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Reversal of Traditional Gender Roles in *As You Like It*

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Reversal of Traditional Gender Roles in *As You Like It*

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Letter of Recommendation

Chiranjibi Dhakal has completed his thesis entitled “Reversal of Traditional Gender Roles in *As You Like It*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2073/03/23 B.S. to 2074/04/28 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Reversal of Traditional Gender Roles in *As You Like It*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Chiranjibi Dhakal, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The major thrust of this thesis is to examine how reverse gender role paves the way for the relaxation of strict codes, conducts and stereotypical role that are imposed on women in a patriarchal society. This issue is extensively probed in this research. Shakespeare's comedy, *As You Like It*, explores this issue at length. This issue is probed from the vantage point of Butlerian feminism. When Rosalind intervenes, disguised as Ganymede, Phoebe falls hopelessly in love with Ganymede. One day, Orlando fails to show up for his tutorial with Ganymede. Rosalind, reacting to her infatuation with Orlando, is distraught until Oliver appears. Oliver describes how Orlando stumbled upon him in the forest and saved him from being devoured by a hungry lioness. Oliver and Celia, still disguised as the shepherdess Aliena, fall instantly in love and agree to marry. As time passes, Phoebe becomes increasingly insistent in her pursuit of Ganymede, and Orlando grows tired of pretending that a boy is his dear Rosalind. Rosalind decides to end the charade. The major finding of this thesis is masculinity and femininity. Hence, are not the opposites but it is correlated. To find this conclusion here I used the gender theory as research methodology.

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I. Representation of Female Protagonist in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

This thesis attempts to study inverse gender role in Shakespeare's play, *As You Like It*. In the play, the major female characters done a masculine disguise. Here in the play Shakespeare makes the female characters dress up as men as a strategy to produce the comic effects. Such a dramaturgy makes the protagonist's gender identity as masculine. This act signifies something which helps women gain the greater liberty in male dominated contemporary Elizabethan society. Rosalind plays her role as a boy to escape from the palace. Shakespeare gives the masculine quality to his female character. Due to this peculiar dramatic gimmick, the play deconstructs Elizabethan gender stereotypes, the binary opposition of gender.

The great majority of the population in Elizabethan England played some part in determining the way Shakespeare chose to write his plays or present them to an audience. Although England may have barred female performers from the stage during the Elizabethan era, there were instances where females performed, not only in specific kinds of productions, but also in other European countries. Regardless of the reasons why England chose to ban females from the formal stage, the role of women in Elizabethan society was very distinct.

It is imperative to explore reasons why Shakespeare incorporates gender role reversal into his well-known play *As You Like It*, a story of hidden identity, love, exile and sexuality. Banished from the palace by her uncle, Rosalind flees to the forest with her cousin Celia and her jester. There, she joins her already exiled father and disguising herself as a boy. In the guise of a young man, she instructs her would be lover Orlando in the ways of love. Shakespeare to explore the dynamics of the city and natural space for exercising the freedom of different aspects of life. The most intriguing aspects of the treatment of love in *As You Like It* concerns the issue of

gender.

Role reversal is a situation in which someone adopts a role the reverse of that which they normally assume in relation to someone else, who typically assumes their role in exchange. In this situation, two people have chosen to exchange their duties and responsibilities. The internal motif of reversing women as a boy by Shakespeare is significant. Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive. They cast women however as emotional, weak and submissive. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify such discrimination. Many people today believe such inequities are a thing of the past because anti-discriminatory laws have been passed.

Cross-dressing and gender are closely related. Cross-dressing is a man dressed like a woman or vice versa. Gender is everyone's costume, and everyone puts on his or her own gender identity. Butler's main metaphor for cross-dressing is 'drag', i.e. dressing like a person of the opposite sex. All gender is a form of drag; there is no real core gender to refer to. Butler says: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender. Identity is performativity constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (25). In other words, gender is a performance. Butler thinks that the interrelation between gender and clothes is based on cultural inferences, which might be wrong.

When a man is dressed as a woman or vice versa, normally we regard his or her real gender as the reality without costume, the anatomy of the person. This kind of naturalized knowledge is based on a series of cultural inferences, but some of which might be erroneous. With regard to transsexuality, it is no longer possible to derive a judgment about stable anatomy from the clothes that cover and articulate the body.

The female characters play a major role for the dramatic smoothness of events

in Shakespeare's plays. Just as in reality, women of Shakespeare's dramas have been bound to rules and conventions of the patriarchal Elizabethan era. Therefore, it was very common in Elizabethan England to compel woman into marriages in order to receive power, legacy, dowry or land in exchange.

Even though the Queen herself was an unmarried woman, the roles of woman in society were extremely restricted. Daughters had been the property of their fathers and handed over to their future husbands through marriage. In Elizabethan time, women were considered as the weaker sex and dangerous, because their sexuality was supposedly mystic and therefore feared by men.

Women of that era were supposed to represent virtues like obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy, and patience. All these virtues, of course, have their meaning in relationship to men. The role allocation in Elizabethan society was strictly regulated; men were the breadwinners and women had to be obedient housewives and mothers. However, within this deprived, tight and organized scope, women have been represented in most diverse ways in Shakespearean plays.

The construction of female characters in Shakespeare's plays reflects the Elizabethan image of woman in general. For all that, Shakespeare supports the English Renaissance stereotypes of genders, their roles and responsibilities in society; He also puts their representations into question, challenges, and also revises them. Those, for tragedies typical early, unnatural deaths are considered as an erotic quality, which seems to be slumbering in all of Shakespeare's female characters. What is more, all of them appear to have guilt upon them.

The entire play is dominated by a conflict between male members of Rosalind's family that results in her being ostracized from the court. The men had to fight to the death in order to honor their family's names and prove their own manhood.

Furthermore, 17th century social norms considered a man who could not control his woman a cuckold; and a woman who would not submit to being controlled was severely ostracized. Only then can a female character's true role be defined to a satisfactory degree.

A prominent dramatist of all times, Shakespeare stands the test of time. His play, *As You Like It*, is widely held as the play of undying quality. Peter Cash, a noted drama critic, makes the following remarks regarding the core thematic content of the play:

As You Like It is a product both of Renaissance humanism and Christian theology. Shakespeare's characterization conforms to the view that a man and a woman can be defined in Platonic terms; at the same time, his plot teaches the Biblical lesson that, because they are mortal creatures, men and women should forgive each other their trespasses and unite/reunite in a spirit of brotherly or not-so-brotherly love. (12)

Shakespeare's aims in the play are to demonstrate that a man has a tri-partite soul. In particular, It aims to show that a man such as Orlando is not a balanced individual until the three parts of his soul are in complete harmony.

The belief that men are superior to women has been used, feminists have observed, to justify and maintain the male monopoly of positions of economic, political and social power, in other words, to keep women powerless by denying them the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political, and social power. Regarding the inferiority of typical female characters, Richard Angler makes the following observation:

That is, the inferior position long occupied by women in patriarchal society has been culturally, not biologically, produced. For example, it is a patriarchal assumption, rather than a fact, that more women than men suffer from hysteria. But because it has been defined as a female problem, hysterical behavior in men won't be diagnosed as such; instead, it will be ignored or given another less damaging name, for example, shortness temper. (65)

Of course, not all men accept patriarchal ideology. Those who do not believe, for example, that because men generally have been made by nature with stronger muscles, they have been made with any other natural superiority are often derided, by both patriarchal men and women, as weak and unmanly, as if the only way to be a man were to be patriarchal man.

William Shakespeare reflects and at times supports the English renaissance as stereotype of women and men and their various roles and responsibilities in society. He is also a writer who questions, challenges, and modifies those responsibilities. In this regard, Beardwood takes the following stand:

In his own time, Shakespeare seems to have been raising questions about the standard images of male and female about what the characteristics of each gender are, about what is defined as masculine and feminine, about how each gender possesses both masculine and feminine qualities and behaviors, about the nature and power of the hegemonic patriarchy, and about the roles women and men should play in acting out the stories of their lives. (32)

For Shakespeare, as well as for most of renaissance society, women as the feminine represented the following virtues which, importantly have their meaning in

relationship to the male; obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy, and patience.

Merging of masculine and feminine in both males and females might help to explain how easy it was for the Elizabethan stage to employ and accept all male and female characters like Juliet, Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, and Kate. Contemporary audiences, so set on separating female from male, would have great difficulty returning to this standard practice of Renaissance. Dwelling upon this side of the narrative, Daniel Robert says:

Indeed, both masculine and feminine characteristics were parts of what the Renaissance considered 'human nature' and each gender participated in both sets of characteristics to varying degrees. The way in which Renaissance society viewed men and women's role differed. Men were generally seen as having the ruling voice as father, husband, masters, teachers, preachers, soldiers and lords. (12)

It is possible that the questions that Shakespeare raised were at least in part due to the political situation of his time. Shakespeare's interest in the loyalty of gender roles may very well have been influenced by England's ruler.

Linda Neal Underwood praises tact of William Shakespeare as the popular dramatist of all time. Underwood claims that Shakespeare is guided by the practical notion of how to entertain audience. He makes the following observation about this practical side of the playwright:

William Shakespeare developed many stories into excellent dramatizations for the Elizabethan stage. Shakespeare knew how to entertain and involve an audience with fast-paced plots, creative imagery, and multi-faceted characters. *As You Like It* is timeless

comedy that has not lost its impact in nearly four hundred years. (51)

Gender role created gender discrimination. As a result, feminist movement came seeking out equal right and status for women. The patriarchy, considers women weaker in every field of household and social life. Because of this biological or physical construction and deep-rooted gender conception, men dominate women.

Domination of men over women in every social, economic, cultural and religious situation of human life has precipitated the hierarchical power relation. Addressing this aspect of troubled gender relation, Arthur Reed makes the following assertion:

This partiality, historically current, sustains itself in the form of male-domination against female subordination through ideological practices. The patriarchy fosters the gender-based inequalities that describe man as superior and women as inferior, man as powerful and the woman as powerless. An individual with the critical bent of mind sees patriarchy as grotesque, increasingly militaristic, increasingly greedy, colonialist, imperialistic, and brutal, with a terrible disregard of civil liberties, of democratic forms. (51)

It shows the consciousness of women who have begun to reject their own passivity. Feminism came into existence for the sake of women rights and human equality. It therefore, studied women as people who were either oppressed or suppressed or rejected the freedom of personal expression.

Deviant romanticism is the essence of *As You Like It*. Muller Booth is the first critic to point out the presence of deviant romanticism at the heart of this play. Certain degree of romantic deviation is necessary in order that progressive transformation could arise. In the brief citation mentioned below, Muller makes the following

remarks:

Hitting the nail on the head on the audience of the sixteenth century England, Shakespeare has done his best to display his talent in stupefying docile readers with stereotypical expectation. The setting is exotic, the subject is erotic, but the story is necrotic. For more than three hundred pages of ironic dithering about who will have sex with whom, the climax is endlessly delayed. (47)

Setting, subject and theme are interwoven in such a complex way that it is not easy to guess what sort of effect is likely to arise from such combination. Exotic setting suits quirky content. The ineffectuality of tradition and disintegration of life-affirming grace are brought to the public acknowledgement so that people will feel tempted to cast aside their obsolete customs and adopt the new outlook on life. The restrictive thoughts of the past should be dismissed however painful it might be. A good deal of headstrong disposition is instrumental in stabilizing some of the progressive changes that have appeared in life.

George Steiner takes Shakespeare's realistic comedy, *As You Like It*, as the most fusion of plenty of available modes of romantic rendering. From Roman tropes to pastoral modes, this play does not leave a moment to seize upon any available dramatic tricks and gimmicks. Addressing this aspect of the play, Steiner makes the following remarks:

As You Like It belongs to the literary tradition known as pastoral: which has its roots in the literature of ancient Greece, came into its own in Roman antiquity with Virgil's Eclogues, and continued as a vital literary mode through Shakespeare's time and long after.

Typically, a pastoral story involves exiles from urban or court life who

flees to the refuge of the countryside. (15)

Characters in this play often disguise themselves as shepherds in order to converse with other shepherds on a range of established topics. Their choices and priorities range from the relative merits of life at court versus life in the country to the relationship between nature and art.

Shakespeare's *As You Like It* develops many of the traditional features and concerns of the pastoral genre. Focusing on its nexus with pastoral mode, Ronald Isherwood makes the following observation:

This comedy examines the cruelties and corruption of court life and gleefully pokes holes in one of humankind's greatest artifices: the conventions of romantic love. The play's investment in pastoral traditions leads to an indulgence in rather simple rivalries: court versus country, realism versus romance, reason versus mindlessness, nature versus fortune, young versus old, and those who are born into nobility versus those who acquire their social standing. But rather than settle these scores by coming down on one side or the other. (17)

As You Like It offers up a world of myriad choices and endless possibilities. In the world of this play, no one thing need cancel out another. In this way, the play manages to offer both social critique and social affirmation. It is a play that at all times stresses the complexity of things. At its heart lies the simultaneous pleasures and pains of being human.

In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare dispenses with the time--consuming and often hard-won processes involved in change. This is the judgmental stand of Michael Mavaille. Concentrating on this aspect of the play, he makes the following commentary:

The characters do not struggle to become more pliant—their changes are instantaneous. Oliver, for instance, learns to love both his brother Orlando and a disguised Celia within moments of setting foot in the forest. Furthermore, the vengeful and ambitious Duke Frederick abandons all thoughts of fratricide after a single conversation with a religious old man. Certainly, these transformations have much to do with the restorative, almost magical effects of life in the forest, but the consequences of the changes also matter in the real world. (43)

These social reforms are a clear improvement and result from the more private reforms of the play's characters. *As You Like It* not only insists that people can and do change, but also celebrates their ability to change for the better.

Although all these critics and reviewers examined the play, *As You Like It*, from different angles and viewpoints, none of them noticed the issue of inverse role. Most of the female characters are assigned with the masculine role to perform. To achieve this goal, they are instructed to put on male clothes, codes and conducts. Though this dramaturgy aims at reproducing the halo of realism, its motive is somewhat more than this. This strategic overture tends to balance somewhat lopsided relation between man and women. Since, the topic of traditional gender role is untouched and unexplored; the researcher claims that it is the fresh, new and original topic.

All the normative and classical norms and mores regarding to the female gender fall flat. Traditional gender role is no longer stabilized. It is shaken to the core. It is sure that a new women friendly gender role is scheduled to arise in the wake of women's hectic and fierce participation in the sexual pleasure cruise. The biological roles of women limit them enormously. Due to the confinement of women in the

reproductive process, they hardly get a chance to move confidently in the external world of excitement, fun, adventure and pleasure cruise. That is why the female characters of this novel are headstrong enough to exploit sexual pleasure. No deep-rooted sexual mores trouble female characters of this novel in their passion for exploiting their sexual desires.

The researcher makes use of theoretical insights of Judith Butler. The sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of men will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males. In this context, it is relevant to cite Butler's view:

The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice. With the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one. This radical splitting of the gendered subject poses yet another set of problems. (76)

It would make no sense to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex. Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a preconceived notion of sex. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature. Gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which sexed nature or a natural sex is produced and established as pre-discursive. This production of sex as the pre-discursive ought to be understood as the effect of the apparatus of cultural construction designated by gender.

Gender roles restrict what both males and females can do. In fact, each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture, age and position within society. Butler makes the following commentary on the notion of stereotypical gender role:

Men, though, while unique individuals, share one thing in common gender privilege. The socialization can lead boys and men to feeling justified in subordinating women and girls. Exclusive role that women play in this socialization process itself is confining. The privileging of boys begins early with differential child-rearing strategies and parental expectations. Such strategies are usually reinforced by the more-present mother. (53)

Women, therefore, also contribute to the perpetuation of male behavior and males' sense of superiority. In effect, these sex roles confine people, forcing us to be what others want us to be. Gendered norms and behaviors are assimilated rather than being natural or genetic. While mass culture likes to assume that there is a fixed, true masculinity. Butler, furthermore, says that "In keying queer desire enhanced by liberal agency to personal discovery, as well as addressing the question of legitimacy, these accounts gesture toward one of liberalism's intractable values"(46). The development or flourishing of persons according to their varying conceptions of the good constitutes the basis of lesbian mode of analysis. For the purposes of legitimating same-sex desire, the novel imagines amorous and consumerist modes of desire as practically identical. The homology underwrites Carol's righteous defense against the family court's accusations of her frailties and degeneration. Erotic intimacy, she insists, is a question of pleasure after all.

This thesis will have three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher

introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding to the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the text, *As You Like It*, by applying the tool of Butlerian feminism. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

II. Reversal of Traditional Gender Roles in *As You Like It*

This research probes the reversal of traditional gender role and its outcome in Shakespeare's comedy, *As You Like It*. Role reversal is a situation in which the protagonist plays the role of other to deceive others to fulfill his/her objectives. It is a technique typical to psychodrama. It is considered by many practitioners as the single most effective instrument in therapeutic role-playing. It helps the protagonist to fall and understand the other role and how it reacts with its environment. Role reversal is useful for a protagonist to gain control over a hierarchy situation with which the protagonist disagrees. Role reversal consists of a daughter reversing roles with her mother, a husband with his wife, a student with his teacher or a persecutor with his victim.

In the play, the heroine disguises herself with man's clothes and name: Rosalind as Ganymede. Under man's name, she acts as man and her masculine characteristics are shown. Meanwhile, she still keeps her femininity. Therefore, cross-dressing mingles two identities together: a woman and a man. Having both masculine and feminine characteristics, the heroine's gender is ambiguous. In disguise, Shakespeare's heroine reveals her masculine characteristics. Thus, the heroine constructs her masculine appearance before traveling, which proves that masculinity is constructed.

While the roles involves in, such role reversals are usually complementary and interdependent. One does not exist without the other. They are also opposites that strive for unity. Each side is encouraged to understand the point of view of its own counterpart and to find a peaceful way of co-existence. The person taking the role of the other 'is not only feeling but doing; he is both constructing and reconstructing a present or an absentee subject in a specific role relation. Often it matters little whether

the reconstruction is an identical copy of a natural setting, as long as he projects the dynamic atmosphere of the setting; this may be more impressive than its identical copy.

Role reversal involves responses which are based, not only on how audience perceives the character. Obviously, complete role reversal is impossible. No one can fully conceptualize the feelings, attitudes and motives of another person, and much less reproduce what the writers perceive. All differ in our ability to put ourselves in the position of another person and in our skill to reproduce the inner experience of that other person in action. The ability to role reverse is not only dependent on a certain degree of intellectual, imaginative, emotional and interpersonal functioning, but also on role-taking and role-playing skills which are insufficiently developed in many persons.

Shakespeare creates a pervading sense of sexual ambiguity, which is embodied in Rosalind and friends and extends to their dress, romance, disposition, and speech. The fourth chapter in *As You Like It* illustrates Shakespeare at his gender-bending best. The following snatch of conversation is illustrative of this point:

Rosalind. Or else she could not have the wit to do this: the wiser, the way warder: make the doors upon a woman's wit and it will out at the casement; shut that and twill out at the key-hole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney. Orlando. A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say 'Wit, whither wilt?' Rosalind. Nay, you might keep that check for it till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbor's bed. (IV. i. 142-50)

Rosalind disguises herself with men's clothes and names as Ganymede. Under man's name, she acts as man and his masculine characteristic is shown. Meanwhile, she still

keeps her femininity. Therefore, cross-dressing mingles two identities together: a woman and a man.

The researcher makes use of the theory of postmodern feminism and Judith Butler's version of feminism. The core concept of Butler's performance based gender is instrumental in conducting the thorough analysis of the text. Entire gamut of Butler's thought is marked, in part, by a linguistic turn. This tenet of thought puts forward a view of gender as a discursive construction and performance rather than a biological fact. Butler's view in this regard is cited below:

The conflation of sex and gender, essentialist generalizations about men and women, and the tendency to view gender as fixed, binary, and determined at birth, rather than a fluid, mobile construct that allows for multiple gender expressions. The gender dichotomy of man/woman so pervasive in Western culture can be understood in terms of the cultural imperative to be heterosexual. (59)

As claimed by Butler, Butlerian feminism rejects a dualistic view of gender, heteronormativity, and biological determinism. They point to the inseparability of the body from language and social norms. Butler argues against the assumption that all women share a common oppression.

Having both masculine and feminine characteristics, the heroines' gender is ambiguous. In disguise, Shakespeare's heroine reveals her masculine characteristics. Thus, the heroine constructs her masculine appearance before traveling, which proves that masculinity is constructed. The following dialogic part is illustrative of this issue:

Touchstone: Of a certain knight that swore by his honor they were good pancakes, and swore by his honor the mustard was naught. Now I will stand to it the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good,

and yet was not the knight forsworn.

Celia: How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

Rosalind: Ay, marry, now unmuzzle your wisdom.

Touchstone: Stand you both forth now: Stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave. (1. ii. 13)

Rosalind, the daughter of Duke Senior, is considered one of Shakespeare's most delightful heroines. She is independent minded, strong-willed, good-hearted, and terribly clever. When her cruel uncle Frederick, who has usurped her father's dukedom and banished him, banishes Rosalind too on no justifiable ground, the conflict between them arises. Earlier, her uncle has let her stay at court as his daughters. Celia and Rosalind are very good friends and cannot live without each other. When Celia pleads with Duke Frederick to allow Rosalind to stay, she points out that the pair has always slept in the same bed.

Arguing that not only gender, but sex as well is culturally constructed, Judith Butler suggests that "When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice. It brings forth the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one" (175). The social and ethical implications and ramifications of the de-sexualization of gender are significant. Butler argues that feminism should adopt a carefully constructed postmodernism, taking the best aspects of each. Feminist writers were provided a lucid discussion of the postmodern and feminist critiques of the subject. Their views are cited below:

Butler provides feminism with a critique of feminism's foundationalism and essentialism, while feminism provides postmodernism with feminism's strength as social criticism.

Furthermore, a carefully constructed postmodern feminism would avoid any type of universalisms such as early feminist attempts to find one universal explanation of sexism that would be cross-cultural. (175)

Butler concludes that carefully constructed feminism would embrace the death of the subject. Rather than a Universalist notion of woman or feminine, social identity would be a multi-strand conception including class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age.

People normally slept two to a bed in Shakespeare's time - and went everywhere together, "coupled and inseparable" (I. iii. 78). The women's special bond is not lost on those who witness their friendship - as Duke Frederick's courtier, Le Beau, exclaims, the cousins share a love that is "dearer than the natural bond of sisters" (I. ii. 289). This shows how the patriarchy does not understand this bond as it tries to limit the freedom of women. What it cares is its honor and status in society, for which Rosalind challenges acting as a man.

Rather than submissively sneaking into defeated exile, she resourcefully uses her trip to the Forest of Ardenne as an opportunity to take control of her own destiny. She decides to own masculinity so as to escape the oppressive patriarchy. When she disguises herself as Ganymede, a handsome young man, Rosalind's talents and charms are on full display. Elizabethans could be very inflexible in their notions of the sexual and social roles that different genders play. They placed greater importance than we do on the external markers of gender such as clothing and behavior.

Rosalind's decision to masquerade as a man may have been more thrilling and perhaps even threatening to the social order. By assuming the clothes and likeness of a man, Rosalind treats herself to powers that are normally beyond her reach as a woman. By subverting something as simple as a dress code, Rosalind ends up

transgressing the Elizabethans' carefully monitored boundaries of gender and social power.

Rosalind: O, they take the part of a better wrestler than me.

Celia: O, a good wish upon you! You will try in time, in despite of a fall. But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest.

Is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?

Rosalind: The Duke my father loved his father dearly.

Celia: Do not therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase I should hate him, or my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando. (1.iii.23)

Indeed, it is this very freedom that Rosalind seeks as she departs for the Forest of Ardenne: "Now go we in content, to liberty, and not to banishment" (I. iii. 139-140). By christening herself Ganymede, Rosalind underscores the liberation that awaits her in the woods. Ganymede is the name of Jove's beautiful young male page and lover, and the name is borrowed in other works of literature and applied to beautiful young homosexuals. But while the name links Rosalind to a long tradition of homosexuals in literature, it does not necessarily confine her to an exclusively homosexual identity.

Jane Flax approaches gender from the vantage point of gender relations.

Gender relations have for the most part been simply relations of domination. Flax describes gender relations as:

Differentiated and asymmetrical divisions and attributions of human traits and capacities are difficult to chart and document graphically.

Through gender relations two types of persons are created: man and woman. Man and woman are posited as exclusionary categories. One

can be only one gender, never the other or both. If gender relations are not to continue to be relations of domination, then gender itself needs to be problematized. (173)

Flax eschews Enlightenment essentialisms and universalisms. She, too, finds that feminist notions of self, knowledge, and truth are too contradictory to those of the Enlightenment to be contained within its categories. She suggests that both sex and gender find their origin in social relations, rather than in a natural or essential difference in being.

The Forest of Ardenne is big enough to embrace both homosexual and heterosexual desires. In this way, Rosalind can play the man convincingly. Her efficiency is reflected in the following bit of dialogue:

Were it not better,
 Because that I am more than common tall,
 That I did suit me all points like a man?
 A gallant curdle-axe upon my thigh,
 A boar-spear in my hand; and, - in my heart
 Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will,
 We'll have a swashing and a martial outside. (I. iii. 118-25)

Rosalind is confident because she is more than common tall; she suits to be like a man, which implies that tall is related to men. If a woman is tall, she owns masculinity to some degree. Though Celia does not disguise as man, Celia's devotion to Rosalind is unmatched, as evidenced by her decision to follow her cousin into exile. To make the trip, Celia assumes the disguise of a simple shepherdess and calls herself Aliena. This reflects a woman's solidarity with the plight of another woman victimized by patriarchy.

Rosalind has good reputation among the people of her country due to “her smoothness, her very silence, and her patience” (I iii. 80). Thus, Duke Frederick wants to banish her so that Celia, his daughter, can be the “more bright and more virtuous” (I. ii. 83). Therefore, in disguise, the heroines’ gender identities are ambiguous: they are both men and women, both masculine and feminine. 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.

Judith Butler best illustrates the feminist position with regard to gender. She is profoundly influenced in regard to the death of the subject and the theory of the body. Butler questions the “assumption that there is a subject-woman. In fact, the notion of the decentered self is essential to her postmodern critique of gender” (171). The consequences which follow from a thoroughly postmodern feminist theory of gender become most apparent in Butler's work. She notes the importance of the question of the subject for politics in general.

Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow. Rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time. It is instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. These acts give the illusion of an abiding gendered self. Butler’s view is mentioned below:

The body performs or acts out what the dominant heterosexual culture determines to be normative for one sex or the other. In this way the dominant heterosexual culture conceals the fact that gender is performative. It need not be limited to those acts which the dominant culture determines to be normative heterosexual acts. (147)

The gendered body has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and

misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from some defect in the active force or from some material indisposition.

Rosalind's motives for cross dressing are less straight-forward than other occurrences of playacting in Shakespeare. 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. 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.

Rosalind's reasons for taking on the role, and keeping it, are complex and over determined, and ought to be carefully examined. Rosalind 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. Her motivation for cross-dressing, later in the play, can be perceived as a bizarrely circuitous ploy to seduce Orlando.

Rosalind's motivations for becoming Ganymed try 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 naiveté.

Rosalind assumes her male disguise as a method of protection against thieves

and assailants might be sound. 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 assayed to steal the clownish fool out of your father's court? Would he not be a comfort to our travel?" (I. iii. 129-131).

Butler characterizes gender as the effect of reiterated acting. It produces the effect of a static or normal gender while obscuring the contradiction and instability of any single person's gender act. This effect produces a narrative that is sustained by the tacit collective agreement to perform. On Butler's hypothesis, the socially constructed aspect of gender performativity is most obvious in drag performance. Rather, Butler suggests that what is performed can only be understood through reference to what is barred from the signifier within the domain of corporeal legibility. Butler explains that "a masculine gender is formed from the refusal to grieve the masculine as a possibility of love. A feminine gender is formed through the fantasy which the feminine is excluded as a possible object of love" (154).

The nobleman's son Orlando, who has fallen in love with Rosalind at first sight, runs through the Forest of Ardenne, mad with love after defeating the court wrestler, Charles. Another reason why he leaves his house is that his faithful servant Adam warns of his elder brother Oliver's plot against his life. Out in the forest, he hangs poems that he has composed in Rosalind's honor on every tree, hoping that passersby will see her "virtue witnessed everywhere" (III. ii. 8). Rosalind enters, disguised as Ganymede. She reads one of Orlando's poems, which compares her to a priceless jewel.

Rosalind: I could find 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.

Celia: I pray you bear with me; I cannot go no further.

Touchstone: For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you; yet
I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for I think you have no money
in your purse. (11.iv.35)

Touchstone, a clown mocks the verse, claiming that he could easily churn out a comparable succession of rhymes. He does so with couplets that liken Rosalind to a cat in heat, a thorny rose, and a prostitute who is transported to the pillory on a cart. Rosalind rebukes Touchstone for his meddling. Just then, Celia enters disguised as the shepherdess Aliena. She, too, has found one of Orlando's verses and reads it aloud. The women agree that the verses are terribly written, yet Rosalind is eager to learn the identity of their author.

According to Butler, gender performance is only subversive because it is the kind of effect that resists calculation. She delivers the following contentious claim:

Signification is multifarious that the subject is unable to control it.
Subversion is always occurring and always unpredictable. The political potential of gender performances can be evaluated relative to similar past acts in similar contexts in order to assess their transgressive potential. (121)

Butler's concepts of gender performativity are a misguided retreat from engaging with real-world concerns. She suggests to her readers that this sly send-up of the status quo is the only script for resistance that life offers. Butlerian feminism is in many ways easier than the old feminism. It tells scores of talented young women that they need not work on changing the law.

Celia teases her friend, hesitating to reveal this secret until Rosalind is nearly insane with anticipation. When Celia admits that Orlando has penned the poems, Rosalind can hardly believe it. Like a smitten schoolgirl, she asks a dozen questions about her intended lover, wanting to know everything from where he is to what he looks like. As Celia does her best to answer these questions, despite Rosalind's incessant interruptions, Orlando and his brother, Jaques enter. Hiding, the women eavesdrop on their conversation.

Orlando and Jaques clearly do not care for one another's company and exchange a series of barbed insults. Jaques dislikes Orlando's sentimental love, declaring it the worst possible fault, while Orlando scoffs at Jaques's melancholy. Eager to part, Jaques walks off into the forest, leaving Orlando alone. Rosalind decides to confront Orlando. She approaches him as the young man Ganymede, and speaks of a man that has been carving the name Rosalind on the trees. She claims to recognize the symptoms of those who have fallen under the spell of true love, and assures Orlando that he exhibits none of them. He is, she says, too neatly dressed to be madly in love. She promises to cure him if he promises to woo Ganymede as though Ganymede were Rosalind.

As Ganymede, Rosalind vows to make the very idea of love unappealing to Orlando by acting the part of a fickle lover. Orlando is quite sure he is beyond cure, but Rosalind says, "I would cure you if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cot, and woo me" (111. ii. 381-382). With all his heart, Orlando agrees. Here, instead of waiting to be wooed, she adopts the freedom to court a lover of her choosing. By subverting something as simple as a dress code, Rosalind ends up transgressing the Elizabethans' carefully monitored boundaries of gender and social power, though it makes her gender ambiguous.

No sooner has the reader gained some understanding of the Orlando/Ganymede relationship than Shakespeare repaints the characters with a different brush. Just as they enter into the charade it seems as though they drop it, eschewing the all-important "would" for words that bespeak real urges. "I will be your Rosalind . . . ask me What you Will, I will grant it" says Ganymede (IV. i. 147). Without pause, Orlando begs, "Then love me, Rosalind" (IV. i. 147). The reader is thus faced with what are now strongly homosexual connotations, for two reasons. In the world of Arden where nothing is as it seems and most everything is manipulated or 'played' with in some fashion, this possibility cannot be ruled out.

Monique Wittig talks about the political assumption associated with the percolating principles and practices of feminism. Attention should be paid to these remarks in a sensitive way. Wittig discloses the following remarks:

The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. (94)

It has been to find examples or illustrations of a universal principle that is assumed from the start. That form of feminist theorizing has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate non-Western cultures. By so doing it tends to support highly Western notions of oppression. The urgency of feminism to establish a universal status for has occasionally motivated the shortcut to a categorical universality.

Rosalind's commentary on Leander and Troilus serves to illuminate two mythological examples of heterosexual lovers, albeit false ones, according to her. Her standards are impossibly high; she mocks, "These are all lies. Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love" (IV. i. 147).

Heterosexuality is clearly the benchmark by which she measures love; even though she labels the heroes failures, their significance lies in the lengths they have gone, and not succeeded, in its pursuit.

Espousing heterosexuality solidifies Rosalind's femininity, but at the same time, examples abound of Ganymede's thoroughly virile speech patterns. Of a snail he remarks, "He comes slowly, he carries his house on his head-a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman. Besides, he brings his destiny with him" (IV. i. 145). Within two sentences, Ganymede uses the masculine pronouns 'he', 'him', or 'his' seven times. What does it say about someone who can assume the mannerisms of the opposite sex so easily and thoroughly? Surely, more than that they can act well.

Cross-dressing permeates Shakespeare's work, in both the writing and the performance. On the most fundamental level, women were not permitted to act on the Elizabethan stage, so all female characters were played by men in women's attire. Cross-dressing becomes an important plot device throughout Shakespeare's plays. By blurring gender lines, Shakespeare confronts his audience with the fact that much of its judgment of male and female behavior is tied to preconceived notions of how each gender should behave, rather than to each character's individual needs and motives. While this tactic may not be novel to a twenty-first-century audience, it unquestionably challenged the way gender roles were perceived in the Elizabethan era.

Celia legitimizes her homoerotic desire for her cousin by defining Rosalind as

her emotional twin and conflating her identity with her “sweet my coz” (1. ii. 1). Character’s accounts of Celia and Rosalind’s relationship underline their extreme intimacy, for, as Charles the wrestler says, “Never two ladies loved as they do” (I. i. 97). Le Beau tells Orlando that their “loves are dearer than the natural bond of sisters,” implying that their relationship is more than familial (I. ii. 254-55). Le Beau’s statement provides one example of textual support for a homoerotic reading of the cousins’ bond. Celia recounts how Rosalind and she have “slept together” (I. iii. 69), “like Juno’s swans / Still we went coupled and inseparable” (1. iii. 71-72). Because of this closeness, Celia’s attachment to her cousin constructs her identity and she defines herself in terms of Rosalind.

In Shakespeare’s play, Celia uses the language of marriage to define her identity and legitimize her desire for Rosalind while adhering to the hetero-normative institutions of society. Because no concept of a homosexual identity existed when Shakespeare wrote the play, Celia turns to marital identities to express her desire. She offers her father to her cousin to equalize their love:

Herein I see thou love me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the Duke my father, so thou has been still with me I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine. So I wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee. (1. ii. 6-11)

This exchange of fathers could only take place through a marriage between Rosalind and Celia, in which Rosalind would take Celia’s father as father-in-law. Shakespeare frequently conflates ‘Father-in-law’ with ‘Father’ throughout his plays. Celia even tells Rosalind that when Duke Frederick dies, “thou shalt be his heir, for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce; I will render thee again in affection” (1. ii. 16-

17). By making Rosalind her heir, Celia establishes a bond akin to marriage, even though no actual ceremony has taken place.

The notion of a generally shared conception of women has been much more difficult to displace. The masculine/feminine binary constitutes only the exclusive framework. In every other way the specificity of the feminine is once again fully decontextualized. Indeed, the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category. To quote Wittig again:

These domains of exclusion reveal the coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction. Indeed, the fragmentation within feminism and the paradoxical opposition to feminism from women suggest the necessary limits of identity politics. The suggestion that feminism can seek wider representation for a subject that it itself constructs has the ironic consequence. This problem is not ameliorated through an appeal to the category of women for merely strategic purposes. (95)

By conforming to a requirement of representational politics, feminism thus opens itself to charges of gross misrepresentation. Obviously, the political task is not to refuse representational politics. The juridical structures of language and politics constitute the contemporary field of power. Within feminist political practice, a radical rethinking of the ontological constructions of identity appears to be necessary.

As Celia and Rosalind's mirroring begins to dissipate, Celia loses the foundation of her identity, which leads to more and more open silences. When Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind, Celia accepts the same sentence of banishment herself, emphasizing that because of their closeness, she, and her cousin must both be exiled. Rosalind denies Celia's logic:

Rosalind lacks, then, the love
 Which teaches thee that thou and I are one.
 Shall we be sundered? Shall we part, sweet girl?
 No: let my father seek another heir. A
 Therefore devise with me how we may fly,
 Whither to go and what to bear with us,
 And do not seek to take your change upon you,
 To bear your grief's yourself and leave me out. (I. iii. 92-99)

Celia continues using the marital imagery to posit that she and Rosalind are one. She will share everything with Rosalind, from losing her inheritance to bearing Rosalind's grief. In fact, Celia is the one who first suggests leaving the court and escaping into Ardenne by dressing themselves in poor and mean attire. By cross-dressing, Rosalind breaks the oneness of her and Celia's characters, undermining Celia's identity and prompting her open silences.

Ganymede also relies on his hat to signal his masculinity, although the hat emphasizes his maleness, thereby underscoring how his relationship with Phoebe is both homoerotic and heterosexual. Phoebe is attracted to Ganymede because of his physical feminine qualities and recounts to Silvia:

There was a pretty redness in his lip,
 A little riper and more lusty-red
 Than that mixed in his cheek was just the difference
 Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask. (III. v. 119-22)

Pulling the hat back on, Ganymede tries to play up his masculinity. As Phoebe likes the feminine features of the youth, this action fails to dissuade her from falling in love with the sweet youth. Wearing the hat completes Ganymede's costume and underlines

his masculinity and actually reconfigures Phoebe's desire as heterosexual Shakespeare's England would present the extra layer of a boy actor for both Rosalind and Phoebe, therefore on the playhouse level.

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 passed upon her; she is banished.
 Celia. Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege,
 I cannot live out of her company. (I.iii.80-86)

Celia does not directly contradict her father's suggestion that Rosalind upstages her. Instead she 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. One's identity is constituted in relation to the other through love and affect.

If a stable notion of gender no longer proves to be the foundational premise of feminist politics, a new sort of feminist politics is now desirable to contest the very reifications of gender and identity. To trace the political operations that produces and

conceals the juridical subject of feminism is precisely the task of a feminist genealogy of the category of women. To dwell upon the concept of feminist genealogy, Butler makes the following observation:

In the course of this effort to question women as the subject of feminism, the unproblematic invocation of that category may prove to preclude the possibility of feminism as a representational politics. The identity of the feminist subject ought not to be the foundation of feminist politics. Representation will be shown to make sense for feminism only when the subject of women is nowhere presumed. (164)

The unproblematic unity of women is often invoked to construct solidarity of identity. a split is introduced in the feminist subject by the distinction between sex and gender. The distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed. Hence, gender is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex. If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way.

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 banished father, you must not learn me to how to remember any extraordinary pleasure” (I.ii.5-7), Celia counters, “I see thou loves 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.

At one point Rosalind asks her to answer, with a single word, 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. What is to become of me in this state of restlessness? (III.ii.33)

Celia has yet to experience the giddiness, pains, and pleasures of love. She 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 regrind her emotions whenever she begins to verge on being carried away by them.

The concept of gender has long been central to feminist thought. However, its evolution over the past twenty years has resulted in a growing consensus among feminist theorists that gender relations need not correspond to anatomy. Butler is critical of the trend to trace feminist essence within the transcendental site. His view is presented below:

Constructivist feminism with its denial of Universalist and transcultural identities such as gender or woman has impacted even further upon the de-sexualization of gender for those feminist theorists who subscribe to postmodern thought. Gender need not, in fact, be related at all to anatomical sex. (142)

One advantage of such a carefully constructed postmodern feminism is that categories such as the modern, restricted, male-headed, nuclear family would be understood to be historically specific institutional categories. They would take precedence over ahistorical, functionalist categories like reproduction and mothering.

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. 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.

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 refers to them as the single entity "ladies" (I.ii.62) and "your ladyships" (I.ii.14), 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.17). Rosalind is set apart from Celia as the object of Orlando's affection, as well as the object of the theater audience's attention.

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 “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 distilled
 Helen’s cheek, but not her heart,
 Cleopatra’s majesty,
 Atalanta’s better part
 Sad Lucretia’s modesty. (III.ii.45-48)

The artificiality of this role is the outcome of emotive response to Orlando’s empty threats of violence with his usual sardonic wit. Duke Senior 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, Orlando dissolves completely. He says rather piteously, “I almost die for food, and let me have it” (II.vii.104). His following speech indicates a restored Orlando. He asks that the dinner party guests remember times that they “looked on better days,” were “where bells have knolled to church,” “sate at any good man’s feast,” and “from their eyelids wiped a tear” (II.vii.13-16). Duke Senior echoes

Orlando's language in his response—no better indication of a true listener—and invites him to join the table.

Oliver and Duke Frederick simply cannot be moved by rhetoric, for they harbor a deep-seated distrust of which 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 banished 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. (I.iii.59-63)

Rosalind uses logic to try to persuade Duke Frederick to change his mind but must tread on careful ground to avoid seeming disrespectful. Rosalind archly insinuates through deliberate diction that it is, in fact, Duke Frederick who is the traitor. He is the man who committed treason by dethroning the rightful duke and banishing Duke Senior from his own dukedom.

The other kind of homoeroticism within the play arises from Rosalind's cross-dressing. Everybody, male and female, seems to love Ganymede, the beautiful boy who looks like a woman because he is really Rosalind in disguise. The name Rosalind chooses for her alter ego, Ganymede, traditionally belonged to a beautiful boy who became one of Jove's lovers. The name carries strong homosexual connotations. Even though Orlando is supposed to be in love with Rosalind, he seems to enjoy the idea of

acting out his romance with the beautiful, young boy Ganymede. A boy who looks like the woman he loves is even more appealing than the woman herself. Phoebe, too, is more attracted to the feminine Ganymede than to the real male, Silvius.

The group congregates before Duke Senior and his men. Rosalind, still disguised as Ganymede, reminds the lovers of their various vows. She then secures a promise from Phoebe that if for some reason she refuses to marry Ganymede she will marry Silvius. She is mindful of a promise from the duke that he would allow his daughter to marry Orlando if she were available. Rosalind leaves with the disguised Celia, and the two soon return as themselves, accompanied by Hymen, the god of marriage. Hymen officiates at the ceremony and marries Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Phoebe and Silvius, and Audrey and Touchstone.

The festive wedding celebration is interrupted by even more festive news. While marching with his army to attack Duke Senior, Duke Frederick came upon a holy man who convinced him to put aside his worldly concerns and assume a monastic life. Frederick changes his ways and returns the throne to Duke Senior. The guests continue dancing, happy in the knowledge that they will soon return to the royal court. Rosalind asks her to forgive his tardiness. Rosalind refuses, insisting that a true lover could not bear to squander “a part of the thousand part of a minute in the affairs of love” (IV.i.40–41).

Rosalind goes on to suggest that Orlando’s love is worse than a snail’s, for though a snail comes slowly, he carries his house on his back. Rosalind relents and invites Orlando to woo her. The lesson begins: when he says that he desires to kiss her before speaking, she suggests that he save his kiss for the moment when conversation lags. Rosalind reassures him that a denied kiss would only give him “new matter” to discuss with his lover (IV.i.69–70). When Rosalind refuses his affections, Orlando

claims he will die. She responds that, despite the poet's romantic imagination, no man in the entire history of the world has died from a love-related cause.

To conclude, the priest performs most of Hymen's lines at the wedding ceremony. Despite the homoeroticism that inevitably rises from Rosalind's cross-dressing, layering of identities, and Celia's open silences, the main desire of the play is heterosexual. In fact, all homoerotic desire revolves around Rosalind, even though her desire is uncomplicatedly heterosexual.

III. Role Reversal for Gender Desire, Love and Sexuality

The core finding of this thesis is that reverse gender role contributes to the balancing and harmonization of lopsided gender relation. This idea is tested and affirmed in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. On the basis of the above analysis it can be easily concluded that the play conforms an excellent example of a woman's empowerment against patriarchal world, which was dominated by masculine supremacy, and rejoices over masculinity through role reversal.

Gender desire is for love and love is an untamed force. These gender stereotypes are suitable for a patriarchal world, for Renaissance England. In Renaissance England, officially, economically and politically, men dominated the society; women were subordinated to men. Dress, as a highly regulated semiotic system, was the code of one's identity, symbolizing one's gender and social classes. The stability of the social order depended much on maintaining absolute distinctions between male and female.

If a woman puts on men's clothes, she crosses the gender boundary, and encroaches on the privileges of the advanced sex. To maintain the privileges of men, Renaissance gender stereotypes required women to wear women's clothes, to be submissive, passive, silent, closed off, and immured within home. Therefore, in the play, role reversal, which is done by cross-dressing, helps to deconstruct Renaissance gender stereotypes. At first, role reversal helps woman characters to travel alone, to enter the men's world, and to act as men, instead of being confined at home.

In men's clothes, the heroine Rosalind demonstrates masculine qualities such as intelligence, wit, capability, and courage, which implies that women can also own masculinity. Likewise, the heroine also demonstrate her admirable feminine qualities such as tenderness, chastity, constancy, and selflessness, so her combination of

feminine and masculine qualities proves that femininity and masculinity are not two opposites and masculinity is not superior to femininity.

The heroine takes the initiative and control the action, especially when she pursues love. Rosalind dominates the love games with Orlando. Her behavior suggests that she is not inferior to men. Shakespeare transforms his heroine from the traditional past object to the current subject; activating her, giving her voice and empowering her with subjective initiative, but without depriving her of the admiring qualities of traditional femininity such as affection, tenderness and selflessness. For him, there is an easy cross-over of masculine and feminine traits to both genders.

The role reversal is for true love reveals from the bottom of her heart to get her hero. Though the triangular love is there, the love between Rosalind and her beloved is the key to open the women's world leaving behind the patriarchal norms of falling in love after forced by her suit. Brevity of a female to get her lover is exemplified in the play. Love is an incredibly powerful word. When we are in love, we always want to be together, and when we are not, we are thinking about being together because we need that person and without them our life is incomplete. This love is unconditional affection with no limits or conditions: completely loving someone. Thus the role reversal in the play is for love.

A great deal of this play is constructed on paradoxes. Ganymede is really a woman who is in fact is really a male actor (a young boy actually) playing a woman. Even more dramatically, we can state that the Forest of Ardenne has noble savages savaging nobles. Orlando is far more savage than the nobles he finds eating there, in spite of his noble upbringing. These paradoxes not only play with the notion of pastoral but also challenge gender identities. While no one would deny there is a paradox in being both a woman and a man, in Shakespeare's time the issue of gender

was much looser than it is in modern society. Women were considered anatomically identical to men except that the uterus was thought to be inverted male genitals. This view of sex allowed Shakespeare to have Rosalind, as Ganymede, pretend to again be Rosalind.

To sum up, femininities applied in the play has been the main point to establish love and the identity through Role reversal. The heroine deconstructs the conventional Renaissance gender stereotypes. Cross dressing makes her gender ambiguous, and gender ambiguity deconstructs the binary opposition of gender, proving that gender is not fixed; masculinity and femininity are not opposed, but united in every individual. So the researcher emphasizes the importance of femininity in the entire play for making female more powerful than male.

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