether one's partner is male or female, to enjoy in this way is to enjoy *like* a man. (37)

Antonio allows Bassanio to enjoy him in this manner, and Bassanio seems to understand Antonio's willingness to please from the beginning. In fact, Bassanio phrases his request as if asking for love, not money, knowing that Antonio values Bassanio's affection over capital. Ultimately, Antonio plays the feminine role, vulnerable and eager to please.

As well, Bassanio understands Portia's desire to be desired by him. That Antonio provides the means for Bassanio to compete as her suitor threatens Portia's access to Bassanio. After all, Bassanio could not even bestow his love on her if it were not for Antonio. Immediately after their union is sealed, Bassanio makes Portia aware of the sacrifice that Antonio has made for him. Antonio's sacrifice outweighs Portia's, as Antonio's life is now at stake because of Bassanio's debt. The letter informing Bassanio of the urgency arrives at an opportune time for Antonio; Bassanio has no choice but to designate Antonio as the most needy competitor for his attention. He does not hesitate to read Portia the letter from his “dear friend:”

Sweet Bassanio, my ships have

all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is  
 very low, my bond to the Jew if forfeit. And since in  
 paying it, it is impossible that I should live, all debts are  
 cleared between you and I if I might but see you at  
 my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure. If  
 your love do not persuade you to come, let not my  
 letter. (3.3.310)

Of course, Portia is more than happy to sacrifice Bassanio right after their union. Bassanio's parting words remind Portia of her competitor's small victory. He promises that "no bed shall e'er be guilty of [his] stay," again comparing his arrangement with Antonio in terms associated with lovers (3.3.326). At this point, Portia is aware of Antonio's intrusion into the dynamic between her and Bassanio. Although she indicates that she already knew of Bassanio before he appeared to choose a casket ["I remember him well, and I remember his worthy of praise" (1.3.119-20)], the letter is the first knowledge that she has of Bassanio's history with Antonio. Here, she is introduced to her competitor.

By allowing Bassanio's leave to go to his friend, Portia submits to both Bassanio and Antonio. Though giving up her first night with her husband might appear as a significant favor, it still does not equate to Antonio's imprisonment. Lorenzo's words to Portia highlight her noble deed yet overshadow it with even more praise of Antonio's great nature:

But if you knew to whom you send relief,  
 How dear a lover of my lord your husband,  
 I know you would be prouder of your work  
 Than customary bounty can enforce you. (3.4.5-9)

Portia attempts to sacrifice her life, too. She tells Lorenzo that she will take leave to a monastery. Until Bassanio returns, she plans "to live in prayer and contemplation" (3.4.28). Her preceding words to Lo-



renzo are spoken in the manner of a self-sacrificing martyr; Portia, too, can make herself into an offering just like Antonio has. In fact, she offers herself in the name of both Bassanio and Antonio, as she gushes:

There must be needs a like proportion  
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;  
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,  
 Being the bosom lover of my lord,  
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,  
 How little is the cost I have bestowed  
 In purchasing the semblance of my soul  
 From out the state of hellish cruelty! (3.4.14-21)

Since Bassanio is moved by Antonio's ultimate vulnerability, Portia imitates what she perceives as actions most likely to gain Bassanio's affection. She sees that, in order to obtain the position of "the bosom lover of [her] lord," she must be the most willing to negate her whole identity for Bassanio, just as Antonio does. The twist in Portia's situation is that she must relinquish her authority in order to feign this feminine vulnerability. Though she certainly has more secure finances and power, these assets do not ensure her of Bassanio's desire. Instead, Bassanio desires Antonio and bestows his affection on the character willing to risk the most in order to be the object of his desire. In this case, having does not secure Portia's position. Like Antonio, she must be completely objectified and relinquish everything that resembles any sort of autonomy or power, all in the name of Bassanio.

Yet, Antonio's self reduction is so great that Shylock's demand for a pound of his flesh cannot reduce him any further:

[Antonio]: These griefs and losses have so bated me  
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh  
 Tomorrow to my bloody creditor. (3.3.32-4)

Antonio has gone to the extreme in his desire to be desired by Bassanio. Portia can only attempt to resemble this ultimate vulnerability and objectification.

Antonio's only concern is that Bassanio can witness the sacrifice that he has made and that Bassanio recognizes him as the one who did it. In jail, Antonio's words attest to his desire for this recognition: "Pray God Bassanio come to see me pay his debt, and then I care not" (3.3.36-7). By this point, Antonio is aware that Bassanio has probably won Portia and that she is his most prized possession. However, Antonio can be justified in his sacrifice only when he can confirm that Bassanio sees his willingness to die for him. Only when Bassanio feels the ultimate loss of his friend can he desire Antonio as a lost love object, just as Antonio desired him as a love object, denied and perpetuating Antonio's libido to turn into an all-encompassing melancholy. Antonio's history with Bassanio is much deeper and consuming than his union with Portia, thereby lending vindication to his sacrifice.

Portia claims that she will retreat to a monastery, but instead, she plans to battle for Antonio in the courtroom. Her greatest attempt to trump Antonio will be to save her competitor's life. If victorious, Portia would display her willingness to play second place to Bassanio's best friend. She can appear to reduce herself, sacrifice an exclusive bond with Bassanio and ultimately prove herself the more modest of Bassanio's two favorite things.

The courtroom scene, then, does not determine whether Shylock gets his justice served or not. Rather, the scene ultimately determines whether Portia can reduce herself to the same self-sacrificing object of Bassanio's desire that Antonio has. If she succeeds in the courtroom, she would prevent Antonio from dying for Bassanio, thwarting Antonio's greatest act of love. By saving Antonio's life, she destroys his recognition as Bassanio's lost object of love. She then becomes the one who has provided more to Bassanio by delivering him Antonio.

However, Portia's courtroom victory ironically makes her lose her coveted position as Bassanio's object. By saving Antonio's life and gaining the upper hand in court, she exposes how powerful she can

be. She blows her own cover when she proudly confesses to the other characters that she was the one who aggressively and cleverly overtook Shylock:

You are all amazed.

Here is the letter; read it at your leisure.

It comes from Padua from Bellario.

There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,

Nerissa her clerk. Lorenzo here

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,

And even but now returned. (5.1.266-72)

She cannot hide her cleverness for long, and by admitting to her disguise, she finally proves that she would rather be recognized as an active and autonomous subject than allow herself to be reduced to Bassanio's object.

Portia's masculine performance solidifies how she is better suited for a position of power and authority. After relieving Antonio from Shylock's bond, she becomes power hungry and abuses her authority over Shylock. She not only denies him his justice and payment due but also puts him at the mercy of Antonio, who forces him to give up his religion and become Christian. Additionally, she adds insult to injury and takes away his entire fortune, stripping him of both his wealth and religion. She shatters his entire identity, and instead of reducing herself to a mere sacrificial object, she reduces Shylock and makes him sacrifice everything that defines him.

After the Act IV, Portia must surrender to her competitor, Antonio. Portia cannot maintain a submissively feminine subjectivity, even for Bassanio. She has preformed the most powerfully masculine role in play and becomes the hero. On the other hand, Antonio has proven how well he can play the victim, how much he deserves Bassanio's affection, and how much he is willing to sacrifice for both Bassanio's pleasure and his own pleasure of pleasing Bassanio.

The final scene of play does not depict the traditional union between man and woman that most of Shakespeare's comedies do. However, it does depict an implicit union between Antonio and Bassanio. At this point, Portia can no longer feign a submissive, feminine position. She has preformed a more masculine and aggressive subjectivity in the courtroom and has acquired too much power to be for Bassanio. Instead, Antonio assumes, or continues to assume, the feminine position for Bassanio. He continues to perform a feminine subjectivity and remains in a position to please Bassanio. The last few lines of the play, then, depict Antonio and Bassanio as the unified couple. Portia even seals their union with a ring. Ironically, this is the same ring that Portia gave to Bassanio after he chose the correct casket, which she then demanded from him when she was disguised as Balthasar as payment for her favor of saving Antonio's life, which she finally offers back to Antonio to keep safe for Bassanio. Portia hands over Bassanio's "ring" to Antonio after he makes his vow:

I once did lend my body for his wealth,  
Which but for him that had your husband's ring  
Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,  
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord  
Will never more break faith advisedly. (5.1.249-53)

Here, Antonio offers his body and soul in the name of Bassanio again. Bassanio also expresses his bond to Antonio in front of Portia earlier in the scene:

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.  
This is the man, this Antonio,  
To whom I am so infinitely bound. (5.1.133-5)

This promise binds Antonio and Bassanio in an agreement similar to that of a marriage, sealed with an exchange of a ring, and with Portia presiding over the covert ceremony. Also, Portia also announces to Antonio that his ships have returned:

And I have better news in store for you  
 Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon;  
 There you shall find three of your argosies  
 Are richly come to harbor suddenly. (5.1.274-7)

Antonio's ship(s) has come in, a metaphor often used when a woman has found her man. Ultimately, Bassanio has Antonio, and Antonio can always be Bassanio's object of desire. Though Portia is explicitly Bassanio's wife, Antonio is the one who has implicitly won Bassanio or has one the position of being Bassanio's object. Therefore, Antonio has triumphed, which entitles him to assume the privileged position for which both he Portia and have battled.

Antonio's final words indicate a less than enthusiastic reaction to the claiming and reclaiming of his power and privileges. Like the other two examples I have given in this project (Petruccio and Orlando), Antonio ends the play by getting everything that he has wanted throughout the play. He has his ships returned, has gotten out of the bond with Shylock, is a free man again, and has his partner. He has achieved a masculine position of power over Portia, his competitor. However, he expresses little or no joy when confronted with his gifts, so to speak. In fact, his reaction is one that exposes all of the anxiety and speechlessness of one who has lost his venue to demonstrate his power, i.e. his threat, by gaining the submission of others in the play. Now that all is well, Antonio is left (literally) speechless: "I am dumb" (5.1.279). He proclaims his helplessness at the same instant that he has received and regained all of his privileges. Antonio begins the play by confessing his sadness and ends the play by expressing a similar and crippled psychological state. Like Petruccio and Orlando, Antonio, too, experiences the loss within the gain. However, uniquely as Antonio, his opening and ending lines indicate a consistent feminine vulnerability that has won him power over even the dominant Portia.

If playing the better female leads to dominance in this play, then the phallic power itself is proven to be fluid in terms of its gender. Calvin Thomas reminds us of the fact that the power of the phallus

comes mainly from the fact that it cannot be seen:

What we do not see is the production of the phallus, and its invisibility ensures that the phallus is not a fixed and finished representation but rather the power that attempts to stand behind all representations in order to fix and finish them (if not to finish them off). (49)

Because of its unfixed characteristic, the phallus becomes fluid, just like gender itself. Therefore, it does not necessarily resemble a completely masculine construction but can be constructed as feminine.

*Merchant* proves that being is more powerful than having, that the feminine construction is more powerful than the masculine in some cases, and that power itself can be feminine. Proving that power itself can be feminine, the play furthers the argument that the phallus can also be feminized. Antonio achieves his victory over Portia through his feminine performance and continues to maintain his power over her by continuing to be had and continuing to be desired by Bassanio.

## CHAPTER 4

### SCREWED INTO HIS TRUE PLACE:

#### MASCULINE (LACK OF) CONTROL IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*,

#### *OR WHAT YOU WILL*

“Pleasure will be paid, one time or another.”

- Feste, *Twelfth Night* (2.4.70)

Feste’s observation about pleasure hints at the ambiguity and slipperiness of fulfillment, perhaps even the impossibility of such. This line indicates that such things as pleasure, wishes, desire, anything that one wants makes no promise of its delivery. On another level, pleasure may only present itself briefly; desire can be fulfilled only for a while, if at all. Feste’s words imply what Sigmund Freud indicates in his study *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: that pleasure is only temporary and a momentary calming of an excited state. The only promise of this release of excitation is that the tension will build again. This concept highlights the ongoing reliance upon tension and desire that is signification. The play itself also displays both an understanding and fear of movement, particularly the movement of desire: “That desire for immobility, for boundness, forms part of *Twelfth Night*’s frequent preference of stillness to movement” (Penuel 77). Though the desire for boundness and stillness resounds in the play, the play also confirms the deferment, displacement, and substitution involved with desire, all of which are movements and workings of signification. All of these, too, construct the masculine identity.

This play demonstrates the argument that language, more specifically the capacity, or more fittingly, the reason to speak, requires a continued tension. Furthermore, this tension required to perpetuate language and signification resembles the tension required to sustain masculinity. From his opening lines to his final speech, Orsino resides within an unfulfilled state; he desires at the beginning and is left desiring at the end of the play. Unlike Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio, Orsino receives no gratification,

at least not the gratification that he seeks throughout the play. Orsino does not get his girl (Olivia), nor does his financial and social status change. He receives no reward in the final act. He does, however, receive a substitution for the meantime. Also unlike the three male characters studied in my first three chapters, Orsino has the most to say at the conclusion of his play. Orsino remains threatened by the fear and anxiety of a deferred reward or, even more frustrating, by the possibility of never receiving what he desires. In other words, Orsino has a reason to keep speaking and performing.

*Twelfth Night* establishes that not getting what one wants perpetuates the masculine identity. Specifically in Orsino's case, accepting a substitution allows him to maintain both speech and masculinity, unlike Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio. As the final play within my study, *Twelfth Night* concludes my argument that being denied satisfaction allows masculinity enough resistance to maintain its force. Goran V. Stanivukovic explores masculinity in his essay "Masculine Plots in *Twelfth Night*." He argues that this play is "the most masculinist of Shakespeare's romances," that "masculinity continues to puzzle, entertain, and dominate the stage" (114). He supports his argument by noting two main observations—Malvolio's comment that Cesario is older than a boy yet not old enough to be a man and Orsino's juxtaposition of gender from Cesario to Viola in the final scene (Stanivukovic 114). Certainly, these instances within the play invite a study of the masculine. Furthermore, Stanivukovic ultimately finds that gender is never bound nor does it completely follow the assumed cultural standards:

But since it is one of the characteristics of Shakespearean romance to twist and obscure the ways of understanding a normative discourse, masculinity in *Twelfth Night* is not represented as normative, in terms in which it was understood in the Renaissance, as heroic and productive. Rather, this version of normative masculinity is constantly challenged. (114)

In fact, it is the "heroic" and "productive" elements of masculinity that are challenged within my study, at least in terms of determining their essential qualities and quantities within the masculine construc-



tion. If these are indicative of the masculine, then they do not come without an equivalent level of anxiety.

Stanivukovic's claim that Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* continues the playwright's resistance to affirm "normative masculinity" and his attempts to "constantly challenge[...]" versions of this sexuality undercuts Bruce R. Smith's claim. In "Sensing Sexual Strangeness in *Twelfth Night*," Smith argues that the separation of "sense" and "speech" is impossible in the play, that "[w]hat speech has to do with sense experience is beyond Saussure's frame of reference" (66). Smith further claims that readers should consider "the sexuality of Shakespeare and his contemporaries on *their* terms, not *ours*" (66). Because Orsino's opening speech is so "sense-laden," we need to consider Smith's argument. Yet, we also need to read the play's opening lines with Stanivukovic's understanding of Shakespeare's text as a challenge to normative sexuality. Orsino only speaks of sensory experience in the first few lines. The rest of his opening statement indicates an understanding of dissatisfaction and deferment:

If music be the food of love, play on.  
 Give me excess of it; that surfeiting,  
 The appetite may sicken, and so die.  
 That strain again, it had a dying fall;  
 That breathes upon a band of violets,  
 Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more,  
 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.  
 O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,  
 That notwithstanding thy capacity  
 Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,  
 Of what validity and pitch so'er,  
 But falls into abatement and low price

Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy

That it alone is high fantastical. (1.1.1-15)

First of all, Orsino's lines are metaphorical. Sausurre accounts for metaphor as a stack of imagined and analogous substitutions. Even sensory explanations "must be imagined, conjured, thought up" (Thomas *Lesson Eight* 167). Although Orsino might be using metaphors contemporary to his time, he is still using language; he is still bound by the unbound slipperiness of metaphor and metonymy. Too, metaphor works with metonymy and creates the tension necessary to mean. Orsino refers to his desire for the music to continue. He refers to an "appetite" that could "sicken and die" should it not be fed. Arguably, the appetite is his desire, not the extinguishment of it. He talks about a "strain" that died yet came back and brought with it a "sweet sound." Again, the strain is what brought the sweetness, not the death of the strain. The "abatement" of this tension is the sad part for Orsino. These lines open the play with an immediate reference to necessary tension and desire, whether they are for love, fancy, or merely the desire to continue speaking. The same tension is required within the masculine construction.

Many readings of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* cannot help but emphasize the homoerotic desire underlying both the plot and subplot of the play. This emphasis is tempting: Viola, who explicitly tells audiences that she will dress as a eunuch in order to gain access to the duke Orsino, unintentionally draws the attention and affection of Olivia, the countess. Olivia's sudden acceptance of Sebastian, Viola's twin, appears arbitrary after lines and scenes depicting Olivia's love for Cesario, who is really a female beneath the disguise of a young male. At the end of the play, Duke Orsino is ready to accept Viola, whether she wants to act like a woman or man. Additionally, Antonio and Malvolio have provided critics, like Nancy Lindheim, with more evidence of the play's "disturbing and cynical" argument of "unfulfilled homosexual longing and unappeasable class conflict" (Lindheim 679). Lindheim observes that critics concede to the play's comic expectations yet still focus their study on the "homoerotic and societal issues" that tease audiences before the comedy's closure (679). Lindheim tries to resolve critics' per-

ceived arguments about the arbitrary and unsatisfying ending by claiming that the play does adhere to comic form while still displaying a sensitivity to sexual and class issues.

Marcela Kostihova's article is also significant in gender studies involving the play. She focuses on productions and readings of *Twelfth Night* in a post-communist Czech context, highlighting that male relations within the play have presented "contemporary directors with the challenge of representing a complex and socially acceptable Renaissance bond [between Antonio and Sebastian] to a subtly and subversively homophobic audience" that runs the risk of looking at these relations as an emasculation of homosexuality (131). Kostihova ultimately sees the play as a challenge to traditional definitions of masculinity and a fear of including "alternative identities and behaviors" into what defines masculine (132). Kostihova's article considers male anxiety in the face of changing definitions and blurred boundaries involving masculinity. My introduction mentions that the early modern father/husband was something of a tyrant.<sup>10</sup> I claim that the need to strengthen the power and definition of masculinity during the early modern period arose from the fact that England was under the command of a female ruler. The threat of being commanded by a female perpetuated the anxiety and fear of the loss of male privilege. Kostihova finds the same trend in the post-communist attempts to define "Westernness" and rebuild a masculine identity in Czech culture. The "gleefully rejected [...] communist-imposed requirements of gender equality on all levels of social existence," was followed by attempts to rebuild "traditional patriarchal values" (Kostihova 132). This reestablishment of gender roles and masculine dominance was a "stark contrast to the theoretical communist gender equality" (Kostihova 132). In the face of losing male privilege (and, in this case, actually having lost its explicit privilege), the Czech culture sought to reinstate gender hierarchy. The resistance to traditional patriarchal values infused the desire to establish and maintain those very values even more explicitly. *Twelfth Night* blurs the distinction between what is

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<sup>10</sup> See pages 16-17 of introduction.

masculine and what is not masculine, while sustaining that necessary tension required to perpetuate male identity and signification.

Blurred identities continue to intrigue critics and directors. The 2006 release of the movie *She's The Man*, based on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, has also opened the door to articles focusing on the play's appeal to a younger, contemporary audience. In their articles, Laurie E. Osborn, Elizabeth Klett, and Monique L. Pittman explore the boy/girl gender construction of the play/movie, the teen adaptations of the play, and the element of soccer.<sup>11</sup> Continuing both the cinematic reproductions of the play and its gender-bending/blurring element, Catherine Thomas's "Nunn's Sweet Transvestite: Desiring Viola in *Twelfth Night*" explores the play's 1996 film production of the play as a drag film.<sup>12</sup> The bulk of even the most recent scholarship on *Twelfth Night* has still not broken from critics' fascination with cross-dressing and homoerotic/class issues, proving David Scott Kastan's observation that "recent readings of the play are more significant as records of our present anxieties than reconstructions of those of Shakespeare's time" (17). *Twelfth Night* certainly captures the attention of an in-depth yet slightly limited scope of criticism.

Perhaps a more refreshing article focuses on the play's twinning and doubling. Suzanne Penuel argues that the above mechanisms serve as a longing for the early modern father (75). Penuel places her discussion in the context of the early modern decline of Catholicism in England that changed the culture's mourning rituals and led to a "post-Reformation hunger" (75). Penuel provides two functions of doubling: one "most obviously a form of special repetition, with one person or image duplicated in another place" (75). Penuel also offers the idea of chronological repetition in which a person repeats him/herself from past into present (75). Her article answers the question of why the play has so many

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<sup>11</sup> See Osborn's "Cinematic Adolescents: One Play, One Plot, One Setting, Three Teen Films (2008); Klett's "Reviving Viola: Comic and Tragic Teen Adaptations of *Twelfth Night*" (2008); and Pittman's "Dressing the Girl/Playing the Boy: *Twelfth Night* Learns to Play Soccer" (2008).

<sup>12</sup> Thomas begins her article with the film's tagline on Fine Line Feature's website: "Before Priscilla crossed the dessert, Wong Foo met Julie Newmar, and the Birdcage was unlocked, there was *Twelfth Night*" (306).

references to dead fathers and brothers; the characters display the Early Modern culture's attempt to reconstruct the past and recreate a lost structure.<sup>13</sup> Enter the twinning and doubles that function as repetition in Penuel's article.

These concepts within the play do indicate a longing, as Penuel observes. Additionally, they lead to the idea of desire, its deferment, and its involvement in the process of signification. The twinning and doubling within the play resemble the function of condensation and displacement and metaphor and metonymy found in the work of Freud and Lacan. Desire moves both metaphorically and metonymically throughout the play, specifically within the relations among Orsino, Olivia, Viola/Cesario, and Sebastian. Orsino's metaphorical manipulation of Olivia's desire through substitution perpetuates her slippery and displaced movement from Orsino to Cesario to Sebastian. This substitution and movement lead to a conclusion that indicates Orsino's attempts to control desire and establish sexually normative partners in time for the comic ending. At the same time, however, these mechanisms prove a submission to the workings of signification on the part of Olivia, Viola/Cesario, Sebastian, and even Orsino.

It is not surprising then that Penuel focuses on the play's desire for boundness and stillness. These qualities directly relate to Freud's definition of pleasure and one's desire for something bound, even though Freud immediately undercuts the promise of pleasure as being bound in any way. Like Feste's comment, the slipperiness of pleasure and desire, for that matter, maintains a certain tension needed to allow signification to work. Lacan furthers this idea by stating that "no signification can be sustained except by reference to another signification" (Thomas's lesson 177). Therefore, stillness, satisfaction, fulfillment of pleasure, and lack of desire stifle signification no matter how deserving one might be of receiving what one wants. Likewise, stillness, satisfaction and fulfillment of pleasure stifle the authority and culturally assumed power attributed to masculinity. In this case, the characters remain thankfully

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<sup>13</sup> The first act indicates that Olivia mourns her dead brother, Viola fears that her brother did not survive the shipwreck, Viola also speaks about her lost father.

unfulfilled as *Twelfth Night* sustains this necessary tension in the face of Early Modern attempts to resist cultural change.

In fact, the play opens with a conditional statement: “If music be the food of love, play on” (1.1.1). David Schalkwyk notes the conditions of which Orsino speaks: His “utterance is less a claim than a question about the relationships among its governing concepts” (81). The conditional and unfixed warrant of Orsino’s opening line sets up the play for its resistance to fulfilled desire and satisfaction. Also, his line not only suggests but commands a continuing movement (“play on”). Interestingly enough, Orsino is both denied his fulfillment and continues to speak about it at the end of the play. This further proves masculinity’s reliance upon dissatisfaction. Desire, resistance, tension, etc. constitute masculinity and parallel signification’s reliance upon these elements, as well.

At the risk of providing yet another “disturbing and cynical” study of gender and dissatisfaction in *Twelfth Night*, I intend to explore the function of signification, not necessarily and explicitly as a mourning of a lost patriarchy and longing for a reconstructed patriarchy, but as reliant upon the tension and anxiety of unfulfilled desire. The satisfaction of meaning involves the lack of satisfaction and constant reference to the next –the next word, the next syntag, or whatever comes next. Add to this the fluidity of what that next could be and boundness becomes an impossibility as long as meaning is intended. Primarily through the tension of metaphor and metonymy does signification work.

The workings of desire that allow metaphor and metonymy to work resemble the foundations of anxious masculinity. I argue that masculinity constantly desires a threat, a reason to voice authority, an opportunity to dominate and control. Without these resistant elements, masculinity cannot perform. Without desire and lack of fulfillment, signification and ultimately language itself cannot work. In both cases, getting what one wants merely shuts down the system. Orsino’s desire for Olivia perpetuates his need to control his world from his masculine position. By still desiring at the end of the play, Orsino proves the tension required to construct and maintain both masculinity and signification. Unlike

Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio in the preceding chapters, Orsino does not get his desired object (Olivia) and must settle for Viola. What is interesting about this denial, however, is that of these four males, Orsino has the last words of the play, words that still mean, more specifically.<sup>14</sup> Antonio confesses his dumbness at the end of *Merchant of Venice*, Orlando merely mimics the duke in the final act of *As You Like It*, and Kate's final monologue in *Taming of the Shrew* sends the giddy Petruchio back to his childhood imaginary phase. In contrast, Orsino explicitly states an understanding of his own place within signification. Even if that place is not ultimately in control, it still has the deferred pleasure, unfulfilled desire, and tension that suspends, maintains, and continues meaning.

From the beginning, in fact, Orsino implies that he can maintain his masculinity within signification through unending deferment much as Feste observes the same spacial order of language: "If music be the food of love, play on" (1.1.1). Orsino's famous line immediately highlights that playing on makes no promise of fulfillment but that it simply must play on without end. The most pleasure that Orsino can hope to gain is the continuity, not the end. The tension of signification undercuts any hope or aim at completion, being complete, or being able to complete anything:

Because there is no "natural history" of human desire, because our destiny is subject to the play of metaphorical condensation and metonymical displacement, the only "wholes" we can ever "aim at" are grammatically complete sentences- even if no single, fully predicated sentence can ever really satisfy its speaker's desire for completion. (Thomas *Lesson Eight* 179)

Likewise, the tension of masculinity renders it impossible to speak of it without the given anxiety of remaining in a constant state of desire. Without a reason to perform its control, authority, or aggression, without a threat, masculinity is silenced and disarmed (like Antonio, Orlando, and Petruchio who are,

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<sup>14</sup> Orsino speaks the last lines of the play before "Clown sings" to close the performance.

oddly enough, unthreatened and supposedly fulfilled at the end of their displays). Yet, by not receiving completion and what it wants, masculinity can continue, albeit in its tense, anxious state of suspended friction. Thus is the case with Orsino.

My reading does not emphasize the homoerotic element of the play, though I do not deny its presence. Any homoerotic affection in play merely falls within the metonymic movement of displaced desire. For example, Olivia's desire for Cesario is more of a displaced desire for Orsino than a repressed desire for a female, Viola. After all, Olivia believes that Viola is Cesario, a young, feminine male but a male nonetheless. Cesario's "soft" qualities capture Olivia's attention but so do his/her skill with words and, sometimes, feisty attitude (1.5.293).<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Orsino's willingness to accept Viola at the play's closure demonstrates the continuation of signification and its refusal to promise fulfillment. Orsino's attempts at substituting himself for Cesario do force Olivia from her celibacy but also perpetuate signification in its endless deferment of fulfilling desire.

*Twelfth Night* incorporates several substitutions and maneuvers of slippery displacement that ultimately create normative sexual partners at the end of the play but not before they allow uncodified sexual desire to play. Orsino's manipulation of these functions proves both his control and lack thereof. His control of other characters in the play and at the same time his lack of control over signification demonstrate the necessity of tension in the construction of both masculinity and signification. Orsino's male authority allows him the power to access Olivia, if only metaphorically. He does, in fact, move her from her cloistered frigidity to sexual passion. She finally accepts a man; the man whom she accepts is just not Orsino. Instead, she displaces her desire from Orsino to Viola/Cesario, to Sebastian.

The metaphorical and metonymic movements within *Twelfth Night* indicate the paradoxical quest to get what one desires while still seeking to sustain desire. In this case, Penuel's argument about

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<sup>15</sup> After the first meeting with Viola/Cesario, Olivia comments that she is taken by his "tongue, [his] face, [his] limbs, actions, and spirit" (1.5.192). She also comments on Cesario's "saucy" demeanor with her gate guards and that he begins his message to her "rudely" (1.5.197, 211). Olivia provides several other, slightly aggressive, characteristics that she likes about Cesario than just his feminine quality.



the play's preference of stillness to movement might only hold to a certain degree. On one level, the characters attempt to create a socially acceptable structure in the fifth act, what Kastan attributes to an Early Modern craving to reestablish patriarchal safety in England.<sup>16</sup> However, from a psychoanalytic perspective, these attempts to establish or reestablish bound and ordered constructions do not quite come to full fruition in *Twelfth Night* (or in any of Shakespeare's other comedies discussed here, for that matter). Just as with *Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, and *Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare leaves a loose end in the finale of *Twelfth Night*. The moment of glory, the comic closure, which grants characters their deserved happiness and rights all wrongs, somehow manages to present more ambiguity than closure. Orsino does not really get what he wanted at the beginning of the play. Neither does Olivia. Sebastian is merely thrown into a marriage for the sake of providing Olivia with a heterosexual mate. Ultimately, these characters are left still desiring.

As unsatisfying as this may be for the characters of the play, it is quite sustainable and necessary for the workings of language and ultimately signification. Desire is the force that holds together language. The movement of Olivia's desire plays the metonymic role in maintaining signification, the "word-to-word nature" that Lacan maps onto Freud's explanation of displacement in dream work (Lesson 8 Thomas 177). Lacan notes that "the enigmas that desire . . . poses for any sort of 'natural philosophy' are based on no other derangement of instinct than the fact that it [desire] is caught in the rails of metonymy, eternally extending toward the desire for something else" (Thomas 177). Such is the case with Olivia.

Olivia's tension within the play provides the metonymic function of signification, the linear slide along desire, what Freud calls displacement and what Lacan "designate[s] as [...] the first aspect of the actual field the signifier constitutes, so that meaning may assume a place there" (Thomas lesson 177). In order to mean, which is what language always intends, meaning must be in line. This linear expectation

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<sup>16</sup> Both Penuel and Kastan are referenced on the first two pages of this chapter.

or, more appropriately, this linear order creates the word-to-word movement required to be able to be read and to mean. The move from one word to the next allows meaning, which is fulfilling, yet requires desire, which is not. The character of sequence, the sequential order of sentences, indicates the significance of space and the requirement of pausing and waiting for the next, only to pause and wait for what comes after the next, and so on:

[B]ecause we read sentences not 'all at once' but only by moving or transferring our attention, our perceptual cathexis or investment, from one word to the next along the chain of contiguous signifiers, Lacan associates the syntagmatic metonymy of structural linguistics with the somnambulant displacement of the Freudian dreamwork. (Thomas *Lesson Eight* 177)

This explanation refers to the movement of Olivia's desire from Orsino to Viola/Cesario to Sebastian. Also, in her case, she may only desire one at a time, Orsino, Viola/Cesario or Sebastian.<sup>17</sup> Desiring all at once disturbs the order of the metonymic movement. This only- one-at-a-time structure perpetuates desire and maintains its slide, providing a place for meaning.

Orsino's case differs. He can mean more than one at a time and, in fact, does. Orsino's metaphoric access to Olivia provides the counterpart to her metonymic displacement along signification's linear function. Here, Lacan maps metaphor onto Freud's explanation of condensation in dreams. Condensation is the "psychic process by which two or more ideas or images are 'paradigmatically' compressed into a single form" (Thomas *Lesson Eight* 174). Structurally speaking, metaphor fills in blanks or gaps along the metonymic axis, leading to imagination and substitution. Any word can mean anything at any time or several things at once. Poetry takes advantage of this permission granted to an imaginative function. Thomas writes that "[w]hile the real scene of syntagmatic relations is their actual occurrence on

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<sup>17</sup> Again, although Viola is Cesario and later I argue that Orsino has mapped himself onto this dualistic character, Olivia does not know Cesario's true identity. Therefore, when she desires Cesario, she only wants "him" at that time, not Orsino nor Viola. This point also counters any homoerotic desire that critics might emphasize.

the sequential chain of discourse, the imaginary 'seat' of paradigmatic relations is 'in the brain; they are a part of the inner storehouse that makes up the language of each speaker'" (166). Metaphor acts as though there is substance, as if something is there in contrast to the metonymic actuality of an evident statement clearly written. Therefore, metaphor relies upon an absence of a substance in order to work as a substitute for an actual substance. Thus is the function that allows Orsino to access Olivia. Despite her refusal, he sends in a substitute, Cesario, to do the work for him. Preceding, however, Orsino forms a bond with Cesario and maps his own image/likeness/similarities onto what he believes to be a young boy. Cesario is also referred to as a eunuch, thereby condensing another layer onto this character. Beneath it all, let us not forget that all of these meanings also include the character of Viola, a female played by a young male on Shakespeare's stage. A complicated mess of condensation is Viola/Cesario(/Orsino/young boy actor).

Metaphor and metonymy work together in the sense that we choose which words we want to fit along the linear function in order to make a statement and mean. The word "choose," however, is not intended to mean a completely free choice in how words work or an individual's ability to use any word at any time. Instead, the individual can choose only from a preexisting collection of words already assigned. Too, the chosen word must fit in the appropriate place along the horizontal axis in order to make sense. Therefore, the matter of choosing or selecting words are loose terms when speaking about speaking, writing, or meaning. Again, Orsino attempts to control this process by taking the liberty to choose which characters will fit along Olivia's line of desire. These two functions, metaphor and metonymy, depend upon constant slipperiness, upon unfixed movement, substitution, displacement and replacement in order to maintain signification. Both functions also rely upon the desire for completion, presence and fulfillment, none of which can happen and mean at the same time. In other words, tension and desire between metaphor and metonymy keep us speaking, writing, and ultimately meaning. They also ensure that Shakespeare's play does not end in the sense that all characters are finally content. Es-

pecially, Orsino receives the greatest disappointment as he most cleverly and intentionally attempts to control signification from the beginning of the play. However, he merely perpetuates signification, not by controlling it but by being controlled by it.

Although Olivia and Orsino do not speak face to face until the end of the play, they still carry on a conversation through their attendants. Because of his station, Orsino has the means to communicate with Olivia in an indirect manner. He has a group of attending gentleman that can deliver his messages. Olivia's attendants deliver her words to the duke several times. In the first scene, we see that Orsino has sent (a) Valentine, one of his servants, to speak his love to Olivia. Olivia has sent back (another) Valentine with news of her intentions:

So please my lord, I might not be admitted,  
 But from her handmaid do return this answer:  
 The element itself, till sever years' heat,  
 Shall not behold her face at ample view;  
 But like a cloistress she will veiled walk,  
 And water once a day her chamber round  
 With eye-offering brine; all to season  
 A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh  
 And lasting in her sad remembrance. (1.1.23-31)

In her attempt to deny the duke her affections, her delivery of the denial perpetuates communication with him. Valentine's message includes intimate details about Olivia and exposes both a guarded yet vulnerable femininity. Olivia gives Orsino details about how she will cry every day behind her veil, as if she wants him to understand how devoted she can be. The word "heat" not only refers to summertime but also gives her description a passionate undertone. She "cannot love" the duke (1.5.262). Her reasons have nothing to do with Orsino, personally. However, she never clearly states that she does not want

the duke or that she would not love him. Her consistent rejection consistently maintains an exchange between herself and Orsino.

Olivia's rejection of Orsino, then, appears more like a deferment than an absolute "no." She can still perform a feminine role for Orsino without having to fall immediately under his control. She can also perpetuate his desire for her. Residing behind her veil allows Orsino to create whatever "fantastical" vision of Olivia that he wants (1.1.15). She keeps the lines of communication opened, while still remaining hidden in the safety of her seven-year cloister. When Orsino sends Cesario to deliver more affection to Olivia, she tells her gentlewoman, "We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy" (1.5.166). Her statement indicates that she has been hearing Orsino for a while and is still receptive to hearing some more, even if she has no plans of taking his offer.

Yet as much as Olivia plays with Orsino's desire, he manipulates hers. She will not speak directly with him, let alone allow him into her chamber. Orsino still manages to access Olivia by way of substitution. He sends in Viola/Cesario, a female disguised in male dress. As a feminine male, Cesario is less threatening to Olivia and more easily allowed into her presence. Orsino still enters her chamber by proxy. In the process, Orsino gains control over Olivia and demonstrates both his sexual and masculine power.

Orsino creates an immediate bond with Cesario in order that Cesario will take his impressions to Olivia. Valentine notes the duke's unusual willingness to welcome Cesario: "[Orsino] hath known you but three days, and already you are no stranger" (1.5.2-4). The duke himself admits to the newcomer that Cesario has become privy to everything Orsino thinks and feels; Cesario knows "no less but all" about the duke (1.5.13). Their dialogue in this scene proves that Orsino has "unclaps'd / To [Cesario] the book even of [his] secret soul" (5.1.13-14). He also gives Cesario orders to enter Olivia's quarters in the same aggressive and masculine manner that Orsino himself would take. The duke makes Cesario into his ultimate servant and substitute, arming Cesario with his passions and orders as means of accessing Olivia.

The duo's later conversation further condenses Orsino and Cesario. As they speak to one another in the second act about love, music plays in the background. Audiences know that Cesario is really Viola, a female who desires Orsino. The affection that Viola/Cesario has for Orsino allows the page to accept everything that the duke tells him/her. Yet, as Viola/Cesario listens to and flatters Orsino, the duke brings the conversation back to the fact that Cesario's duty is to take his words to Olivia. As an admirer, Viola/Cesario is all too happy to absorb what Orsino tells him/her and is even more willing to please the duke. After a lengthy discussion that supposedly increases their bond, Orsino closes the scene with a command: "To her in haste; give her this jewel; say / My love can give no place, bide no decay" (2.4.123-4). This order reminds Cesario that, although he is allowed to have closeness with the duke, Cesario is still a servant with the ultimate duty of delivering Orsino's messages to Olivia. Orsino intends their dialogue to be delivered to Olivia. If Cesario knows that Orsino can speak of romance and love, then Cesario's delivery to Olivia will appear more genuine and honest.

With Orsino having unclasped the secrets of his soul to Cesario, Cesario contains the duke's desires with the duty of delivering them to Olivia. Orsino and Viola/Cesario become bonded, making Cesario an extension of the duke's identity. Orsino maps his passions onto Cesario and manipulates Cesario's state: "My state is desperate for my master's love" (2.2.37). Cesario is let in on his master's love; however, Cesario is not the intended recipient. Though she/he can listen to and absorb the duke's passions, Cesario must carry them to Olivia. Only for a moment can she/he pretend that Orsino speaks to him/her. The contents of what the duke tells Cesario must go to another, Olivia. Although Orsino bares his innermost thoughts to him/her, Cesario is nothing more than a delivery boy for Orsino.

When Cesario goes to speak to Olivia, then, he presents her with two persons- himself and Orsino. The two have been condensed. He tells her that he is "very comptible, / even to the least sinister usage," indicating that his soft and sensitive persona can be easily manipulated, a quality of which the duke has taken advantage and of which Olivia might manipulate, as well (1.5.175-6). Though she has

already explicitly rejected the duke, she implicitly displays a desire for communication with him by allowing Cesario into her chamber, knowing that he has a message from the duke. She is willing to hear it from the less threatening Cesario, who is “[n]ot yet old enough for a man, nor young / enough for a boy” (1.5.156-7). Initially, then, Olivia does have some affection for the duke, even if she does not have any intention of admitting it directly. Instead, she receives him through a secondary and substitutive means—Cesario. Now, Cesario becomes an object of her desire, as she displaces it from the duke to Cesario, who brings Orsino’s message. Cesario is an extension of Orsino. Therefore, as Olivia displays a new desire for the young page, she also accepts a part of Orsino, too.

Olivia soon breaks her vow of cloistered celibacy. She allows Viola/Cesario into her chamber, speaks with him/her, and even unveils her face at Cesario’s first request to see it. She asks if Cesario finds her countenance “well done,” begging compliment and recognition from the eunuch (1.5.235). Olivia then gives a catalogue of her sensual parts, including “two lips,” “two grey eyes, with lids to them,” “one neck,” “one chin, and so forth” (1.5.247-49). The “so forth” indicates more of Olivia’s “items” that are located beneath her face. She allows Cesario to woo her with the duke’s words. She then offers Cesario her “purse” and further access to her chamber (1.5.284,81). Olivia has indirectly, yet readily, accepted Orsino’s offer, by accepting and falling for Cesario.

Olivia’s conference with Cesario leaves it unclear as to which one she desires, Cesario or Orsino. This ambiguity, however, is inevitable, considering that Cesario is the duke’s messenger. If Olivia falls for Cesario, then she must also accept the duke’s impression on him. Though she often claims that she simply cannot love the duke, Olivia still sends Cesario back to him with an open invitation. She commands that Cesario tell her how the duke takes her rejection (282). Again, Olivia keeps the lines of communication with the duke opened, while engaging in sexual wordplay and flirtations with Cesario. The whole while she speaks with Cesario alone in her chamber, Olivia knows that Orsino has sent him and that Cesario’s words are entangled with those of the duke.

Although the division between Orsino and Cesario is unclear, Olivia still keeps the metonymic order by allowing only one suitor into her chamber. The metonymic displacement of desire relies upon a spacial order in which only one word can reside on the horizontal axis at a time. Likewise, only Cesario enters Olivia's bedchamber as a substitute that has been condensed with Orsino; he/she has not entered the chamber with the physical Orsino, only the imaginative and metaphorical entanglement of the two. She can imagine whomever she wants accepting her words and messages. However, only one physical individual can be in presence with her at a time. Besides the fact that Olivia is risking her reputation by inviting two or more men into her bedroom with no chaperone, this sort of situation disrupts the deferred and ordered structure of signification. Again, Olivia can imagine more than one but can only accept one suitor. Here, the distinction between the psychical and the physical becomes significant in terms of metaphor and metonymy, respectively:

In fact, we pretty much have to imagine those vertical, paradigmatic 'stacks' of signifiers because –unlike the actual and evident contiguities and adjacencies of the horizontal chain of syntagms, which we don't have to imagine but can merely register –the paradigmatic 'word-towers' are not really there; they must be imagined, conjured, thought up. While syntagmatic relations depend upon actual combinations and contiguities that are physically arranged horizontally, in praesentia, paradigmatic relations involve imaginary substitutions and unifications, psychically aligned vertically, in absentia. (Thomas *Lesson Eight* 167-8)

Therefore, the absence of Orsino's physical body allows metaphor to work. Cesario's physical presence in Olivia's bedchamber allows Olivia to explicitly state her desire and be read/heard/understood (as much as Cesario can). Ultimately, she can mean to Cesario, while allowing the imaginative function of



metaphor to work in the absence of Orsino. She has the physical Cesario listening to her while imagining the psychical Orsino:

And this distinction between the physical and they psychical, between the actual and the imaginary, allows structuralism to align, one the one hand, the syntagmatic –sequential-contiguous-combative- horizontal axis of language with the metonymic and, on the other hand, the paradigmatic/analogous/selective/substitutive/vertical axis of language with metaphor.” (Thomas *Lesson Eight* 168)

The meeting/meaning between Olivia and Cesario creates a necessary tension that signification requires. Let us remember, too, that Orsino has engineered this meeting in hopes of attaining Olivia. He has utilized the power, whether real or imagined, that comes with his position as duke. He has the privilege of a servant who is willing to do his legwork and carry out the play of both words and desire between him and Olivia. As long as Olivia resists, the duke can continue his attempts to manipulate Olivia, as well as Viola/Cesario, who is more than willing to please him and more than delighted to have Orsino’s meaning mapped upon her. Underneath the disguise of Cesario, Viola willingly allows herself to be condensed into Orsino’s metaphorical entanglement. Orsino does not even have to leave his chamber in order to get his messages to Olivia.

Orsino has, in fact, accessed Olivia, metaphorically. Olivia immediately falls for Cesario, the duke’s substitute. He has infiltrated the cloistered countess:

How will she love when the rich golden shaft  
Hath kill’d the flock of all affection else  
That live within her; when liver, brain, and heart,  
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and fill’d

Her sweet perfections with one self king! (1.1.34-8)

To solidify Orsino's above supposition, she will love "[e]ven so quickly [as] one may catch the plague" (1.5.295). Olivia describes the cunning manner in which Orsino has metaphorically supplied and filled her, "[w]ith an invisible and subtle stealth / To creep in at mine eyes" (1.5.296-7). Orsino has done just that. His image uses aggressively sexual language. He will penetrate Olivia with his coveted shaft. He will penetrate her completely and leave no room for any other thought. Orsino also makes note of Olivia's internal organs, which he boasts about being able to reach and fill with his shaft. He has done so through use of Cesario, who has become a part of this one self king. Orsino has played out all of the masculine and sexual aggression of his above plan, albeit with Cesario as his representative and substitute.

Orsino sets into motion a metaphoric and metonymic movement. He sends his substitute, Cesario, to Olivia; Olivia falls for Orsino's substitute and displaces her desire from Orsino onto Cesario, who is condensed with Orsino. Orsino has manipulated both Cesario and Olivia through his privileged position and displays his masculine and sexual power over them. When Orsino finds out that Olivia has just married who he thinks is Cesario, he reacts with anger. His words to Olivia include the same masculine and sexual aggression that he demonstrated at the beginning of the play, when he was so sure that his golden shaft would win her over:

Since you to non-regardance cast my faith,  
 And that I partly know the instrument  
 That screws me from my true place in your favor,  
 Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still. (5.1.121-24)

However, now Olivia's liver, brain and heart have changed from soft, accessible organs to a cold marble breast. Orsino admits to his explicitly defeated plan. Implicitly, though, Orsino's tirade also indicates that his plan has worked via his substitute. Orsino's "instrument" has unintentionally gained Olivia's affec-

tions. In doing so, he has screwed Orsino from direct contact with her. Orsino has managed to control Olivia's desire. At the same time, he has also lost control of his own substitutions.

Orsino threatens to do the impossible – to kill his own extension. He promises that, “[h]im will I tear out of that cruel eye / Where he sits crowned in his master's spite” (5.1.127). He vows that he would sacrifice “the lamb that [he does] love” (5.1.130). Yet, doing so would cause Orsino to kill a part of himself, the very part that has managed to invade Olivia. Thus, he would have to make a sacrifice in order “[t]o spite a raven's heart with a dove” (5.1.131). Orsino admits that he loves Cesario. Later in the scene, when Antonio threatens to stab Cesario, whom he mistakes for Sebastian, and accuses him of being “the devil incarnate,” Orsino is surprised by the accusation: “My gentleman, Cesario?” (5.1.181, 182). On one hand, he wants to kill that part of himself. On the other hand, he wants to protect it from someone else. Orsino's conflicting reactions to Cesario indicate his own ego conflicts, for Cesario is condensed with the duke and an extension of his ego.

Yet, Olivia's metonymic movement does not end with Cesario, nor can it. She makes another shift in the play, this time to Sebastian, Viola/Cesario's twin, whom she marries. Sebastian is the next signifier on the horizontal movement of displaced desire through which meaning is made yet never made to satisfy nor fulfill desire. Lindheim responds to critics' arguments against the arbitrary coupling of Olivia and Sebastian, highlighting how “Shakespeare makes Sebastian a believable substitute for Cesario” (681).<sup>18</sup> Lindheim's reasoning is useful, especially in defense of the play's pairing of Olivia and Sebastian and as she considers Sebastian a “substitute.” Antonio's comment indicates the similarity between Cesario (Viola) and Sebastian: “How have you made division of yourself? / An apple cleft into two, in not more twin / Than these two creatures” (5.1.223-4). Antonio, an old friend of Sebastian, cannot even tell the difference between Viola dressed as Cesario and Sebastian. This confusion indicates that Viola/Cesario and Sebastian look, act, speak, walk, and perform in an identical fashion. Olivia's move

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<sup>18</sup> Lindheim claims that Olivia was attracted to Cesario's “non-threatening,” “androgynous youthfulness” and his “striking verbal exuberance,” both of which are also apparent in Sebastian (681).

from Cesario to Sebastian is not done in any arbitrary way nor does the play provide a sudden or artificial union between Olivia and Sebastian.

In fact, Sebastian is a reasonable move for Olivia to make, as well a further condensed extension and substitute for Orsino. Olivia's reaction to finding out that she has just married Sebastian instead of Cesario is not one of shock, anger or confusion. Rather, she is excited. When Antonio questions which twin is Sebastian, Olivia answers for him: "Most wonderful!" (5.1.225). Her exclamation proves her willingness to accept a complete stranger. However, Sebastian is not that strange to her. Sebastian is just as much a substitute for Orsino as he is for Cesario. Viola, Cesario, and Sebastian are all condensed into "one self king," Orsino, the protagonist of Olivia's affections.

Olivia's metonymic move from Orsino to Orsino's substitute, Cesario, to the substitute's twin, Sebastian, defers the fulfillment of both her own and Orsino's desire. Orsino engineers this displacement by initiating Olivia's move along the chain of signification. Orsino has demonstrated his control over Olivia's desire and, at the same time, negated his control over the workings of desire. He perpetuates Olivia's metonymic move, deferring both her satisfaction and his own.

Orsino's final words leave the audience with a sense of unfulfillment:

Pursue [Malvolio], and entreat him to a peace;

He hath not told us of the captain yet.

When that is known, and golden time convents,

A solemn combination shall be made

Of our dear souls. Mean time, sweet sister,

We will not part from hence. Cesario, come-

For so you shall be while you are a man;

But when in other habits you are seen,

Orsino's mistress, and his fancy's queen. (V.i.380-88)

Here, loose ends, deferment, and a description of necessary and continued desire pervade Orsino's realization that he has to settle and that his control over signification is lost, as he becomes a part of it.

Now, he is one who must wait for word, meaning, time, and even a union with Viola, who really is not the one whom he wants. The characters exist in the "mean time," in waiting for the next step, the next word. All of this waiting, desiring, and mean time threaten Orsino's male identity. However, they also provide him with a reason to maintain his masculinity. He is still speaking because he has a reason to speak. He is still performing because he has a reason to perform. Like language's reliance on tension and desire, Orsino's identity rests upon both tension and desire, as well.

Conclusively, *Twelfth Night* provides the other side of the paradox that is masculinity. It also allows for its comparison to the function and workings of language. Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio receive their rewards at the price of the resistance needed to bolster their masculine identity. With no resistance, they have no need to speak. In contrast, Orsino was denied his reward yet still has the desire and tension to maintain his masculinity. His masculinity is proven by his ability to speak and perform—he has a reason to do so. Furthermore, the slipperiness and ambiguity that conclude the play give greater reason/need for Orsino to prove and perform his masculinity. Interestingly enough, he still has not proven or been recognized as the prevailing man of the play. In fact, most of the male characters are left without having proven their power or distinct masculinity:

The text of *Twelfth Night* lend itself particularly well to the explorations of various forms of masculinity. Its multiple, sometimes overwhelming references to and examination of manhood suggest that the worth of individual male characters – and their suitability for coupling – rests on the kind of masculinity they inhabit. (Kostihova 136)

None of the male characters, least of which, Orsino, appear to “inhabit” that powerful of a male identity:

All of the characters fail in the ultimate test of masculinity in their shortcomings as soldiers. Their swordsmanship – the ultimate marker of the degree of the phallus they possess – is less than admirable and results in public shaming of various degrees. (Kostihova 136)

Ultimately, none of the male characters have received their awaited pleasure or recognition. In the face of this resistance to pleasure, fulfillment, recognition, and satisfaction, Orsino still has a reason to continue to establish and maintain his masculinity. Therefore, he still speaks for and waits for it.

### Conclusion

“And the subject, while he may appear to be the slave of language, is still more of a slave of discourse in the universal movement of which his place is already inscribed at birth, if only in the form of his proper name.”

-- Jacques Lacan *The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious*

“This ultimately leads us to the remark that there is no existing language [langue] whose ability to cover the field of the signified can be called into question, one of the effects of its existence as a language [langue] being that it fulfills all needs there.”

--Jacques Lacan *The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious*

Lacan confirms the encompassing capacity of language that sustains a subject. It also reminds us that this entire system pre-exists the subject, placing him at the mercy of its terms and conditions. Much like a contract, language gives a subject a recognizable existence at the price of his own satisfaction. Entrance into signification is an abandonment (perhaps reluctantly) of the certainty of fulfillment. The possibility may present itself, but its delivery has no guarantee.

My study has explored the connection among desire, masculinity, and language and how these elements function within four of Shakespeare’s comedies. Specifically, the ability to speak indicates that a certain tension must be present and that satisfaction must be absent. Likewise, the performance of masculinity requires a threat or the same force of desire that perpetuates signification. We have looked at four comedies, *Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night*, in which three of the main male characters are left speechless at the end of the play: Petruchio has, in fact, tamed Kate, or at least he is made to believe that he has; Orlando has regained his land and received his love interest, Rosilind, as his wife; Antonio has regained his ships, secured his finances, and, as I have

proved in my third chapter, been made sole companion to Bassanio, Antonio's love interest. Shakespeare ends *Taming*, *As You Like It*, and *Merchant* with Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio in the height of masculine glory. He has accomplished one of the main elements of comedy by banishing the "villain" and removing the obstacles that, throughout the play, have denied these characters their ultimate victory. The fifth acts of these plays appear to have solidified and confirmed the males' masculinity and assured heteronormative coupling for each.

Yet, Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio do not have much to say about their supposedly secure identity. Petruchio's final lines could be compared to childlike babble in contrast to Kate's certain and verbally adept presentation. Orlando merely mimics the duke's words in the fifth act of *As You Like It*, and Antonio explicitly confesses his dumbness. The performance prior to the finale displays more certainty than the moment when all circumstances submit to their demands. In this case, getting recognition of their manhood is a more aggressive endeavor than actually having it. Submission negates their reason to assert male dominance. There is no longer a reason to perform and no longer a reason to speak about it.

The removal of tension, resistance, and threats to masculinity does not establish or secure a dominant identity. Quite contrarily, the removal of tension, resistance and threats disarms masculinity; explicit submission, appeasement, and recognition bring about the end of the masculine performance, the fifth act and final scene of the "play," so to speak. Judith Butler and J.L. Austin have connected performance and speaking, as I have indicated in my introduction. Likewise, Roberto Harari's *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety"* includes a diagram of two concentric circles. The inner circle is labeled "Body," and the area of the outer circle is labeled "Speech." This diagram assumes that the body is caught up in speech, that speech encompasses a greater area than and outside of the body, and that the body is a part of speech. Harari affirms that this "schema indicates that the body is included, inscribed a such, in the



functions of speech” (177). Butler confirms the necessity of speech in the body’s performance of identity:

Certain words or certain forms of address not only operate as threats to one’s physical well-being, but there is a strong sense in which the body is alternately sustained and threatened through modes of address. (*On Linguistic Vulnerability* par. 4)

Interestingly enough, Butler’s quote combines sustaining and threatening in terms of how one’s identity is performed. The masculine identity specifically must be “sustained and threatened,” not alternately but simultaneously within the Shakespearean plays that I have included in my study: “If language can sustain the body, it can also threaten its existence” (Butler *On Linguistic Vulnerability* par. 7). Masculinity relies upon threats in order to exist. The threat to masculinity is its existence and the proof is whether or not the male characters can speak about their existence, whether or not they can perform with their bodies within signification. Speaking is performing. Once the identified threat is gone, nothing remains against which masculinity can sustain itself.

Speaking, then, is proof of existence and performance. Speaking indicates that a body is recognized within signification:

Language sustains the body not by bringing it into being or feeding it in a literal way; rather, it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible. (Butler *On Linguistic Vulnerability* par. 5)

In terms of my study, specifically the masculine identity can show proof of its existence only through language. Petruchio, Orlando, and Antonio fail to prove their masculinity in the final scenes. However, throughout the play, all of these characters speak effortlessly in their attempts to gain or regain their

manhood. They speak with reason to speak, perform with reason to perform, and assert their purpose only as long as they have a reason to do so; this reason encompasses desire and the refusal to rest.

Masculinity resembles the function of language closely in its reliance upon desire, lack of fulfillment, and tension. Lacanian analysis yields a fundamental understanding of signification, that language is desire. The substitutions and displacements, the slipperiness of metonymic movement, the deferment of satisfaction, the waiting for the next only to wait for what comes after the next all constitute the functioning of language and its instance of existence. Desire is language's reason. Likewise, masculinity must defer its satisfaction in order to be recognized as masculine. Orsino is an example. At the end of *Twelfth Night*, he is still speaking and performing just as clearly as he has throughout the play. Furthermore, what he speaks of is sustained desire and deferment. Before Orsino's final lines which are, in fact, the final lines of the play, Malvolio makes a promise of revenge: "I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you" (5.1.378). He then exits, never to return to the stage, leaving the others in waiting.

Dissatisfaction reigns at the end of *Twelfth Night*. Ann Barton emphasizes the sudden, arbitrary, and artificial pairings in the fifth act that perpetuate an "implausible world:"

For Olivia and Sebastian, Viola and Orsino, this heightened world perpetuates itself. For them, there will be no return from holiday, no need to leave Illyria. Yet the little society which they form at the end of the play is far more fragmentary and insubstantial than the one that had been consolidated in Arden. (Barton 308).

Yet, the fragmentary and insubstantial conditions of this society do perpetuate a more plausible world than Barton admits; these conditions perpetuate the world of language. Barton confirms that "[t]he final pairings-off are perfunctory," and indicates Orsino's "rather [...] surprisingly" hasty acceptance of Viola, a substitute for his object of affection (308). *Twelfth Night* leaves the characters in a less than happy state, even for comic standards.

Orsino's response to this "perfunctory" situation is clearer and more certain than the other male characters' final words, yet they are certain of uncertainty. His lines indicate further waiting. Orsino reminds the others that Malvoio "hath not told [them] of the captain yet," an answer that has been denied for the time and that, clearly at this point in the play, will remain unanswered for Orsino and the others (5.1.381). He continues speaking and waiting by saying that the "solemn combination shall be made" only "[w]hen that is known" (5.1.383, 384). Again, Orsino can speak about his deferred marriage and the state in which he must reside: "Mean time, sweet sister, / We will not depart from hence" (5.1.384-5). Speaking of Orsino's marriage, it is not a marriage with his first choice, Olivia. Instead, Orsino must accept a substitute that does not sustain a solid identity. Viola takes on more than one persona and resists a definite gender:

Cesario, come—

For so you shall be while you are a man;

But when in other habits you are seen,

Orsino's mistress, and his fancy's queen." (5.1.385-8)

This description is an example of the metaphorical and metonymic functions of language, which I highlighted in my fourth chapter. Orsino's words hint at desire sustained by metaphorical substitutions and slippery displacements, which perpetuate signification.

In contrast to Orsino's deferment, Petruchio appears to have finished his work and, in turn, is finished: "Come Kate, we'll to bed" (5.2.184). His lines suggest an end to his taming, an end to his authority, and an end to his masculinity. He has no further reason to speak or perform. Lucentio ends the entire play with his suspicion of the scene that he just witnessed: "'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tam'd so" (5.2.189). Like critical audiences, Lucentio does not seem entirely convinced by Kate's sudden submission and Petruchio's certainty of his masculinity. As I argued in Chapter One, Kate, in fact, is not the one who has submitted. Explicitly, her words indicate as much. However, implicitly and theoretic-

cally, Kate has extinguished Petruchio's masculinity by negating the need for him to voice his authority. If the first act of the play, Petruchio asks his friend, "Hortensio, to what end are all of these words?" (1.2.48). In the fifth act, Petruchio gets his answer and ends his words. Kate has shut him up, so to speak.

In the finale of *As You Like It*, Orlando does not provide any sort of direct statement. Instead, his final lines merely repeat what others have already said. After spending the entire play pursuing Rosalind, Orlando does not express any sort of joy at having finally wedded her. In fact, he speaks much more fluently while talking to Ganymede about how he wants Rosalind. Audiences might suspect that Orlando could know that Ganymede is actually Rosalind in disguise; however, Orlando's communication with Rosalind is mediated by the disguise, as long as the two remain in Arden. However, on the two occasions when Orlando is face to face with Rosalind, he does not speak with any sort of confidence. After Rosalind discards her Ganymede disguise and perpetuates the comic ending, her father exclaims, "If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter" (5.4.118). Orlando's last words of the play are simply, "If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind," a mere repetition of the duke's realization (5.4.119). My second chapter proves that Orlando performs a more assertive man by pursuing Rosalind than he does by having Rosalind.

The same concept applies to Antonio in *Merchant*. Antonio opens the play in a sad state, yet has the verbal capacity to identify it:

In sooth, I know not why am so sad;  
 It wearies me, you say it wearies you;  
 But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,  
 What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,  
 I am to learn;  
 And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,

That I have much ado to know myself. (1.1.1-7)

Here, Antonio is fluid in his speech, though he describes a shiftless state. He indicates that he has much to learn, that he must find a cause, and that he desires to know himself in order to have a more secure identity. Salerio reminds the audience that Antonio's "mind his tossing on the ocean" (1.1.8), using a similar word to that which Petruchio uses to identify his state at the beginning of *Taming*; both men are tossed yet talking about it. However, when Portia announces that Antonio's ships have returned and after Antonio has secured his partnership with Bassanio, the merchant's response is not a response at all: "I am dumb" (5.1.279). The answers that he was seeking in the first scene have arrived, as his ships have come in (literally and metaphorically). Antonio's rewards have explicitly left him mute. At the same time his ships and love are secured, his masculinity is silenced.

Much emphasis has been placed here on the heteronormative product of these comedies. My intent is not to undermine this concept and merely claim that heteronormativity is unsatisfying in and of itself, though the pairings in my study do incorporate an arbitrary and sudden unification. My intent is to focus on the necessity of the lack of satisfaction in the perpetuation of signification and the masculine construction. When the male characters are fulfilled (at least for the time being at the end of their plays), they are nearly speechless and disarmed. They lose their reason to speak and perform; they lose their desire to do so. Lack of fulfillment becomes an implicitly welcomed condition for existence.

Desire is neither the villain in masculinity nor in signification. In fact, it serves both well. If there were to be true villain, it would be satisfaction. If there were to be a resting point, it would be within the acknowledgement that the lack of satisfaction produces meaning, which provides its own pleasure:

If the endlessness of interpretive desire makes some of us anxious,  
perhaps we can begin to learn how to let that anxiety remain  
productive. Perhaps we can begin to speak and write our bodies, to  
put those bodies on the line, to let the desire(s) of the other(s) speak.

(Thomas *Male Matters* 194).

Yet, whether we let or resist, anxiety is productive. As Bulter reminds us, our existence is based on being placed within language, that endless chain of signification and desire: “One comes to ‘exist’ by virtue of this fundamental dependency on the address of the Other” (On Linguistic Vulnerability par. 6). Survival becomes a question of being caught within the metaphorical/substitutive/imagined/selective and the metonymic/displaced/sequential/combinative forces that perpetuate signification, neither of which promise stability or stasis. When Feste observes that “[p]leasure will be paid, one time or another,” he affirms the mere possibility of its delivery. The possibility, not the promise, provides the instance of meaning.

The only promise (thankfully) is that there will always be another after the next: “Desire desires desire and not its satisfaction” (Thomas *Male Matters* 194). Meaning will continue “as long as our desires remain open to the possibility of their own nonsatisfaction” (Thomas *Male Matters* 194). Satisfaction is a tease of which we can only speak, a possibility for which we perform, and the absent other that makes us mean.

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