"Am not I your Rosalind?":

Negotiating Ovidian Identity and Transformation in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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PREFACE

A Writer's Journey

In late July, after a summer of extensive reformulation away from my initial spring proposal (a vague idea to take a literary and cultural view of animals as they were conceived in the English Renaissance), this essay at long last began to come into focus as a consideration of how Shakespeare drew upon, referenced, and transformed Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in his festive comedies, and specifically how scholars that have come to this topic before me have imagined and deployed the notion of what it means to be Ovidian.

With these themes in mind, I soon fixed upon Rosalind as the ideal, paradigmatic "Ovidian" character and began exploring just what about her character resonated with Ovidian notions of change. Rosalind seemed like a natural character from which to generate my blueprint of the ideally Ovidian character. *As You Like It*, among the comedies, is unique in its conception and positioning of its characters. Unlike the romances, tragedies, and history plays, the festive comedies are noted for their lack of so-called "main" characters. Even their titles—*Love's Labor's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*—contrast those of other genres, as they are devoid of names of and allusions to specific individuals, denoting that no single character is the hero or heroine of the play. Yet Rosalind is the undisputed singular heroine of *As You Like It*. Audiences are drawn to her, and critics take it for granted that she is the center of the events that unfold in *As You Like It*, the witty mastermind and the linguistic powerhouse. Jonathan Bate invests her with the full weight of human agency, writing that instead of the gods and fairies that call the shots in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "It is Rosalind who grants the wishes…Rosalind [who] is

orchestrating the script."[1] William Kerrigan gives her the distinction of being "the wittiest woman in the canon."[2] Anne Barton, in her introduction to the Riverside edition of the play, writes, "Rosalind is extraordinarily important in *As You Like It*, as central and dominating a figure in her fashion as Hamlet is in his own, very different play."[3] Scholars love to describe her facility with language and her persuasive powers over those around her—all of which formed the principal elements of the ideally Ovidian character on which I have premised this essay.

Yet with each model I developed, and the more I examined the intriguing scenes in which Rosalind does not always have full control or agency, I began to see significant ways that other characters overlapped with and shared elements of her character—a personality trait here, a certain skill with wordplay there. This dawning realization troubled me at first, as a potential weakness in my essay's project to create parallel formulations of Rosalind and the notion of the ideally Ovidian character. The more I read scholarly articles written on *As You Like It*, and the more I reread the play, the more I believed that people have tended to focus attention on Rosalind at the expense of significantly shortchanging, even outright dismissing, the other characters of the play. I felt this most acutely with the characters of Celia—usually considered, and performed, as the quieter naïve sidekick to Rosalind—and Orlando—who tends to be simply cast as Rosalind's love-addled love interest.

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[1] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid.* New York: Oxford University Press (1993): 161.

[2] Kerrigan, William. "Female Friends/Fraternal Enemies." *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Schwartz, Valeria Finucci and Regina, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1994): 186.

[3] Barton, Anne. Introduction to *As You Like It*. *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. Boston, Houghton Mifflin (1997): 400.

I do not mean to suggest that we should give Celia and Orlando more weight than Rosalind, when we think about the characters of *As You Like It*—in the end, *As You Like It* is Rosalind's play, carried along by the force and directions of her desires, actions, and language. Yet a recovery of Celia and Orlando certainly does not result in a eclipsing of Rosalind's character. This kind of simplistic reasoning makes the same error in judgment as Duke Frederick does when he characterizes the relationship between the two girls as somehow competitive, suggesting that Rosalind's presence dims Celia in some way:

> *Duke Frederick*. Thou art a fool; she robs thee of thy name,
> And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous
> When she is gone. Then open not thy lips:
> Firm and irrevocable is my doom
> Which I have pass'd upon her; she is banish'd.
> *Celia*. Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege,
> I cannot live out of her company. (*AYL*, I.iii.80-86)

Celia does not directly contradict her father's suggestion that Rosalind upstages her, and instead reiterates that her close bond with Rosalind is absolutely unbreakable and absolutely necessary to her being. But she needn't put into words what she and the audience already instinctively know: Duke Frederick is wrong. Rosalind's presence does not dim Celia's light, nor can it be said that the opposite might occur; rather, the two girls light one another, so that one's identity is constituted in relation to the other through love and affect. In place of the hyper-competition that characterizes and deeply fractures the brotherhood between Oliver and Orlando, and Duke Frederick and Duke Senior, mutual love, empathy, support, and respect define the exceptionally close, sisterly relationship that Rosalind and Celia share.

So it is with Orlando, Celia, and Rosalind—a close reconsideration of Celia and Orlando, an illumination of the force and importance of their characters after they have been darkened by the lack of scholarly attention over the years, will only aid and brighten our understanding of Rosalind. This essay is still primarily about Rosalind. My central project remains an examination and clarification of what it means for a character to be Ovidian, and what it meant for Shakespeare to draw upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the middle of his career, in contrast with the arguably more simplistic way he drew upon the classical text in his early plays. Yet even as I work to position Rosalind as the ideally Ovidian character in the Shakespearean canon, it seems crucial to remember that part of what it means to be Ovidian, as I will argue in this essay, is to be able to fashion and deploy affective and persuasive rhetoric, and to be able to draw others into one's own imaginative circle—skills that require a genuine empathy and generosity toward others. And so this essay has also become, in part, a recovery project of the characters of Celia and Orlando. A rescuing and repositioning of Celia and Orlando as more significant characters in *As You Like It* does not outshine considerations of Rosalind; it helps to light our view of the beloved, ever-elusive Shakespearean character that is Rosalind.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has been translated many times over since it first appeared in Latin in the first century AD. All quotations from the *Metamorphoses* in this essay will be taken from the 2002 Penguin Classics edition of the 1567 Arthur Golding translation. History indicates that Shakespeare owned a copy of the Golding translation, and scholars of Shakespeare have generally agreed that he referenced both this Elizabethan translation and the original Latin. I also found the recent Charles Martin translation, published by W. W. Norton in 2004, to be useful during my research. In my essay, I have taken care to quote from the language of Golding's translation, in acknowledgment of Shakespeare's own familiarity with that particular text.

metamorphosis, *n*.

1. The action or process of changing in form, shape, or substance; especially transformation by supernatural means.

2. A complete change in the appearance, circumstances, condition, or character of a person, a state of affairs, etc.

3. *Biol*. Change of form in an animal (or plant), or its parts, during post-embryonic development; spec. the process of transformation from an immature form to a different adult form that many insects and other invertebrates, and some vertebrates (e.g. frogs), undergo in the course of maturing.[4]

[4] Adapted from the Oxford English Dictionary online.

INTRODUCTION

To Change is Human (and Divine)

> *Rosalind*. I will
> be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-
> pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot
> against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more
> giddy in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for
> nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that
> when you are dispos'd to be merry. I will laugh
> like a hyen, and that when thou art inclin'd to sleep.
>
> *Orlando.* But will my Rosalind do so?
>
> —*As You Like It*, Act IV, scene i

Carnival of the Animals

What does it mean to say that someone is acting in an inhumane way? when we call someone an animal or a beast? The imaginary line drawn between us and them is shrinking with the advent of genome sequencing and increasing scientific knowledge of our biological similarities and links. However, the belief that humans are unassailably distinct from animals persists. The common argument elevates humans to a level above animals by virtue of the mind, which is capable of clear-thinking and rationality. Animals, by contrast, are irrational creatures, driven by their desires and search for sensual pleasures. The mythological creature of the centaur comes to mind as the embodiment of these dual natures: half human and half

horse, the centaur is ruled on one end by the base instincts of hedonism and desire, while on the other end is able to exercise complete rationality and control. The figure of the centaur suggests, in immediately visual terms, that to be human is to be governed by this ideal upper half, and to be able to resist instinct and irrational desire. The alignment of animals with irrationality and physical desire, and in contrast, humans with rationality and emotional control, creates a convenient shorthand with which to talk about what is properly human, and what constitutes proper human behavior, in an organized, civilized society. For an animal to be anthropomorphized is to neutralize the physical threat that they pose, to tame them from their wild, instinctual natures to something familiar, categorical and therefore understandable, to be empathized with rather than feared or killed. For a human to be described as animalistic is to suggest that they have given themselves over to instinctual, primal desire.[5]

When it comes to women, however, this binary construction fails to hold. The usual discourse of animal versus human natures, described by the visual metaphor of the centaur and the traditional Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy, is insufficient to discuss the specific societal stigmatization of female sex and sexuality. A step back is needed, to see the distinction that is made (and not talked about) between male and female sexuality. When we talk about human rationality in contrast with animalistic irrationality, what we fail to acknowledge or even recognize is that we are actually talking about *male* rationality. Thus, discussions of desire and sexuality in humans and animals must also include the issue of gender, if they are to be comprehensible and credible. While male virility is celebrated,

[5] For more, see Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern British Culture*, New York, St. Martin's Press (2000); and Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, New York, Pantheon Books (1983).

female sexuality and desire have been portrayed in cultural production—if at all—as something unstable, voracious, and threatening. Elizabeth Grosz describes it as the "fantasy of the vagina dentate, of the non-human status of woman as android, vampire or *animal*"[6] (emphasis mine) and indeed, the female libido tends to be characterized as animalistic, rather than humanistic. So what exactly is so threatening about female desire and the libido to human society, and why is it portrayed as irremediable, if we are to believe in the dividing line between humans and animals, and the idea that humans are able to rise above their primal instincts? An excess of sexuality, associated with animals as well as women, is perceived as a destabilizing force in organized society. Social conventions dictate the proper behavior of individuals to maintain order, and these conventions are concerned most with the structuring and regulation of sex and gender, most efficiently and effectively through the institution of the family and marriage. The hierarchical system of marriage—and by extension, gender roles—is deliberately tailored to govern sexuality and keep at bay the threat of the libido, especially that of women.

The myths of divine rape that appear in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* perpetuate these gender roles. Many of the most famous Ovidian myths of metamorphoses in circulation during the English Renaissance—whether in the Latin original or "Englished" translations—involve bestiality by way of animal transformation of one or both the individuals involved. The link that Ovid draws, time and time again, between bestiality and rape can be rationalized in a number of ways, including the reasoning that rape results from uncontrolled animal lust. Because the nature of these rapes strays far from the bounds of proper sexual

[6] Grosz, Elizabeth (1995). Animal Sex: Libido as Desire and Death. *Sexy Bodies: the Strange Carnalities of Feminism*. Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn. London, Routledge: 293

acts and—literally—into animalistic territory, a rejection of the two participants from society would be expected to follow. Copulations outside of marriage, especially those that produce children, are destabilizing to a society sustained by patriarchy and the continued assurance of a true family lineage through male heirs; stories that celebrate and even deify rape might similarly be expected to face societal disapproval. However, the rapes that occur in the *Metamorphoses* go largely unpunished. Committed by gods, these rapes and their victims, frequently virginal girls, usually escape the stigmatization and horror that come with rape. In fact, many of the rapes end with the girl's reintroduction into society, as well as productive childbirth. Rather than slapped with social stigma, these rapes are startlingly accepted, even consecrated—by those in society in the tales themselves, as well as by the society that retells them.

For J. E. Robson, bestial myths are not only socially accepted, but in fact demonstrate the superiority of men over women, and "have the effect of defining what sexual behaviour is suitable for a woman: a woman must submit to an appropriate male, and must not herself be the instigator of the sexual act."[7] In "Bestiality and Bestial Rape in Greek Myth," Robson excavates rituals of puberty and adolescence in ancient Greece to show how young boys and girls were linked with animals in coming-of-age rites, and how elements of these ceremonies have been incorporated in bestial myths. Upon reaching puberty, boys underwent formal rituals to be initiated into society as citizens. They were taken outside of civilization—as part of rites of segregation—and into the wilds, where they would be directed to perform rites of *ekstasis*:

[7] Robson, J. E. (1997). Bestiality and Bestial Rape in Greek Myth. *Rape in Antiquity*. Susan Deacy and Karen F. Pierce. London, Duckworth: 81.

> The idea of these rituals was to confuse the boy's identity and to take him outside himself so that he might assume a new identity when he rejoined the *polis* [civilization], that of a man. This ceremony…combined hunting, change of identity, and sexuality.[8]

This intermediate period of living outside of society and assuming a temporary, Other identity, was thought to provide a setting in which the boy could learn the new roles expected of him as a male citizen as well as fulfill his feminine side of his nature before he became a man and such behavior—cross-dressing—would be deemed inappropriate. The final rites of initiation reintegrated the boy into civilized society, now prepared for masculine activities and roles in the hunt and war as a male citizen and a man.

Coming-of-age ceremonies for girls followed the same format of segregation-*ekstasis*-integration, but without the underlying drive toward gaining citizen rights that male ceremonies had. Rather, the rites of passage for girls were geared toward marking their attainment of fertility and physical womanhood, and preparing them for marriage. The intermediate rites of *ekstasis* for girls thus diverged significantly from those for the boys; instead of cross-dressing, the girls and the priests and priestesses performing the ceremony dressed up as animals and wore animal masks, in order to excise the girls' wild natures. Following reintegration into society as women,

> Marriage…[was] the final stage of the taming process… At marriage, the girl rids herself of her animality and is now a…wife or 'tamed one,' since she has

[8] Robson 68.

submitted to Aphrodite's yoke. This taming is intended to curb any potential for sexual abandonment the girl might be capable of developing.[9]

The very language used to describe this process by both Robson and the Greeks demonstrate the ways in which girls, particularly those on the precipice of puberty and the emergence of her sexuality and ability to reproduce, were linked with animals. Bestial myths, by incorporating elements of these rites, further associate the girl with the animal and animal impulses.

I have quoted extensively from Robson's essay in order to demonstrate the persistent association between females and animals in Western civilization, as well as to illuminate the strong ties made during these ceremonies between sex and the hunt. However, my conclusion from this historical evidence diverges from Robson's. While he attributes these rites of passage to a general concern with containing and controlling the threatening adolescent state of transition and Otherness for both boys and girls,[10] I argue instead that the unease that surrounded female puberty—an unease that carries over into mythology and specifically Ovid's bestial myths—was rooted in the problem of female sexuality and desire. Rather than acknowledge its existence, these female coming-of-age rituals were constructed to circumvent any exploration of sexuality, even in the context of reproduction, their main function as women in society, in the same way that male coming-of-age rituals were designed to teach boys the roles of men in society. These ceremonial rituals instead served to tame and domesticate women and break them of their natural, emerging sexuality, which was

[9] Robson 73.

[10] Robson 72.

perceived as unchecked and thus a threat to the social order. In fact, Robson points out in a tangential note that in myths about female lust, "female passion is always punished."[11]

In Ovid, then, physical metamorphosis becomes an example of proper female behavior within this paradigm of male aggression and female passivity. The positioning of men as hunters and women as animals during these initiation rites is an unmistakable metaphor for the erotic chase, with all its use of guile, aggression, and disguise—elements encoded in the structure of the Ovidian rape, in which the god literally transforms himself and/or the girl during the course of sexual pursuit. Transgressive and outside the cultural norm, female sexuality as a threat to the social order can be rendered innocuous by classifying women with the beasts instead of with humankind—just as the interim state of *ekstasis* in the initiation rites instructed girls to dress as animals to fulfill their supposed animalistic sides. Whether it is Jove turning himself into a bull to seduce Europa or Jove transforming Callisto into a bear after copulation, these myths emphasize the animal nature of the female sex. While the ancient Greek rites involve transformation followed by restoration, in the *Metamorphoses*, transformations do not involve a return to the original form. The metamorphoses of these women are permanent, not cyclical. In tales in which the god transforms himself, the girl is usually reintegrated into society without consequence, reinforcing the proper hunter/hunted paradigm of female submission. However, in cases when the girl herself is transformed or tries to resist the sexual advance, she faces exclusion from society. In myths in which the girl is transformed into an animal, plant, or inanimate object, these metamorphoses remain permanent, and thus serve as a potent warning against the indulgence of female sexual desire.

[11] Robson 81.

The myth of Apollo and Daphne in Book I of the *Metamorphoses* is another example of proper female behavior. When Daphne tries to flee from the advances of Apollo, she realizes that the only way she can escape bodily rape is by praying to her father Peneus to alter her body, or "shape," which she calls her "harm."[12] Here, significantly, the language of the text reveals the way in which Daphne identifies the female body as a site of torment and pain for the woman herself. Peneus responds to his daughter's pleas by turning her into a laurel tree, resulting in her removal from human society. Daphne's active rejection of the god's sexual advances, therefore, directly condemns her to an eternity of Otherness and utter lack of agency; as a tree, she is helpless to Apollo's touch and caresses. The paradox of the metamorphosis as a moment of simultaneous movement and solidifying is brilliantly captured in the dynamic marble of Bernini's sculpture *Apollo and Daphne* (Figure 1). These myths of permanent metamorphosis, then, teach women by example to submit to the will of superior male and resist their animalistic sexual impulses.

These scenes of divine rape and metamorphosis take a markedly different turn when they leap from Latin verse to the visual during the Renaissance and, in the paintings of Correggio, come to invite a different interpretation of female sexuality and desire from their original context in the *Metamorphoses*. For the writers and artists of the Renaissance, "Rome was synonymous with the antique, the new awareness of its immanence, and the vitality of classical antiquity, which only in Rome was alive and not merely the subject of academic

[12] Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as translated by Arthur Golding, Book I, line 670. All quotations from the *Metamorphoses* will hereafter be cited within the text in the following format: (*Met*, I.670)

teaching."[13] The erotic, profane episodes of Ovid's *Metamorphose*s, consequently, were acceptable and even respectable because of their classical roots. In 1530, Antonio da Correggio was commissioned by the Duke of Mantua to paint, as a gift to the Emperor of Spain Charles V, a series depicting some of the most famous profane love scenes from Ovid. Titled *The Loves of Jupiter*, the celebrated series of four paintings depict the myths of the youth Ganymed abducted by Jupiter in the guise of an eagle from Book X of the *Metamorphoses* (*Ganymed abducted by the Eagle*, Figure 2), the seduction of Io by Jupiter disguised as a cloud and subsequent transformation into a heifer in Book I (*Jupiter and Io*, Figure 3), Leda seduced by Jupiter in the form of a swan from Book VI (*Leda with the Swan*, Figure 4), and Danaë seduced by Jupiter as a rain of gold from Book IV (*Danaë*, Figure 5). These four Loves of Jupiter, all victims of rape, should hardly be called loves in the violent context of Ovid's tales. Under the paintbrush of Correggio, however—the artist who was once described as supreme in expressing the effects of the body, surpassing even his contemporaries Michelangelo and Raphael[14]—the joy, relish, and, yes, sexual pleasure of the three women and the youth are immediately apparent. In contrast with how these tales are presented in Ovid—the passive and utterly helpless victim swooped down upon by the eager, oversexed Jove—Correggio's paintings deliciously show Ganymed in his moment of

[13] *Correggio and the Antique*. May 2008. Galleria Borghese. 20 June 2008 <www.galleriaborghese.it/nuove/emostre.htm>. The Galleria Borghese in northern Rome—home to an unequaled collection of Bernini sculptures, including the aforementioned *Apollo and Daphne* (Figure 5)—recently had on view the most complete monographic exhibit dedicated to Correggio, which I had the distinct pleasure of visiting this past May.

[14] Galleria Borghese (2008).

breathless surprise and anticipation, Io kicking up her feet in "blissful surrender,"[15] Leda warmly smiling down at the swan and contouring her body to match the curve and twist of his neck, and Danaë reaching down to expose her lap to a delicate shower of golden drops.

What is most striking, and in fact unique, about the Loves of Jupiter series is the amount of agency and physical pleasure that both the women and the male youth in the paintings express. David Ekserdjian notes this in his monograph *Correggio*, and argues that the transformations of Jove "allow action without including men as rivals for their voyeuristic audience."[16] I want to go a step further, and suggest that the female figures in the Loves of Jupiter paintings are not merely nude subjects laid bare before the voyeuristic gaze of the viewer, but active participants in their sexual encounters. For Correggio, the metamorphosis of Jove becomes a way of excising the adult male presence from the scene, so that when standing before the painting and contemplating the moment of copulation, the viewer focuses on the female body as a site of eroticism and pleasure for the woman herself. In these myths of divine rape, Jove's physical transformations open up a visual space in which the male figure is unseen, and the female (or young male, in Ganymed's case) figure can be put fully on display in her moment of sexual awakening and gratification. In contemporaneous representations of Danaë, by contrast, Danaë is frequently cast as an example of female lustfulness and wantonness, and her story becomes a metaphor for the power of money and gold to corrupt weak-willed women.[17] Aside from Jan Gossaert's

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[15] Ekserdjian, David (1997). *Correggio*. New Haven, Yale University Press: 284.

[16] Ekserdjian 282.

[17] Sluijter, Eric Jan (1999). "Emulating Sensual Beauty: Representations of Danaë from Gossaert to Rembrandt." *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 27(1/2): 4-45.

painting of Danaë (Figure 6), which was executed approximately four years earlier, Correggio's version of the myth is singular in its portrayal of Danaë as a young girl instead of a full-fledged woman, leaving no doubt about her status as an innocent virgin. What's more, while other illustrations of the myth, including representations from antiquity, portray Danaë looking heavenwards at Jove descending to her lap in a shower of gold (Figure 7) or Danaë with her eyes closed, and thus essentially withdrawn from the scene (Figure 8), Correggio portrays the young girl looking down at her own body, "an excited spectator witnessing her own unveiling, but at the same time a delighted admirer of her own body."[18] In this way, Correggio takes advantage of the facilities afforded to him by visual representation in order to turn metamorphoses from a trope that, in Ovid, dehumanized its female victims, into one that celebrates and restores to its subjects the very human privilege of experiencing transcendent sexual pleasure.

Correggio's Loves of Jupiter series represents a first step beyond traditional sex and gender roles toward a more expansive and equalizing view of female agency, identity, and desire in the Western mythological tradition through the visual form in the Italian Renaissance—a movement that Shakespeare continues in the dramatic form of the festive comedy during the English Renaissance. Ovid's writings were highly influential on the writers and artists of the English Renaissance; thanks to the swell of the translation movement in Elizabethan England, these works were made more available to English audiences. Jonathan Bate suggests that by borrowing from Ovid for his plays, Shakespeare brought the Roman poet beyond the classrooms of the upper crust and made his works even more accessible to all classes of people. More importantly, Shakespeare reinvigorated the

[18] Ekserdjian 288.

ancient myths, and made them relevant to the times.[19] Stocked with Ovidian characters, retellings of episodes, or amalgamations of Ovidian elements, the festive comedies of Shakespeare, of all his plays, bear the most influence from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Set in times of celebrating the harvest and seasonal cycles, the festive comedy as a genre is a perfect place to explore themes of change, both individual and generational, as well as the relation between man and nature.[20] The inclusiveness of Shakespeare's festive comedies, with their incorporation of elements generally considered antithetical to comedy—the banishment of Rosalind from her kingdom in *As You Like It*, Beatrice's dark order to Benedick to "Kill Claudio" in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Malvolio's general threat to the happy marriage crowd followed by Feste's song about growing old at the end of *Twelfth Night*—reflect the acute awareness of the realities of growth and death that lingers in the background of these festival days and threatens to unleash disruption and disorder.

The wariness that surrounds female desire and agency, as in Ovid, continues to exist in the world of Elizabethan England and Shakespearean plays. As women, the female characters are bound by gender norms that delimit their public language and action—a double bind that is memorably identified and resisted by Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, when, seized by jealousy of Claudio's freedom and power of public speech as a man, she cries out, "What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, O God, *that I were a man!* I would eat

[19] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. New York, Oxford University Press (1993): 31-37.

[20] Barber, Cesar Lombardi. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: a study of dramatic form and its relation to social custom*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (1959): 8.

his heart in the marketplace."[21] Beatrice, here, verbalizes a desire that many female heroines in Shakespeare's comedies actualize—the desire to be a man in the world. I find myself resisting too clear-cut a distinction between the male and female genders, a model that Laurie Shannon reveals to be anachronistic in Elizabethan England, and too reductive an explanation for the gender-bending metamorphoses that Shakespearean female heroines take on in many of the comedies—Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and Viola in *Twelfth Night*. The transformations that these heroines undergo, after all, are rarely clearly woman-to-man: Julia and Rosalind play male youths, not men, while Viola disguises herself as a eunuch, which is more androgynous than male. Rather than transvestitism, cross-dressing, gender-bending, and so forth, I prefer to call this type of identity transformation "playacting," one that involves change in physical dress—costumes and clothing as the visible indicator of character, gender, and class in the theater—as well as linguistic reversals and manipulations.

> Shannon dubs this linguistic act "rhetorical husbandry" in her essay "Likenings":
>
> Portia's intervention [in *The Merchant of Venice*]…is utterly rhetorical. . . . She leverages her otherwise inert economic value and wit into an agentive power of self-formation. She determines the lingua franca that will specify her relation to Bassanio, shifting the meanings and altering the possibilities of what can be said and performed within its affective charter. … This

[21] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act IV, scene i, lines 306-310, emphasis mine. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays will hereafter be cited within the text in the following format: (*MAAN*, IV.i.306-310, emphasis mine)

> husbandry creates a new contracting authority, as Portia enters a contract [marriage] as its signer rather than as its consideration.[22]

Shannon sheds crucial light on the nature of the gender metamorphoses that occur in the festive comedies, pinpointing concretely just how these female characters metamorphose themselves, physically and rhetorically, outside of gendered norms. Importantly, her theories challenge the reality of heteronormativity as a permanent and natural social state that existed in Elizabethan England, and her writings resist terms such as "transgression," "normalize," and "orthodox" in favor of a discursive system of likeness and difference in which one sex/gender system can be deployed against another, and gender becomes an affective role rather than a concrete, stable identity—thus opening up very real possibilities for self-transformation not delimited by gender. Shannon's essays will serve as useful models for discussions of Shakespearean female identity in the context of gender, playacting, and metamorphosis in my own essay. Her argument in "Likenings" and her earlier essay "Nature's Bias,"[23] in communication with similar works by other scholars, helpfully illuminate the social culture in which Shakespeare wrote and set his plays as not the strait-laced era we tend to imagine in which gender and sex were irrevocably linked and the idea of heterosexuality not only existed but was the only acceptable and conceivable norm, but rather as one consisting of "ongoing negotiations among competing norms, ideals, and

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[22] Shannon, Laurie. "Likenings: Rhetorical Husbandries and Portia's "True Conceit" of Friendship." *Renaissance Drama* 31 (2002): 3-26.

[23] Shannon, Laurie. "Nature's Bias: Renaissance Homonormativity and Elizabethan Comic Likeness." *Modern Philology* 98:2 (2000): 183-210.

ideologies, especially in regard to affective protocols and the relational selves they constitute."[24]

When a character metamorphoses on the Shakespearean stage into a gender or a species[25] that is different from their own, we can understand this transformation to occur not on a physical, atomic level but rather on a metaphorical and linguistic level. After all, whenever we step into a theater, are we not asked as audience members to accept these particular illusions, of the visual, the imaginative, and the rhetorical, in our experience of this fictive world? Just as I suggest that Correggio re-imagined the capabilities of visual representation to transform the Ovidian trope of metamorphosis into a way of erasing the male figure and spotlighting the female body in the moment of sexual intercourse, so Shakespeare re-imagines the capabilities of the dramatic form to revise the trope of metamorphosis into a tool of female empowerment and agency via the self-transformative and self-constitutive power of speech.

In this essay, I will look at the Shakespearean festive comedy *As You Like It* in particular—with glances to the side at *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *1 Henry IV*, *Hamlet*, and *Twelfth Night*, which will provide useful points of contrast and accordance—to illuminate particular facets of the interrelated themes of desire, identity, and transformation in Shakespeare, and highlight Shakespeare's ability to imagine and create theatrical spaces in which female agency and desire can exist. I argue that the Ovidian characters in Shakespeare fruitfully uncover and exploit the possibilities and freedoms offered by self-transformation via play-acting, which principally relies upon

[24] Shannon (2002): 5.

[25] Bottom, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is transformed into an ass.

language as a tool and medium of change and identity constitution, assertion and persuasion. The space of the theater and the literary form of drama allows these Shakespearean-Ovidian characters, in a way that is unachievable in the verse narrative medium of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, to conceive of and enact worlds and selves that are different from their current worlds and selves. In this essay, I propose that Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, is the exemplar of the Ovidian character, in the way that she employs the device of the self-masquerade in order to imagine, stage, and enact her own transformation in relation to others.

Chapter 1 will engage with the theories of Jacques Lacan, Lynn Enterline, Stephen Greenblatt, and others to discuss the role of language in identity production in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, looking specifically to the myths of Actaeon and Orpheus. Chapter 2 will explore issues surrounding identity transformation through affect and language in the context of *As You Like It*, via a recovery of Celia and Orlando. Chapter 3 will take a close look at the transformation of Rosalind into the youth Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind" by illuminating the crucial discursive differences between playacting and disguise, using Viola from *Twelfth Night* as a point of contrast. Finally, Chapter 4 will focus on the scenes of instruction and playacting between Rosalind and Orlando in *As You Like It*, with particular attention to what it means to play oneself. I will conclude by reflecting what it means for a character to be Ovidian in Shakespeare, and how Shakespeare goes beyond Ovid in his staging, in *As You Like It*, of what it means to be an agentative human in a society that continually prefers to defer to the mythologies and narratives that have preceded us.

A Pause For Consideration: What It Means To Be Ovidian

Thus far I have used the term "Ovidian" rather casually. Here I pause to take a more critical look at how the term has been deployed by scholars, in order to lay out my own definition of the term as a descriptor for a certain type of Shakespearean character.

At the intersection of classical and Renaissance scholarship frequently appears the notion of Ovidianism, or of something being somehow "Ovidian." However, these terms are slippery at best, and their precise definitions lack critical consensus. Scholars ranging from Mary Ellen Lamb and Francois Laroque to Charles Martindale and Harry Berger, Jr., sling these terms around, calling wit "Ovidian,"[26] the framework of Shakespeare's plays "Ovidian,"[27] sexual pursuit "Ovidian,"[28] characters "Ovidian,"[29] and a certain type of transformation as "Ovidian,"[30] among many other contexts and referents. Although few pause to define their terms of engagement, there does seem to be a rough agreement about what "Ovidian" connotes: change, desire, subjectivity, frequently cruelty or violence, and a certain way of being human in the world. However, a closer examination reveals instability

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[26] Martindale, Charles. "Introduction." *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influence on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Charles Martindale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988: 4.

[27] Berger, Jr., Harry. "Actaeon at the Hinder Gate: The Stag Party in Spenser's Gardens of Adonis." *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Ed. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

[28] Bate 132.

[29] Lamb, Mary Ellen. "Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*." *Shakespearean Comedy*, New York Literary Forum Special Issue (1980): 63-77.

[30] Laroque, Francois. "Ovidian Transformations and Folk Festivities in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *As You Like It*." *Cahiers Elisabethains* 25 (1984): 23-36.

in these definitions. That is, does Ovidian change mean that one is taken further from one's identity, or does it take one closer? Is metamorphosis self-induced or forced upon an individual? Can an individual ever truly undergo affective change, or does metamorphosis only manifest itself in physical transformation? For that matter, does Ovid even believe in the concept of a core identity, or do the myths of the *Metamorphoses* suggest that individuals fundamentally lack an absolute identity and instead "only perform roles"?[31] And how do violence and desire intersect and relate to one another, and where does love fit in?

These are large questions—perhaps the fundamental questions of what it means to be human—and to answer them is far beyond the scope of this essay, and certainly bigger than the *Metamorphoses* itself. In fact, the way that Ovid himself juggles these themes in the *Metamorphoses* is frequently ambiguous, at times contradictory, and always in flux. Lamb highlights this instability, declaring that "Ovid's work was too complex for any rigid system."[32] Thus, this essay wishes to focus on how Ovid approaches these questions vis-à-vis how Shakespeare treated these same themes in his festive comedies. As T. S. Eliot suggests in "Tradition and the Individual Talent,"

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. …the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.[33]

[31] Lamb 63.

[32] Lamb 64.

[33] Eliot, T. S. *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. London, 1975: 38-9.

Rather than try to divine what Ovid believes about change and subjectivity—a project so immense that it would likely be a dead-end—it is more productive to see what Shakespeare believes about Ovid in his presentation of human agency, identity, and change. By examining the ways that scholars have deployed the term "Ovidian" to describe issues of identity and change in the works of Shakespeare and other Renaissance writers, we can understand what it means to draw from Ovid and to be Ovidian in the Renaissance, and begin to see the ways that Ovid inspired—literally, breathed into—the plays of Shakespeare. In the process, we can begin to approach questions of identity formation, desire, and transformation as they coalesce around the female heroines of the festive comedies.

To have command over language's representational and constitutive powers, as Lynn Enterline elaborates its uses in *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare*,[34] is to have command over the construction of one's own identity and the actions of others. The ability to use language to persuade and move others is, as I argue in this essay, an essential part to what it means to say that something or someone is "Ovidian," particularly when it comes to discussing Shakespeare. To call an element of an artistic work Ovidian, for many scholars, is merely a way of identifying that element as an allusion to something similar in Ovid's works. For instance, scholars have often referred to Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Ovidian because of its numerous references to characters and events from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The more interesting and compelling critical deployments of "Ovidian" burden the term with more significant weight than mere dramatization of Ovid, as Jonathan Bate characterizes its relationship to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. To be

[34] Enterline, Lynn. *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000: 30.

fair, Bate tempers his claim by calling it a "*displaced* dramatization,"[35] as opposed to the "obsessive literalism"[36] that characterizes the rude mechanicals' dramatization of the Ovidian tale of Pyramus and Thisbe in the final act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In fact, the way that Bate details this relationship between Ovid and Shakespeare is particularly useful, calling Shakespeare "son rather than ape"[37] of the classical poet, and calling *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a "translation of elements…on a higher level"[38] by virtue of difference. However, the passage that Bate uses to sum up the intertextual relationship between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Metamorphoses* is a moment of explicit reversal. Early in the play, Helena tells Demetrius that she wishes for a gender, power, and desire reversal of the myth of Apollo and Daphne from Book I of the *Metamorphoses*: "The story shall be chang'd: Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase" (*MND*, II.i.230-1).

In many ways, Bate's reading of the way that Shakespeare uses Ovid in his plays is sufficient to explain *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which Shakespeare wrote in 1595-1596 early in his career. However, it fails to adequately describe the way that Shakespeare uses Ovid later in his career, particularly the festive comedy *As You Like It*, which goes far beyond mere reversal of tropes and figures, a model that relies upon the preservation of binary distinctions and clear, unambiguous opposites. In this essay, "Ovidian" does not refer to an appropriation of Ovid, but instead a reimagining of Ovid upon a new stage: the English Renaissance instead of classical antiquity, human agency in place of divine rule and

[35] Bate 131, emphasis mine.

[36] Bate 131.

[37] Bate 132.

[38] Bate 132.

intervention, and a changed notion of the way that Ovid himself thought of and represented change in the *Metamorphoses*. For this essay, I prefer the use of "Ovidian," by which scholars tend to mean *ideally* Ovidian, as meaning to have the facilities of language at one's disposal—to be able to reconcile opposites in language without sacrificing the potency of each side, and to be able to manipulate language effectively and according to one's own ideas and desires rather than according to societal or generic conventions. These Ovidian characters, in Shakespeare, possess a level of agency that enables them to shape, create, and assert an identity in relation to another that is not beholden to the strictures of society or generic notions of love and human relationships, and to be able to persuade others into seeking such a renewed perspective. In the *Metamorphoses*, this ideally Ovidian character is Orpheus; in the Shakespearean canon, it is Rosalind of *As You Like It*.

CHAPTER 1

Reconsidering the Voice and the Body in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

> *Orlando*. What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
> I cannot speak to her, yet she urg'd conference.
> O poor Orlando! thou art overthrown,
> Or Charles, or something weaker, masters thee.
>
> —*As You Like It*, Act I, scene ii

A Critical Engagement: Lynn Enterline and Stephen Greenblatt

Lynn Enterline's *The Rhetoric of the Body: From Ovid to Shakespeare* is first and foremost concerned with the disconnect between the voice and the body. Her main thesis draws on Lacanian theories of the role of language in identity construction—that is, that language and subjectivity are intimately connected, and that each is constituted vis-à-vis the other. In this theory, language is not merely a way of representing the body, but more directly, it becomes an active method of colonizing the body and its affective orders, a way of understanding and experiencing the body by specifying, localizing, and therefore reifying its physical parts and emotions with words.[39] In many ways, this body of thought aligns with Stephen Greenblatt's ideas of self-fashioning. In fact, in his introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, he explicitly mentions language's contributory function in shaping one's own

[39] This idea was outlined vividly in a lecture given by Professor Fredric Jameson in a Literature 283 course on August 26, 2008 at Duke University. Many of the terms I use in this section of my essay were drawn from related lectures in that class, as well as Enterline's book.

identity.[40] That is, by using language to assess and express his or her own subjectivity, the individual is able to create and present him or herself to others as a single, cohesive self. Paradoxically, however, language as a tool of conquest is also a fracturing force; its disposition toward sectioning and categorizing in the process of rhetorical representation dismembers, rather than unifies, the body.[41] Furthermore, language, in relation to the speaker, is always inevitably partial, incomplete, and excessive. Despite its rhetorical functions, there is always something about the body and its desires in particular that remain, as Enterline puts it, "fugitive."[42]

The power of the human voice was a provocative theme for writers and artists of the classical world as well as the later Renaissance movement in Western Europe. In the sixteenth century, the tenets of Christianity, which were "suspicious of man's power to shape identity," began to be challenged in powerful and convincing ways by the re-circulation of classical ideas of self-consciousness and the fashioning of human identity as "a manipulable, artful process."[43] The verb "to fashion" gained currency during the Renaissance as a way of "designating the form of a self," in addition to its original meaning as "the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern."[44] Greenblatt interprets self-fashioning primarily as a method of improvisation, a characteristically Western

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[40] Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005: 9.

[41] Enterline: 1.

[42] Enterline 6.

[43] Greenblatt 2.

[44] Greenblatt 2.

mode of role-playing and disguise, or the willingness to transform oneself into another temporarily.[45] This interpretation of fashioning identity, in which an individual dons the mask of another, so to speak, accentuates the divide between the tongue and the heart, so that we can see in more concrete ways how identity becomes something external to, rather than the outward manifestation of, the idea of the inner self. Both Enterline and Greenblatt are concerned not only with language's ability to articulate and thus shape one's own identity, but perhaps more importantly, with language as a persuasive force—the ability of an individual to *move* another through language's "instrumental, poetic, and rhetorical" functions.[46] While Greenblatt is concerned almost solely with the power structures that influence this interpretation of language and identity, however, Enterline is interested in the issues of authorship, subjectivity, and authorship in the human voice, as they are explored in the myths in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and subsequent Elizabethan literature.

Having established language as the primary mode by which identity is formed and presented by individuals in classical antiquity and the early modern period, we can now explore the limitations of this model—the pessimistic side to the idea that humans can be agents of self-transformation and change through the power of language. What about people who are somehow limited in their ability to speak? or who cannot speak at all? Are they somehow less human, because they are less able to control their identity and thus their fate as a result?[47] In Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, these questions are entirely

[45] Greenblatt 228.

[46] Enterline 5.

[47] Here, I deliberately conflate identity with destiny; to know oneself, after all, is to be able to guide one's own future.

precluded; in his view, the seductive concept of self-fashioning is an illusion, and in fact is a delusion than mankind wishes to believe rather than a true model for subjectivity formation. The idea that humans exercise control and autonomy in identity construction of themselves and of others, Greenblatt argues, is naïve. Rather, humans are "the ideological product of the relations of power in a given society," the results of cultural institutions instead of their own choices.[48] Selfhood and self-fashioning, in the end, is simply a fiction. Just as Shakespeare created Othello, so did Iago create Othello; just as Shakespeare created Othello, so did Elizabethan England create Shakespeare. Any attempts to subvert this paradigm, in Greenblatt's worldview, is already contained. Enterline takes a more liberal, humanist approach to this question, allowing for more agency and choice in the human subject in constructing identity, and in a writer's ability to conceive of and construct characters that push back against societal norms. In fact, with regard to cultural constructions of gender identity, Enterline specifically rejects readings of Ovid's tales as reinforcing "historically coded gender positions" and instead suggests that "the trope of the female voice [as it appears in the *Metamorphoses*] unsettles the very idea of gender hierarchy and identity on which it also relies."[49] I find Enterline's argument more persuasive than Greenblatt's theories of subversion and containment, which are entirely too limiting and indeed, unhopeful, ways of looking at the world. Even though we may be severely limited by the tools we have at our disposal—linguistic and otherwise—our culture's best artists and scientists are able to conceive of a world that pushes against the world in which they find themselves, in insistent, provocative, and, yes, powerful and affective ways. For me, as it has

[48] Greenblatt 256.

[49] Enterline 20.

been for so many scholars and readers that have come before me, the English writer who achieves this type of imaginative work best is William Shakespeare; and it is the ways in which his characters and plays re-imagine and reconfigure language and identity that continue to energize and confound us.

The Hunter Loses His Voice: The Tale of Actaeon

As I have already hinted above, language, while powerful, is also in many ways prone to failure and unpredictability, and somehow beyond the intentions of the speaker. Like Enterline, I am drawn to moments in which characters experience a disconnect between their speech and their intent, where language is in some way inadequate to its task. Enterline dubs these moments "Ovidian scenes of alienation from one's own tongue,"[50] the consummate example of which is the tale of Actaeon and Diana in Book III of the *Metamorphoses*. The hunter Actaeon accidentally wanders across the goddess Diana, who is bathing naked in a natural bower untouched by "man's device" (III.184). Realizing that this mortal has seen her bare body, she sprinkles water over his face and head and says, "Now make thy vaunt among thy mates, thou saw'st Diana bare. / Tell if thou can; I give thee leave" (III.227-228). The spitefulness and cruelty of her words do not become manifest until the next moment, in which we witness Actaeon's physical metamorphosis into a hart. At first, Actaeon is unaware of his transformation; when he spots his reflection in the brook,

> he would have cried, 'Alas!'
> But as for then no kind of speech out of his lips could pass,
> He sighed and brayed; for that was then the speech that did remain

[50] Enterline 2.

And down the eyes that were not his bitter tears did rain.

No part remained (save his mind) of that he erst had been. (III.237-241)

Actaeon's hounds, not recognizing him in his new form, chase their master through grounds that used to be his hunting grounds. Ovid writes:

He strained oftentimes to speak, and was about to say

'I am Actaeon. Know your lord and master, sirs, I pray.'

But use of words and speech did want to utter forth his mind. (III.276-278)

Throughout the *Metamorphoses*, characters are rendered unable to speak due to physical transformations from human to other. These moments vividly link language with identity; tellingly, when Actaeon is unable to speak, he is also acutely aware that his new state is no longer "his" in a sense, that his identity has been transformed into something beyond his understanding and grasp. This loss of language, then, is also the loss of self-identity as well as the identity that we present to others, by which they identify us. I also want to call attention here to Actaeon's extreme disempowerment in this tale as a human being in a forest governed by the gods. Not only is he transformed into a stag by a goddess, but also, as the narrator tells us, this "was his cursed cruel fate" (III.208).

What is crucial to note in the myth of Actaeon is that Actaeon is at first unaware of his physical transformation by the spiteful hand of Diana. The verse in this section roams over his body like a video camera in extreme close-up, revealing to the reader here horns emerging from his head, there his ears sharpening, here his skin becoming a hairy hide, there his arms becoming long and thin (III.230-234). Despite the extremity of his transfiguration, Actaeon remains ignorant of his newly formed body, and can only wonder why he can suddenly run so quickly. It is not until he catches a glimpse of himself in the still water of a

brook, and simultaneously tries to speak, that he realizes the terrible truth that his body is somehow no longer his. Suggestively, this moment of self-consciousness occurs upon mirrored reflection. However, unlike the mirror stage of the sort that Lacan proposes, in which the individual sees an image, reflected and external to himself, and identifies with that image of the body, this is not a moment of coming into selfhood and self-representation, but rather a moment of trauma in which Actaeon is effectively wrenched from himself. What epitomizes this loss of identity is the loss of language and its ability both to self-represent ("I am Actaeon") and to move others ("Know your lord and masters, sir, I pray"). Loss of language in turn results in loss of identity, even loss of life and limb.

The myth of Actaeon is only one of countless tales in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which language reinforces identity and vice versa, so that to be stripped of the power of speech not only threatens one's place in society, but also threatens one's essential status as a human. It is at this precise intersection of language and identity that the concept of the "Ovidian" exists—encapsulated most movingly in the figure of Orpheus who, in these terms of engagement, is the quintessential "Ovidian" character, the ultimate persuasive voice that can "effect the changes of which it speaks."[51]

The Poet Loses His Head: The Tale of Orpheus

On the day of her wedding to the poet Orpheus, Eurydice is stung by a snake and dies. Orpheus, determined to get her back, journeys down to Hades with his harp and sings before Pluto and Persephone in order to persuade them to allow his wife to return to earth and live out a full life. His virtuosic play with words and song is so stirring and affective that

[51] Enterline 222.

the inhabitants of the Underworld are temporarily taken outside of themselves and pause in their repetitive work—Tantalus stops trying to drink from the receding pool, Ixion's eternally spinning wheel stands still, Sisyphus sits down on his rock, and the Furies themselves are moved to tears. The rulers of the Underworld are similarly so touched by Orpheus' song that they allow Eurydice to return to life with him, with the condition that he not look back at her until they are past the bounds of Hades. However, with the earth coming in sight, Orpheus doubts that she is still following behind him and looks back. "Immediately she slipped back" and dies for the second time, "Her last farewell…spake so soft that scarce he heard the sound" (X.61-67). This last shared moment between the two lovers, in which Eurydice is virtually unable to speak, serves as a sharp contrast with Orpheus' unparalleled power to deploy language. Yet ultimately Orpheus' actions betray his linguistic facilities, and condemn him to his second separation from Eurydice. Devastated and forlorn, Orpheus "eschew[s] / The womankind" (X.88-89) and chooses instead to take on boys as lovers. After days of mourning, he finally picks up his harp again; the rest of Book X is made up of songs telling tales of misogyny and violence: of gods loving, transforming, and kidnapping young boys; of goddesses changing women into harlots out of spite; of men suffering decapitation; of men shunning natural women and creating statues to replace them; of daughters desiring their fathers; of lovers defiling places of worship; and of young men being gored to death by boars. His song, just as it earlier moved inhabitants of Hades to take pause and listen to his voice, now moves nature and "delights the minds / Of savage beasts and draws both stones and trees against their kinds" (XI.1-2).

In the middle of his performance, the Maenads, a group of female followers of Bacchus, come upon Orpheus and are stirred into a mad frenzy at the sight of the man who

has rejected all women. They begin to throw lances and stones at the singing poet with the intent to silence and kill him, yet the stones that are cast at him are, in perhaps the most poignant moment of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,

> vanquished with the sweet
> And most melodious harmony, [and] fell humbly at his feet
> As sorry for the furious act it purposed. (XI.11-13)

However, the Maenads beat drums and blow shawms in their frenzied rioting, and so create such bedlam that they drown out the sound of Orpheus' voice and harp:

> Then first of all stones were
> Made ruddy with the prophet's blood and could not give him ear.
> And first the flock of Bacchus' frows by violence brake the ring
> Of serpents, birds and savage beasts that for to hear him sing
> Sat gazing round about him there. And then with bloody hands
> They ran upon the prophet, who among them singing stands. (XI.19-24)

The Maenads fall upon Orpheus and proceed to tear apart his body. At the moment of his death, the narrative voice, in a rare moment of tenderness, delivers a brief eulogy for the man "who never till that hour / Did utter words in vain nor sing without effectual power" (XI.41-42).

If I were to apply the conclusions I drew from the myth of Actaeon to the myth of Orpheus, it might seem that Orpheus, too, has lost an essential part of his identity by being essentially stripped of his power to persuade through language and song. However, the text insists otherwise. After ripping apart his body, the Maenads throw Orpheus' head into a nearby stream with his harp, both of which seem to sing as they are carried down the river.

Furthermore, unlike other myths in the *Metamorphoses*, in the myth of Orpheus his ghost remains in view after his death. The narrator describes how Orpheus goes to the Underworld for the second time and finds his beloved Eurydice, and "now he one while walks / Together with her cheek by cheek; another while he stalks / Before her; and another while he followeth her" (X.71-73). In contrast with how Eurydice appears at their first meeting in Hades, limping from her still-recent wound, here the two lovers are whole in body and, at last, reunited in peace and happiness.

Identity in Ovid's Metamorphoses

I have quoted extensively from Arthur Golding's translation of these two tales in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* because the themes—words, speech, the mind, identity, authorship—that come into sharp focus from this type of close reading are the very themes under consideration in this essay. Ovid, too, was actively thinking about issues of authorship and subject formation in relation to language and speech; these tales will serve as useful points of comparison as I begin to consider Shakespeare's approach to these same sets of questions in *As You Like It* in the following chapter. In the tale of Actaeon, the central character loses his ability to speak after a physical transformation, and is thus misidentified and subsequently loses his life. In the tale of Orpheus, the central character demonstrates an enormous facility for using speech to persuade and move others, but in the end has his voice drowned out and consequently loses his life. In both tales, the characters experience the failure of language's persuasive and constitutive power, which in Ovid—as in Shakespeare—is portrayed as the ultimate human failure. The stories of Actaeon and Orpheus powerfully highlight the centrality of speech in identity construction as well as representation, and how language

fashions the body and acts as the interface between the self and the external world. Enterline writes that "for Ovid, the self comes most memorably into being when the instrumental function of language breaks down."[52] What I understand this to mean is that moments in which language escapes the control of the speaker, and becomes excessive of the speaker's original intent, demand the reader to rethink given notions of identity and selfhood by suggesting that identity is both fluid and not-fluid, both constructed and essential. Can one undergo an essential change or shift in one's own physical appearance—a transmutation from human form to animal or plant form—but still remain, somehow, one's own self? The *Metamorphoses* seems to answer yes. Characters who are transformed into animals and plants in the *Metamorphoses* come to be essentialized by their new forms, almost as though the physical transformation were the result of an inevitable external expression of an inner state. There is only one nightingale in the *Metamorphoses*, and she is Philomela. There is one bear: Callisto. Narcissus *is* the narcissus flower. The *Metamorphoses* is filled with paradoxical moments in which characters are struck by a self-awareness that they are, in some fundamental way, no longer them-selves.

When Actaeon is unable to assert, "I am Actaeon," the terrible truth that he realizes, and what the reader realizes, is that he is no longer Actaeon in a sense, but something other than himself—a stag in the woods, hunted by dogs. However, as Ovid and Golding's translation makes clear, he retains that essential part of himself that is aware—Golding calls this "his mind," which is the only part that remains[53] and that is set in opposition to his

[52] Enterline 27.

[53] Ovid *Met.* III.241: "No part remained (save his mind) of that he erst had been."

ability to articulate (his mind, his identity, his desires) through speech.[54] Actaeon remains himself, trapped in a familiar situation over which he once had dominion and now has lost control. When Orpheus' voice is drowned out by the frenzy of the Maenads, he is denied the essential part of himself that is able to move and influence others, and is torn from limb to limb. The tragedy in the myth of Orpheus is not, despite the version that is most often retold, in the moment when he turns back to glimpse his wife on their way back from Hades and thus loses her forever. What does it suggest about our society that we pass down only the first half of the Orpheus story, which turns the myth into a rather mawkish tale of love lost and turns Orpheus into a man ruled wholly and helplessly by his desires? The complete tale, restored upon reading Books X and XI of the *Metamorphoses*, tell a different tale of Orpheus as the ultimate artist, the mortal whose power to create and persuade through the manipulation of words and music can move the gods themselves to give up their hold on Eurydice, can move the trees to uproot themselves in order to get closer to his voice, can move rocks so that they lose heart and drop to the ground halfway in flight. The true tragedy of the myth of Orpheus is the moment when this consummate artist—the epitome of what is Ovidian—is unable to deploy the uniquely agentative and affective power of his speech and song against his would-be killers, by the sheer fact that his audience refuses to listen and drowns out his voice with their own. What results from this fundamental breakdown in communication is the death of his physical body, but importantly not his identity: his head seemingly continues to sing as it floats, disembodied, down the river.

This final image of the myth, of Orpheus' head floating toward the sea accompanied by his harp, underlines the fact that to speak of loss and possession—of identity, of

[54] Ovid *Met*. III.278: "But use of words and speech did want to utter forth his mind."

language—is somewhat misleading. Orpheus doesn't lose language, nor does Actaeon lose his identity, in the same way that I might misplace my glasses or might have my car stolen. On the contrary, identity is possessed the same way that a legal right is: one doesn't have it except in the moment of asserting it, and thus to have it is inextricably bound with having facility for linguistic expression. Stuart Hall, in his discussions of cultural identity, expresses this concept succinctly:

> Instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact…we should think of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.[55]

Representation, in this essay, means linguistic representation. I do not mean to suggest that language and identity are mutually enforcing in a positive way. Rather, they are caught in an eternal struggle, one that often, in Ovid, results in violence. The difference between Orpheus and Actaeon is not of loss, but of the degree to which they are able to retain their voice, and thus their identity, against external forces of change—in shorthand, the difference between the two characters is how "Ovidian" each one is. In place of a dialectic of possession and loss, then, we should use a dialectic of struggle and instability, shift and transformation, to discuss these themes of identity construction and language. The question is not, as I earlier posed it, whether one's identity can be changed in a fundamental way—because there *is* no essential identity to defend. The question becomes whether one has agency over the perpetual constitution of one's own identity and thus one's fate. This issue is not only important to consider in the context of Renaissance studies and how Renaissance

[55] Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation." *Framework* 36 (1989): 68.

artists and writers approached the same questions raised in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: it is perhaps the fundamental question of how we apprehend ourselves as humans.

CHAPTER 2

Language as Recovery and Transformation in *As You Like It*

> *Orlando*: I thank you, sir; and pray you tell me this:
> Which of the two was daughter of the Duke,
> That here was at the wrestling?
>
> —*As You Like It*, Act I, scene ii

Ovidian Transformation in As You Like It

Shakespeare takes the Ovidian subject of metamorphosis and change to a different stage in the festive comedies, in which characters are transformed (as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) or transform themselves by taking on disguises (as in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*). The distinction between Shakespearean change and Ovidian change might be crudely summarized in this way: in Shakespeare, transformations of identity are merely temporary roles that can be put on and later taken off, like masks or disguises; while in Ovid, transformation is permanent for mortals, and those who are transformed do not and cannot return to their original state. This characterization of the two, however attractive, is reductive and misguided, because it assumes in both cases that identity is intrinsic and immutable. By contrast, when truly Ovidian characters in Shakespeare assume a different identity, it is not putting on a disguise precisely, but an immersion in another's skin, while still retaining one's own selfhood; in other words, playacting. During this period of dual identity, these Shakespearean-Ovidian characters are generally able to move between both personas. Yet it is ambiguous as to how, at the end of the play, the characters resolve their

fractured selves as the society in which they live and the genre of comedy demand of them. Are these Ovidian characters eventually able to stitch up the disjunction between their two identities and create cohesive selves by the ends of the festive comedies? or instead, in trying to navigate the slippery slope of their two identities, are these characters, as Greenblatt suggests somewhat chillingly in relation to Iago in *Othello*, "giving voice to hypothetical self-cancellation"?[56]

If language is a representation of the world as well as a mode of action in the world, as Enterline suggests,[57] there are few characters in Shakespeare who exploit language's capacities as skillfully and powerfully as Rosalind, the heroine of Shakespeare's festive comedy *As You Like It*. Robert K. Root, more than a century ago, commented on the unusually strong influence of Ovid on Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, to an extent unmatched by other Shakespearean comedies.[58] Knowles builds on Root's claim, explaining that many of the allusions to Ovid appear in the source material of *As You Like It*—Thomas Lodge's prose romance, *Rosalynde*—but suggests that Lodge litters *Rosaynde* with classical references as embellishment befitting a pastoral romance, while Shakespeare's use of Ovid is much more "pointed" and "meaningful."[59] Shakespeare drew upon the works of the classical poet in many of his plays to a significant extent, but Ovid's name is specifically invoked in the

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[56] Greenblatt 235. Iago says, "Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago" (*Othello*, I.1.57); Greenblatt asks, "Are there two distinct, even opposing selves?"

[57] Enterline 220.

[58] Root, Robert K. "Classical Mythology in Shakespeare." *Yale Studies in English*, No. 19. New York: 1903.

[59] Knowles, Richard. "Myth and Type in *As You Like It*." *ELH*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (March 1966): 3.

canon only twice—once in *Taming of the Shrew* (I.i.318) and once in *As You Like It*, when Touchstone calls him "the most capricious poet" (III.iii.8).

It is easy to see why Touchstone identifies with Ovid's capriciousness. As the fool of the play, Touchstone enjoys a freedom of expression that rivals Rosalind's, but his way of speech is more rambling than hers. Touchstone has a particular knack for being both silly and touching at once, often so fluidly that the line between sheer inanity and canny wisdom can hardly be drawn, in spite of their extreme opposition.[60] Touchstone, in his characterization of Ovid, squarely identifies—and identifies with—what is most compelling about Ovid as a poet: his unrivaled ability to unify opposing forces, often within the span of a few lines of verse, with envious ease. Charles Martin, in the introduction to his recent translation of the *Metamorphoses*, marvels at

> [t]he irony that so often undercuts the noble and the heroic…by a simile that brings us from tragedy to comedy with no stops in between…the speed of the narration, the casualness of tone, the rapid changes in point of view, the alternation between apparent sympathy for his characters and apparent indifference to their fates; there is the wordplay, the elaborate and rhetorical and prosodic figures, the whimsical erudition, and the coining of new words. (Martin, 6-7)

This passage might be describing Shakespeare's festive comedies, and *As You Like It* especially. The organic unity of Rosalind as a character who is most often described as the

[60] After Touchstone's Jane Smile tale, Rosalind admiringly remarks, "Thou speak'st wiser than thou art ware of" (II.iv.57), a comment that perfectly characterizes the new variety of Shakespearean fool played by Robert Armin—witty, incisive, and often bawdy, in contrast with the old buffoonish Shakespearean fool played by Will Kemp.

harmonization of opposites, particularly when it comes to matters of love,[61] reflects the organic unity of the genre of the Shakespearean festive comedy[62] as well as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* itself.

However, the important distinction between Shakespeare and Ovid is their respective treatment of their characters. As Martin points out, Ovid flips between displaying sympathy and indifference for his characters in the narration of the *Metamorphoses*. Martin is actually quite kind in his characterization of Ovid, even to the extent that he whitewashes the brutality, cruelty, sadism, and violence that permeates the tales and characters' actions of the *Metamorphoses*—prominently displayed in the selections from the tales of Actaeon and Orpheus in my previous chapter. Tenderness and empathy are rarely seen or felt in the *Metamorphoses*, and when they do occur—in the tale of Orpheus, for example, when he moves the inhabitants of the Underworld to tears with his song, and again when the narrator himself declares that Orpheus did not deserve his fate—it strikes the reader as even more poignant. Shakespeare, by contrast, is largely compassionate toward all of his characters, even toward those who might be painted as villains, particularly in his festive comedies. *As You Like It* is tender, loving, empathetic, and benevolent to its characters, investing each with the capacity for change. Shakespeare keeps Ovid carefully at bay by deliberately

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[61] Margaret B. Beckman writes, "Throughout the whole play [Rosalind] has made extraordinary, seemingly impossible…conjunctions between contrary things. Her own person is a seemingly impossible reconciliation of opposites. The magic she performs brings contrarieties together and harmonizes them" (44). Beckman, Margaret Boerner. "The Figure of Rosalind in As You Like It." Shakespeare Quarterly 29:1 (1978): 44-51.

[62] For more on the genre, as well as wonderful close readings of the plays that are categorized in this genre, see C.L. Barber's landmark text *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959).

choosing Touchstone to invoke Ovid's name in *As You Like It*; already set outside of the play's established social space as the Shakespearean clown, Touchstone does not poison the play with Ovid's brutality and indifference with his affinity for and identification with the poet Ovid, but still successfully recognizes and pays tribute to Ovid, on behalf of Shakespeare, as an influence upon the play. While Shakespeare draws freely upon Ovid's characters, tales, sense of wordplay and metaphor, irony, and themes of change for his plays, he does not allow Ovid's largely disaffected tone nor his flippant, even cruel, treatment of his characters in the *Metamorphoses* infect the warmth and altruism of the festive comedies. Like Touchstone, whose status as the Shakespearean fool means that he only burlesques the ridiculousness of, rather than truly experience or feel, strong affective emotion, Shakespeare's use of Ovid does not transplant and suffer from Ovid's cruelties.

Rosalind, the heroine of *As You Like It*, will serve as the perfect model to contextualize the ideally Ovidian character that I have posited in this essay; in fact, I claim Rosalind as the paradigmatic Ovidian character in Shakespeare, in her ability to use language in a persuasive, affective way that gives her control over the constitution of her own identity and life as well as over the characters around her. Scholars have delighted in the twisty meta-levels of drama and theater that build up in *As You Like It*, at the height of which, at least during the Elizabethan age of theater, involves a young boy actor onstage playing a girl (Rosalind) playing a young boy (Ganymed) playing a girl ("Rosalind"). Of all the disguises and play-within-a-play tropes that appear in Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, and histories, Prince Hal is the only other character who has such self-awareness and mastery over language and his own subjectivity that he is able to play himself in Act II, scene iv, of *1 Henry IV*. In *As You Like It*, Rosalind is able to move in and out of her identity as Ganymed-

as-"Rosalind" fairly seamlessly; at certain moments, however, she seems caught by the identity that she has constructed for herself, and her grip on language seems to slip temporarily. It is these moments, in which Rosalind displays a brief loss of agency over language and identity construction and seems to be carried away by emotion, that are most striking in a play that constructs Rosalind as the wizard behind the curtain, skillfully manipulating the other characters and the situation with which she is confronted with her snake-like tongue, as Duke Frederick characterizes it. Why does Rosalind decide to pretend to be Ganymed and later a version of herself? If it is true, as C.L. Barber claims, to say that Rosalind "possesses an attribute of character the power of combining wholehearted feeling and undistorted judgment which gives the play its value,"[63] how exactly does she reconcile these two seemingly irredeemable opposites—the cognitive and the affective? And finally, how does Rosalind resolve the disjunction between her two selves—the Rosalind who has fallen in love with Orlando and desires a marriage, and the Ganymed-as-"Rosalind" who is trying to cure Orlando of the lunacy of love—or should we first ask whether she puts her fractured identity back together at all by the end of the play? These questions, and others, will be taken up in the remainder of this essay—although I cannot guarantee their full and satisfactory answers by the conclusion of my essay, and will leave it to the reader to continue reading and seeking.

In order to understand Rosalind, we must first reconsider our perceptions of Celia and Orlando as characters in relation to Rosalind. Audiences and scholars generally tend to overlook the reality that the play sets up Celia and Orlando, from the very beginning, as

[63] Barber 233. I like particularly his suggestion that this attribute of Rosalind is what gives the play its value; this, I think, is right on the mark.

matched with Rosalind in playful wit and masterful use of language, because we have been lulled into taking the popular view that Rosalind is the puppet master of the play who directs the movements and voices of the other characters. Cynthia Lewis gives voice this prevailing sentiment, characterizing Rosalind in the span of a single paragraph as "clearly the true, if hidden, choreographer [of the play]," claiming that Rosalind's "larger manipulations affect nearly all the characters…without their direct knowledge" and that she "overtly take[s] 'charge'…[with] her machinations."[64] I dispute this presupposition and argue that it is necessary to recover Celia and Orlando as characters on par, linguistically and emotionally, with Rosalind—at least as the play establishes the three in its first act. As the play progresses through Acts II, III, IV, and V, all three characters, at their own pace and precipitated by their interactions with one another, undergo significant transformation and maturation in their apprehension and formation of themselves in relation to others. It would be a mistake to set Rosalind on a higher pedestal than Celia and Orlando from the very outset of *As You Like It* to the end, for such a view obscures not only these two characters but also our understanding of Rosalind's motivations, desires, and transformations as an ideally Ovidian character.

The Love Triangle, or, Recovering Celia

The second scene of the play establishes the triangulation among Rosalind, Orlando, and Celia, revealing the ever-shifting dynamics among the three characters—emotional, social, political—and showing how rapidly and powerfully affective language can grip an individual and trigger a transformation. While the scene introduces Celia and Rosalind as

[64] Lewis, Cynthia. "Horns, the Dream-Work, and Female Potency in *As You Like It*." *South Atlantic Review*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Autumn 2001): 62.

equals, by the conclusion of the scene Rosalind is squarely established as the central character—the audience, like Orlando, is held spellbound by Rosalind and can hardly tear its eyes away from her for the rest of the play. Once the play gets underway, it is easy to forget that Celia is around. She hangs back in the wings of the stage that Rosalind and Orlando create for themselves in the wild woods and emerges to speak only after Orlando leaves. However, at the beginning of the play, Celia seems to have the upper hand over the other characters as the daughter of the reigning Duke. Celia speaks authoritatively to Touchstone, commanding that he "Speak no more of [her father], you'll be whipt for taxation one of these days" (I.ii.84-85), and also is the one who first calls for Orlando. The scene opens with Celia trying to cheer up Rosalind, who is distressed over the fact that Duke Frederick has banished her father, Duke Senior, from his kingdom. Celia makes a number of rhetorical moves in her attempt to lighten Rosalind's mood; when Rosalind says to her, "Unless you could teach me to forget a banish'd father, you must not learn me to how to remember any extraordinary pleasure" (I.ii.5-7), Celia counters, "I see thou lov'st me not with the full weight that I love thee" (I.ii.8-9), and launches into a hypothetical verbal game of ifs, possibilities, and reversals, by which Celia's father might have been banished by Duke Senior instead. Celia's metaphor of weights and balances gestures toward the ways in which relationships are continually reinvented and reinvested, particularly the relationship between her and Rosalind, which escapes simple description.

Indeed, it is difficult to pin down the tone of this scene; Celia might be played as either joking or serious, which would color her as playful and self-aware or otherwise entirely earnest and immature in her attempts to comfort Rosalind. At times Celia seems the loving, admiring, slightly naïve younger sister of Rosalind, in much the same vein as the relationship

between Sebastian and Antonio in *Twelfth Night*; while at other times, as in this first scene between the two women, Celia seems to act as the caring older sibling, trying to comfort her dear little sister. In fact, as the play progresses and Rosalind becomes love-aggrieved at certain moments, Celia becomes the more pragmatic, even borderline pessimistic, half of the pair when it comes to love. At one point Rosalind asks her to answer, with a single world, a torrent of ten questions about her brief encounter with Orlando. Celia laughs at Rosalind's preposterous suggestion:

> You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first; 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism. ... It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover. (*AYL*, III.ii.225-233)

Celia, as someone who has yet to experience the giddiness, pains, and pleasures of love, naturally takes a much more skeptical view of love, and so is able to look and comment upon Rosalind's infatuation in a disconnected, detached manner that helps Rosalind to re-ground her emotions whenever she begins to verge on being carried away by them.

In fact, Celia's inexperience with falling in love and her consequent dubiousness over the whole game of love and courtship makes her presence absolutely essential to Rosalind in the first half of the play, during Rosalind's period of emotional and linguistic development as a woman newly in love. It is their different levels of experience, or inexperience, with love that separates them for much of the play, highlighted in Act I, scene ii, when Rosalind suddenly decides to change the topic of their tête-à-tête from her father's banishment to the idea of falling in love. Celia's rapid rejoinder shifts the conversation away from love and toward verbal wordplay about Fortune and Nature, revealing the intriguing dichotomy

between Celia and Rosalind and their preoccupations. It is this moment, in which the topic of conversation quickly slips from one thing to another and another, that ultimately distinguishes the two, who are otherwise matched in rank, wit, and mutual adoration for one another. Indeed, Rosalind and Celia are set against one another as equals in their mastery of language; the witty repartee between the two women that fills the first half of the scene reveals that both are uncannily adept at manipulating language for comic and persuasive effect. Furthermore, throughout the first scene in which they appear, the two women are continually conflated and occasionally confused: Duke Frederick and LeBeau addresses them as the single entity "ladies" (I.ii.162) and "your ladyships" (I.ii.114), and when Orlando first speaks to the two, he confuses Rosalind for Celia and addresses Rosalind as the princess who has summoned him (I.ii.170). It will be important to trace out how the scene distinguishes the two cousins, to understand how, by the end of Act I, scene ii, Rosalind is set apart from Celia as the object of Orlando's affection, as well as the object of the theater audience's attention.

Worried that the young Orlando is an unsuited match for his brawny wrestling opponent, Duke Frederick commands Rosalind and Celia, "Speak to him, ladies, see if you can move him" (I.ii.161-162). Duke Frederick's request sets up, from the outset of the play, the power of language to persuade and move others as the central dynamic of human relationships. Rosalind and Celia both entreat Orlando to not participate in the wrestling match, but Orlando resists and requests their support instead. Rosalind and Celia verbalize their encouragement in equal amounts; when Rosalind says "Fare you well: pray heaven I be deceived in you," Celia follows it with "Your heart's desires be with you" (I.ii.197-199); when Rosalind shouts at the beginning of the match, "Now Hercules be thy speed, young

man," Celia expresses the wish, "I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg" (I.ii.210-212); Rosalind, during the match, exclaims, "O excellent young man!" which Celia replies,"If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who should down" (I.ii.213-215). At this point in the scene, the two women are no longer speaking to one another; the lively exchange of wits and rhetorical play that characterized their conversation at the beginning of the scene has given way to paralleled language of passion, wishes, and desire. Rosalind and Celia are no longer directly competing against one another with logic and wordplay, and instead are indirectly competing with affective language, and their sphere has widened past the bidirectional, sororal bonds to include the male figure.

Post-match, Celia once again takes the initiative to call upon Orlando, and is the first to speak to him, with warm, almost flirtatious words of thanks and congratulations. Rosalind, on her part, gives him the chain from her neck, effectively tying him to her through the gift. Orlando is tongue-tied at the bestowal of these words and gifts, and can only say in an aside, "My better parts / Are all thrown down" (I.ii.249)—but the audience remains unsure of the object of his love. Orlando does not yet know Rosalind's or Celia's names, and so we, too, are left uncertain of who it is that has captured his heart and tongue. Rosalind also seems to be unsure, and says "He calls *us* back" (I.ii.252, emphasis mine) instead of "He calls *me* back." When Orlando asks Le Beau to distinguish between the two women, the audience at first may think that Orlando has fallen in love with Celia, for he asks, "Which of the two was daughter of the duke / That here was at the wrestling" (I.ii.269-270)? The correct answer, of course, would be Celia; yet Le Beau, in a bit of misdirection, spends more time talking about Duke Frederick's niece than his daughter. The play's deliberate, extreme delay in revealing which cousin has "overthrown" Orlando not only achieves a comic effect,

but also reinforces the equality of the two characters. It is not until Orlando utters Rosalind's name in the final line of the scene—"heavenly Rosalind!" (I.ii.289)—that we are at last certain of whom Orlando and the play *As You Like It* will belong to—the daughter of the banished duke, rather than the daughter of the tyrant duke; Rosalind, and not Celia.

In short, the dynamic between the two dear cousins is more complicated than most scholars have judged it to be.[65] Most take for granted that Rosalind is the wiser, wittier protagonist, and subordinate Celia as the quieter, less dazzling sidekick. However, these close readings reveal that Rosalind and Celia are, at least at the beginning of the play, are set on equal grounds linguistically. I certainly do not mean to suggest that their use of language is the same, nor their motivations or characteristics. The quotes from Celia and Rosalind that I have pulled out from Act I, scene ii, reveal that Celia is more invested in fanciful imaginings of potential self-transformations through speech, even in moments in which she is ostensibly comforting Rosalind or encouraging Orlando. Rosalind, for her part, seems to grow increasingly attached to Orlando, as her speech moves from polite well-wishings to hyperbolic speech and finally to emotional, affective language in her outburst "O excellent young man!"[1] That is, while Celia remains invested in her own self, Rosalind tends to give herself over to empathy in her interpersonal relationships. Their contrast is succinctly

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[65] In fact, a search on the MLA International Bibliography came back with only three articles that specifically investigate the relationship between Rosalind and Celia, none more than 16 pages long, and the most recent one published in 1993: Fiona Shaw's "Celia and Rosalind in *As You Like It*" (*Players of Shakespeare, II: Further Essays in Shakespearean Performance by Players with the Royal Shakespeare Company*, 1988: pp. 55-71), Gilchrist Keel's "'Like Juno's Swans': Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It*" (Conference of College Teachers of English Studies, 1991: 5-11), and Sophie Thompson's "Rosalind (and Celia) in *As You Like It*" (*Players of Shakespeare 3: Further Essays in Shakespearian Performance by Players with the Royal Shakespeare Company*, 1993: 77-86).

exemplified in the moment when Duke Frederick dismisses Orlando after he reveals his father to be Sir Rowland de Boys: Celia can only wonder, "Were I my father, coz, would I do this?" (I.ii.231) while Rosalind declares that "My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul…Had I before known this young man his son, / I should have given him tears unto entreaties, / Ere he should thus have ventured" (I.ii.235-239).

Far from arguing that Rosalind and Celia are the same, I mean to point out, in a more nuanced suggestion, the homogenous ways that Rosalind and Celia are perceived by the characters around them, and the equal way that their banter operates—by balanced give and take—when we are first introduced to them. The play initially positions Rosalind and Celia as equally matched rather than in the hierarchy that audiences automatically assume—after all, as William Kerrigan writes, a true wit requires a witty companion[66]—and it would be a mistake to forget this early dynamic if we are to begin investigating the complex motivations behind Rosalind's decision to take on a male disguise at the end of Act I, scene iii. The bond between Rosalind and Celia demands further, deeper investigation in a future essay, but it is worth mentioning here, however cursorily, in order to call attention to the fact that when Rosalind, Orlando, and Celia first encounter one another, the directionalities of desire might very well have arced differently, and Orlando might have fallen for the other daughter instead—and on a certain level, Rosalind seems aware of this possibility.

Orlando: The Romeo of As You Like It

After the second meeting between Rosalind and Orlando at the conclusion of Act I, scene ii, it is clear that Rosalind and Orlando are infatuated with one another. However,

[66] Kerrigan 186.

Orlando is entirely tongue-tied in her presence, and can only despair to himself, "Can I not say, I thank you" (I.ii.249)? Rosalind seems amused, or perhaps impatient, at his inability to speak. Waiting for an answer from him but receiving none, she takes the bold step to make clear to him that she reciprocates his feelings: "Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown / More than your enemies" (I.ii.253-254). Still, he says nothing in return, and so the two cousins leave. Orlando, in Rosalind's wake, despairs over his inability to speak, and asks himself, "What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?" (I.ii.257-258). His sudden onset of love initially overwhelms his capacity for language and develops into clichéd love-struck speech and behavior thereafter. He calls Rosalind "heavenly" (I.ii.289), pins verses on the trees to declare that "From the east to western Inde, / No jewel is like Rosalind" (III.ii.88-89), and compares her to famed women of history and mythology:

> Nature presently distill'd
>
> Helen's cheek, but not her heart,
>
> Cleopatra's majesty,
>
> Atalanta's better part
>
> Sad Lucretia's modesty. (*AYL*, III.ii.145-148)

Indeed, his heady, shallow infatuation with Rosalind is strongly reminiscent of a different character's love for another Rosalind in the Shakespearean canon: Rosaline, who was Romeo's love before Juliet.

Shakespeare completed his first romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* around 1595, at least four years before writing *As You Like It*, which scholars date around 1599.[67] When we first hear about the young Montague in Act I, scene I of *Romeo and Juliet*, we only know that

[67] Based on the Chronology and Sources listed in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, second ed.

he is in a melancholic mood. Shortly thereafter, Romeo himself wanders onto the stage sighing and despairing of an unrequited love. Yet rather than tell his friends about his mystery lady, Romeo delivers not one but two speeches about love itself, the first about love's confounding contradictions (I.i.171-183), and the second about love's maddening effects on his physical and emotional being (I.i.185-194). Benvolio twice asks Romeo who it is that he loves (I.i.199, I.i.201), but Romeo does not answer, and says merely "I do love a woman" (I.i.204) before dissolving into poetry:

> she'll not be hit
>
> With Cupid's arrow, she hath Dian's wit …
>
> She will not stay the siege of loving terms …
>
> Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold. (*R&J*, I.i.207-214)

Romeo, like Orlando in *As You Like It*, relies principally on hyperbole and allusions to characters from Roman mythology in order to describe the woman he loves—the final line alluding, of course, to the myth of Danaë and Jove.[68] As this passage reveals, the woman that Romeo loves has vowed to forswear love, and so Romeo's silly pursuit is doomed from the start. Yet when Benvolio suggests that Romeo forget about this unattainable woman, Romeo declares:

> He that is strooken blind cannot forget
>
> The precious treasure of his eyesight lost …

[68] Mercutio also draws upon characters from mythology to compare to Rosaline, but exaggerates Rosaline's beauty to the point at which the beauty of these legendary women is eclipsed: while Cleopatra in *As You Like It* is majestic, here she is a gipsy; while Helen in *As You Like It* is described as beautiful right down to her soft cheek, here she is a hilding and harlot (*AYL*, III.ii.146-147; and *R&J*, II.iv.41-42). Mercutio's speech reveals the ridiculousness of the way that Romeo, and Orlando, use this particular linguistic trope to describe the women they are infatuated with.

Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget. (*R&J*, I.i.235-237)

Benvolio insists that he will, and the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* thus concludes. But wait—Romeo still has not revealed the name of his love. In fact, we do not learn her name until the next scene of the play, and even then it is embedded in a long list of other names: "…Mercutio and his brother Valentine; mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daughters; my fair niece Rosaline, [and] Livia; Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt…" (I.i.67-70). Benvolio, perhaps taking his cue from a change in Romeo's tone when he reads aloud Capulet's guest list, slyly says, "At this same ancient feast of Capulet's / Sups the fair *Rosaline* whom thou so loves" (I.i.82-83, emphasis mine). It is only now, after this comical delay, that the audience at last knows who it is that Romeo loves, the woman who commands a devout dedication from him comparable to religious belief[69] and whose beauty "the all-seeing sun / Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun" (I.i.92-93)—at least according to Romeo.

These strong echoes of Rosaline in Rosalind in *As You Like It* can hardly be accidental on Shakespeare's part. In suggesting this Rosaline from *Romeo and Juliet* as an ur-*As You Like It* Rosalind, I point to two details of note in Romeo's language and behavior, in order to draw out the parallels and distinctions between Romeo and Orlando and the language that the two characters use to express their love for their respective Rosalind/es. First, Romeo adheres strictly to the poetic form of iambic pentameter rhymed couplets to evoke his affections for Rosaline. Second, he swears that he should never deviate from this love nor forget her, yet promptly forgets about Rosaline upon seeing Juliet at the masked ball. Now it is Juliet who "seems she hangs upon the cheek of night / As a rich *jewel* in an

[69] Romeo cries, "When the devout religion of mine eye / Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires; / And these, who, often drown'd, could never die, / Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!" (I.i.88-91)

Ethiop's ear" (I.v.45-46, emphasis mine, recalling Orlando's description of Rosalind as a jewel in *AYL*, III.ii.88-89), while Rosaline has been completely erased from his mind:

> Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
>
> For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. (*R&J*, I.v.52-53)

His love is thus been shown to be rudderless, swinging from one target to the other in a moment and without a backward glance. His shift is so sudden that Mercutio dies believing that Romeo is still in love with Rosaline, unaware that a new girl has captured his friend's attentions. In fact, I suspect that if the audience hadn't been privy to the private conversations and encounters that Romeo and Juliet share, we would also be clueless of his new love. After all, very little in Romeo's speech or language changes when his affection does; he continues to speak in lyrical effusion, in iambic pentameter meter and rhymed couplets laden with lavish imagery and hyperbolic language. In short, he speaks in clichés. Juliet herself comments on his reliance on socially constructed language and behavior, saying to him, "You kiss by th' book" (I.v.110) at their very first meeting—and throughout their courtship, Romeo rarely deviates from the book.

Despite his own predilection for excessive language in describing his love for Rosalind, Orlando shows himself as fully capable of using language imaginatively and persuasively as is Rosalind. However, he retains his facility with language only when he is in familiar and comfortable situations. In fact, it can be suggested that whenever Orlando stumbles into unfamiliar territory, his language and demeanor changes for the worse, betraying his uncertainty, apprehension, and fear. It is as though when faced with the unknown, Orlando subconsciously decides to assume, temporarily, the identity of someone else—a stereotype, a stock character, an idea—in order to protect himself, until he has had a

chance to assess his surroundings and adjust himself in response. His language reflects this change, and his characteristically elegant phrasings denature into stiff and unconvincing clichés. This striking contrast is vividly illustrated in Act II, scene vii, when Orlando happens upon Duke Senior and his party in the woods after he and Adam have fled into the "uncouth forest" (II.vi.6) to escape from Orlando's murderous brother. Nerves no doubt frayed, the normally ever-polite Orlando gives way to a new, aggressive creature who waves around his sword at the table and demands that the dinner guests give him their food. The artificiality of this role is not lost on Jaques, who responds to Orlando's empty threats of violence with his usual sardonic wit; nor Duke Senior, who serenely delivers the aphorism, "Your gentleness shall force, / More than your force move us to gentleness" (II.vii.102-103). Realizing that he has come upon a familiar scene of civilization rather than the savagery he first anticipated, Orlando, whose affected bravado already began to crack only three lines into his speech, dissolves completely, and he says rather piteously, "I almost die for food, and let me have it" (II.vii.104). His following speech indicates a restored Orlando, the Orlando whose language can be stirring, persuasive, and imaginative. He asks that the dinner party guests remember times that they "look'd on better days," were "where bells have knoll'd to church," "sate at any good man's feast," and "from [their] eyelids wip'd a tear" (II.vii.113-116). Duke Senior echoes Orlando's language in his response—no better indication of a true listener—and invites him to join the table. Later, in Act III, scene ii, Orlando spars playfully with Jaques when Jaques asks him to stop marring the trees with Rosalind's name. Monsieur Melancholy (as Orlando good-naturedly dubs Jaques during their conversation), evidently impressed, describes Orlando as "full of pretty answers" (III.ii.270) and "a nimble wit: I think 'twas made of Atalanta's heels" (III.ii.275-276). Indeed, Orlando's wit here, as later

seen when he first encounters Rosalind as Ganymed, is more reminiscent of Mercutio's deft and often merry wordplay[70] than Romeo's ever-overwrought and heavy-handed couplets.

Yet when it comes to expressing his love for Rosalind, Orlando's language is uncharacteristically torturous and clichéd to the point of sheer meaninglessness. Head-over-heels in love, Orlando once again finds himself in strange territory—though this time it is an emotional unfamiliarity, rather than a physical location. Unable to find the appropriate language to match his emotions, Orlando resorts to drawing upon the language that has come before him, from love poetry to classical mythology, rather than try to forge new expression. "Neither rhyme nor reason can express" and capture the magnitude of Orlando's love for Rosalind (III.ii.398-399), while the rhymes that he attempts are clumsy, to put it kindly. As a particularly egregious example, one love poem that he tacks up to a tree ends with the lines "Heaven would that she these gifts should have / And I to live and die her slave" (III.ii.153-154). It is the very stuff of comedy—Touchstone has a bit of fun at Orlando's expense with parodying the anonymous poet's affected verse (III.ii.101-112), Rosalind and Celia join in the teasing with a few choice words about his "tedious homily of love" (III.ii.155) and confused meter (III.ii.164-171), and this particular reader can't help but laugh at how ludicrous some of his turns of phrases are. But his inability to use language is also, for Rosalind, legitimate cause for worry and dismay. As Friar Laurence warns Romeo,

[70] Mercutio is usually remembered by his dying moment in Act III, scene i, simply because it is the turning point in *Romeo and Juliet* from comedy to tragedy. However, his true moment in the spotlight as a character rather than a plot device occurs in Act I, scene iv, a scene that showcases Mercutio as one of Shakespeare's most silver-tongued characters, able to shift in an instant from playful, amusing speech to breathtaking turns of phrase form. The scene contains not only his delightfully imaginative Queen Mab monologue that shows off his power of extemporaneous speech (and that Romeo cuts off irritably, saying "Thou talk'st of nothing") but also his goosebumps-worthy musing on dreams (*R&J*, I.iv.97-103).

"Women may fall, when there's no strength in men" (*R&J*, II.iii.80). Textbook kisses and poetry are nothing unique; Romeo's intense passions could have been directed toward anyone, and his effusive speech could have applied to anyone—his rapid change of heart from Rosaline to Juliet strongly indicates this. With all the parallels between Romeo and Orlando, it isn't unimaginable that Orlando might behave the same way. From the outset of the relationship among these three characters, it seems entirely possible that Orlando might have fallen for Celia rather than Rosalind; and on some level, Rosalind seems to recall the quick emotional disposal that befell this prior Rosaline, and thus feels compelled to take care to prevent a similar outcome with Orlando.

The stage has thus been set for a scene of instruction. Rosalind must work to transform Orlando's love for her from that of an impetuous youth—exemplified by Romeo—to a love that is mature, deeper, and more genuine; or else risk losing Orlando to the next woman who catches her eye, and suffer the same loss that the ur-Rosalind did, the Rosaline who is obliterated from Romeo's memory the moment that Romeo sees Juliet across a crowded room. Friar Laurence, again, is the person to turn to for an articulation of this tendency in young, immature men:

> Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!
> Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
> So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies
> Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes. (*R&J*, II.iii.65-68)

Thankfully, Orlando has already demonstrated himself to be capable of listening and learning. Although it was fairly easy for Duke Senior to stir Orlando out of his aggressive persona with a few pithy words of wisdom. Rosalind has a much bigger project ahead of

her—she calls it giving "good counsel" to remove "the quotidian of love" (III.ii.364-365)—to change Orlando's language of love by curing it from its imprecision, its tendency to exaggerate, and its appetite for euphuistic romantic clichés and mythological allusions. By challenging Orlando's affected language through play-acting, Rosalind challenges the mask that he has adopted of the tongue-tied, love-struck, aggrieved lover, and encourages him to marry his divided selves: the Orlando whom she loves, and the Orlando who loves her. The notion of a divided self in love is a central theme in *Romeo and Juliet*; the affective power of an attachment to another person leads Romeo to express the feeling that he has lost his identity in a way. When Benvolio addresses him, Romeo says, "Tut, I have lost myself; I am not here; / This is not Romeo; he's some other where" (I.i.197-198). It is a division that Rosalind herself experiences, and must also work through in the course of *As You Like It*. A fuller consideration of Rosalind's and Orlando's divided selves, and how they come (or perhaps fail to come) to a reunion of these two identities, will form the bulk of Chapter 4.

Love At First Sight: Rosalind and Orlando

I have already argued that we must see Celia and Rosalind on equal planes to recognize the ways in which the two women support and enlighten one another in matters of love, as well as to propose reasons for Rosalind's preoccupation with the fidelity and constancy of Orlando's love for her and vice versa. Similarly, it is absolutely necessary to resuscitate Orlando as Rosalind's equal in order to understand that Rosalind's love for him is rooted more deeply than facile love-at-first-sight, to understand why she invests so much in maintaining her male persona in order to enact these scenes of playacting and instruction, and to demonstrate why the two are ideally suited for one another for genuine and lasting

reasons. By recovering Orlando as a character on par with Rosalind, I present Orlando's verbal acuity as what initially attracts Rosalind to him in Act I, scene ii of *As You Like It*, and argue that her memory of Orlando as he appears in their first interaction—headstrong, courageous, persuasive, passionate, and witty in speech, just as she is—is what drives her to initiate these scenes of instruction with the overly affected, love-afflicted Orlando. His own brother Oliver, his supposed enemy, characterizes Orlando as

> gentle, never school'd and yet learned, full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly belov'd, and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him. (*AYL*, I.i.166-170)

Orlando is the first character to speak, and his extended monologue that opens the play displays his skillful use of moving, metaphorical language. The fact that Shakespeare grants Orlando ample time and space upon the stage to proclaim his emotions without interjection and before anyone else has had the opportunity to speak—his taciturn interlocutor is Adam, the family servant—marks Orlando as someone whose use of language is his defining characteristic and sets him apart from the other characters of the play. In his speech, Orlando vividly and memorably lays out his frustrations with his older brother, Oliver, who has denied him the education that someone of his class deserves, and has subjected him to maltreatment worse than that he gives to his oxen and horses (I.i.10). At the end of his speech he steadfastly declares, "The spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude: I will no longer endure it" (I.i.24), but then undercuts the power of this claim by admitting his failure to act, saying, "yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it" (I.i.25). The last sentence of his speech highlights a tension between speech and

act; it seems clear, from this statement, that Orlando primarily uses language, perhaps in lieu of action, to assert and give external expression to his emotions and desires.

The conversation between Orlando and Oliver that follows Oliver's entrance onto the stage builds upon this characterization of Orlando's use of language. He has shown himself able to deliver a moving speech with affective and imaginative language; the dialogue between the two warring brothers in the first scene of the play showcases Orlando's power of witty, forceful, and assertive rhetoric—and in the orchard of Oliver's house, no less—but also shows how quickly intense emotions can break down his control over his own language and actions. Hierarchically speaking, as the younger brother living on his older brother's turf, Orlando ought to be more timid and less aggressive in the way that he speaks to Oliver. Certainly he is already on unstable ground with his brother, who reacts with displeasure when he finds Orlando in his orchard, and who later in the scene convinces Duke Frederick's wrestler, Charles, to kill Orlando, by claiming that Orlando—whom he calls stubborn, full of ambition, and villainous—plans to kill Charles first through devious and underhanded means. Oliver's manner of speech, in this scene, reveals him to be duplicitous as well as authoritative, even imperious. Much of his side of the dialogue consists of questions in the vein of "Why are you here?" and "Who do you think you are?" or direct commands, yet Orlando is bold enough to challenge his brother. Each command and pointed question that Oliver throws out is quickly countered or turned on its head by Orlando, who consistently deflects questions away from Oliver's original intent and repositions the topic of conversation to what he perceives to be Oliver's unjust treatment of him. When Oliver, evidently displeased to see Orlando in his orchard, asks "What make you here?" Orlando responds brusquely, "Nothing. I am not taught to make anything" (I.i.29-

30), bringing to light the formal education that Oliver has denied him. When Oliver attempts to jokingly reformulate his original question by asking "What mar you then, sir?" Orlando responds that he is marring himself "with idleness" (I.i.31-34), once again reminding Oliver of the languishing, almost animalistic state that Oliver has forced upon him. However, when Oliver dismisses him, Orlando's blood begins to boil too hot and he loses control, lashing out linguistically and physically against his brother. He seizes his brother; Oliver, in surprise and anger, calls him a villain, which only fuels Orlando's fire. He refuses to let go of Oliver's throat until he agrees to give him either the gentleman's education that he deserves or his rightful inheritance. Oliver begrudgingly acquiesces to give him a portion of the money, and Orlando storms off, Adam following behind.

Orlando's dialogue with Oliver in Act I, scene i, serves as an apt point of comparison to the dialogue that occurs between Rosalind and Duke Frederick in Act I, scene iii. In both scenes, the protagonists struggle against an older figure that wishes to see them gone, and attempt to use their powers of wit and linguistic persuasion to convince these authority figures to be more reasonable and try to look at the situation from another perspective. Neither Rosalind nor Orlando succeeds—Oliver resolves to have Orlando killed, and Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind from the kingdom—despite their characteristic verbal acumen. Their biggest obstacle is that their approach relies upon rousing empathy through affective speech as their primary method of persuasion. Oliver and Duke Frederick simply cannot be moved by rhetoric, for they harbor a deep-seated distrust of who Rosalind and Oliver are, premised on the idea of inheritance. Duke Frederick makes his discrimination against Rosalind and her linguistic ability clear when he banishes her from his court, declaring that she is a traitor. Rosalind appropriately asks him what makes him believe that she is a traitor,

to which he responds plainly, "Thou art thy father's daughter, there's enough" (I.iii.58). Rosalind argues against this logic:

> So was I when your Highness took his dukedom,
>
> So was I when your Highness banish'd him.
>
> Treason is not inherited, my lord,
>
> Or if we did derive it from our friends,
>
> What's that to me? my father was no traitor. (*AYL*, I.iii.59-63)

Even when Rosalind uses logic to try to persuade Duke Frederick to change his mind but must tread on careful ground to avoid seeming disrespectful—deferentially calling him "your Highness" and "my lord" three times in the span of three lines—she still manages to work in a highly suggestive zinger that borders on treason. Under the pretense of asking him what circumstances have changed between when her father left and the present moment, Rosalind archly insinuates through deliberate diction that it is, in fact, Duke Frederick who is the traitor, the man who committed treason by dethroning the rightful duke and banishing Duke Senior from his own dukedom. This linguistic supersession echoes a similar move that Orlando makes in Act I, scene i, when Oliver calls him a villain and he responds that "he [Oliver] is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villains" (I.i.57-59). There are similar points of analogy with the way that Duke Frederick characterizes Rosalind, as someone whose

> smoothness,
>
> Her very silence, and her patience
>
> Speak to the people, and they pity her. (*AYL*, I.iii.78-80)

The claims and the words contained in these lines are strongly reminiscent of Oliver's description of Orlando; both passages allude to Orlando's and Rosalind's popularity with the general populace, and affirm their superlative use of language.

By the time that Act I ends, then, Orlando and Rosalind have been established as equally matched not only in circumstance—both are forced to leave homes that have been taken over by hostile autocratic relatives, and are accompanied into the forest by dear and loyal companions—but also in language and even, to an extent, in personality. Both are passionate and independent, intelligent and sharp-witted, and are uncommonly forceful and effective in persuasion. When these two similar individuals encounter each other for the first time in Act I, scene ii, it is unsurprising that they fall for one another so quickly and so deeply, and suffer from intense affect. Laurie Shannon defines affect as "to be made or fashioned toward or in respect of an other";[71] this definition, I think, is exactly right as a description of how Orlando and Rosalind are altered by one another once they fall in love. He is the only person who has been able to resist her persuasion with words of his own. When Rosalind and Celia try to convince him not to wrestle Charles, and Rosalind declares resolutely that it shall be her suit to the Duke to cancel the match, Orlando successfully counter-persuades them to cease their efforts by eloquently appealing to their hearts with a stirring, affective little speech of courage, gentlemanliness, and nihilism:

> I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts, wherein I confess me much guilty to deny so fair and excellent ladies any thing. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial ... I have none to lament me;

[71] Shannon, Laurie. "Likenings: Rhetorical Husbandries and Portia's "True Conceit" Of Friendship." *Renaissance Drama* 31 (2002): 4.

> the world no injury, for in it I have nothing. Only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty. (*AYL*, III.ii.183-193)

Rosalind, clearly moved by Orlando's silver tongue, abandons her original goal and declares, "The little strength that I have, I would it were with you. ... Fare you well; pray heaven I be deceiv'd in you!" (III.ii.194-198) The fact that Orlando is able to redirect her feelings and intents so rapidly immediately sets him apart from everyone else. Rosalind cannot help but be impressed by Orlando's force of language, courage, and act—the qualities that define her, and that she doubtless values most in herself. In fact, Orlando is the only character, in the entire play, who is able to successfully challenge her persuasive voice with a counter-persuasive voice and bring her to a view completely opposite from her original intent. Celia is able to temper Rosalind's language at moments, but she never succeeds in convincing Rosalind out of a decision once she's made up her mind. Meanwhile, Duke Frederick resists her powers of persuasion in Act I, scene iii, when she tries, unsuccessfully, to convince him that she is not a traitor, and ought to be allowed to keep her home in his kingdom. However, he does not counter-persuade Rosalind into believing that she is a traitor, the way that Orlando counter-persuades her into believing that he has the strength to hold his own against Charles. It is not that Rosalind is unpersuasive or ineffective in her speech, but rather that Duke Frederick simply refuses to listen to her, much the way that the Maenads, in their frenzy and bedlam, drowned out Orpheus' song and refused to listen to his voice. Thus, Orlando is the only character in *As You Like It* who truly matches Rosalind in rhetorical wit, passion, and persuasion—little wonder, then, that the two fall in love so rapidly and so intensely.

But while Rosalind is largely able to retain control over her language and identity—brilliantly showcased by her playacting as another person entirely, which requires the utmost control—Orlando is weaker in sustaining control. This is the main difference between the two lovers: although both experience emotions intensely, Rosalind is more able to exercise control over the outward expressions of her internal emotional changes than Orlando, who allows himself to be carried away by anger or the experience of falling in love, and whose power and control over language deteriorates as a result. Thus, when Orlando suddenly regresses into a tongue-tied, "love-shak'd" (III.ii.367) adolescent in their subsequent interactions, it is a huge blow to Rosalind, and she must seek to bring back to her side the fiery, passionate Orlando that she first fell in love with by curing him of his highly affected, euphuistic language. My claim certainly does not carry the implication that Rosalind never allows herself moments of hyperbolic and excessive speech in describing her love for Orlando; in fact, moments in which Rosalind's control over her emotions seem to slip are most intriguing to analyze. Rather, even when she declares her love to be as bottomless as the Bay of Portugal (IV.i.208), or that Orlando's kissing is as holy as the Eucharist (III.iv.13-14), these bits of purple prose occur only when she is with Celia, and never in front of Orlando. As C.L. Barber describes it, Rosalind "remains always aware of love's illusions while she herself is swept along by its deepest currents."[72] When Rosalind interacts face-to-face with Orlando, she remains cool-headed and rational, the steadfast instructor that never allows his student to be unrestrained, imprecise, and indulgent in his own construction of language.

[72] Barber 233.

At this point, I bring the conversation back to Rosalind, after having spent some time considering Celia and Orlando within the thematic scope of desire and change. Pausing to recover Celia and Orlando as characters who ought to be considered as equals to Rosalind in wit, to compare Orlando to Romeo, and to draw an intertextual link between Rosaline of *Romeo and Juliet* and Rosalind of *As You Like It*, however, are hardly irrelevant asides or unnecessary tangents. An closer examination of Celia and Orlando, and the bonds they have forged with Rosalind, helps us to understand Rosalind as the epitome of the Ovidian character in Shakespeare. To recapitulate, the ideally Ovidian character is one who is able to assert and forge one's identity through the masterful use of language, and also use language as a powerful tool of persuasion to influence the emotions, actions, and decisions of others. Rosalind realizes, perhaps more than any other character in Shakespeare, that true emotion will always elude precise verbal description; as Enterline asserts, language is necessary, but forever inadequate to its task.[73] It is not that she doesn't announce or verbalize her emotions, or tamps them down, because she certainly does have moments of spontaneous, thrilling, ardent speech; but we also sense, even in those moments, that she never gives herself completely over to her emotions, and always maintains control. Rosalind's skillful use of language does not constrain, overstate, or betray her inner feelings, and thus her love speeches ring more genuinely than other characters' do, including Orlando's clumsy, overblown, self-indulgent efforts to declare his affections for Rosalind. Emotion and reason needn't be on opposite sides of the human coin, but perhaps should be conceived of as two sides of the same unstable scale, forever in flux and tipping to one side or the other at any given moment, and never quite settled.

[73] Enterline 5.

Rosalind epitomizes the ideally Ovidian character, as I earlier defined it, as someone who is able to maintain a balance between emotion and reason with minute adjustments here and there, and able to indulge in one side without shortchanging or destroying the integrity and value of the other, someone who manages to be simultaneously in control of and swept up by their emotions, and who becomes a model for those around her to do the same. Rosalind, as the character who is best able to use language as a powerful and highly agentative tool of identity constitution and persuasion, is therefore best equipped, of all of the characters of *As You Like It*—perhaps of all of Shakespeare's heroines—to wield control over her self-constitution and self-transformation, even when she, too, becomes seized by desire, and to help others to do the same. In the second half of my essay, I will take a closer look at how she uses language, the device of playacting, and the characters of Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind," as tools of self- and social-transformation in a way that is unparalleled by any other Shakespearean character. Powerfully imaginative and benevolent, Rosalind's mode of playacting seeks to lift herself, as well as those around her, above given, superficial notions of gender, identity, and infatuation, to forge anew the social, interpersonal bonds of love, family, and friendship.

CHAPTER 3

Becoming Ganymed: Playacting in *As You Like It*

> *Rosalind*. [*Aside to Celia.*] I will speak to him like a
> saucy lackey, and under that habit play the knave
> with him.
>
> —*As You Like It*, Act III, scene ii

Playacting and the Imagination

The final act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens with a dialogue between Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and his fiancée Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, about narrative-making and the human capacity for imagination. From the beginning of the play, Theseus and Hippolyta have been set in contrast with one another with regard to their beliefs about dreams versus reality, physical existence versus imagination. Their conceptions of time illustrate their essential differences; while Theseus expresses impatience that their marriage is still four days away and laments that the moon wanes too slowly (I.i.3-4), Hippolyta says that "Four nights will quickly *dream* away the time" (I.i.8, emphasis mine). In a play centrally concerned with the magic of playacting and dreaming, in a play that is populated by human and non-human characters who sometimes wake from sleep to find themselves not-themselves after the lightest sprinkle of fairy juice (II.i.168-172), Theseus is the odd man out with his prosaic, stubborn commitment to reality and his disregard, even disdain, for storytelling and the imagination.

When the four lovers return from the forest, having spent the past two acts of the play under the flummoxing effects of Puck's love-in-idleness flower, they tell the adults of the play—Egeus, Hippolyta, and Theseus—about what has happened to them in the supernatural woods of Athens. While Hippolyta is more willing to believe in the possibilities that their tales might have some truth in them, Theseus declares he will never believe in these "antique fables" or "fairy toys" (V.i.4), and launches into an extended diatribe against such imaginative storytelling, which he calls the practice of lunatics, lovers, and poets:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> ...
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name. (*MND*, V.i.5-18)

Theseus, like Rosalind in *As You Like It*, aligns love with madness on the determination that both have a weakness for generating wildly imaginative fantasies. However, Rosalind certainly believes in the possibility of extricating reckless madness from love—it is the project she undertakes with Orlando and herself. Theseus is also much less generous in his view of poets and their imaginative use of language than Hippolyta and Rosalind are. In fact, as a masterful spinner of words herself, Rosalind is not only more generous than Theseus toward the creative work of poets but is also herself principally reliant upon language's

affective abilities to persuade and imaginative capacities to create worlds other than the one in which she lives.

Hippolyta, in her characteristically resistant and contrary way, counters her fiancé's rant with a more tempered, thoughtful, and admiring reading of the fantastical narrative that the lovers have told. Her speech compactly and cogently highlights the themes and many of the terms of engagement that will be in circulation in this section of my essay:

> But all the *story* of the night told over,
>
> And all their minds *transfigured* so together,
>
> More witnesseth than *fancy's* images
>
> And grows to something of great *constancy*;
>
> But, howsoever, *strange* and *admirable*. (*MND*, V.i.23-27, emphases mine)

Hippolyta recognizes something unified and coherent about the imaginative tales that each of the lovers tell, and senses the power of the imagination to create worlds that are "strange" to ours, yet more "admirable" than the ones that we live in. The power of storytelling through narrativizing or playacting, then, allows us not only to look at the world in which we live, but also to freely—that is, "fancifully"—conceive of a different world of existence that is compellingly believable and tantalizingly possible. It is a power that Ovid refuses his characters, but that Shakespeare generously gives to his.

I argue, in this chapter, that Rosalind exploits the imaginative power of playacting in a way that goes far beyond other characters in Shakespeare who consciously take on disguises and roles. Plenty of Shakespearean characters disguise themselves as someone else; Rosalind and Prince Hal in *1 Henry IV* are the only two Shakespearean characters who consciously play a version of themselves. Additionally, Rosalind's disguise eludes simple

explanation: first of all, she does not simply play a role, she plays a role while playing a role, a dazzling layered piece of metadrama that does not appear anywhere else in the canon; and secondly, while other characters take on disguises for clearly justifiable reasons, Rosalind's motivations for playing Ganymed are difficult to pin down. Just as the lovers are unable to plainly explain the self-transformations of desire that have afflicted them in the forest, Rosalind never sufficiently verbalizes her reasons for maintaining her transformation as Ganymed, and in fact would seem to have no real reason for doing so. Furthermore, Rosalind displays a superior mastery of identity formation by maintaining her disguise for longer than nearly any other Shakespearean characters. She plays Ganymed for nearly the entirety of *As You Like It*, a record that is perhaps matched only by Viola-as-Cesario in *Twelfth Night*. Finally, Rosalind's manner of playacting is open, beneficial, and benevolent to those around her who are interpolated into her theater of playacting, in a way that is opposite the self-serving and frequently uncharitable modus operandi that characterizes almost all other instances of disguise that occur in Shakespeare.

Yet even as Rosalind succeeds in taking the device of disguise to more sophisticated, benevolent, and fruitful heights, she encounters very real problems when it comes time to "remove" her disguise as Ganymed. I have suggested the superiority of Rosalind's form of playacting as a method of identity-constitution and –transformation that goes beyond the mere form of "disguise" that characterizes other Shakespearean identity alterations. However, by investing so intensely in her imaginative role on the educational stage, Rosalind also ends up fracturing her own self into three selves—Rosalind, Ganymed, and "Rosalind"—and her life into three worlds—the world in which she is Rosalind, in love with Orlando, the world in which she is Ganymed, trying to cure Orlando of his love with

Rosalind, and the world in which she is "Rosalind," being wooed and courted by Orlando. Faced with this crisis of identity, Rosalind must undergo a process of reconceptualization of her own self in the wake of her playacting as Ganymed. This type of self-aware transformation and restoration resounds throughout Shakespeare; it occurs whenever a character pretends to be someone else, when a character disguises his or her identity, when a character is mistaken for someone else, and when those characters dispense with these charades and illusions and restore stability of identity. Garrett Sullivan draws from Linda Charnes' discussion of notorious identities to argue something similar:

> For Charnes, dramatic subjectivity means "the subject's experience of his or her relationship to his or her 'identity' … in the Renaissance, drama is the dominant mode in which the provisional, performative, and contingent nature of subjectivity can literally be embodied.' That is, it is in the theatre that the relationship between identity and subjectivity is staged.[74]

I like particularly Sullivan's use of the word "staged" to describe the theatrical transformations that occur in Shakespeare. In this essay, I argue that characters in Shakespeare never undergo actual, which is to say permanent, transformation in taking on a disguise, putting on a costume, or acting. That is, one identity does not subsume or erase the other in the moment of theatrical transformation; there is no incidence of actual forgetting.

My comments on forgetting may appear to run counter to Sullivan's main thesis, in which he uses self-forgetting as a way of taking upon another social identity, and says explicitly that "forgetting is the vehicle by which experiments in the conceptualization of the

[74] Sullivan, Garrett. *Memory and Forgetting in English Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2005): 12.

self are undertaken."[75] Indeed, his argument is predicated upon the actualization of forgetting by these characters, and the crisis of identity that results from succumbing to self-forgetting. However, Sullivan clarifies memory and forgetting as social, not purely cerebral processes, "terms through which the subject is located in relation to various social institutions and practices."[76] It is on this point that Sullivan and I find resolution. For both of us, it is not that forgetting entails that these characters actually forget their own selves, but rather that their identities and the social order bend and crack, revealing that the dominance of these constructions are exactly that—provisional constructions and contingent performativities—and thus can be suspended, at least temporarily, to allow room for the construction of alternative modes of identity and personas. I suggest that in almost all Shakespearean transformations of identity, both personas—the "original" and the "other"—continue to exist for the duration of the transformation and, what's more, both try to assert themselves on the same plane of being, until one persona is no longer needed, and is at last discarded for the other. It may be that these characters are temporarily taken outside of themselves—particularly in moments of intense erotic desire—but Sullivan and I agree that these moments are not a wholesale replacement of identity, but rather a fracturing of it. I am persuaded by this reading in light of the evidence presented by moments of slippage that occur in the plays, in which the cracks between two identities of a transformed character are fleetingly exposed—ripe for comedic exploitation as well as critical analysis.

Even in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when magic interferes with the lives and desires of the lovers and Titania and the affected characters seem to temporarily forget who they are, blinded by the artificial drive to pursue these new impulses, it is not a permanent

[75] Sullivan 21.
[76] Sullivan 21.

forgetting. By Act IV, order has been restored by the fairies, and the lovers are at last paired off correctly. However, the lovers have not forgotten the transformations that they have experienced in the forest of Athens, and articulate this sensation of double-ness in the wake of their transformations and returns:

Demetrius. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.
Hermia. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.
Helena. So methinks,
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.
Demetrius. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. (*MND*, IV.i.187-194)

Of all the transformations that occur in Shakespeare, the shift in desire and identity that the lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* experience teeters closest to enacting the forgetting, and complete erasure of their identities. However, the lovers themselves reveal that they have not replaced one identity with another, but rather, during the period of transformation, inhabited both—Demetrius is both with Helena and not with Helena; the lovers seem to be living in both a dream world and in reality.

Rosalind, when she chooses to take on the role of Ganymed in *As You Like It*, experiences the same fracturing of identity and doubleness that the lovers articulate toward the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but the stakes here are much higher. *Dream* is

always backed by the supernatural influence and power of the fairies; we feel secure that all will be as it should be by the end of the play; and the transformations of the lovers, mostly superficial and driven by comedic purposes, do not seem to leave much of an impression on either themselves or the other characters of the play. After their conversation about doubleness, Demetrius closes down all the open possibilities of identity and social space by declaring conclusively, "Why then, we are awake…let's recount our dreams" (IV.i.198-199). By contrast, Rosalind never actually sheds her role as Ganymed—she remains dressed in the doublet and hose of a man—by the end of the play. Instead, she signals her "true" self through language by way of relation, declaring herself, and recognized by others, to be her father's daughter and Orlando's Rosalind (V.iv.116-119). At times, her refusal to drop the disguise seems self-motivated; at other times, her disguise seems to be compelling her to remain as Ganymed even when internal and external forces pressure her to stop playacting and "reveal herself to Orlando in her own person, and recognize the fact that Hymen, the god of marriage, presides not over the fields and woods but over the town."[77] A closer examination of the role of Ganymed and Rosalind's reasons for taking on the persona, then, is needed. By investigating Rosalind's method of playacting alongside Viola's and Prince Hal's—the two characters I put forward as closest to Rosalind in their ability to restage their own identity—I seek to establish Rosalind as the ideally Ovidian character in Shakespeare's canon in the way that she skillfully plays different roles, and in the process indicate places of consensus and rupture between Ovid and Shakespeare in their conception of identity construction and transformation through language.

[77] Barton 400.

Becoming Ganymed

Rosalind's decision to take on the disguise of Ganymed occurs fairly early on in *As You Like It*, and she sustains the role for the rest of the play. However, her motives for cross-dressing are less straight-forward than other occurrences of playacting in Shakespeare, powerfully indicated by the plain fact that I, like other scholars,[78] feel persistently compelled to ask the simple question, "*Why* does Rosalind choose to pretend to be Ganymed?" It is a question we seldom, if ever, ask of other Shakespearean characters who take on roles and disguises, and the fact that we feel the need to do so suggests that the answer, buried somewhere in Rosalind's psychology, remains uncertain, subterranean, and ever-elusive. I do not mean to imply that Rosalind has no emotional reason to pretend to be Ganymed and that she is entirely unmotivated by logic and reason, nor that she allows herself to be completely carried away by the force of her emotional whims. Rather, Rosalind's reasons for taking on the role, and keeping it, are complex and overdetermined, and ought to be carefully examined.

To understand Rosalind's mindset and initial decision to become Ganymed at the end of Act I, we must recall that at this moment in the play, she is standing on the boundary that separates her home from the unknown, the boundary that separates the civilized kingdom and the wild forest of Arden, and the boundary between her former, carefree self and her present, threatened self. Rosalind, at the end of Act I, scene iii, is in the middle of tumultuous change and upheaval in her life—and in the midst of it all, she consciously and deliberately makes the decision to take on a male identity. Why? Her motivation for cross-

[78] Anne Barton writes, "there is no reason on the level of plot why she [Rosalind] should not [abandon her disguise as Ganymed] as soon as she is safe in Arden" (Barton 399).

dressing at this moment in the play is, ostensibly, to protect herself and Celia**.** Her motivation for cross-dressing, later in the play, can be perceived as a bizarrely circuitous ploy to seduce Orlando.

These are explanations that have tended to satisfy critics, including Kent Talbot van den Berg, who suggests that Rosalind "disguises herself as a page boy and, becoming her own actor, dramatizes herself for her lover,"[79] then goes on to say that Rosalind

> assumes the disguise in the first instance to protect herself from sexual assault (see I.iii.108-22), then uses it to maintain that cautious approach to love that Celia had earlier recommended: "Love no man in good earnest, nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honor come off again" (I.ii.27-29).[80]

Berg's interpretation of Rosalind's motivations for becoming Ganymed tries to frame her male disguise as a way to safely navigate the choppy, unfamiliar waters of love. However, his reading of Rosalind's change in identity fits more with my reading of Orlando's change in identity and language when he is faced with the unknown. I have suggested that Orlando clumsily takes on the persona of a stock character when confronted by alien circumstances—whether encountering Duke Senior's party in the forest, or falling in love—partly out of caution, and also partly out of uncertain naïveté. Rosalind's change in identity cannot be attributed to either of these rationales. Berg's reading of Rosalind's choice oversimplifies and glosses over the deeper psychological reasons for Rosalind's disguise in favor of describing her

[79] Berg, Kent Talbot van den. "Theatrical Fiction and the Reality of Love in *As You Like It*." *PMLA* 90.5 (1975): 887.

[80] Berg 889.

as a naïve girl with a first crush. Rosalind does not take on nor retain the male disguise "for her lover," as Berg suggests. Certainly at the end of Act I, when her life has been wracked by change and instability in losing both her father and her home, angling to gain Orlando's affections is the last thing on Rosalind's mind. This view misses the point entirely of Rosalind's decision to take on a male disguise, which seems much more complex and meaningful than the girlish pursuit of an infatuation.

Meanwhile, the suggestion that Rosalind assumes her male disguise as a method of protection against thieves and assailants might be sound, but it fails to hold upon recalling that, in the final lines of the scene, Rosalind suggests inviting Touchstone to join them on their flight from Duke Frederick's kingdom, saying "But, cousin, what if we assay'd to steal / The clownish fool out of your father's court? / Would he not be a comfort to our travel?" (*AYL*, I.iii.129-131) Once the two women decide to invite Touchstone along, the presence of Ganymed is superfluous. That is, it is no longer necessary for Rosalind to assume a male disguise now that the two women have been joined by a true male figure—yet when we next see Rosalind and Celia in Act II, they have sustained their disguises. As the stage directions explicitly indicate, Rosalind is Ganymed, Celia is Aliena, and Touchstone is with them. Rosalind, too, makes it clear in her dialogue that she and Celia are still playing their roles, saying, "I could find it in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat; therefore, courage, good Aliena" (II.iv.4-8). At this point in the play, Rosalind's decision to retain her male persona as the youth Ganymed appears to be completely unmotivated and illogical. Everyone present in the scene is fully aware that Rosalind is *not* Ganymed, and Celia is *not* Aliena; and yet Rosalind feels somehow compelled to maintain

the charade even within this small group of those who are in-the-know. Something much more is going on here, more than disguise, mere courtship, or physical protection, something that is contingent upon Rosalind's self-identification as Rosalind rather than Rosalind's desires, not to do with her infatuation with Orlando but with her concern with the state of her own life, which has been destabilized by external forces in the first act of *As You Like It*.

In light of this evidence, I argue that by taking on a male persona, Rosalind seeks to assert control over this aspect of her life—her identity—at the very moment in which she has lost complete control over nearly everything else. Her essential reasons for dressing and acting like Ganymed and later Ganymed-as-"Rosalind," and for maintaining these roles far longer than the situation might demand, are not motivated externally—that is, not to protect Celia and herself from the imagined savages of the forest of Arden, nor to court Orlando—but rather internally. She takes on these roles for herself, and this bold resolution is not only emboldeningly proto-feminist, but also tantalizingly suggestive of how Shakespeare conceived identity constitution and free-will of individuals. Still, the argument that that Rosalind's disguise is self-motivated remains somewhat vague, and begs further explanation and rationalization. Furthermore, what does it mean to say that Rosalind does this "for herself"? I do not mean to suggest by my wording that Rosalind's reasons for disguising herself are selfish. Quite the contrary, I seek to represent Rosalind's method of playacting as more generous and benevolent than that of most Shakespearean characters, which as a result opens up the stage for self-exploration for herself as well as for those around her. At this point, the word "disguise" seems to be an insufficient term for what Ganymed is to Rosalind—a new word is needed, and so here I turn to other scholars to see how they

have grappled with these same issues, to further investigate Rosalind's relationship to Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind."

Disguise vs. Playacting: The Power Structures of Play

Frequently cast by modern feminist critics as scandalous and transgressive, the cross-dressings and same-sex sexual liaisons that populate Renaissance works, in fact, operate around a logic that "moves unflinchingly along heterosexual lines."[81] In other words, the stability of these masculine and feminine gender categories are never truly destabilized in these supposedly "subversive" moments. Stephen Greenblatt would refer to this circulation of power as transgression contained; Jonathan Dollimore calls it transgressive reinscription.[82] The distinction between the two phrases are fine-grained but perhaps worth taking a closer look. After all, Rosalind's choice to take on the male identity of Ganymed can be easily interpreted—particularly by overzealous feminist critics—as an act of transgressive female empowerment, the notion being that she disguises herself as male in order to escape from the social constrictions of being a woman in the male-dominated society of Renaissance England, and empowers herself by exploiting the cultural powers and freedoms of speech and movement available to men within her male disguise. Yet such an interpretation willfully ignores the important work in authority and subversion that Stephen Greenblatt initiated in 1980 with the publication of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*; and indeed, is a dangerous reading

[81] Finucci, Valeria. "The Female Masquerade: Ariosto and the Game of Desire." *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Ed. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1994): 61-88.

[82] Dollimore, Jonathan. "Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection." *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986): 59.

to make in the way that it blindly accepts the permanence and preeminence of these gender categories.

Dollimore argues that this type of "transgression" is merely an inversion of categories, which does not subvert preexisting structures, but rather operates within them—here, then, is his model of transgressive reinscription, which he suggests is an entirely fictionalized, which is to say impermanent, form of true transgression. Although inversion may have political effectiveness for a subculture, which may imitate and thus demystify the dominant culture that categorically excludes it, actual and permanent transgression beyond these terms does not occur. Binaristic categories, once established, cannot be transgressed or subverted, not by reversal, nor by "breaking free" from such categories, because those acts, at their very core, acknowledge the fundamental structural elements of the categories they wish to break from, and accept their power as overarching paradigms—Dollimore concedes the validity of this aspect of Greenblatt's argument in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*.[83] However, Dollimore points out, quite compellingly:

> Binarism produces an instability in the very process of categorically dividing the world. It both produces ambiguities which it can't contain and invites transgression in and of its own terms. Thus the opposition us/them produces the scandal of the internal dissident; the opposition masculine/feminine produces the scandal of the transvestite, not to mention the troubling ambiguity of the hermaphrodite. … It is in this sense of actively altering—a divergence which is also a turning back upon—that the female transvestite of the early seventeenth century could be described as an "invert" and not at all

[83] Dollimore 58-59.

in the sense of that word coined and popularized by the nineteenth-century sexologists.[84]

That is, subversion does not come from external struggle; rather, Dollimore argues that these pockets of ambiguity and resistance are created during the very act of categorizing and dividing the world into binary oppositions.

The so-called moments of "transvestitism" that occur in the festive comedies of Shakespeare are not truly masculine-feminine reversals, but rather inhabit these slippery spaces of ambiguity. For these reasons, I dislike the term "transvestitism" to describe Rosalind's transformation into a boy, though some scholars have found it useful. Phyllis Rankin makes it her explicit project to examine "transvestite heroines in five English Renaissance comedies,"[85] including *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, even as she backs away from the distinction between the male and female gender to embrace a discourse of androgyny and changing concepts of gender. Transvestitism implies a clear, ahistorical binary between the male and female genders that fails to hold in Elizabethan England. The fiction of transvestitism as a literary tool for transgression is challenged by the gender-status of Ganymed in *As You Like It*, who is a young boy, and Cesario in *Twelfth Night*, who is a eunuch—both androgynous states rather than true, sexually mature men. Finally, it would be simply inaccurate to say that Rosalind is simply a transvestite; her doubled-role as Ganymed-as-"Rosalind" goes beyond mere transvestitism as cross-dressing,

[84] Dollimore 62.

[85] Rankin, Phyllis. "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage." *PMLA*, Vol. 102, No. 1 (1987): 29.

and into more ambiguous, rarely studied territory of the female masquerade,[86] as well as the curious category of the self-masquerade, which I will take up later.

Anne Barton, in her introduction to the Riverside edition of *As You Like It*, agrees that Rosalind takes on a male persona for herself, and elaborates on Rosalind's decision to stay as Ganymed in this way:

> Rosalind clings to the part of Ganymed because of the freedom it allows her. In her boy's disguise, she escapes (for a time) the limitations of being a woman, Duke Senior's daughter, the conscious object of Orlando's love. She learns a great deal about herself, about Orlando, and about love itself which she could not have done within the normal conventions of society. This knowledge is, in a sense, the gift of the forest. (Barton 400)

Barton here hits on something quite profound and persuasive in her deceptively straightforward way of writing, suggesting that Rosalind takes on the boy's disguise in order to step outside of herself, at least for a while. However, as valuable as the term "disguise" is for the purposes of Barton's and Berg's arguments, I prefer the terminology of the theater instead to describe Rosalind's transformation into Ganymed. I'm not sure that the term "disguise" accurately captures the nuances of the relationship between Rosalind and Ganymed, and Rosalind and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind," nor the benevolence with which Rosalind performs these roles, for which I am arguing in this essay. Ganymed, as a role that Rosalind plays for the majority of the play—from Act II through the very end of Act V—is more than a disguise, for it is more than a mask of concealment, more than a physical

[86] For the definitive text on this subject, see Valeria Finucci's "The Female Masquerade: Ariosto and the Game of Desire." (*Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Ed. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1994): 61-88.)

alteration. Few characters transcend the mode of crude disguise—a donning of a costume so that others cannot recognize one's true identity—to exploit playacting as sophisticatedly, fruitfully, and empathetically as Rosalind. By this I mean to argue that Rosalind is most able to fully, consciously, and authentically inhabit the roles that she plays throughout the course of the play, first the youth Ganymed, and then a version of herself, not for duplicitous purposes but in order to enlighten her knowledge of herself and the knowledge of those around her.

This essay will not use "disguise," nor "transvestitism," as terms to talk about Rosalind as a character who directs her own self-transformation, but rather take a discursive shift to theatrical vocabulary—playacting, role-playing, and so forth—which may open up new, different, and worthwhile perspectives from which to examine Rosalind's transformation. Barton's suggestion that Rosalind uses the character of Ganymed as a way to achieve objective distance from a situation is a good place to begin talking about playacting, and in fact can apply to a number of other characters in Shakespeare's plays. After all, the device of acting is hardly limited to Rosalind's use of it in *As You Like It*.

Theatrical acting holds a particularly special place in our minds as movie- and theater-goers. Certain actors come to be embodied in popular culture by a single character they once played, while certain fictional characters come to be remembered by a single actor that played them;[87] audiences and critics alike are most impressed by what we call "convincing," "realistic," and "believable" acts and performances; superlative actors are said

[87] For me, *Much Ado*'s Beatrice will always be Emma Thompson, and Marlon Brando's performances are always inflected in my mind by the brutishness of Stanley Kowalski from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

to "inhabit" the roles that they play. Actors must walk a fine psychological line between having complete control over their character while not showing that level of self-consciousness to the audience, and becoming consumed by the character entirely. "Disguise," by contrast, implies a superficial donning of a costume or change of dress that can be easily put on and taken off. The word "disguise" is defined as a concealment of one's identity by altering one's appearance. This definition, coupled with the textual evidence that I have cited above, quickly breaks down as an inadequate description of what Ganymed and Ganymed-as "Rosalind" are to Rosalind. When Rosalind plays Ganymed in the beginning of Act II, scene iv, it would be inaccurate to say that she is in "disguise" beyond the fact that she is dressed in the doublet and hose of a man (II.iv.6), for no one else in the scene is actually deceived by her altered appearance. Rosalind goes beyond using apparel as a mode of concealment, and transforms her language and comportment to suit her at all points like a man (I.iii.116). Her manner of playacting goes beyond mere surface alteration to achieve a deeper transformation that affects not only her style of dress, but also the way that she interacts with other characters, linguistically and emotionally, and ultimately the direction of her life and the lives of those around her.

More importantly, "disguise" carries insidious implications that "playacting" does not. It is not merely that playacting is a more imaginative endeavor than donning disguises, but that it is also more generous in the way that it draws others into its circle. The difference between disguise and playacting can be helpfully illuminated by Jean-François Lyotard's theory of performativity and the circulation of information. Lyotard argues in "The Postmodern Condition" that the performativity—or efficacy—of an utterance or act increases proportionally with the amount of information about its referent that it possesses,

and therefore the amount of power that information generates for the performer.[88] That is, power is derived from the holding of information, so that the ultimate goal is to attain power, and generate more, by having information and withholding it from others. The disguise, then, is the ideal way of generating power within this paradigm, for it operates by concealing crucial information in order to deceive and mislead others. Driven by one's own motives, disguise is the selfish and self-serving bastard brother to playacting. Whereas playacting lays out all of its cards on the table, disguise must hide its devices and machinations in order to produce and safeguard its power. Actors in the theater do not attempt to dupe their audiences into believing that they truly are who they play. Plays do not derive their power from withholding information or hoodwinking theater-goers into believing that what is happening upon the stage is real. The exact opposite is true: plays and actors interpolate their audiences into the tales that they generate, and derive their power only from the audience's awareness of and willing participation in their fiction-making.

Rosalind, similarly, does not throw a veil over her audience's eyes in the process of playing Ganymed, nor does she playact in order to withhold information from those around her. Rather, she performs these roles—Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind"—in order to educate those around her about what it means to love fully, and not madly. Although she is not entirely upfront with Orlando that she is not actually a male youth, the scenes of playacting that she initiates with him requires his participation in and full acceptance of the illusion that she is playing "Rosalind." She withholds from Orlando the knowledge of her primary level of playacting—Rosalind-as-Ganymed—not to mislead him nor close him off

[88] Lyotard, Jean-François. "The Postmodern Condition." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Second Edition. Eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing (2004): 355-364.

from reality to his detriment and blindness, but instead to create a stage upon which, together, they can imagine alternate worlds and alternate selves. Thus, on this secondary, more important level of playacting—Ganymed-as-"Rosalind"—Rosalind maintains transparency with Orlando.

Rosalind is also generous toward her theatrical audience; we, like Orlando, are willing though not always fully knowledgeable participants in her play. Stanley Cavell makes an analogous, though negatively-slanted argument about playacting:

> The medium [drama] is one which keeps all significance continuously before our senses, so that when it comes over us that we have missed it, this discovery will reveal our ignorance to have been willful, complicitous, a refusal to see.[89]

I am inclined to agree with Cavell's argument that we ought to look upon Shakespeare's characters not as symbols or metaphors, as modern critics have tended to do,[90] but rather as fully humanized individuals with specific psychologies that can be analyzed like any non-fictional being. However, he makes this move in order to bolster his main claim that we, as audience members, are implicated in the action of the play to the extent that we share in and enact the psychologies and choices of the characters onstage, and so "share the responsibility for tragedy"[91] when we are faced with events upon the stage and fail to act. I must disagree with Cavell's main thesis that Shakespearean theater, by interpolating its audience and choreographing these moments in which we fail to intervene, seeks to stage the reality of our

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[89] Cavell, Stanley. *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*. 2nd edition. New York: Cambridge University Press (2003): 84.
[90] Cavell 44.
[91] Cavell 54.

essential separation from one another as human beings,[92] in that we can never truly empathize with nor ease another person's suffering. I am more convinced by Thad Jenkins Logan's argument, which reconciles Cavell's argument, shared by W. H. Auden, Harold C. Goddard, and Jan Kott, that "finds in the plays a 'serious treatment of psychological states' and a 'negative comment about social conditions,'"[93] with C. L. Barber's and Northrop Frye's readings of the comedies as "celebrations of social order, in which the protagonists are engaged in growth and self-discovery."[94]

In order to resolve the two conflicting viewpoints, Logan posits that we relocate the site of growth and self-discovery in the audience, and writes the plays extend to the audience "an invitation to participate imaginatively."[95] Note here the similarity of her theoretical move to Cavell's—both are concerned primarily with illuminating the crucial ways in which plays appeal to their audiences and their audiences' own psychological drives—and how her argument directly contradicts his, by using the adverb "imaginatively" to describe our participation in the theater, which is to say "not actively," "not physically." The title itself, *As* You *Like It*, directly acknowledges and addresses the audience as an active participant in the creation of the play. In fact, other than *Twelfth Night*, which has the subtitle "*Or What* You *Will*," *As You Like It* is the only Shakespearean play that invokes and includes the audience in its very title. Shakespeare's dramas, and *As You Like It* in particular, open up opportunities to stage empathy rather than inaction, the unity of our human condition

[92] Cavell 110.

[93] Logan, Thad Jenkins. "*Twelfth Night*: The Limits of Festivity." *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900, Vol. 22, No. 2, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (Spring, 1982): 223. For her thesis, Logan draws from Richard A. Levin's article, "*Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice*, and Two Alternate Approaches to Shakespearean Comedy," which reveals the existence of two divergent readings of Shakespearean comedy.

[94] Logan 223.

[95] Logan 225.

rather than separation. As audience members to *As You Like It*, we agree to participate imaginatively in the scenes that are played before us, to believe in its fiction. As audience members to Rosalind's play, we are much like onlookers to an expert sleight-of-hand magician, in that we are always present to witness crucial moments in her development, even though we are not immediately privy to what lies below the surface and drives the magic.

The two characters who come closest to Rosalind's variety of playacting are Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Prince Hal in *Henry IV, Part I*. Yet while Viola also masterfully sustains her male role as Cesario for most of *Twelfth Night*, Cesario does not quite reach the imaginative sophistication nor generosity of Rosalind's Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind." In fact, Cesario works well as a model of disguise as I have characterized it, and so will serve as a useful contrast to what I have defined as playacting. Meanwhile, Prince Hal does not maintain his role for as long as Viola and Rosalind do, but plays a version of himself that matches Rosalind in imaginative skill and believability as well as respect for its audience. I will take up Hal's mode of playacting in the following chapter; first, a consideration of Viola as Cesario.

Viola and Cesario: Disguise in Twelfth Night

At the beginning of *Twelfth Night*, Viola washes up on the shore of Illyria, having been separated from her twin brother, Sebastian, in a shipwreck. The Captain informs her that Illyria is governed by the Duke Orsino, who pines for the lady Olivia, who has resolved to rebuff the advances of men in the wake of her father's and brother's relatively recent deaths. Viola, not surprisingly, finds communion with Olivia through their similar experiences, and expresses the desire to serve Olivia, until she has settled in Illyria and

carved out her own niche in the kingdom. However, the Captain informs her that Olivia is shunning everyone, even the Duke. Viola decides, in response, to take on the male disguise of Cesario and serve the Duke instead:

> Conceal me what I am, and be my aid
> For such disguise as haply shall become
> The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke;
> Thou shall present me as an eunuch to him,
> It may be worth thy pains; for I can sing
> And speak to him in many sorts of music
> That will allow me very worth his service. (*TN*, I.ii.53-59)

The sudden change in direction of Viola's attention from Olivia to the Duke, and her resolution to disguise herself as a eunuch, may appear, on the surface, to be haphazardly and randomly decided—much like Rosalind's choice, in Act II of *As You Like It*, to remain as Ganymed after Touchstone has joined her and Celia in their escape from Duke Frederick's kingdom.

Upon closer examination, however, Viola's decision to pursue the Duke is in fact firmly founded on logic and pragmatism—knowing that she cannot get to Olivia directly, she chooses the next best route, which is to go through the Duke. After all, of Olivia's suitors, the Duke is most likely to win her over, or at the very least, to be granted a meeting with her, simply because he rules over the kingdom. Her decision to cross-dress also is founded upon reason; as a woman, Viola's actions might be perceived as improper, even scandalous, if she befriended the Duke and offered him her services as herself. It is significant that she chooses to adopt the specific male disguise of a eunuch. Cesario allows Viola

considerable freedom of speech, for the male eunuch's voice—higher pitched, soprano rather than tenor or baritone—is similar to her natural voice so that her disguise is easily believable. More importantly, the male eunuch offers Viola considerable freedom of movement, for the eunuch is a completely non-threatening presence to women. Castrated and de-sexed, the eunuch is as close to genderless as any sexual category could be, and so Viola-as-Cesario is able to move about and act in a more unrestrained manner, including approaching Olivia and even speaking to her alone, because he is freed from any insinuation or possibility of courtship. Unlike Rosalind, then, Viola chooses to disguise herself as a eunuch motivated by a single reason, which is to get to Olivia and request her audience; in essence, she cross-dresses as a means to an end, and chooses to play the game that society has constructed for its citizens. Like Portia's male disguise in *The Merchant of Venice*, Viola's disguise is compelled by clear and self-serving motivations that sharply contrast Rosalind's more complex, knottier decision to dress and act as Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind."

Not only is Cesario a transparently motivated disguise, but also is itself flatly created, which is to say that Viola's disguise does not open up new worlds and possibilities but rather inhabits the same plane of existence. Cesario is not the stuff of a world that could be, but instead inserts itself into the world that is, and meddles in its affairs to the detriment of its inhabitants. Indeed, Viola is not generous toward the other characters of the play—she jealously guards the secret of her disguise from all the other characters of the play except for the Captain, who is the only person who knows her true identity, and only then because of purely practical necessity. Viola's distrust of others is so extreme that she feels it necessary to bribe the Captain, who thus far only been kind and helpful to her, to keep secret her identity as a woman:

I prithee (and I'll pay thee bounteously)

Conceal me what I am, and be my aid

For such disguise as haply shall become

The form of my intent. (*TN*, I.ii.52-55)

The Captain swears he will keep her secret, and Viola imperiously commands him to lead her on. Yet more telling than her clear distrust of others is the fact that Viola as Cesario actively withholds crucial information from Orsino and Olivia at the expense of their full knowledge of themselves and their desires. After Cesario's first failed attempt to woo Olivia for Orsino, Olivia gives Cesario a ring and the message that he should stop trying to flatter her on Orsino's behalf, implying that she wishes that Cesario would pursue her for himself—a shocking reversal for the woman who has sworn to refuse all advances. Olivia herself seems surprised and bewildered by her sudden change of heart, saying, "I do I know not what" (I.v.308). In their next encounter, Olivia very nearly throws herself at the bemused Cesario, begging him to "solicit" (III.i.108) her and pours forth her heart, to which Cesario replies only, "I pity you" (III.i.123), blunt and cruel. Olivia, hopeful, says, "That's a degree to love," but Cesario corrects her: "No, not a grize; for 'tis a vulgar proof / That very oft we pity enemies" (III.i.123-125). Love-addled Olivia misconstrues his words as an allusion to the hunter/hunted paradigm of courtship, but Viola here refers to the contorted, twisty situation that her disguise as Cesario has precipitated, in which she (as Cesario) has become the object of affection of her (Viola's) object of affection's (Orsino's) object of affection (Olivia), the result of which means that Viola must compete against Olivia for Orsino's love. Olivia continues to plead with Cesario, who will have none of it. In an aside, Olivia notes that Cesario appears scornful, contemptuous, angry, even murderous (III.i.145-147), yet in

her next breath declares unambiguously to Cesario, "I love thee so" (III.i.151), demonstrating to both Cesario and the audience that she truly knows not what she speaks.

I am certainly not trying to portray Viola as a distrustful or selfish person in essence, but instead attempting to show the ways in which the enterprise of taking on a disguise requires its user to become distrustful, selfish, and exclusionary, rather than open, generous, and inclusive, toward others. That is, Viola herself is not fundamentally inconsiderate, unforthcoming, and cruel, but her disguise requires her to behave this way toward others in order to preserve and generate its own power, which increases in proportion to the amount of information it withholds from others. Viola herself acknowledges the way that her disguise has taken on a life and force of its own beyond her control; upon first realizing that Olivia has fallen for her, Viola says despairingly,

> Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
>
> Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness
>
> Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
>
> …
>
> O time, thou must untangle this, not I,
>
> It is too hard a knot for me t' untie. (II.ii.24-41)

Viola's exclusionary mode of disguise spills over to the play's interaction with its audience, so that *Twelfth Night* is at times curiously parsimonious with its viewers. The initiation and evolution of the relationship between Orsino and Viola occur offstage, so that Viola's sudden infatuation with Orsino seems flimsier than Rosalind's love for Orlando. In Act I, scene ii, Viola resolves to be Orsino's servant (I.ii.55-59), but when we next see the two together in Act I, scene iv, three days have already elapsed and they have evidently and

inexplicably developed a close relationship. In their first onstage interaction, Orsino says to her as Cesario, "Thou know'st no less but all. I have unclasp'd / To thee the book even of my secret soul" (I.iv.13-14), and at the end of the scene, Viola wistfully reveals to the audience in a surprising aside that she has fallen for the Duke: "I'll do my best / To woo your lady. Yet a barful strife! / Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife" (I.iv.40-43). By contrast, the interactions between Rosalind and Orlando in *As You Like It* all occur onstage, so that the developments in their relationship are generously disclosed to the audience in their entirety.

Despite Viola's clear sophistication and mastery of playing the role, Cesario fits the category of disguise as I have delineated it: motivated by transparent and self-serving reasons, flat, easily assumed and discarded, and operating primarily by the perpetuation of duplicity, concealment, and deceit. By contrast, Rosalind lays out all her cards to the other characters of the play as well as the theatrical audience. Her choice to sustain the role is entirely under her own control, and unlike Viola, does not stand to lose anything were her playacting exposed. Even when she withholds information from those around her—Orlando and Phebe, primarily—she never seeks to mislead them, and certainly does not playact to their detriment. Instead, Rosalind-as-Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind" bring their audiences into their circles of playacting, and invite Orlando, Phebe, and the theatrical audience to imagine a different world, a better world, driven by generosity, empathy, and imagination. The question remains, then, whether Rosalind is ever truly able to drop her imaginative roles of Ganymed and "Rosalind" at the end of *As You Like It* and go back to the world she has left and the woman she used to be—the sharp-tongued, quick-witted, much-loved Rosalind of Act I—or if she has been transformed to the point of no easy return.

CHAPTER 4

Becoming Rosalind: Identity (Re)Constitution in *As You Like It*

> *Rosalind*: [*To Duke Senior*] To you I give myself, for I
> am yours. [*To Orlando*] To you I give myself, for I
> am yours.
>
> *Duke Senior*: If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.
>
> *Orlando*: If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.
>
> —*As You Like It*, Act V, scene iv

Hal and "Hal": The Self Masquerade in 1 Henry IV

Female characters are largely the undisputed rulers of the comedies, taking their ignorant, immature male counterparts under their wings to teach them, through disguise and playacting, what it means to love (Rosalind and Orlando in *As You Like It*), to trust (Hero and Beatrice, and Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*), and to be constant (Portia and Nerissa, and Bassanio and Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice*). By contrast, in the history plays, particularly the plays that make up the Lancastrian tetralogy *Richard II*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V*, the male characters are the ones who take on roles and disguises, and exploit the power of language to persuade, promise, and proclaim to its fullest extent—exemplified by the character of Prince Hal, later King Henry V of England. Widely acknowledged as the master of languages and roles, Hal, like Rosalind, has a keen eye for understanding the motives and desires of those around him, and wields extraordinary control over his own identity and destiny like no one else. In his famous soliloquy in *1 Henry IV*, Hal

dismisses his supposed friends as inferior and declares that he will one day repudiate their company:

> I know you all, and will a while uphold
> The unyok'd humor of your idleness,
> Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
> Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
> To smother up his beauty from the word,
> That, *when he please again to be himself*,
> Being wanted, he may be more wond'red at
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
> Of vapors that did seem to strangle him. (*1HIV*, I.ii.195-203, emphasis mine)

This soliloquy perfectly captures Hal's character at this moment in the play, demonstrating the extent of his self-knowledge as well as his political shrewdness. He reminds himself, and by extension the theatrical audience, that this current Hal who jokes around with Poins, Peto, Bardolph, Falstaff, and the rest is not the true Hal, but instead a Hal who wants to have a little fun and be one of the boys before he must "pay the debt [he] never promised" (I.ii.209), "throw off" (I.ii.208) this coarse behavior, and inherit the throne.

Both Rosalind and Hal are highly agentative characters, able to direct the way that they present themselves to the world through language, imitation, and playacting. In fact, other than our heroine Rosalind in *As You Like It*, the only other character who explicitly and openly plays a version of himself in the Shakespearean canon is Prince Hal in *1 Henry IV*. Hal shows off his chameleon-like skill for role-playing in the tavern scene of *1 Henry IV*, in which Hal and his best friend, the fat, corrupt, blustering, much-loved Falstaff, playact

Prince Hal and his father as they discuss the company that Hal keeps as the "son of England" (II.iv.409). As with Rosalind's audience, the taverners here know that he is playing a role; the "play extempore" (II.iv.279) that he and Falstaff stage here is clearly performative, put on for the entertainment of the others in the tavern. Their repartee demonstrates both men's rhetorical and imaginative skills—and preoccupations—as they inhabit and swap these roles during the scene, which begins with Hal as himself and Falstaff as his father, then switches to Hal as his father and Falstaff as Hal. Upon closer examination, however, Falstaff takes the stage for much of their banter; Hal has but a single line as "Hal," while Falstaff extemporizes as King Henry IV at great length, questioning "Hal" about the company he keeps, and about a certain "virtuous man" (II.iv.417) who appears often at his side. "Hal" replies, "What manner of man, and it like your majesty?" (II.iv.420-421), to which "King Henry IV" names and describes Falstaff as a cheerful, pleasing, and virtuous man, worth keeping around though "Hal" ought to banish the rest. Hal breaks from the playacting, evidently displeased at the way the conversation is going: "Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, / and I'll play my father" (II.iv.433-434). Falstaff protests, still as "King Henry IV," but Hal presses, and so the roles are turned. "King Henry IV" now imagines Falstaff as old, fat, cunning, and villainous, a man that should be kept from further misleading his son (II.iv.462-463). Now it is "Hal" who must argue for Falstaff's preservation:

> *Falstaff.* …banish not him thy Harry's company, banish
> not him thy Harry's company—banish plump Jack,
> and banish all the world.
> *Prince*. I do, I will. (*1HIV*, II.iv.479-481)

First, it is ambiguous as to whether Falstaff hears Hal's line. It is also unclear whether Hal speaks here as his father—which is to say, still publicly playacting for his delighted tavern audience—or has broken from the playacting to speak as himself, the private Hal who broods to himself in asides that he will eventually turn away from the "foul and ugly" (I.ii.202) friends with whom he currently rambles about town, drinking and stealing. In either case, Hal withholds from Falstaff and the others that he is seriously considering spurning their company, and banishing them from his kingdom, once he ascends to the throne.

Like Rosalind, Hal playacts in order to imagine a world different from his own. However, Hal's self-masquerade is conducted with the knowledge that he will eventually discard with such a persona, cease his play, reject his fellow participants, and move on without a backward glance. He explicitly makes this plan clear at the end of his playacting with Falstaff in the tavern scene—his "I do, I will" (*1HIV*, II.v.481) is a promise that he fulfills in at the end of *2 Henry IV*, when he carelessly and cruelly casts Falstaff aside and banishes his old dear friend from his kingdom (*2HIV*, V.v.47-65). Hal playacts in a deliberate, shrewdly calculating way, almost like a superlative chess player, always keeping an eye toward the future and his next move, knowing that he will, in due course, discard with this role. By contrast, Rosalind seems to play everything by ear; she has no larger long-term plan for her playacting, and instead goes with the flow, adjusting herself in response to the scene and situation as it changes and shifts according to the whims of each participant. As seen in the playacting scene between Falstaff and him in Act II of *1 Henry IV*, Hal directs changes and shifts in conversations and scenes himself, never letting those around him—nor the theatrical audience—forget that he is the most important person at any given moment,

in any given situation, as the heir to the English throne. Most of the lower-class characters who come into contact with the prince tend to be deferential and respectful, referring to him as "my lord" in perpetual acknowledgment of Hal's social standing.

In fact, Hal's disdain for his lower-class companions is even more callous in light of their clear affection and respect for him. Poins calls him "sweet Hal" (I.ii.112), and Falstaff refers to him genially as "Hal" for most of *1 Henry IV*, and "my sweet boy," "my King," "my Jove," and "my heart!" (V.v.36) in *2 Henry IV*. Hal's relationship with Falstaff and the other taverners is markedly different from Rosalind's relationship with Celia and the other characters they encounter in the forest; indeed, Hal and Rosalind connect with others around them in fundamentally opposing ways during the course of the playacting. Hal is a colder character, less generous and less given to empathy, and conducts himself with the belief that he is inherently superior to everyone else, indicated by the way that he interacts with and eventually dismisses Falstaff and the other Boar's Head taverners. Although his playacting may be transparently conducted in the tavern scene—Hal, here, generously allows the taverners the opportunity to delight in this farce—we can already see from his "I know you all" soliloquy that Hal, in a way, is perpetually playing a version of himself throughout *1 Henry IV*. The lower-class, roguish men he keeps as company do not realize that the Hal who comes down to Eastcheap and chums around with everyone is, in fact, a highly self-aware, highly constructed performance, one that hides beneath its playful, bantering veneer a coldly calculating heir to the throne who would sooner banish his friends than allow others to know that he fraternizes with them. Thus, although aspects of Hal's self-masquerade foreshadow Rosalind's own self-masquerade, its self-serving machinations and general lack of

empathy and generosity for others align the tone and motivations of his playacting more with Viola's Cesario than Rosalind's Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind."

Becoming "Rosalind"

Prince Hal's self-masquerade in *1 Henry IV* usefully highlights the centrality of language and the imagination in effective playacting. Unlike disguise, which relies upon donning a costume or otherwise changing one's appearance to conceal a "true" identity, the self-masquerade does not feed off of the ignorance of others to generate the power and persuasiveness of its fiction. Robert Kimbrough suggests that Rosalind's self-masquerade is "a hidden way of being openly herself."[96] Not quite. Rosalind's role of "Rosalind" is more complex than this, because of the levels of playacting involved—she is Ganymed who is "Rosalind." Furthermore, "Rosalind" is simply not Rosalind in the way that the two apprehend others around them and matters of love. There is a clear distinction between the way that "Rosalind" talks to Orlando about being in love and the way that Rosalind talks to Celia about being in love—a contrast that can be witnessed most strikingly in Act IV, scene i, which I will later take up in great detail. Alone with Celia, Rosalind lets her emotions run more wildly and openly; with Orlando, "Rosalind" is more skeptical, restrained, and practical about love. In this portion of my discussion, I will refer to Rosalind as Ganymed whenever she is playacting as the male youth, and refer to Rosalind as "Rosalind" whenever she is playacting as the male youth playacting as a false "Rosalind." Whenever Rosalind is genuinely herself, I will refer to her simply as Rosalind. This shorthand will not only

[96] Kimbrough, Robert. "Androgyny Seen Through Shakespeare's Disguise." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Spring, 1982): 24.

maintain the distinctions among the three personas of Rosalind but also reveal the fluidity with which Rosalind moves among them in this scene.

Rosalind's double-layered masquerade as Ganymed-as-"Rosalind," moreso than her masquerade as Ganymed, relies upon language as a way to imagine a different identity and life for herself—one in which she and Orlando can speak to one another, and experience the thrill and play of courtship, unclouded and uncorrupted by romantic, generic cliché. By enacting these scenes of instruction with Orlando, Rosalind seeks to cure Orlando of his immature, "moonish," "effeminate, changeable," "proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something, and for no passion truly any thing" (III.ii.410-414) love, which enfeebles rather than strengthens him, into a fuller, more rational love. First, Ganymed must induct Orlando into the imaginative space, in which a male youth plays the woman that he loves, and Orlando must come to him every day and woo this false "Rosalind."

After falling in love at the wrestling match in Act I, scene iii, Rosalind and Orlando do not encounter one another again until Act III, scene ii, after they have both been banished from Duke Frederick's kingdom and into the forest of Arden. The first words that they exchange with one another at their strange reunion—Orlando as himself, but now in hunters' clothes, and Rosalind as Ganymed, dressed in doublet and hose—set the tone for their new relationship, in much the same way that the opening words of *Hamlet* set the tone for the rest of the play. "Who's there?" Barnardo says, to which Francisco says, "Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself." In the compact space of two lines, Shakespeare establishes the themes of the play and characterizes the relationships between its characters: mystery,

darkness, suspicion before trust, and uncertainty about the identity of others. The lines that begin this new connection between Rosalind and Orlando create quite a different mood:

> *Rosalind, as Ganymed*. Do you hear, forester?
>
> *Orlando*. Very well. (*AYL*, III.ii.207-208)

It is a deceptively commonplace interchange, a call and response of the sort that might open a modern-day conversation over telephone or walkie-talkie—"Can you hear me?" "Yes, go ahead"—but in fact, these words succinctly characterize their subsequent relationship. By asking, and affirming, Rosalind and Orlando create a space of language as reciprocal communication rather than verbal debate, of listening closely and responsively, of listening "well." Unlike the miscommunications and misunderstandings that corrupt the language and human interactions of *Hamlet*, *As You Like It* celebrates language's function as an interface between two individuals, as a way of bridging the infinite space between two strangers in a world that otherwise contrives to alienate humans from one another through the adulteration and misuse of language. Their first conversation establishes language and listening as the foundation for their new relationship. Rosalind tests the waters ("Do you hear?"), and Orlando responds accordingly ("*Very* well"), demonstrating his ability and willingness to listen to what others have to say. Faced with the incontrovertible evidence that language perverts emotion and betrays the intentions of its speaker, Rosalind still believes in and argues for the reverse: language's ability to cleanse and wash away such corruption to reveal a glimpse into the truth of things.[97]

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[97] I might also add here that the first conversation that Orlando and Rosalind share after falling in love strongly recalls the first conversation that occurs between Prince Hal and Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*, but riffs on it in a significant way. Directly following these initial two lines:

> *Ros*. I pray you, what is't a' clock?

After a delightful bit of banter between Orlando and Rosalind-as-Ganymed about the nature of time, which effectively hooks Orlando's interest in this "pretty youth" (III.ii.334), Ganymed spurs Orlando to confess that he is the one who "haunts the forest" (III.ii.359) with his love poetry, "he that is so love-shak'd" (III.ii.367), only to undermine his claim by saying:

> There is none of my uncle's marks upon you.
>
> He taught me how to know a man in love; in which
>
> cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner. (*AYL*, III.ii.369-371)

Orlando, dismayed, replies, "Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love" (III.ii.385-386), to which Ganymed says, "Me believe it? You may as soon make her that you love believe it" (III.ii.387-388). Here we sense Rosalind first developing the idea to play a version of herself with Orlando. Clearly still debilitated by his infatuation, declaring that "neither rhyme nor reason can express how much" (III.ii.398-399) he is in love, Orlando is in no state to interact with Rosalind on a sensible level. Thus, Ganymed first promises Orlando that he will "wash [his] liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in it" (III.ii.422-424). Orlando is reluctant to accept this proposition and resists at first. Throughout the scene Orlando has already demonstrated his eagerness to

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> *Orl*. You should ask me what time o' day; there's
> no clock in the forest. (*AYL*, III.ii.299-301)

Compare to:

> *Fal*. Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?
> *Prince*. Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old
> sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping
> upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to
> demand that truly which thou wouldest truly know.
> What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? (*1HIV*, I.ii.1-6)

Neither Orlando nor Prince Hal directly answer the question; however, Orlando responds far more playfully and respectfully to his interrogator than Hal, who seemingly cannot resist an opportunity to cut Falstaff down to size.

learn about love and women from the seemingly learned youth; when Ganymed tells him that his uncle "taught" (III.ii.343) him to speak, and "read many *lectures* against [love]" (III.ii.246, emphasis mine) and women, Orlando quickly asks, "Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?" (III.ii.351-352); when he demurs, Orlando presses, "I prithee, recount some of them" (III.ii.357); when Ganymed suggests that he could offer counsel to the anonymous, love-sick man carving trees with Rosalind's name, Orlando says, "I pray you tell me your remedy" (III.ii.367-368); Ganymed replies that Orlando doesn't seem to be in love, lacking the tell-tale marks, and Orlando asks, "What were his marks?" (III.ii.372). Yet when Ganymed suggests that he cure Orlando of his love for Rosalind, Orlando refuses. In response, Ganymed changes the rules of the game and proposes that they engage in playacting: "I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind, and come every day to my cote and woo me" (III.ii.426-427), essentially offering Orlando the opportunity to enact fictional scenes of courtship with "Rosalind"—a dress rehearsal for the real performance, in other words. Unsurprisingly, Orlando jumps aboard, declaring, "Now, by the faith of my love, I will" (III.ii.426-429).

It is evident that Orlando stands to benefit from these scenes of playacting, and that he will be a willing and enthusiastic participant. It is less evident why Rosalind would choose to deflect Orlando's love for her in such a way—surely she does not truly intend to scrub Orlando's heart clean of affection for her. My discussion of the relationship between Rosalind and Celia in Chapter 2 may help to illuminate Rosalind's motivations for taking on a second role on top of her role as Ganymed in Act III, scene ii of the play. Mere minutes before Orlando enters the scene, we witness her mooning about the forest after learning from Celia that Orlando loves her. Rosalind has some of her most passionate and

breathlessly unrestrained passages of prose in this scene; so eager to hear who the anonymous love poet of the forest is, Rosalind nearly goes crazy when Celia playfully but maddeningly needles her dear cousin by delaying the answer for no less than 30 lines, making fun of Rosalind's ardent speech all the while. When Celia finally reveals his name, Rosalind says the equivalent of today's disbelieving teenager's "Shut. Up. Shut up!" and asks Celia to confirm her reply twice; and when Celia proceeds to describe in greater detail her encounter with Orlando, Rosalind keeps interrupting her at the end of every pause. Her highly affective, unconstrained language simultaneously amuses and irritates the more level-headed Celia, who chastises Rosalind upon her first interruption by saying, "Give me audience, good madam" (III.ii.238)—and again upon her second interruption, with increasing impatience, with "Cry 'holla' to thy tongue, I prithee; it curvets unseasonably" (III.ii.244-245)—then again upon Rosalind's third interruption, when she says with clear annoyance, "I would sing my song without a burthen; thou bring'st me out of tune" (III.ii.247-248). Rosalind is hardly recognizable here—the Rosalind who kept her cool while Orlando was reduced to a mute block, the Rosalind who reacted carefully and rationally at the news of her banishment from the kingdom, the Rosalind who calmly agreed to go into the unknown forest of Arden with her cousin, have all disappeared and given way to this love-struck, overheated, impassioned Rosalind, who nevertheless is able to restrain herself when Orlando appears onstage with Jaques, and recollect herself by the time she approaches him as Ganymed.

Rosalind, like Orlando, is clearly suffering from the emotional effects set on by intense love. Thus, in order to circumvent the distorting, excessive influence that this type of irrational infatuation has on both of their abilities to use language, Rosalind alights upon the ideal method to be together with Orlando, deepen their love, and help both of them

distance themselves from the extremities of their infatuations: the self-masquerade. The role of "Rosalind" is the ideal way for Rosalind to assess and gently reshape Orlando's love for her, as well as gain an objective perspective of her own emotional state, in order to regain stability and control over her emotions, language, and selfhood.

Earlier in this essay, I wrote that Rosalind takes on these disguises "for herself," but even as I made this claim, I felt the need to back away from such a bold assertion and temper it with the suggestion that Rosalind chooses to assume these roles and self-transformations not merely to benefit herself but to benefit others as well. I return to this point now, in the interest of resolving my initial internal conflict. I must draw an important distinction between the two roles of Ganymed and Ganymed-as-"Rosalind"—a clarification that I haven't yet made, though I don't think I could have made it until this point. It may well be that Rosalind takes on the role of Ganymed, at the end of Act I, for herself—to gain temporary escape from the stresses and demands of her life, as Anne Barton suggests[98]—but Rosalind takes on the role of "Rosalind," halfway through Act III, for much more selfless, and more important reasons. Ganymed may provide Rosalind with the chance to fly,[99] but "Rosalind" brings Rosalind, and Orlando, back down to earth.

Lesson Plans: The Education of Orlando and Rosalind

The mock-marriage portion of Act IV, scene i, marks a crucial turning point in the relationship between Rosalind and Orlando. Thus far Orlando and Ganymed have been,

[98] Barton 400.

[99] Recalling Celia's characterization of their banishment from Duke Frederick's kingdom: "devise with me how we may *fly*, / Whither to go" (I.iii.100-101, emphasis mine); "Devise the fittest time and safest way / To hide us from pursuit that will be made / After my *flight*" (I.iii.135-137, emphasis mine).

fairly faithfully, fulfilling the terms of their teaching arrangement—Orlando addresses Ganymed as Rosalind, as he has been directed, referring to Ganymed as "My fair Rosalind" (IV.i.42), "dear Rosalind" (IV.i.50)—but there is always the awareness, coloring the words and actions of both Orlando and Rosalind, that this "Rosalind" is not the true Rosalind. An extended banter about the tardiness and inconstancy of love begins their only instructional scene of the play, between Orlando and "Rosalind" in full acting mode. Their playacting comes to an abrupt halt when Orlando says, "my Rosalind is virtuous," and Ganymed replies, "And I am your Rosalind" (IV.i.63-65). For the briefest moment, Orlando ceases his play—instead of saying "*You* are virtuous," he refers to the absent figure of "*my* Rosalind"—and Rosalind's control over the entire masquerade seems to lapse as well. It is ambiguous as to who says, "I am your Rosalind," "Rosalind" or Rosalind, and whether Ganymed is trying to bring Orlando back into the fiction of the scene or whether the emotions of Rosalind are coming through. Celia, standing close by as Aliena, senses this slip and says sharply, "It please him to call you so; but he hath a Rosalind of a better leer than you" (IV.i.66-67), in order to remind Rosalind of her commitment to these roles.

This moment, in which the artificiality of the relationship between Orlando and this "Rosalind" comes into sharp relief just as Orlando tries, mutedly, to profess his love for the real Rosalind, is disquieting to Rosalind, and certainly shakes her resolve in continuing this playacting so wholeheartedly. Thus, in the next line, Ganymed shifts the terms of their interaction to the hypothetical, so that rather than enact these scenes of courtship, they talk about what they would do—as though blocking out the scene and dialogue in preparation for the real performance. Ganymed ceases their play and emerges from the "Rosalind" role to ask, "What *would* you say to me now, and I *were* your very very Rosalind" (IV.i.69-71,

emphasis mine)? The shift, in Ganymed's language, to a conditional and subjunctive mood, reminds Orlando of the fiction of their scene, and he replies, also in the conditional, "I *would* kiss before I spoke" (IV.i.72, emphasis mine). The scene continues in this hypothetical tenor:

> *Ros.* Nay, *you were better* speak first, and when you were gravell'd for lack of matter, you *might* take occasion to kiss.
>
> …
>
> *Orl.* How *if* the kiss be denied?
>
> *Ros.* Then *she* puts you to entreaty, and there begins new matter.
>
> *Orl.* Who *could* be out, being before his belov'd mistress?
>
> *Ros*. Marry, that should you *if I were your mistress*, or I should think my honesty ranker than my wit. (*AYL*, IV.i.73-85, emphases mine)

Rosalind's fears are thus soothed; Orlando has not conflated this "Rosalind" with Rosalind, and has demonstrated his ability to sustain control over his use of language and follow the conditional thread of this new direction in their playacting.

Rosalind decides to further challenge him and test his linguistic control, and so Ganymed says boldly, "Am not I your Rosalind?" (IV.i.88) to which Orlando replies, "I take some joy to say you are, because I would be talking of her" (IV.i.89-90). Pleased with this answer, Ganymed says playfully, "Well, in her person, I say I will not have you" (IV.i.91-92), and Orlando replies, "Then in mine own person, I die" (IV.i.93). This bit of verbal hyperbole sets Ganymed off into a passionate rejection of such romantic ideas of love, and he points out rather comically that even the legendary lovers of myth and lore—Troilus and Leander—did not die of love, but prosaically, by a club to the head (IV.i.98) and a cramp

while swimming (IV.i.104). Orlando does not concede this point, and instead says (suggestively, I think), "I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind, for I protest her frown might kill me" (IV.i.109-110). Ganymed relents, and declares, "come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on disposition; and ask me what you will, I will grant it" (IV.i.112-114). The playacting is back on, and now it is Orlando's turn to make the bold statement that pushes the fiction of their scene to its straining limits:

> *Orl.* Then love me, Rosalind.
>
> *Ros*. Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all. (IV.i.115-117)

I haven't yet remarked upon the level of Orlando's awareness throughout these scenes of playacting. The common interpretation is that Orlando does not realize that this male youth is the woman he loves. However, a number of moments suggest to me that Orlando sees through Rosalind's playacting, or at the very least, conceives of it as a possibility. Later in the play Oliver relates Orlando's description of Ganymed as "fair, / Of female favor, and bestows himself / Like a ripe sister" (IV.iii.85-87); later, when talking to Duke Senior about Ganymed, Orlando says, "My lord, the first time that I ever saw him / Methought he was a brother to your daughter" (V.iv.28-29). Here, Orlando makes his confident request for Rosalind's love—not "Rosalind"'s—freed from any tinge of the conditional or hypothetical that earlier weighed upon their words and actions, and speaks from a place of sure knowledge. His request it is so forthcoming, so bald, so candid that it simply cannot have been said in the attitude of playacting and fiction, but from a frame of mind of honest emotion and desire, wholly uncontrived. By prompting him to ask "Rosalind" anything, Rosalind has given Orlando the reins to take control of the scene, and he has taken them into thrillingly new and dangerous territory, in which the lines between

reality and playacting are blurred. Although Ganymed is the first to suggest that they enact the wedding performance—"Come, sister, you shall be the priest, and marry us" (IV.i.118-119), it is within the bounds of Orlando's imagination that the mock-marriage takes place. "Rosalind" and Orlando speak the rites as though they were truly going through them, without the guise of the subjunctive: "I take thee, Rosalind, for wife"; "I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband" (IV.i.137-139).

Even as their playacting borders on reality, Ganymed resists its pull, and momentarily drops his act as "Rosalind" to demand of Orlando, "Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possess'd her" (IV.i.143-144). "For ever and a day" (IV.i.145), he replies, and "Rosalind" bursts into an extended speech, railing against the hyperbole and predictability of romantic linguistic conventions, and describing the emotional inconstancies of women:

> Say "a day," without the "ever." No, no,
> Orlando, men are April when they woo, December
> when they wed; maids are May when they are maids,
> but the sky changes when they are wives. I will
> be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-
> pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot
> against rain … (*AYL*, IV.i.146-152)

It is, arguably, the most memorable speech of the play.[100] Certainly it is the most masterful, showing off the dazzling power, control, and sheer imaginative skill of "Rosalind"'s speech. "Rosalind" consciously plays on the rhetorical tropes and verbal tics of euphuism—a style of

[100] Much of my interpretation of this passage is drawn from Professor Joseph A. Porter's November 15, 2007 lecture on *As You Like It* in his Shakespeare Before 1600 course.

prose originating from John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578), which Thomas Lodge drew on for his 1590 prose romance *Rosalynde or, Euphues' Golden Legacy*, which in turn formed the source material for Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The highly mannered style of euphuism is characterized by elaborate rhetorical structures, linguistic parallels, antitheses, extended similes, and metaphors from the natural world. "Rosalind" sets up the elaborate linguistic parallel and antithesis—men and maids, April and May, woo and maids, wed and wives—only to diverge from the highly patterned structure in the final phrase. The audience anticipates, in accordance with expectations created by such euphuistic language, that "Rosalind" will complete the passage with "January when they are wives." Instead, she says, "*But the sky changes* when they are wives" (IV.i.149, emphasis mine), denying our expectations and breaking with the linguistic formula. It is a delightfully unexpected, beautifully compact, and linguistically virtuosic move, changing within the very word "changes." It is the height of "Rosalind"'s rhetorical powers—crucially, Rosalind delivers this speech as "Rosalind" and not as herself—and in this moment, it seems patently impossible that Rosalind will ever want, or be able, to shed her personas of "Rosalind" and Ganymed and effectively leave behind the value of their removed perspective and linguistic control, unaffected and unadulterated by passion and love. At the heart of "Rosalind"'s "sky changes" speech is a sophisticated understanding of the nature of love, marriage, and the mutability of desire and identity through language. A part of Rosalind has come to a full understanding of her emotional state as a woman in fresh love, and she can never come back down from such a moment.

Becoming Rosalind

It may seem contradictory to title the final section of my essay "Becoming Rosalind" so soon after making the claim that Rosalind can never truly abandon her roles as Ganymed and "Rosalind." However, multiple forces toward the end of *As You Like It* pressure Rosalind to cease her imaginative playacting with Orlando, take off her male apparel and reassume her feminine dress, and reenter society—all of which, at least according to the conventions of comedy, can be accomplished through the act of marriage to Orlando as "herself." Influenced by Stephen Greenblatt's suggestion that Iago toys with the idea of self-cancellation,[101] I had previously imagined this process to be a self-destruction of sorts, that Rosalind would have to destroy Ganymed in order to bridge the gap between her identity as Rosalind and her identity as "Rosalind" and forge a single Rosalind who is able to both indulge her love for Orlando and not be overcome by the emotional intensity of love. I'm no longer certain that such an act is achievable in those terms. But certainly Rosalind must, on some level, reconcile the differences among her three personas, if not to fulfill the dictates of society and the genre of comedy, then to reconstitute her fractured self.

After Orlando and Ganymed part ways with the promise that they will meet again at two o'clock, Celia reprimands Rosalind for the direction that she took with the playacting scene. Celia's aversion to such fiction-making is evident during the mock-marriage; when "Rosalind" and Orlando ask her to conduct the marriage ceremony as the mock-priest, she resists by saying, "I cannot say the words" (IV.i.128). "Rosalind" insists, and begins to put the words into her mouth: "You must begin, 'Will you, Orlando'—" (IV.i.129), which Celia-as-Aliena interrupts, "Go to! Will you, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind" (IV.i.130-

[101] See page 37 for this discussion.

131)? It is her sole contribution to the mock-marriage, and unwillingly given. For the rest of the scene, she remains silent until Orlando leaves the stage, and then she is the first to speak—almost as though she has been holding her tongue for a long while, and finally has been allowed to say her mind. She suggests that Rosalind should "have [her] doublet and hose pluck'd over [her] head" (IV.i.202-203) and cease such play, but Rosalind ignores her cousin entirely, and dissolves into sighs:

> *Ros.* O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am love! But it cannot be sounded, my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.
>
> *Cel.* Or rather, bottomless—that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out. (*AYL*, IV.i.205-211)

Rosalind once again ignores her cousin's words and continues her hyperbolic speech. It is a surprising emotional and linguistic turnaround, given the fact that minutes before, she delivered a spine-tingling speech about being practical about love.

However, the scene that follows drives Rosalind to be more reasonable and begin to look forward to a time in which she and Orlando can be together without the interventionary element of playacting. Orlando does not show up at their second meeting on time, and instead Oliver appears, holding a bloody handkerchief and seeking out Ganymed and Aliena to deliver bad news. Oliver proceeds to weave a narrative about Orlando's encounter with a "wretched ragged man" (IV.iii.106) who is fast asleep under an oak with a snake wrapped around his neck, about to strike. Startled by Orlando's presence, the snake glides away, but nearby a lioness, "udders all drawn dry" (IV.iii.114), crouches beneath the bushes, waiting to strike the sleeping man. Orlando draws closer, and realizes that the man

under the oak is his older brother. Aliena interrupts Oliver's story here, saying, "I have heard him speak of that same brother / And he did render him the most unnatural" (IV.iii.121-122). Pulled outside his narrative, Oliver continues to refer to himself in the third person, saying, "well I know he was unnatural" (IV.iii.124), then resumes his story, of how Orlando is kind and noble and battles the lioness in order to save his brother. Aliena and Ganymed see through his tale, and question Oliver closely:

> *Cel.* Are you his brother?
>
> *Ros.* Was't you he rescu'd?
>
> *Oli.* '*Twas I; but 'tis not I.* I do not shame
>
> To tell you what *I was*, since my conversion
>
> So sweetly tastes, being the thing *I am*. (IV.iii.133-137, emphases mine)

A common criticism of the play's conclusion is that Oliver and Duke Frederick, the apparent villains of *As You Like It*, are too quickly and too conveniently tamed by the end of the play, to the extent that their transformations feel contrived for the purposes of comedy. However, Oliver here remarks upon the terms of his transformation, making it clear that as a result of his encounter with Orlando in the forest of Arden, and in no small part due to the opportunity to narrativize his own experiences and being, Oliver is reformed of his selfish ways and undergoes a "conversion." The act of narrating his story, in much the same way that playacting benefits Rosalind and Orlando, enables Oliver to step outside of himself temporarily and gauge his own self, constituted in relation to others, and then come back out of it as a changed man. He is no longer "what I was," and now is "the thing I am"—and this self-transformation through language is what Rosalind desires for herself, and for Orlando as well.

Oliver tells Ganymed and Aliena that the bloody handkerchief is the result of the lioness' attack on Orlando, and that Orlando, bleeding in the cave, asked Oliver to convey the handkerchief and his apology for breaking his promise to return at two o'clock "unto the shepherd youth / That he in sport doth call his Rosalind" (IV.iii.155-156). Rosalind faints on the spot. Aliena, alarmed, and Oliver, nonplussed, seek to revive her; when Rosalind wakes, she says plaintively, almost to herself:

Ros. I would I were at home.

Cel. We'll lead you thither. (*AYL*, IV.iii.161)

In this moment, finally, Rosalind desires to come out of her playacting. By fainting, Rosalind forces herself outside of her state of being in the world, much the way that Daphne, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, removes herself from her state of being in the world by praying to her father to alter her shape. These acts—of fainting, and of bodily transformation—constitute the direct opposite of imagination, which creates worlds. Here, pushed to desperation and at the ends of their emotional tethers, Rosalind and Daphne refuse and negate the world in which they live by removing themselves from it. However, Rosalind does so temporarily, while Daphne's transformation into a laurel tree carries the weight of permanence. Daphne loses her social status as an agentative participant in the world and instead becomes a passive observer to it. By contrast, Rosalind awakens and returns to life with new resolve: to live within the world as an active participant, aided by those around her.

Orlando, too, desires to end their playacting. Having almost died in his encounter with the lioness only to survive to find that Oliver and Aliena have fallen in love "on so little acquaintance" (V.ii.1) and agreed to marry the very next day, Orlando no doubt feels weary of his scenes of courtship with "Rosalind" and wishes to enact the real thing:

Orl. O, how biter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

Ros. Why then to-morrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?

Orl. I can live no longer by thinking. (*AYL*, V.ii.43-50)

Ganymed tries to comfort Orlando by proposing yet another session of fiction-making, but Orlando refuses to participate. He has had enough with their sort of playacting and now wants to live and speak and act within the real world, and with the real Rosalind. At last, neither Rosalind nor Orlando need the imaginative capacities of the masquerade any longer. However, they cannot simply return to their old world. Rosalind and Orlando have been changed so fundamentally and irrevocably by the experience of imagination and affective power of language that they have outgrown the original terms of their playacting—Rosalind as Ganymed as "Rosalind," and Orlando courting Ganymed as such—yet they also cannot go back to the way that they used to be—Rosalind and Orlando—without betraying their new selves and the experiences that they have had. Instead, Ganymed and Orlando mutually agree to cease the old terms of their fiction-making and embark on a new imaginative path, one in which Ganymed, through magic, will marry Rosalind with Orlando. The scene concludes with Ganymed setting the wheels of motion in place for all to be as it should by the end of the play.

However, as Cynthia Lewis writes, "by assuming the role of wife, Rosalind does not dwindle into it. Rather, she defines it to her satisfaction."[102] Indeed, Rosalind cannot simply

[102] Lewis 64.

discard her role as "Rosalind," for what does it really mean to play oneself? To transform herself into Orlando's Rosalind, "human as she is" (V.ii.67), Rosalind must change her relationship with others through language, just as Hal drops "Hal" through speech acts in the Henry plays. By banishing Falstaff at the end of *2 Henry IV*, declaring coldly, "I know thee not, old man … I have long dreamt of such a kind of man … But being awak'd, I do despise my dream" (V.v.47-51), Hal effectively distances himself from his prior persona and baptizes himself anew. For the self-masquerade, transformation is not indicated by a simple announcement, nor conducted with a change in clothes, but instead must be enacted through language and its power to position its speaker in relation to another. In the history plays, speech acts are conducted in order to serve the ends of political maneuvering, and do not depend on the response of others for their power. By contrast, speech acts in the comedies operate through affect, emotion, desire, and generosity, and thus depend on the response of others to derive their effectiveness. In the final scenes of *As You Like It*, Rosalind's speech acts, and the responses of Duke Senior and Orlando to her words, interpolate Rosalind into a new form of being, a new Rosalind, reborn:

> *Ros.* [*To Duke Senior.*] To you I give myself, for I am yours. [*To Orlando.*]
>
> To you I give myself, for I am yours.
>
> *Duke S.* If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.
>
> *Orl.* If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind. (*AYL*, V.v.116-119)

CONCLUSION

Metamorphosis

Ovidian Identity, Shakespearean Transformation

Metamorphosis, as M. E. Lamb clarifies it, is a complex word. The word itself is an intersection of two unlike meanings, referring "both to the process and the product of the change."[103] For Ovid, metamorphosis resonates more as a product of change; even the title, *Metamorphoses*, uses the word in its noun form. For Shakespeare, the process of metamorphosis is ever-going, and never truly comes to an end; identity is never fixed, and does not stop forming itself to rest on a final state.

The self-masquerade, these rare moments of playacting in Shakespeare in which characters play versions of themselves for an audience who is fully aware of the fictive nature of their self-masquerade, illuminate this notion best. These scenes of playacting engender an awareness in the theatrical audience of the connections and disconnections that exist between identity and subjectivity, by staging scenarios in which we witness characters think about and look at themselves from a position outside themselves. The few characters who are able to enact this type of self-performance, who are able to slip in and out of one frame of mind to another close in kind but distant in reality, are most Ovidian—perhaps to an extent explored not even in Ovid. Do we ever see characters in the *Metamorphoses* objectively think about themselves, and watch themselves recreate their own identities? I am inclined to say no; perhaps Orpheus does this in an oblique way, when he simultaneously forges his new mindset toward love and women and comments upon his changed perspective through song,

[103] Lamb 64.

after he loses Eurydice to Hades for the second time. However, neither the mortals nor the gods of the *Metamorphoses* ever transcend the genre of disguise, as I have delineated it in this essay, to achieve a self-awareness of and control over their own subjectivities in the way that Rosalind and Hal do with their self-masquerades. Most of the transformations that mortals undergo in the *Metamorphoses* are neither self-chosen nor self-actuated, but forced upon them by various gods as corporeal punishment or for the gods' own pleasure or guilt.[104] Another small handful of human transformations occur seemingly "naturally," which is to say that the physical transformation follows, and reflects, an emotional transformation that the character has already undergone—for example, Niobe, Clytie, and Narcissus.[105] In both cases, these transformations are not deliberately chosen nor actively participated in by their human victims; and as a result, do not measure up to Rosalind's fully imaginative and generous mode of playacting.

Furthermore, characters in the *Metamorphoses*, both gods and mortals, forever retain their core identities even if they undergo physical transformation, even if they experience death, an essentialist perception of identity that closes down possibilities for reinvention of the self. When Narcissus is transformed into a flower after death in Book III of the *Metamorphoses*, he completely becomes that flower to the extent that it assumes his name and becomes its referent. Narcissus the man is physically erased, but the essence of his identity and its unique characteristics are preserved in the narcissus flower. When Jove

[104] Charles Martin, in the introduction to his 2005 translation of the *Metamorphoses*, takes a kinder perspective, and notes that in the first six books, "transformations are for the most part the result of divine action" (xiii), naming Daphne, Io, Callisto, and Arachne as examples (see Appendix 2); while in the second six books, "though the actual transformation has to be the work of a god, it is the result of human passion and crime" (xiv). Six of one, half dozen of the other—in both cases, these human transformations do not spring from the characters' own desires or motivations, but from the gods'.

[105] For brief summaries of their stories of metamorphosis, see Appendix 2.

disguises himself as Diana in order to ravish Callisto in Book II, his desires and behavior do not change in correspondence with his physical "counterfeiteth…straight in count'nance and array" (*Met*, II.530). Callisto is tricked by Jove's disguise at first, but when he seizes her and kisses her, he "Bewrayed plainly what he was and wherefore that he came" (*Met*, II.540). When Daphne is transformed into a laurel tree in Book I, she continues to "writhe" (I.681), in tree form, from Apollo's proffered kisses and embrace, and finally acquiesces to his entreaty for physical closeness only after he alters his request to use her boughs and leaves to adorn him and victors, by "bowing…her new-made boughs and tender branches down / And wagging of her seemly top as if it were her crown" (I.699-700). In the *Metamorphoses*, no one can escape who they are, not through physical transformation nor through death, a belief about identity as predetermined and fixed that the more than 250 tales of transformations contained in Ovid's narrative poem describes for its readers over and over again. Shakespeare disagrees, and stages in *As You Like It* actual moments of self-transformation that are imagined and enacted by the characters themselves, rather than by divine or supernatural intervention. Through the characters of Rosalind, Orlando, Celia, Oliver, Duke Frederick, and Phebe, Shakespeare suggests the capability of the human race to forge our own identities and subjectivities through the imaginative power of language and role-playing.

And so, renewed, I recall my project of recovery of Celia and Orlando as important characters in the play in their own right, which now strikes me as ever more urgent. Scholars absolutely must not cast Rosalind as the puppet-master of the play. By portraying her in such a light, they displace the dominion once held by the gods in the *Metamorphoses* and the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into Rosalind's hands, undermining what I posit as the play's true belief about its characters—or should I say, the play's true belief *in* its characters.

The generosity displayed by Rosalind toward those around her is amplified by the play's generosity toward its own characters, even toward such seemingly irredeemable characters as Oliver. It is a dangerous scholarly move to try to insinuate that we ought to accept Rosalind as the main character of the play, the sole choreographer of the play's events, the maestro who conducts the behavior of the other characters. This sounds more like Viola's enterprise, or Prince Hal's. Instead, Shakespeare's *As You Like It* operates on the fundamental humanist belief that every one has the capacity to direct their lives, independent of external, divine forces, and to enact genuine agency over their self-constitution and self-transformation as they like it.

APPENDIX 1

Paintings and Sculptures

Figure 1: *Apollo and Daphne*
Gian Lorenzo Bernini
1622-25
Carrara marble, height 243 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

Figure 2: *Ganymed and the Eagle*
Antonio da Correggio
1531-32
Oil on canvas, 163.5 x 70.5 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

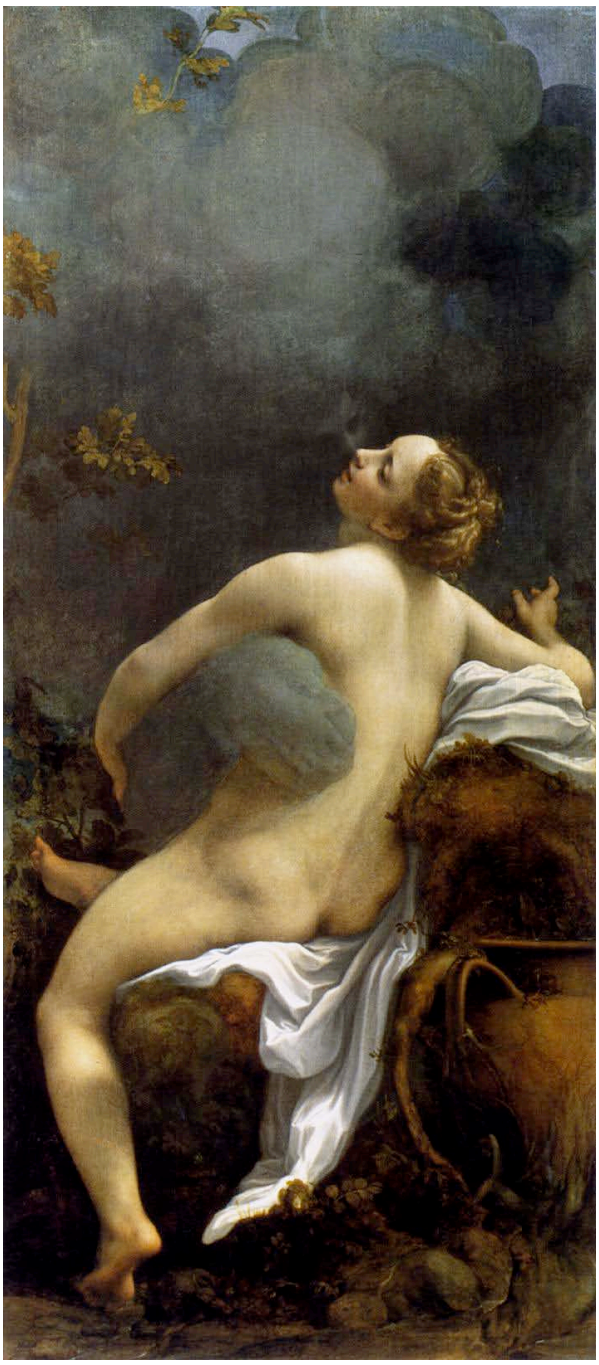

Figure 3: *Jupiter and Io*
Antonio da Correggio
1531-32
Oil on canvas, 163.5 x 70.5 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

Figure 4: *Leda with the Swan*
Antonio da Correggio
1531-32
Oil on canvas, 152 x 191 cm
Staatliche Museen, Berlin
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

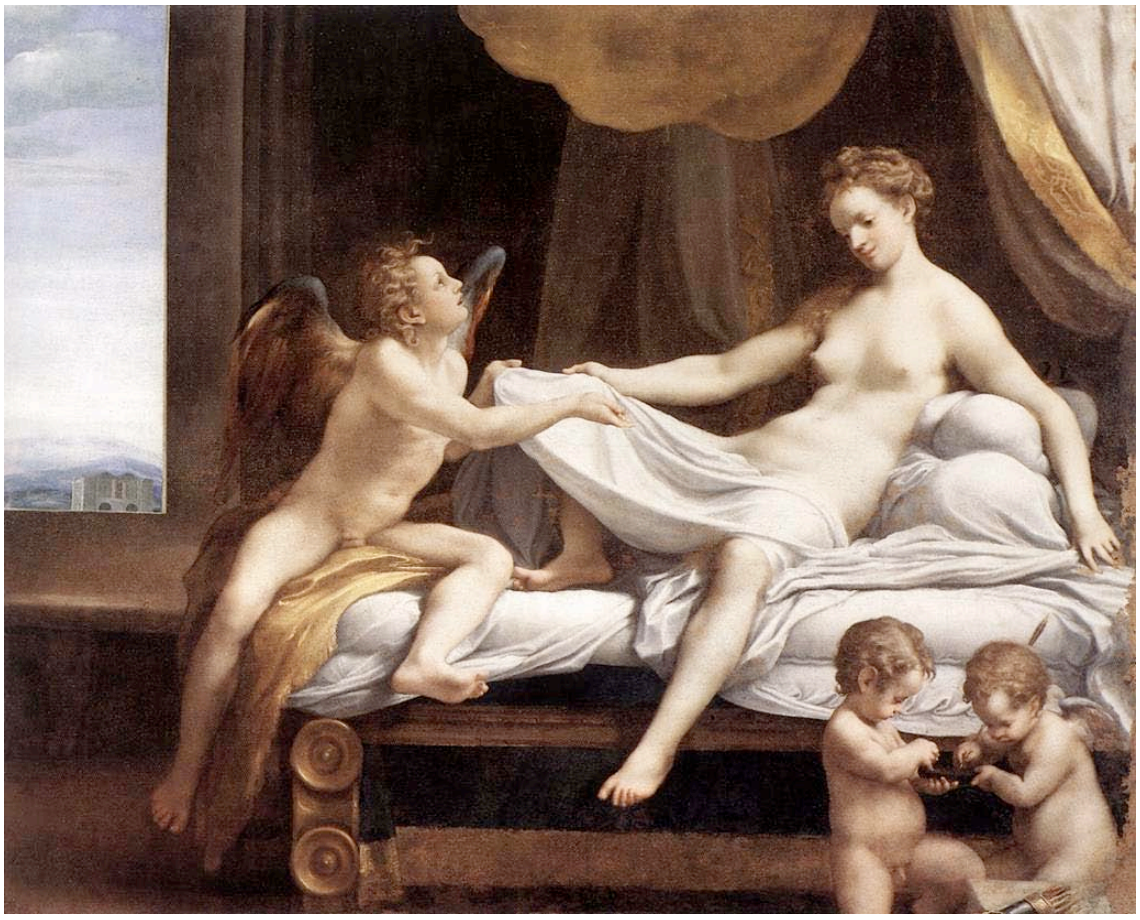

Figure 5: *Danaë*
Antonio da Correggio
1530
Oil on canvas, 158 x 189 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

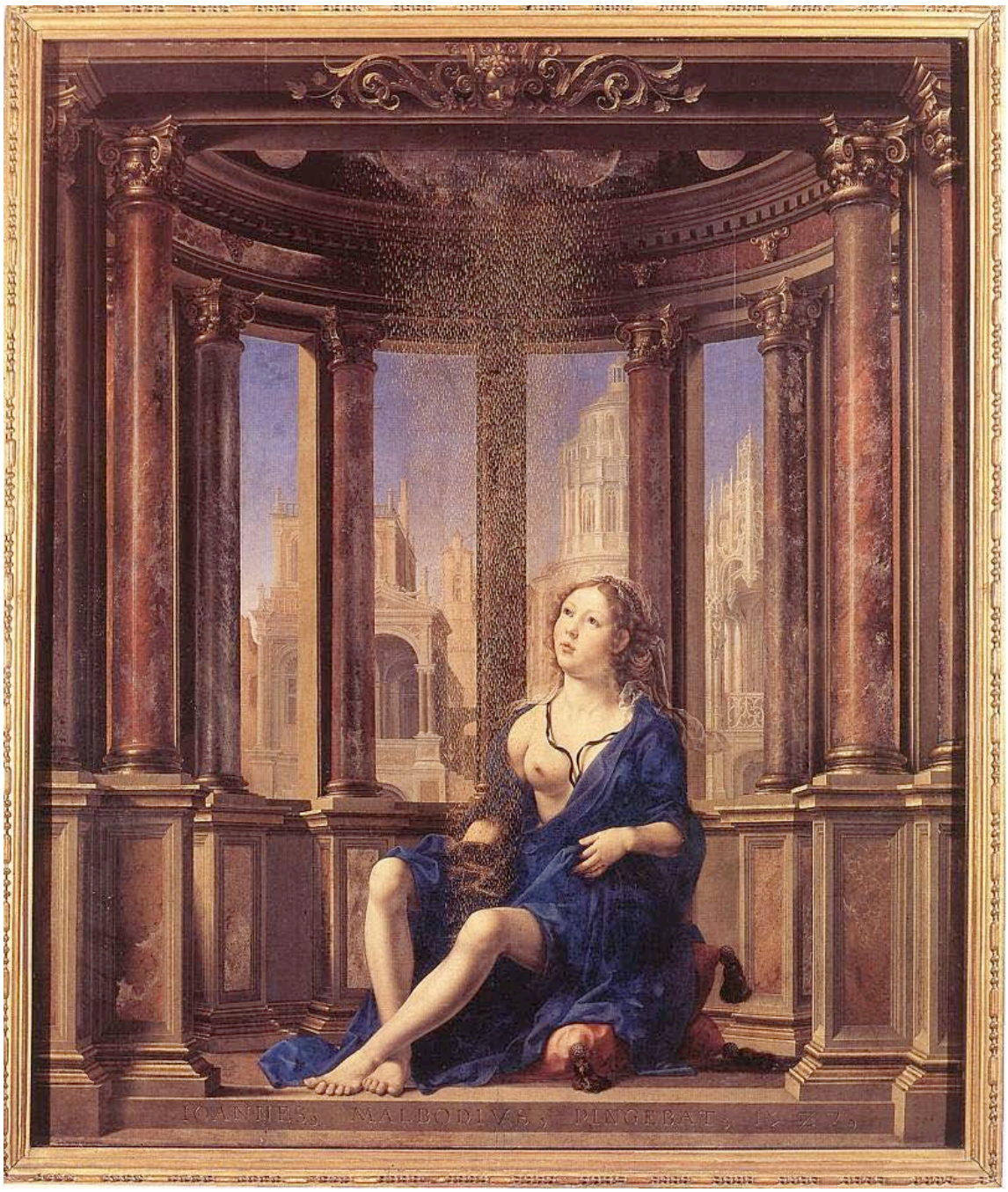

Figure 6: *Danaë*
Jan Gossaert
1527
Oil tempera on wood, 113,5 x 95 cm
Alte Pinakothek, Munich
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

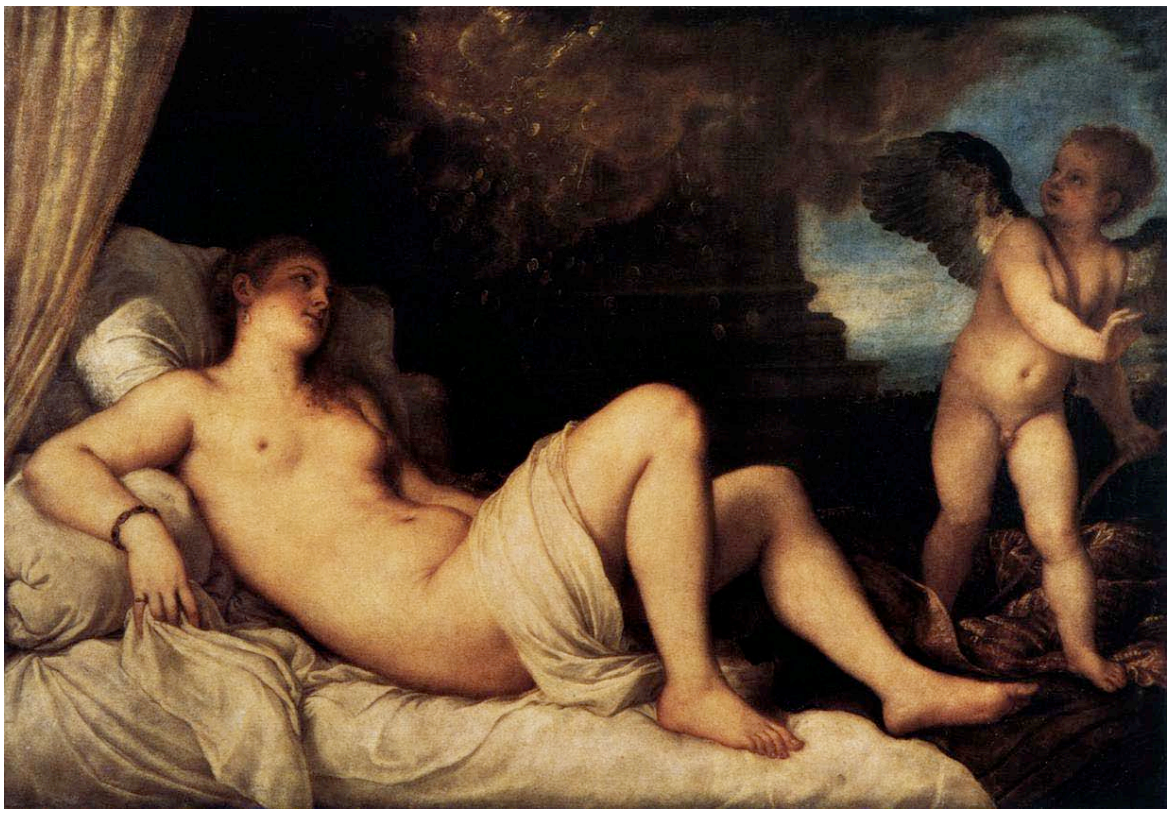

Figure 7: *Danaë*
Tiziano Vecellio (Titian)
1544-45
Oil on canvas, 117 x 69 cm
Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples
Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art

Figure 8: *Danaë*
Hendrick Goltzius
1603
Oil on canvas, 173.3 x 200 cm
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles
Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

APPENDIX 2

Abbreviated List of Mythological Characters

Adapted from Charles Martin; line numbers taken from the Arthur Golding translation

Actaeon (Book III, line 150): grandson of Cadmus, son of Autonoe; transformed into a deer by Diana

Apollo (Book I, line 545): son of Jove and Latona, twin brother of Diana; chased Daphne

Callisto (Book II, line 504 ff): approached by Jove in the guise of Diana, raped; subsequently turned into a bear by a jealous Juno; almost killed by her son but both turned into constellations by Jove to prevent the matricide

Clytie (Book IV, line 250): water nymph in love with Apollo, who deserted her; pined after the god for 9 days, changed into a flower

Danaë (Book IV, line 751): daughter of Acrisius, the king of Argos; mother of Perseus by Jove; raped by Jove as a golden shower

Daphne (Book I, line 545): daughter of Peneus; Apollo's first love; changed into a laurel by Peneus to escape Apollo

Diana: daughter of Jove and Latona, twin sister of Apollo; goddess of chastity, hunting, childbirth, and the moon

Ganymed (Book X, line 161; and Book XI, line 871): stolen away by Jove as an eagle; cupbearer to the gods

Helen: daughter of Leda and Jove, cause of Trojan War

Io (Book I, line 700): raped by Jove, changed into a heifer afterward, worshipped in Egypt as Isis

Iphis (Book IX, line 797): raised as a boy, later changed into a man by Isis

Jove: husband of Juno, ruler of heaven

Juno: sister and wife of Jove

Leda (Book VI, line 134): wife of Tyndareus, raped by Jove, which produced Castor and Pollux

Narcissus (Book III, line 427): fell in love with his own image, became a narcissus flower

Perseus (IV.836): son of Jove and Danaë, Greek hero who slew Medusa, rescued Andromeda

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