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Shakespeare and Homoeroticism:
A Study of Cross-dressing, Society, and Film

Leigh Bullion
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Introduction

“What shall I do with my doublet and hose!”
-Rosalind, *As You Like It*, (3.2.200-01)

William Shakespeare's plays cover an array of topics focused on sexuality, from gender reversal to adultery to bestiality. But perhaps the most consistent and emphasized topic is homoeroticism. This focus on homoeroticism proceeds from the prohibition of women on the English stage and the subsequent female roles young boys would play. Stephen Orgel suggests the reason for barring women stems from a culturally ingrained anxiety towards women, especially concerning their sexuality; he notes that Early Modern England exhibited a much greater unease towards female sexuality than it did towards male sexuality (35-36). The theatre, therefore, was not especially concerned by underlying male-male homoeroticism in “heterosexual” relationships between characters on stage, but rather disturbed by uncontrolled displays of female sexuality. To a degree then, any Early Modern English play necessarily possesses a measure of homoerotically charged exchanges. In plays that incorporate cross-dressing, the layering of genders increases this potential for homoeroticism, yet maintains a heterosexual level to the relationship. When I discuss “levels” of relationships, I refer to one of three levels: the first is the playhouse level, which denotes the Early Modern theatrical world and assumes the use of boy actors. The second level is the true-character level, which signifies the “true plot” that lies under the exterior plot where characters do not yet know that Cesario is actually Viola or that Ganymede is actually Rosalind. The third and final level is the plot level, or what is currently occurring in the story line at that moment without invoking the playhouse level or citing the use of boy actors. On the plot level, the cross-dressed female characters are actually their male persona. *Viola is Cesario* and *Rosalind is Ganymede*. We must remember, of

course, that all of Shakespeare's plays would have involved cross-dressing due to the ban on female actors. This multitude of gender roles creates a flexibility that produces homoerotic relationships and avoids contact with or anxiety over women's sexuality.

The construction of gender on stage often proves ambiguous, allowing for a flexibility of desire and action that did not necessarily hold with society's strict codes at the time. Indeed, in the 16th and 17th centuries, England's laws governing sex were numerous, punishing "unacceptable" sexual acts with execution in most cases. These laws considered sodomy especially evil. According to historical records, however, the laws were hardly rigorously enforced, and cases in which a man was executed for violating the law were few (Smith 48). The patriarchal structure of Renaissance England focused mostly on male sexual behaviors, although England seemingly feared the sexual impact of women on the stage. However, we see a deep-seated fear of female sexuality in Shakespeare's time, shown not only through the absence of displays of female sexuality, but also through misogynistic attitudes and dialogue that exist in the plays and other popular literature. Relationships like Orlando and Ganymede's in *As You Like It*—which we view as homoerotic and therefore unconventional—may in fact have been safer and more tolerated in Renaissance England than relationships with women. We must remember that the law did not discriminate against a *kind* of person; rather, the law and social standards regarding sexual acts covered *only* acts. In Early Modern England, an act we regard as "homosexual" today was then simply a sexual act, with no connection to identity or sexuality.

Let me begin by clarifying important terms. In Bruce R. Smith's book *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*, he succinctly describes the semantic differences of which one needs to be aware: "Homosexual behavior may be a cross-cultural, transhistorical phenomenon; homosexuality is specific to our own culture and to our own moment in history" (12, Smith's

emphasis). Sexuality in the early modern period was regarded very differently than it is in our culture. In England in the 16-17th centuries, the closest word for what we consider to be homosexuality was sodomy. But sodomy is a vague term that does not mean the same things we associate with homosexuality today. The OED defines sodomy as an “unnatural form of sexual intercourse, especially that of one male with another” (OED). However, in Early Modern England, even heterosexual sex could be sodomy if it was sex that was not for procreation. As Smith’s comment implies, sexual acts, lawless or not by England’s standards, did not constitute one’s identity. Our society today constructs identity from one’s sexuality, and, accordingly, homosexual acts are now identity-forming rather than isolated acts. Granted, the term “homosexual” did not exist until 1870 and was not widely used until the turn of the century, so any discussion of “homosexuality” in Shakespeare’s day refers to sexual acts between at least two men (Foucault 43). Our understanding of sexuality conflates gender, sexual acts and desires, and identity to yield the categories of heterosexual and homosexual. Smith and Alan Bray cite instances in which the law (and society) tolerated repeated offenses. It seems that the only reason that several homosexual acts went unpunished in Early Modern England was this separation of act and identity. In my discussion of Shakespeare’s texts, I will use “homoerotic” in situations of same-sex sexual tension or overtones. “Homosexual(ity)” will refer to acts or behavior that we would read as homosexual in our culture today. Though this terminology may seem an imposition of our present onto the past, using the terms in this way will assist my discussion of the plays and films.

A Midsummer Night’s Dream, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* each present different representations of homoeroticism yet complement each other. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* focuses on the erotic potential of unrestrained desire and the tense relationship between female

amity and dominating patriarchal and heterosexual interests. *As You Like It* also involves female amity disrupted by heterosexual love, but Rosalind's cross-dressing and a homoerotic man-boy relationship also complicate conventional heterosexual desires. *Twelfth Night* centers on cross-dressing as well, but includes subplots of male amity and presents what we might call a prototype for a homosexual identity. Smith points out "all of Shakespeare's comedies...end with male friendship yielding place to heterosexual love" (72). I want to extend his argument to female amity, for heterosexual love and desires disrupt Hermia and Helena's friendship as well as Rosalind and Celia's relationship. Amity between same-sex friends does not necessarily suggest a homoerotic relationship: for "the question...was not, am I heterosexual or am I homosexual, but where do my greater emotional loyalties lie, with other men or with women" (Smith 65). When looking at these friendships, we need to consider what Philip McGuire calls "open silences": when a character is on stage in a scene but does not have any lines or stage directions (xv). Hippolyta, Celia, and Antonio are noticeably silent in various scenes, and the interpretations of these silences influences how we read Celia's relationship with Rosalind and Antonio's friendship with Sebastian; in other words, is it *more* than amity? The performances of these open silences can drastically affect the tone of the whole play.

Though each play contains homoerotic elements, the representation of homoeroticism takes several different forms. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does not concentrate on a relationship between a cross-dressed woman and a man, but rather on desire in general and the potentially homoerotic consequences of misguided desire. While *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* both consist of cross-dressed women engaged in homoerotic relationships with men and women, there are subtle differences between them. The former play presents one more layer of gender performance: a boy actor playing a woman who is disguised as a boy who pretends to be

a woman. Rosalind's double act, as Ganymede and then as Ganymede playing "Rosalind," explicitly invites Orlando to woo her/him. Because *Twelfth Night* does not have this fourth gender layer, it does not generate such undisguised homoeroticism, but rather focuses on the homoeroticism beneath the seemingly strict heteronormative social structure. The similar issues of the plays, with their concerns of social structure, cross-dressing, and female amity, made me interested in the different effects of the various homoerotic issues in the texts. Above all, the plays' investment in heteronormative resolutions—with as many as four heterosexual marriages at the end of one play—compelled me to question the purpose of establishing homoerotic desires so firmly.

Among the elements that affect the intensity of homoeroticism, setting is perhaps the most significant because it dictates what actions can or cannot take place. For example, the fairies cannot use their magic to disrupt the social hierarchy of Athens; therefore, all of the love juice scenes take place in the chaotic forest. The settings of these three plays are quite different, but looking at the plays chronologically creates an intelligible progression of settings. Social matters frame *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594-1596), but it mostly takes place in the woods, a pastoral setting dominated by magical beings and events. *As You Like It* (1599-1600) also begins in the hierarchy of the court, but though the action moves into the pastoral forest of Ardenne, Duke Senior maintains the social hierarchy and practices of the court while in exile. *Twelfth Night* (1601-1602), on the other hand, takes place exclusively in civilization and social roles greatly effect the homoerotic interactions that take place. Each setting enables the particular homoerotic relationships to occur, although society inevitably attempts to stop the perpetuation of homoeroticism. The potential for homosexual desire in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* exists because of the chaotic forest and the mayhem created by the fairies. *As You Like It* and *Twelfth*

Night rely on social hierarchy to employ traditional wooing practices with unconventional effects. These comedies work particularly well together because of their general preoccupation with desire, especially desire that places characters in homoerotic scenarios. Reading them against one another allows us to compare the differences in homoerotic relationships and the effect these differences have on the heteronormative resolutions.

Looking at film adaptations of these three plays is particularly useful for a number of reasons. These comedies, while not the most widely adapted of the comedies on film, provide numerous examples as well as a wide range of the depictions of homoeroticism. Film offers an alternative way to tell the story, since the camera is ingrained in the narrative. Instead of surveying what is on stage, we see only what the camera shows us and have no choice but to follow it. Settings, special effects, soundtracks, along with several editing techniques increase the possibilities for film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays to extend beyond the stage and enter new territory. Like theater, however, a film director has to decide how to present the text, and, in particular, must choose how to handle Hippolyta, Celia, and Antonio's open silences. The management of these characters' silences can greatly emphasize the homoeroticism in the text, especially regarding Celia and Antonio's intense friendships with Rosalind and Sebastian, respectively. For these reasons I will explore films of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, so that I may read the text against the film in order to make evident the homoeroticism in both. I chose films with a wide range of homoerotic content, from films that heavily emphasize the homosexual nature of particular relationships to films that play down the homoeroticism in the text, and almost elides the subject completely. When the latter is the case, I want to examine the effect of this absence on the text, with a special focus on issues of amity and the heterosexual resolution.

Casting is another facet of film that can accentuate the level of homoerotic tension in a film. All film adaptations I will discuss cast women in the female roles—not the way they would be cast in Shakespeare’s day. These casting decisions will present the text’s homoeroticism in different ways, which is why I want to consider how a film portrays, if at all, the homoerotic nature of a cross-dressed woman and her male love interest.

By analyzing contemporary film to read against the original text, I hope to see gaps in the text that open up new possibilities for questioning the heteronormative endings of the plays. The traditional ending for a comedy in Renaissance England was a heterosexual marriage, thereby resolving homoerotic tensions in a socially conventional way. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* end only after heteronormativity has been re-established and consecrated, with Viola and Orsino in *Twelfth Night* as the one exception: their marriage is forthcoming at the end of Act 5. Studying films of these particular plays, I will look at how the heterosexual resolution may *not* fully eliminate homoerotic tensions or homosexual desires due to cross-dressing and gender reversal.

In the plays that include cross-dressing, the female character must return to her “true” gender before the resolution. *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* highlight the construction of gender and focus a great deal on gender performance. In the texts, cross-dressed women like Rosalind and Viola do not fully relinquish their adopted masculinity. The epilogue of *As You Like It* perpetuates the layering of Rosalind’s character by addressing the audience both as Rosalind and as the boy actor who plays her. In a similar fashion, Viola does not appear in woman’s clothes after Act 1, scene 2, and Orsino never sees her in her “woman’s weeds” (5.1.266). This continuation of a homoerotic undertone challenges the traditional comedy ending of marriage (or forthcoming marriage, in the case of *Twelfth Night*). How film directors manage

issues of open silences, gender performance, and homoerotic desire affect the authenticity of the heteronormative outcome. Because homosexuality is now considered a valid foundation of one's identity, I will focus on the effects homoerotic tensions in the plays have on the legitimacy of a heteronormative outcome. Again, the changes in cultural understandings of the word homosexual will be important to keep in mind. What was once simply an isolated and illegal act has become a broad identity-forming category, a class of its own in society. Changes in homosexual identity—including the creation of such a classification—have changed the way we, as a modern audience, read the text.

“And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays”
 -Bottom, (3.1.127-28)

A Midsummer Night's Dream, unlike *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, does not revolve around the obviously homoerotic relationships between a cross-dressed woman and unwitting men and women. Instead, the play focuses on desires or the “circulation of desire,” to borrow Valerie Traub’s phrase (6). Like the other two comedies, however, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests that desire is inherently unstable. Characters have no control over their desires; third parties, such as Theseus and the fairies, attempt to control desire, although their efforts usually lead to the disruption of desires. The love juice also disrupts already-formed desires by creating new desires. Hippolyta’s open silences also potentially impede Theseus’s desires and signal disruption in her female allegiance to the Amazons, and these silences depend on filmmakers’ decisions regarding their representation. Hippolyta’s relationship with the all-female Amazon community introduces concerns of female amity and underlines the possible effects this amity may have heterosexual desire. Other relationships of female amity, like Hermia and Helena’s and Titania and her female votary’s, also interfere with the central desires of the play. The latter relationship frustrates the story’s primary desire, Oberon’s desire for Titania’s Indian changeling boy. This desire is the motivating factor for most of the chaos of that ensues in the woods and acts as the impetus for disrupting the heterosexual desire of many individuals. Although the play focuses mostly on heterosexual desires, the potential for homoeroticism exists. The most dominant desire in the play, Oberon’s for the Indian boy, while not blatantly erotic, is certainly not heterosexual. In addition, the love juice does not dictate the desires of an individual, but imposes general erotic desire, not necessarily heterosexual desire, onto an individual. This

capacity for homoerotic exchanges disrupts the heterosexual desires established in the play and suggests that heterosexual desires are superficial and temporary.

The treatment of Hippolyta's character and the performance of her open silences indicate a film's approach to the circulation of desires that takes place in the text. Theseus and Hippolyta's relationship sets up what is going to happen in the rest of the play, and the depiction of this relationship demonstrates the range of ways films negotiate with these temporary desires. Textually, Hippolyta says and does very little, although we do know various things about her. We know that she was the Queen of the Amazons, and that Theseus "wooed [her] with [his] sword" (1.1.16). Theseus disrupts Hippolyta's all-female Amazon community, or, in other words, heterosexual desire disrupts female amity. As Philip McGuire notes, however, none of Hippolyta's speeches are opinionated—we have no way to know simply by reading the text what she is feeling (1-2). A film may suggest that Hippolyta's relationship with Theseus is one of enforced heterosexual desire, a common theme in the play. Representations of Hippolyta's open silences suggest different ways of impeding Theseus's desire, although all of the representations I examine inevitably end with heteronormative outcomes.

Films in which directors make Hippolyta's open silences a signal of strife within her relationship with Theseus indicate how female amity and enforced love disrupts heterosexual desire. As Hippolyta and Theseus' relationship is the first one we see in both the play and film, the tension existent within this relationship sets the tone for many of the issues that impede heterosexual desire. In Max Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935), Hippolyta's silences mark her hatred for Theseus and unwillingness to fulfill his heterosexual desires. Her loathing stems from Theseus' conquest of the Amazons. Hippolyta's clothing depicts her imprisoned status: in her first close-up shot, she is wrapped in cloth, with one arm tied to her

shoulder by a decorative snake. Her clothing literally imprisons her, and we understand her relationship with Theseus to be one of enforced desire. She refuses to look at Theseus as he jovially says “Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword / And won thy love doing thee injuries” (1.1.16-17). When the camera jump cuts to her face while the crowd sings “Theseus be blessed,” Hippolyta smirks at him and nods bitterly at his narcissism. By emphasizing the fact that Hippolyta was formerly the savage Amazonian queen, Reinhardt implies that female amity and a barbarian nature prohibits heterosexual desires. When Theseus tells Hippolyta that the “old moon...lingers [his] desires,” she recoils when Theseus touches her and barely looks at him throughout the scene (1.1.4). Hippolyta is no longer in restrictive clothing, but the imagery of the snake continues in her dress, where she has a snake sewed into the neckline. Most importantly, as she speaks the conciliatory lines “Four days will quickly steep themselves in night, / Four nights will quickly dream away the time” (1.1.7-8), she looks up towards the sky hopefully, but as she remarks that the moon “shall behold the night / Of our solemnities,” she looks down and pulls her hand away from Theseus (1.1.10-11). She refuses to fulfill Theseus’s desire and does not embrace the enforced marriage. This performance of Hippolyta’s open silences obstructs heterosexual desire, although only for a period of time. After the lovers exit the woods and meet Theseus at the end of the play, Reinhardt does not allude to Hippolyta’s angry behavior at the beginning of the film. The snake imagery is gone, suggesting that Hippolyta is now civilized, and her apparent dislike of Theseus turns enforced desire into apparently real desire: she refers to Theseus as “my Theseus” with enthusiasm (5.1.1). Reinhardt’s film suggests that if Hippolyta simply becomes civilized, her relationships of female amity will disperse and heterosexual desire will triumph.

On the other hand, Michael Hoffman's 1999 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests that enforced desire is the main disrupter of heterosexual desire. He portrays Hippolyta's relationship with Theseus as loving and, for the most part, balanced. Their relationship also faces issues, although instead of female allegiances within the Amazon, Hermia's enforced betrothal to Demetrius incurs Hippolyta's anger with Theseus. After he advises Hermia to "look you arm yourself / To fit your fancies to your father's will" (1.1.118-19) and says "come, my Hippolyta," Hippolyta turns away and leaves without him (1.1.122). Theseus's angry demand to Demetrius and Egeus to come with him for "private schooling" implies Hippolyta's actions have obstructed his heterosexual desires (1.1.116). In the end of Hoffman's film, we know that heterosexual desire is not yet restored, as Hippolyta rides angrily away when Theseus attempts to brag about his Spartan hounds. When Theseus discovers the lovers, he motions Hippolyta aside to discuss the situation, and, when they return, Theseus announces he "will overbear [Egeus'] will" and the lovers will be able to marry (4.1.176). After this proclamation, Hippolyta follows Theseus without hesitation when he says "come, Hippolyta" (4.1.183). Theseus restores heterosexual desire not by civilizing Hippolyta or by breaking female amity, but by refusing to enforce unwanted desire upon Hermia.

While Theseus's heterosexual desire has the potential to hinder female amity, representations of female amity in the text impede heterosexual desire as well, which suggests both the power and the malleability of desires. Hermia and Helena's relationship demonstrates how desire can be both sexual and nonsexual and how one person can have numerous desires at once. Hermia recalls how she and Helena "Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie, / Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet" (1.1.215-16). Clearly they were once very intimate, although Hermia's use of the past tense suggests their friendship is not now as close.

When Hermia discloses to Helena her and Lysander's plans to escape Athens, she invokes these "primrose beds" to tell her friend where Lysander will meet her. In pursuit of her own heterosexual desires, Hermia's relationship with Lysander displaces her female amity with Helena. Helena, however, only values her relationship with Hermia insofar as it helps her win Demetrius's love. Her description of Hermia's beauty establishes how highly she esteems her friend's features because her beloved loves them:

Demetrius loves your fair—O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear
 When wheat is green, when Hawthron buds appear.
 Sickness is catching. O, were favour so!

(1.1.182-86)

Even though Helena states how much she longs for Demetrius, she also desires Hermia, or at least Hermia's exterior. Though this illustration of Helena's desire for Hermia's appearance is not homoerotic in itself, Helena's description shows how manifold and powerful desire is in the play. Helena desires Hermia's beauty in order to "sway the motion of Demetrius's heart," or to change his desire for Hermia back to her (1.1.193). Helena notes how Demetrius "hailed down oaths that he was only mine, / And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt, / So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt" (1.2.243-45). Even before the love juice, Demetrius's desires switch. The love juice produces the same effect, as he tells Theseus that his love for Hermia "melted as the snow" (4.1.163). Therefore desire is not only temporary, but malleable as well.

In Hoffman's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia and Helena's friendship is not as well established as it is in the text, which diminishes the ubiquity of desire, and, as a result, heterosexual desire dominates the film. Hoffman removes the dialogue between Hermia and Helena regarding Demetrius' love for Hermia as well as the reference to the women's pastimes. In the text, these exchanges show that while heterosexual desire upsets female amity, the nature

of desire is illogical. Without this dialogue, Hoffman fails to establish the ubiquity and power of desire. He also cuts Hermia's description of her pastime with Helena of "emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet" in the woods, thereby lessening the strength of their bond (1.1.216). Even though they kiss nonsexually in the film to say goodbye after Hermia asks Helena to "pray thou for us," no history of their friendship substantiates such a close bond (1.1.220). However, Hoffman does show how heterosexual desires detrimentally affect even their weak female amity. Hermia and Helena's heterosexual desires for Lysander and Demetrius, respectively, lead each to neglect the other woman in pursuit of her own heterosexual desires. Helena, believing that Hermia is part of the "confederacy" with Lysander and Demetrius to mock her, asks

Is all the counsel that we two have shared—
 The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spend
 When we have chid and hasty-footed time
 For parting us—O, is all quite forgot?
 (3.2.199-202)

These lines remain in Hoffman's adaptation, but Helena's description of Hermia and her being "like to a double cherry: seeming parted, / But yet an union in partition, / Two lovely berries moulded on one stem" is left out (3.2.210-12). By removing the text and thus weakening the amity between the two friends, Hoffman lessens the ubiquity of desire. The desires that do exist within the four lovers are solely heterosexual desires, and these desires dominate the film and, in particular, its resolution.

Titania and Oberon's feud stems from Titania's amity with one of her female votaries, but both the text and films maintain that heterosexual desire will ultimately triumph over female amity. Hoffman retains Titania's amity with a female votary, a relationship that disrupts her bond with Oberon. Oberon wants the Titania's Indian changeling boy, and her refusal stems from her faithfulness to the votary:

The fairyland buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a vot'ress of my order,
 And in the spicèd Indian air by night
 Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 [...]
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
 And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
 And for her sake I will not part with him.
 (2.1.122-26, 135-37)

Oberon dismisses their bond and continues to press Titania for the boy, and her second refusal provokes Oberon to “torment [her] for this injury” (2.1.147). Although both Oberon and Titania desire Hippolyta and Theseus, respectively, their rancor does not originate from their heterosexual indiscretions but rather from Titania’s female amity with her votary. Hoffman’s film keeps Titania’s speech about her relationship with her female votary and her offer to Oberon to join her if he will “patiently dance in our round, / And see our moonlight revels, go with us” (2.1.140-41). Titania wants to keep the Indian boy, thereby protecting her female amity with the votary, but she also wants to preserve her heterosexual bond with Oberon. He denies her these dual desires by saying “give me that boy and I will go with thee,” forcing her to choose between her desire for him and her desire for the Indian boy (2.1.143). The threat that Titania and the votary’s amity poses to Oberon’s heterosexual relationship signifies both the power and the insecurity of desire.

The play’s central desire, Oberon’s yearning for Titania’s Indian boy, motivates the chaos of the woods and the breakdown of heterosexual desire. Oberon’s reasons for desiring the Indian boy are ambiguous and provide potential for a homoerotic reading. Puck claims that “jealous Oberon would have the child/ Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild,” but we do not find out much beyond this explanation (2.1.24-25). Oberon tells his Queen that he wants the “little changeling boy / To be [his] henchman,” although we never discover what Oberon means by this

statement (2.1.120-21). Marjorie Garber suggests that as the “emblem of desire—irrational, unattainable,” the Indian boy and the fight for him represent the “desire for someone else’s desire” (219). In this configuration, Oberon desires Titania’s desire for the boy. We discover that Oberon has a multitude of strong desires. Bruce Smith notes the enormity of Oberon’s sexual appetite, as Titania does when she says

but I know
 When thou hast stol’n away from fairyland
 And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
 Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
 To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here
 Come from the farthest step of Tindia,
 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
 Your buskined mistress and your warrior love,
 To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
 To give their bed joy and prosperity?
 (2.1.64-73)

Smith wonders in “just what capacity, then, might Titania’s “changeling boy” serve as Oberon’s page?” (200). The vague answers Oberon gives about why he wants the boy suggests the potential for a homoerotic representation, although the films I am looking at use the Indian boy to restore heterosexual desire.

Reinhardt’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* extends beyond the text to underline the boy’s importance in the reestablishment of heterosexual desires by centering a significant portion of the film on the Indian boy. He is the center of attention in the dance of Titania’s fairies, which demonstrates Titania’s deep attachment to him. Reinhardt’s film cuts out all the dialogue about why Titania and Oberon are in the woods, including Titania’s monologue about how their feud is affecting nature and the world. Instead, Reinhardt’s Oberon skips immediately from “tarry, rash wanton” (2.1.63) to “do you amend it, then,” which focuses his and Titania’s fighting down to one single issue: the Indian boy (2.1.118). Reinhardt’s depiction of the boy demonstrates the

instability of desire. When Titania tells her fairies to “sing [her] now asleep,” she crowns the boy’s head with a laurel and then lies him down next to her in her bed (2.2.7). After she falls in love with Bottom, she pushes the boy aside and ignores him. Later she removes the laurel from the boy’s head and gives it to Bottom. Titania brings Bottom into her bed where the boy had been before, which displays both the temporary quality of desire and how new desire can quickly replace earlier desires.

In the text, even Oberon’s desire for the Indian boy seems ephemeral. The changeling boy only appears in the text three distinct times: once when Puck is speaking with one of Titania’s fairies, a second time in Oberon and Titania’s argument, and lastly after Oberon has acquired the boy and decides to release the “hateful imperfection” of Titania’s eyes (4.1.60). Shakespeare does not supply any stage directions that suggest the boy is on stage; indeed, some film adaptations do not even show the boy. Reinhardt’s film, which prominently features the Indian boy, shows him only once more after Oberon gets him and then he disappears from the movie. If the Indian boy is, as I argue, the center of desire, his abrupt absence in Reinhardt’s film is disconcerting. If the central object of desire in the play vanishes after that desire has been fulfilled, how stable is desire?

Despite its ephemeral quality, desire in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* circulates in every facet of the play and has the potential to be unconventional. Lysander provokes Demetrius by observing that “you have her father’s love, Demetrius;/ Let me have Hermia’s. Do you marry him” (1.1.93-94). Clearly Demetrius is not going to marry Egeus, but Lysander’s insult suggests the possibility for homoeroticism. Egeus responds to Lysander’s jab at Demetrius by saying “True, he hath my love;/ And what is mine my love shall render him” (1.1.95-96). This reply could be construed as homoerotic, depending on the performance, but in any case Egeus

underlines the homosocial bond he shares with Demetrius. Likewise, anytime Puck or Oberon uses the love juice, there exists the possibility that the recipient will wake up to someone of the same gender. Before Lysander wakes up to see Helena, Demetrius is in the scene. Lysander is speaking with Helena when Demetrius, enchanted, wakes up and desires Helena. Shakespeare enables the desires to remain heterosexual, but characters of both sex are already on stage after Oberon or Puck applies the love juice. Due to our knowledge of the love juice, we experience tension due to the uncertainty of the love juice's outcome. Tom Gustafson's highly homoerotic adaptation *Were the World Mine* (2008) plays with this tension by turning desire implemented by the love juice into homoerotic desire.

Were the World Mine gets its title from Helena's comment to Hermia: "Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, / the rest I'd give to be to you translated" (1.1.190-91). Gustafson's film does indeed transform the landscape of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The plot of the film roughly follows that of the original text, though the film is predicated on the love juice being able to form *any* kind of desire. Gustafson's emphasis on the homoerotic possibilities in the text illustrates how most, but not all, desire in the play is temporary and fundamentally unstable. His film focuses on Timothy, a gay student at a prestigious all-male private high school, who is cast as Puck in the school's theater production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. While the film does not focus desire around the changeling boy—in fact, there is no Indian boy in the film—Oberon's other henchman, Puck, becomes the foundation of and impetus for desires. When Timothy discovers a way to make Oberon's love-in-idleness flower, he uses the love juice to turn his homophobic classmates and neighbors gay. He uses the love juice on his love interest Jonathon, the captain of the rugby team who had previously displayed some interest in Timothy without declaring himself to be homosexual. In the end of the film, after the effects of the love

juice have disappeared, Jonathon comes out as gay. While certain desires in the film are stable, such as Timothy's desire for Jonathon and Timothy's female friend, Frankie's, desire for Max, most of the desire in the film is ephemeral. All desire that the love juice created dissipates once Timothy removes the spell, except for Jonathon's. While there are subtle hints that Jonathon is also gay, he initially has a girlfriend and is captain of the homophobic rugby team. The change in Jonathon's character resembles the transformation of Demetrius. Jonathon is the only person who seemingly remains under the spell of the love juice, and we do not know to what extent his desire for Timothy is real or fabricated. However, Gustafson's film does not ultimately differentiate between heterosexual and homosexual desires. Both circulate throughout the film, both are simultaneously stable and unstable, and both have the potential to create homoerotic situations.

The all-boys atmosphere of the high school also underlines the possibility for homoeroticism by casting males in all of the roles in their production of the play. The drama teacher Ms. Tebbit tells the homophobic principal and rugby coach that "women were prohibited by law to act on the Elizabethan stage; men filled the void." She suggests that the men are insecure with their own sexuality and that their discomfort with the play stems from their homophobia. But Gustafson suggests that homoerotic desire is just as powerful as heterosexual desire and that even homophobia cannot restrict homoerotic desire. The complaints and actions of angry parents who have punished their transformed sons do not disrupt the boys' desires. Later in the film, as Frankie is running away from two girls that have fallen in love with her from the love juice, she yells back at them "I am *not* a lesbian!" *Were the World Mine* suggests that it is not important whether or not Frankie or the two girls are lesbians, but that these homoerotic desires are possible because desire is malleable and constantly changing.

Desires and the circulation of these desires in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggest that the resolution of three heterosexual marriages is not secure because desire is inherently unstable. The performance of Hippolyta's open silences and relationships of female amity demonstrate how malleable desires are while implying the inconstant nature of desire. The degree of emphasis on importance of the Indian boy and his sudden disappearance disrupt the exaggerated heterosexuality of the ending by implying that desire can and most likely will vanish once fulfilled. Although the marriages in Act 5 suggest the play upholds heterosexuality, the potential for homoeroticism that has existed throughout the play does not simply vanish at the end. At the end of *Were the World Mine* Timothy removes the spell of the love juice with the lines "Be as thou wast wont to be, / See as thou wast wont to see" (68-69). The characters that he turned into homosexual regain their heterosexual desires, thus paralleling the general theme of the play. However, Jonathon "comes out" and reveals his true feelings for Timothy. Their homosexual desires disrupts everyone else's return to heterosexuality. In Gustafson's film, the desire created by the power of the flower fades, except, perhaps, for Jonathon's desire. The ambiguity surrounding Jonathon's character—his sexuality, his desires—parallel him with Demetrius, who, in the text, remains under the spell indefinitely. This problem is not addressed at all in Shakespeare's play and creates uneasy tension surrounding the marriages in Act 5. By setting up patterns of circulation, disruption, and supernatural intervention, Shakespeare prompts us to distrust any desire that seems to be enforced, conventional, or blessed by those with magical powers.

As You Like It

“If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me”
-Rosalind, (Epilogue 14-15)

In *As You Like It*, desires manifest and play out in identity rather than chaotically circulating in a magical setting. The play focuses on the formation of identity and how identity—particularly social and gender identities—dictates and validates desire. In the Early Modern period there was no such thing as a homosexual identity, at least not in the way we perceive it today, so those experiencing homoerotic desires in the play seek representation in identities that already exist (Smith 12). *As You Like It* contains more inherent homoerotic potential than *A Midsummer Night's Dream* due to issues of identity, cross-dressing, same-sex love, and Celia's ambiguous open silences. Because the play takes place in a world where social hierarchies pervade every location, social demands and expectations pressure characters to legitimize their homoerotic desires. Even though the resolution of the play is overwhelmingly heteronormative, a sense of homoerotic desire lingers due to the epilogue, which defies the complete domination of heterosexuality while maintaining fluidity between the binaries of male/female and heterosexuality/homoeroticism.

Although most of the homoeroticism in the play develops from Rosalind's cross-dressing, Celia could be performed or read as a homosexual character, insofar as she is in love with Rosalind. If we read her character this way, Celia legitimizes her homoerotic desire for her cousin by defining Rosalind as her emotional twin and conflating her identity with her “coz” (1.2.1). Characters' accounts of Celia and Rosalind's relationship underline their extreme intimacy, for, as Charles the wrestler says, “never two ladies loved as they do” (1.1.97). Le Beau tells Orlando that their “loves are dearer than the natural bond of sisters,” implying that their

relationship is more than familial (1.2.242-43). 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" (1.3.67), "like Juno's swans / Still we went coupled and inseparable" (1.3.69-70). Because of this closeness, Celia's attachment to her cousin constructs her identity: she defines herself in terms of Rosalind. Depending on the representation of this intimacy, a film director has the opportunity to emphasize—or de-emphasize—the homoeroticism in Celia and Rosalind's relationship. Consider Kenneth Branagh's adaptation (2006) in contrast with Paul Czinner's film (1936) with regard to cutting text. Branagh's film highlights the cousins' intimacy when Celia appeals to Rosalind to "be merry" (1.2.1). Lying on the floor of a bedroom, Celia sits behind Rosalind hugging and comforting her after her father's exile. Branagh removes all of Charles' comments about Rosalind and Celia but only because we already know this expository information. He keeps in Le Beau's remark, however, which underlines the intimacy we have already seen. Branagh's film does not emphasize the possibility of Celia's desire for Rosalind, but, by retaining the descriptions of their close relationship, he does not completely deny a homoerotic reading.

Czinner's film, on the other hand, cuts out both statements regarding the women's relationship and therefore neglects to establish the intensity of their bond. The film dismisses any significant suggestion of Celia's homoerotic desires. Czinner's Rosalind and Celia are dressed exactly alike which emphasizes their closeness, but matching costumes do not substantiate a homoerotic relationship. In their first scene the camera creates a visual match between swans swimming in a pool and Celia and Rosalind, who are sitting beside the pond. Literalizing Celia's statement about Juno's swans, Czinner reinforces the strength of the bond between the women.

However, despite these visual cues of their attachment, Czimmer limits the potential for homoeroticism in the cousins' relationship by leaving out the text.

In Shakespeare's play, Celia uses the language of marriage to define her identity and legitimize her desire for Rosalind while adhering to the heteronormative 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 lovest 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 hadst been still with me I
could have taught my love to take thy father for mine. So
wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously
tempered as mine is to thee.

(1.2.6-11)

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, and the effect here is the further mirroring of Celia and Rosalind. In Christine Edzard's adaptation (1992) and Branagh's film, the same actor plays Duke Frederick and Duke Senior, which suggests the ease with which the adoption of the former as Rosalind's father might occur. Celia's argument that her cousin's love for her does not match her love clearly has homoerotic connotations, and, when Celia offers Rosalind her father, the heteronormative institution of marriage becomes a tool for expressing and legitimizing homoerotic desire. 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" (1.2.15-17). By making Rosalind her heir, Celia establishes a bond akin to marriage, even though no actual ceremony has taken place.

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 on herself, emphasizing that because of their closeness, she and her cousin must both be exiled. Rosalind denies Celia's logic, to which the latter responds that Rosalind

lacks then the love
Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one:
Shall we be sundered? Shall we part, sweet girl?
No: let my father seek another heir.
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 griefs yourself and leave me out.

(1.3.90-97)

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 griefs." In fact, Celia is the one who first suggests leaving the court and escaping into Ardenne by dressing themselves in "poor and mean attire" (1.3.105). Rosalind, insisting on her differences from her cousin, observes that, since she is "more than common tall" (1.3.109), she will "suit" herself "all points like a man" (1.3.110). Rosalind and Celia's mirroring ceases, and Celia can no longer depend on Rosalind for her identity. Celia decides to "smirch [her] face" (1.3.106) with dirt to disguise herself, and she calls her new identity "Aliena," since it "hath a reference to [her] state" (1.3.121-22). We can read this line in two ways: as a reference to Celia's literal self-imposed exile to Arden or as an allusion to her sudden estrangement from Rosalind. The latter reading explains why Celia increasingly has more open silences after Rosalind begins to cross-dress as Ganymede. By cross-dressing, Rosalind breaks the oneness of her and Celia's characters, undermining Celia's identity and prompting her open silences.

After Rosalind decides to cross-dress as Ganymede, Celia's identity shifts away from Rosalind and increasingly depends on how productions stage the performance of her open silences. These open silences offer films significant potential for the representation of homoerotic desires and tensions. For example, Celia's behavior greatly affects the possibility of homoerotic tensions in the play when Rosalind goes back to speak to Orlando after the wrestling, or during Ganymede's first interaction with Orlando, in which s/he decides to "cure" Orlando of his love (3.2.363). While Czinner's adaptation does not emphasize the homoeroticism of these moments, the film does play a little Celia's verbal and nonverbal responses to her cousin's actions. For example, when Rosalind approaches Orlando again after the wrestling to tell him that he has "overthrown / More than [his] enemies," Celia walks up to her and urgently asks while tugging on her sleeve "Will you go, coz?" (1.2.220-22). Celia responds anxiously to Rosalind's attraction to Orlando, although we are not sure if this anxiety stems from Rosalind showing sexual interest in someone other than Celia or if it arises from Rosalind's enthusiasm for a man Duke Frederick denounces. This anxiety carries over into the forest of Arden when Ganymede first proposes "curing" Orlando. Celia appears only once after Ganymede begins talking about this cure, when the camera jump cuts to her reaction to Ganymede's suggestion that Orlando "call [her] Rosalind / and come every day to [her] cot, and woo [her]" (3.2.381-82). We see Celia putting her hand over her mouth in surprise before the camera jump cuts to Orlando. Czinner visually emphasizes Celia's distress about Ganymede's actions, but rather than being anxious because of the disruption of a hidden desire for Rosalind, she seems more disturbed because of Ganymede's audacious schemes. Even though Rosalind's desire for Orlando is heterosexual, Czinner's Celia becomes uncomfortable with the homoerotic implications of cross-dressing.

Shakespeare's *As You Like It* underlines how every relationship involving cross-dressing is both heterosexual and homoerotic. By cross-dressing, Rosalind reconfigures her heterosexual desire for Orlando as homoerotic. Globe theater-goers would know that Rosalind was actually a boy actor, but by cross-dressing he would avoid blatant same-sex flirting. In the change of a costume, the boy actor transmutes his same-sex desire into heterosexual desire. Rosalind constantly reaffirms "real" gender after she dresses as Ganymede when she reminds Celia—and the audience—that she is indeed a woman (3.2.227). Likewise, Ganymede validates "his" exchanges with Orlando by becoming the female "Rosalind" and having him woo "her." However, Rosalind's choice of name for her crossed-dressed male persona necessarily indicates a homoerotic quality to her cross-dressing. As Smith writes, "for Renaissance Englishmen...the story of Jupiter and Ganymede was the best known, most widely recognized myth of homoerotic desire" (191). Ganymede is a name laden with homoerotic connotations, as it signified a young man who was sexually involved with an older man in early modern England (Greenblatt 605). Marjorie Garber suggests that "Ganymede is necessary to falling in love. We could almost say that Ganymede *is* love in *As You Like It*" (459). I would revise Garber's statement to argue that Ganymede is desire, not love, and as such "he" "engender[s] heterosexual as well as homoerotic desires" (Traub 122).

By constantly playing with gender while in her adopted identities, Rosalind increases the potential for both heterosexual and homoerotic interactions. Dressed as Ganymede, Rosalind reminds Celia and the audience that she is really a woman when she asks Celia "Dost thou think, though I am comparisioned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?" (3.2.178-80). In Edzard's film, Rosalind's hat signals gender: when she wears it, she is the male Ganymede, and, when she does not wear it, she is Rosalind. When Celia chides Rosalind for

interrupting her so much, Rosalind responds, with her hat off and hair down, “Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak” (3.2.227-28). Textual references are not the only marker of Rosalind’s “true” gender. When Celia spies Orlando through the window of their shack, Rosalind hurriedly puts her hair back under the hat. Rosalind’s quick transition from female to male reminds us of the layering of gender, while Ganymede’s hat, underlining Rosalind’s femaleness, emphasizes the heterosexual desire that is at the foundation of all desire in the play. Despite the homoeroticism of Ganymede and Orlando’s relationship, the use of the hat underlines the heterosexual desire beneath Rosalind’s cross-dressing by specifying her “real” gender.

Branagh’s Ganymede also relies on “his” hat to signal “his” masculinity, although the hat in this film emphasizes “his” maleness, thereby underscoring how “his” relationship with Phoebe is both homoerotic and heterosexual. When “he” is first talking to Phoebe, Ganymede is not wearing a hat, but, when “he” realizes that Phoebe “means to tangle my eyes, too,” “he” quickly puts his hat back on his head (3.5.45). Phoebe is attracted to Ganymede because of “his” physical feminine qualities and recounts to Silvius how

There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper and more lusty-red
Than that mixed in his cheek. ‘Twas just the difference
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.

(3.5.121-24)

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 (3.5.65). Shakespeare’s England would present the extra layer of a boy actor for both Rosalind and Phoebe, therefore on the

playhouse level, Phoebe's interaction with the male Ganymede is both heterosexual and homosexual. The films I am looking at do not use boy actors for either women. However, as Traub argues, "the contemporary practice of employing *female* actors for these parts can heighten [homoeroticism]" (108). Using female actors subtracts the playhouse level of cross-dressing, but the end results are similar. Phoebe's interactions with Rosalind are both heterosexual and homoerotic.

Ganymede's adoption of "Rosalind" as an identity allows for both heterosexual and homoerotic desires, demonstrating how manifold identities permit fluidity between numerous and sometimes conflicting desires. Rosalind's dual performances as Ganymede and "Rosalind" complicate Orlando's desires, as we do not know which desires he attempts to fulfill: his desire for the "pretty youth" or for Rosalind through Ganymede's portrayal of "Rosalind" (3.2.304).

Consider the scene in which Orlando agrees to woo "Rosalind":

ORLANDO: I would not be cured, youth.
 ROSALIND: I would cure you if you would but call me Rosalind
 and come every day to my cot, and woo me.
 ORLANDO: Now by the faith of my love, I will.

(3.2.380-83)

Orlando only agrees to "be cured" once Ganymede has said he will be Orlando's "Rosalind," which suggests he agrees to the youth's proposition because it is now more socially legitimate, as the cure is the conventional wooing of a woman. The "faith of [his] love" could be his love for Rosalind, his love for Ganymede, or his love for "Rosalind"—the text fails to specify. Although Rosalind occupies this binary system of desires, she does not conflate homoerotic and heterosexual desires, but rather blurs the lines between these different modes of desire.

Branagh's *As You Like It* upholds heterosexual desires over homoerotic ones, although there are moments when he plays with the possibility of homoeroticism before effectively

denying it. The mock marriage scene between “Rosalind” and Orlando offers a possibility for legitimizing Ganymede’s desire for Orlando, but Branagh, although he does incorporate some homoerotic tension in the mock marriage, ultimately refuses any legitimization of this homoeroticism. Orlando pulls “Rosalind” extremely close when he asks her to “love me” and, as the text indicates, willingly participates in the marriage (4.1.98). After “Rosalind” tells Orlando she will take him as her husband, “Rosalind” leans in to kiss Orlando. The camera jump cuts from a close-up of her face back to Orlando’s bewildered and uncomfortable expression. Branagh does not explore the possibility of Orlando responding to “Rosalind’s” kiss with his own kiss; instead, Orlando denies Ganymede’s kiss by distancing himself from Ganymede as he tries to recover from the sudden homoerotic turn of the mock marriage. Even the homoeroticism of Orlando participating in Ganymede’s “cure” is diluted by the film’s implication that his reason for agreeing to be cured stems from a perceived challenge from Ganymede. When Ganymede proposes the cure, We see a wide angle shot of Orlando and Ganymede face-to-face, and as Orlando says “Now by the faith of my love, I will” he raises his hand to the youth’s face and “he” responds in kind, shaking hands with Orlando. Branagh changes Ganymede’s reply from “Will you go?” to simply “Will you?,” which further emphasizes the characterization of the cure as a challenge (3.2.386). Even though Branagh downplays the erotic potential of this scene, the homoeroticism inherent in Ganymede and Orlando’s relationship must convert into a heteronormative relationship before the end of the play.

Many complicated non-normative desires exist in *As You Like It*—so many, in fact, that the only way the heterosexual desires can prevail is to invoke Hymen, the god of marriage. This *deus ex machina* performs four heterosexual marriages at the end of the play, which sets all the potential homoerotic relationships back on a heteronormative path. This ratification of a god

denies the use of marriage in legitimizing homoerotic desires. Characters attempt to manipulate marriage as a way to sanction their nonconformist desires, such as Celia's use of the language of marriage in Act 1 and the mock marriage between "Rosalind" and Orlando. Marriage, however, remains a heterocentric institution, despite the way characters use it throughout the play. The four heterosexual marriages orchestrated by a god clear away any doubts of marriage's heteronormativity. While Hymen does not appear in any of the films I am examining, other characters speak some of his lines in two of the films and therefore assume his heteronormative function. In Czinner's film, Rosalind speaks Hymen's first lines, "Good Duke receive thy daughter; / Hymen from heaven brought her" (5.4.100-01). Czinner's Rosalind becomes the enforcer of heterosexuality at the end of the film even though her cross-dressing initiates most of the homoeroticism in the play. By giving Rosalind these lines, Czinner's film underlines the fact that Rosalind's desire has been heterosexual from the beginning. Hymen's lines further associate her with the heteronormative side of marriage, even though her desires have been heteronormative all along. In Branagh's film, the priest performs most of Hymen's lines at the wedding ceremony. As the priest is clearly associated with marriage, these line changes perform the same task of precluding homoerotic relationships but in a more realistic and subdued fashion, as if Branagh's film does not need the extreme correction of homoeroticism that Hymen performs.

The heteronormative resolution denies the homoerotic possibilities depicted throughout the play, but the epilogue creates a lingering sense of homoeroticism and thus defies the complete domination of heterosexuality by maintaining fluidity between heteronormativity and homoeroticism. Both Czinner and Branagh juxtapose the last scene of the play, where Hymen—or his speeches at least—appears, with Rosalind's epilogue. Their epilogues play with the idea

that identity and the desires that emerge in identity are not limited to physical appearance. In Czinner's film, Rosalind is in her wedding gown as she begins the epilogue. After she speaks "My way is to conjure you" (Epi. 9), Rosalind suddenly turns into Ganymede by a visual effect that replaces her clothing with "his"; before speaking "and I'll begin with the women," Rosalind switches gender (Epi. 10). Ganymede turns back into Rosalind just as she begins to address the men. This particular performance demonstrates how the epilogue "highlight[s] the constructedness of gender and the flexibility of erotic attraction" (Traub 128). Shakespeare's epilogue plays with the multiple layers of desires without constricting them as Hymen does. The visual effects in Czinner's epilogue play with Rosalind's "real" gender by putting her in Ganymede's clothing when she says "If I were a woman I would kiss as many of [the men]" (Epi. 15). Branagh's epilogue plays more with identity more than gender, as Rosalind appears as Ganymede and delivers the epilogue as "he" is walking around the set of the film, amid the trailers and crew. At the end of the epilogue Rosalind, or rather the actress who plays her, enters her trailer. The last shot shows the door of the trailer, where a piece of paper that says "*As You Like It*, Rosalind" hangs. This meta-cinematic scene does not focus on constructions of gender as much as it shows the process of constructing identity. Both renditions of the epilogue work to disrupt, however slightly, the conventional marriages at the end of Act 5 and reaffirm that desire and performances of desire are located in and informed by identity.

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. Perhaps Rosalind's heterosexual desire for Orlando is the reason why there are significantly fewer film versions of *As You Like It* than *Twelfth Night* that actively work to

emphasize the homoeroticism in the play. However, the films I have examined still locate desire, regardless of the type of desire, in identity, especially gender identity. All three of the films designate a piece of Rosalind/Ganymede's costume to emphasize which gender s/he is at that moment, which shapes Rosalind's desire as heterosexual or homoerotic and creates flexibility in gender and desire. Ganymede's hat is what signifies "his" maleness and his identity in all of the films; moreover, a hat is not an article of clothing that we associate with the body in highly erotic ways. If we read the hat as a way of gender coding, gender is then located in the head rather than on the body as a whole. The directors of *As You Like It* films seem to see gender as more of an intellectual matter than an erotic or bodily one, which explains the noticeable lack of blatant homoeroticism in *As You Like It* films compared to those of *Twelfth Night* despite the rich opportunities the play's text offers. While social hierarchy is a concern in the play, with issues of primogeniture, usurpation, and the structure of the court, the heterocentric nature of society does not inform the homoerotic relationships involving cross-dressing, unlike *Twelfth Night*.

Twelfth Night, or What You Will

“I am all the daughters of my father’s house, / And all the brothers too”
 -Viola/Cesario, (2.4.119-20)

Of the three plays, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* occurs in the most structured society and for this reason insists most upon heteronormative relationships, since heterosexual marriages are the pervasive structure of social alliances in the play. *Twelfth Night* begins with a desiring man, Orsino, and the desired woman, Olivia, establishing the entire play in a strictly heterosexual frame. Like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* contains homoerotic relationships stemming from same-sex amity and open silences. Rather than an apparently uncontrollable circulation of desire eventually ending in heterosexual pairings due to magic, as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, or divine intervention, as in *As You Like It*, characters in *Twelfth Night* exchange their homoerotic desires for normative ones to ensure a heterosexual resolution. In this comedy, desires are more limited by the institutionalized patriarchal society. This fixed social structure demands erotic and emotional substitution to retain heteronormativity, while any characters who do not exchange or substitute their desires are marginalized or expelled.

Despite the strictness of the social structure, its rigidity appears superficial, due to Antonio’s character, Viola’s dress, and the unconventional ending. These features suggest that the exchanges required by society are aggressively heteronormative in order to mask an underlying homoerotic potential. Desires abound in the play, but unlike *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* chaotic widespread circulation of desire, characters in *Twelfth Night* swap desires and their object of desire, sometimes unwittingly. These exchanges represent the safeguard society has in place to normalize homoerotic coupling. This process of exchange and substitution, intentional or not, ultimately resolves the homoeroticism of many relationships, but not all.

Olivia marries the male Sebastian instead of the female Cesario, Orsino takes Viola instead of Cesario or Olivia, and Sebastian takes Olivia instead of Antonio. *Twelfth Night* uses what Jonathan Crewe calls the “always power-infused heterosexual marriage plot as a normative and/or hegemonic ordering device” (102). While film depictions of these exchanges emphasize the ways the rigidly structured society forces characters to exchange desires in order to conform to heteronormativity, representations of Viola’s cross-dressing, Antonio and his open silences, and the unconventional ending undermine both the social structure and its heteronormativity.

Roles in the society of *Twelfth Night* are rigidly defined and occupied, but Viola’s cross-dressing shows how these roles and gender identities depend upon costume rather than performance. She is not actually named as Viola in the text until well into Act 5, scene 1, after the audience has seen her as Cesario for four acts. Trevor Nunn’s *Twelfth Night* (1996) demonstrates this instability in her gender identity from the beginning of the film. Even though the film names her in the first act, the first time we see Viola she is dressed as both a man and a woman. She and Sebastian are in women’s clothing, yet are wearing mustaches. We do not know the gender of either certainly until Sebastian peels off Viola’s mustache. Shipwrecked in Illyria, she cannot serve Olivia as a lady, since Olivia will “admit no kind of suit” (1.2.41). She decides instead to serve Orsino as a man and asks the captain to “Conceal me what I am, and be my aid / For such disguise as haply shall become / The form of my intent” (1.2.49-51). Viola returns to performing the gender we saw her as in the first scene of the film. She wishes she could serve Olivia, “And might not be delivered to the world / Till I had made mine own occasion mellow, / What my estate is” (1.2.38-40). Olivia would be the prime lady for Viola to serve because of their similar social status: both have lost a brother and are unmarried. Nunn’s film sets up these parallels in the beginning of the film by having Viola actually see Olivia. In order to serve

Orsino, Viola must switch genders, so she cross-dresses as the male Cesario. In Nunn's film, the fake mustache Viola/Cesario wears is the most prominent signifier of maleness. Viola's cross-dressing establishes the construction of gender through costume (Orgel 57). However, costume, though necessary for Viola/Cesario's role in the Duke's house, does not determine the desires of the individual.

Viola's cross-dressing decides her role in Illyrian society; her cross-dressing, not her desires, leads to homoerotic situations, suggesting that the strict heteronormativity of society is a farce. In order to ensure a heterosexual resolution, Viola/Cesario must exchange genders, not desires. Viola/Cesario's male gender gives her/him the opportunity to serve a role in the Duke's court, but her/his feminine traits provoke Orsino's homoerotic description of his page:

Diana's lip
 Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
 Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
 And all is semblative a woman's part.
 I know thy constellation is right apt
 For this affair.
 [...]

Prosper well in this
 And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,
 To call his fortunes thine.

(1.4.30-35, 37-39)

While Orsino's attraction to Viola/Cesario's feminine traits is heterosexual, he still believes s/he is a boy and gives her/him the opportunity to woo Olivia. The youth is given a chance to better her/his social status due to the Duke's homoerotic interest in her/him. At the same time, Cesario is actually Viola, a girl, so her relationship with Orsino, on the true-character level, is heterosexual. In Early Modern England, however, a boy actor would have played Viola, a character who Orsino believes is a man. On the playhouse level and the plot level, the Duke's relationship with Viola/Cesario is homoerotic. John Sichel's *Twelfth Night* (1969) reworks this

duality by featuring the same female actress, Joan Plowright, playing both Viola and Sebastian.¹ As a result, Viola's exchange of gender at the end of the film does not ensure a completely heteronormative resolution, since Sebastian, as the audience knows, is still a woman on the playhouse level. Even in Shakespeare's day, Viola's total exchange of genders would be impossible because of boy actors. To secure an entirely heterosexual resolution, individuals cannot inhabit such a multitude of gender identities. As a result, Tim Supple's film (2003) as well as Nunn's film heavily emphasize Viola's femininity through her clothing, or lack thereof, when she is alone. By reminding us of her "real" gender, Supple and Nunn make the gender switch Viola undergoes at the end feasible, although the renewed heteronormativity remains unconvincing. No character represents this masked homoeroticism more clearly than Orsino, the Duke of Illyria.

Although Orsino represents the patriarchal society in which *Twelfth Night* takes place, his exchanges often lead to homoerotic situations, which implies that the fierce heterosexuality in social roles, especially a conventionally Petrarchan role, conceals the homoerotic potential inherent in these roles. As the beginning of the play sets up, Orsino, the desiring man, pursues, however passively, the desired heterosexual object, Olivia, and ceaselessly moans about his love to his page Cesario. The films underscore the homoerotic potential in Orsino confiding the depth of his love to Cesario. In Supple's *Twelfth Night*, we see Orsino and Viola/Cesario's relationship building over the "three days" he has known her/him through a montage of clips (1.4.3). A lord, Valentine, presents Viola/Cesario to Orsino, and we see the young page speaking to the Duke long into the night as Valentine becomes increasingly resentful of Viola/Cesario and Orsino's growing intimacy. Supple switches the text of Act 1, scene 4 around slightly, so the scene opens with Orsino, in a bathtub, calling "who saw Cesario, ho?" (1.4.9). Valentine holds Viola/Cesario

¹ To avoid confusion with Tim Supple's *Twelfth Night*, I will refer to John Sichel's film as the Plowright version.

back and tells him “if the Duke continue these favours towards you, Cesario, you are like to be much advanced” (1.4.1-2). They both enter the bathroom, but Orsino dismisses Valentine with “stand you a while aloof” (1.4.11). Supple’s depiction of Viola/Cesario and Orsino’s growing closeness opens up room for homoerotic interactions. Orsino presumably has told the youth everything regarding his ardent love for Olivia, so that Viola/Cesario “know’st no less but all. I have unclasped / To thee the book even of my secret soul” (1.4.12-13). Despite his claims of passionate love for Olivia, Orsino is actually most intimate with Viola/Cesario.

Both Nunn and Supple’s films heavily emphasize this closeness through the bathtub scenes, but the first time we see Viola/Cesario and Orsino together in Nunn’s film is during Orsino’s “If music be the food of love” speech (1.1.1). The young page plays the piano while the Duke talks about love. Orsino directly addresses Viola/Cesario when he says “O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame / To pay this debt of love but to a brother” (1.1.32-33). The scene cuts to Sebastian struggling in the stormy ocean, thereby implying that Viola is the “she” who is “paying” this “debt of love.” Orsino’s lines in the bathtub scene follow immediately after this line in the text, although it takes place almost forty-five minutes later in the movie and contains much more explicit homoerotic overtones. Nunn’s chopped-up dialogue for this bathtub scene incorporates lines from both Act 1, scene 1 and Act 2, scene 4, the effect of which is Viola/Cesario’s momentary replacement of Olivia in Orsino’s desire. Orsino calls her/him in to the room and motions for her/him to wash him. This duty of Viola/Cesario highlights how social roles within heteronormative or patriarchal society can actually be extremely homoerotic. As the “boy” begins to wash his back, Orsino asks

How will she love when the rich golden shaft
 Hath killed the flock of all affections else
 That live in her—when [liver,] brain, and heart,
 [These sovereign thrones,] are all supplied, [and filled

Her sweet perfections] with one self king!

(1.1.34-38, Nunn has omitted the bracketed material)

The entirety of Act 1, scene 1 would remind us that this “she” Orsino speaks of is actually Olivia, but Nunn’s jumbled film does not name the countess. Viola’s reactions to the Duke’s speech make it clear that she is substituting herself as this “she,” as Nunn’s film has already introduced her into dialogue she does not hear in the text. The camera jumps from a side-view of the Duke and Viola/Cesario to a head-on shot, where Orsino’s face is slightly out of focus and Viola/Cesario looks lovingly down at his naked back. Cutting back to the original shot, Viola/Cesario comes to her/his senses and, jumping ahead to Act 2, asks “Sir, shall I to this lady?” (2.4.121). As Viola/Cesario remembers the social role s/he is currently occupying, her/his homoerotic actions cease. In spite of this return to heteronormativity, the “boy’s” actions demonstrate the homoeroticism encompassed in the social role. As Laurie Osborne notes, Nunn’s film “emphasize[s] the hierarchical connections between master and servant that underlie their mutual attraction in the Folio text” (92). This mutual attraction and adherence of their social roles, despite all pretense of heteronormativity, lead to several homoerotic moments.

Most strikingly, in Nunn’s film Orsino and the cross-dressed Viola/Cesario almost kiss. They are listening to Feste singing “Come away, come away death,” and the camera continually cuts back and forth between the Duke and Viola/Cesario who are getting closer as if they were going to kiss, and Feste, responding to what he sees as blatant homoeroticism (2.4.50). When Feste finishes his song, Orsino quickly pulls back from Cesario’s face before they make contact. In Nunn’s film, the presence of another person, even if it is the fool, reminds Orsino and Viola/Cesario of their social roles. Immediately following this scene, Nunn’s Orsino forcefully says “Once more, Cesario, / Get thee to yon same sovereign cruelty” (2.4.77-78), respecting his

social role over his erotic desires, without entirely eliminating the homoeroticism of the interaction that just took place.

The bathtub scene in Supple's film even more openly underlines patriarchal society's underlying homoeroticism. Supple's scene takes place in Act 1, scene 4, after we have seen how intimate Viola/Cesario and Orsino have become. Cesario, Orsino's most favored gentleman, becomes an erotic object in this scene and, because of this homoerotic appeal, better "his" social standing. After dismissing Valentine, who resentfully steps aside, Orsino bids Viola/Cesario to massage him. As he says "then unfold the passion of my love," Orsino jumps out of the bath, and the "boy" hands him a towel (1.4.23). Still naked, he touches her/his lips when he notices "Diana's lip / Is not more smooth and rubious" (1.4.30-31) and runs his hand down to "thy small pipe" (1.4.31) and then traces down the buttons of Viola/Cesario's shirt as he says "all is semblative a woman's part" (1.4.33). In Supple's film, Viola/Cesario's dress shirt becomes a signifier of both her/his maleness and femaleness. Orsino's focus on her/his shirt locates his interest in the youth's masculinity *and* femininity. Orsino sees feminine traits in Cesario and declares him "right apt" for wooing Olivia *because* of these traits (1.4.34). These homoerotic moments are what secure her/his opportunity to woo Olivia and the chance to "Prosper well in this / And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord" (1.4.37-38). Viola/Cesario's erotic appeal to Orsino places her/him at a higher status within the structured society of the Duke's court.

Viola/Cesario's erotic appeal also places her/him in higher status in Olivia's court, unmasking homoeroticism while still reinforcing the patriarchal values. In their first scene together in Supple's film, Olivia begins to desire Viola/Cesario and raises her/his social status, first asking about the "boy's" parentage and then wishing "the master were the man" (1.5.264). Olivia advances Viola/Cesario's social status as she realizes she is falling in love with her/him,

demonstrating the influence of one's desires on social status. Even though Olivia's desire for Viola/Cesario is homoerotic on the plot level, her sudden request that Viola/Cesario "undertake another suit" upholds the patriarchal society by diminishing Olivia's independence (3.1.100). Olivia was using her mourning for her brother as protection against marriage and the subsequent relinquishment of her independence. She exchanges her grief for her dead brother with erotic desire for Viola/Cesario.

The editing in Supple's film helps us see this exchange visually. The entire wooing scene takes place in the church, circling the shrine to Olivia's brother. Right before Olivia hears "Orsino's embassy," she imagines her dead brother playing the piano in the room (1.5.148). As Viola/Cesario leaves the church with the remark "Love make his heart of flint that you shall love / And let your fervour, like my master's, be / Placed in contempt," the film cuts to Olivia seeing Cesario in front of her brother's shrine at "you shall love" (1.5.256-58). After s/he has left, Olivia turns back to face the photographs of her brother, but the camera jump cuts to Viola's naked legs and runs up her body, and we hear the rest of Olivia's speech in a voiceover. The camera visually replaces Olivia's brother with Viola/Cesario, thus indicating that the Countess has swapped her emotions for her lost brother with erotic desires for this "peevisish messenger" (1.5.270). Her mourning over, Olivia is willing to marry and can fulfill her social role in a patriarchy such as Illyria by marrying. Her object of choice, however, undermines the heteronormativity of that patriarchy and exposes how social roles can lead to unwitting homoerotic interactions.

Viola's ring soliloquy underlines her duality of genders, and, in the Plowright film, Plowright's performance of the ring speech suggests that dependence upon social structure leads to homoerotic investment. In this speech, Viola/Cesario's body becomes a center of erotic desire,

as s/he both desires Orsino and finds her-/himself to be the desired object of Olivia, although after s/he has an established social role. Viola's soliloquy after receiving the ring from Malvolio suggests that Viola has a "dual erotic investment" in being both a subject and object in the play (Traub 131), especially true in the Plowright film because of the double casting of Viola and Sebastian. The performance of Viola/Cesario's soliloquy in the Plowright version indicates her pleasure at being a subject and object simultaneously. In this film, Viola/Cesario is in public, unlike the other two films. S/he speaks "I left no ring with her" aloud, but then switches to an internal speech because she is in the middle of the town surrounded by people (2.2.15). The public location reinforces the seemingly strict structure of society in which Viola is located. S/he says out loud "She loves me, sure" and then quickly puts her/his hand over her/his mouth (2.2.20). Because s/he is in public, Viola/Cesario is literally silenced by the society surrounding her/him. At the same time, the use of voiceover highlights the homoeroticism that exists beneath society's heteronormative façade. The next line s/he says out loud is "O time, thou must untangle this, not I. / It is too hard a knot for me t'untie" (2.2.38-39). S/he deliberately remains both desiring subject and desired object while waiting for time—not society—to "untangle" the mess.

The manipulation of clothing in the ring speech in Supple's film reveals a homoerotic complexity within an apparently fixed heterosexual social structure, suggesting that social roles—and the clothing necessary for these roles—actually occupy a homoerotic space as well as a heterosexual one. Viola begins the speech lying in bed wearing only a man's dress shirt. She hopes "my outside [has] not charmed [Olivia]. / She made good view of me, indeed so much / That straight methought her eyes had lost her tongue" (2.2.16-18). While she says these lines, Viola's "outside" in this scene reveals her femaleness by showing her barely clad body. These lines, as well as the editing of this scene, place Olivia in a homoerotic position of desiring an

undisguised woman. Viola continues the speech standing in front of a three-panel mirror and, as she says “I am the man,” she begins to unbutton her shirt (2.2.23). This scene contradicts Orgel’s argument that “whatever Viola says about the erotic realities of her inner life, she is not a woman unless she is dressed as one” (104). For while we as an audience understand that Viola is actually Cesario when she is dressed as him, her unbuttoning the dress shirt, revealing bare skin underneath, complicates the relationship between costume and gender. The dress shirt, normally signifying Viola’s maleness, actually reveals femaleness and subsequently reminds us of Viola’s “real” gender. This use of costume, coupled with the heavy jump cutting between Viola/Cesario and Olivia, emphasizes the homoerotic interest Olivia has in the youth, despite her heteronormative intentions.

While the disguise of “real” gender often leads to homoerotic situations and relationships, Antonio presents a homoerotic character who relies on his undisguised identity and social roles rather than cross-dressing as the foundations for this homoeroticism. His relationship with Sebastian is just as homoerotic as Ganymede’s relationship with Orlando and Viola/Cesario’s relationships with Orsino and Olivia without being diluted by cross-dressing. Antonio implores Sebastian “for my love, let me be your servant,” using a social role to justify following Sebastian (2.1.30-31). Consider where Antonio enters the play: Act 2, scene 1 immediately follows the first wooing scene between Viola/Cesario and Olivia, thereby paralleling unintended homoeroticism with conscious homosexual desire. Antonio and Sebastian’s first scene is chronologically out of order, but by placing the scene here, Shakespeare sets up a defense against homoerotic desires: Sebastian, whose exchange of place with his sister will eventually solve the homoeroticism between Viola/Cesario and Olivia. Antonio, however, demands that we think about the structure of society as well as homosexuality as an identity. Yet unlike Viola/Cesario, it is not duty that

drives Antonio but “My desire, / More sharp that filèd steel, did spur me forth / And not all love to see you” (3.3.4-6). Supple’s film especially focuses on Antonio’s identity by using language to underline the closeness of his relationship with Sebastian. Most of Act 2, scene 1 is spoken in Hindi. Antonio makes a “pleasure of [his] pains” by following Sebastian and giving him his purse (3.3.2). At the end of Act 3, scene 3, Antonio tells Sebastian to “remember” in Hindi, and he responds “I do remember” in the same language (3.3.48). They understand each other because, beyond speaking the same language, their relationship is temporarily exclusive. Speech becomes a means of allegiance that characters use to convey their desire or, conversely, to maintain their social role. Antonio’s chose role as Sebastian’s servant highlights the homoerotic potential in such a social role. However, Antonio’s desire is completely homosexual and offers no heteronormative possibility.

Antonio represents a character who *cannot* exchange his desires in order to conform to the demands of society and therefore is marginalized. His desires do not involve any issues of cross-dressing or mistaken identity, yet, when he does encounter the cross-dressed Viola/Cesario, he quickly becomes the scapegoat for anxiety surrounding homoeroticism (Traub 133). Rescuing Viola/Cesario, Antonio thinks he is taking the side of Sebastian in the fight with Sir Andrew. The commotion draws the attention of the officers, and Antonio, by mistaking her/him for Sebastian, suffers for Viola/Cesario’s cross-dressing. Supple’s Antonio tells Viola/Cesario in Hindi “I must entreat of you some of that money” (3.4.305). S/he responds also in Hindi, but, even though they are speaking the same language, they do not understand each other. Antonio is unable to understand why “Sebastian” denies their relationship. Because Antonio does not replace his desire for Sebastian with a heterosexual object, such as Viola, his arrest and open silence in Act 5 demonstrate his marginalization from society. The fidelity Antonio and Sebastian shared

through language is limited, and Viola's ability to speak Hindi disrupts this bond between the men. Traub reminds us that there are "literally no early modern terms by which Antonio's desire can be understood" (137), and it seems even Hindi offers no way to resolve Antonio's alienation. His arrest signals the beginning of his marginalization from Illyria and society.

Antonio finds no place in society because he is incapable of replacing his homoerotic desires with heterosexual ones. Crewe suggests that "same-sex desire...can thus be rendered functional as a transitional phase in the otherwise intractable heterosexual marriage plot" (108). For Antonio, however, same-sex desire is not a transitional phase on his way to heteronormativity. Antonio's lines lead to the reunion between Sebastian and Viola, but, after he asks "which is Sebastian," he is silent for the rest of the play (5.1.217). In the Plowright film, Antonio walks into Olivia's house with the rest of the party, but this Antonio is the most heteronormative of the three. Nunn and Supple's Antonios are much more homoerotic and are therefore less fortunate: both have disappeared by the end of the scene. Nunn cuts to Antonio's despairing face as he watches Sebastian with Olivia. Orsino pardons him by releasing him from his shackles and shaking his hand, but Antonio is not included in the group in any real way. Although he enters the house with the rest to see to Malvolio, Nunn shows him walking away from the house, look back once, and then cuts back to Orsino and Olivia inside the house. Supple is equally careful to show Orsino pardon Antonio. After Olivia reads Malvolio's letter, Orsino walks by Sebastian, who grabs him by the arm and nods towards Antonio. Orsino says nothing but looks at Viola, who is still dressed as Cesario, and nods to the guards who unlock Antonio's handcuffs. Sebastian has found Viola, who speaks his language, so he has no further need for Antonio's bilingualism. Antonio disappears after gaining his freedom. While society functions with a homoerotic subtext, it maintains its heteronormative surface. Illyrian society pardons

Antonio for his “war crimes,” but he is marginalized for his inability to exchange his homoerotic desires for heterosexual desires, even if the exchange is superficial.

The resolution of Shakespeare’s play presents the final exchange of desires yet simultaneously denies homoeroticism (in the figure of Antonio) while perpetuating it (in the figure of Viola/Cesario). Heterosexual marriage is the persistent structure of society in Illyria, as the resolution of the play shows, yet not all homoeroticism is restrained by the exchanges that take place at the end. Upon discovering that Cesario, his page, is actually Viola, Sebastian’s sister, Orsino “share[s] in this most happy wreck” and will marry Viola (5.1.259). Orsino tells Viola to “let me see thee in thy woman’s weeds” (5.1.266), but she tells him that the “captain that did bring me first on shore / Hath my maid’s garments. He upon some action / Is now in durance, at Malvolio’s suit” (5.1.267-69). Malvolio, of course, departs angrily with “I’ll be revenged on the whole pack of you,” suggesting that Viola may never recover her specific “woman’s weeds” (5.1.365). While we and Orsino know that Viola is a woman, her gender identity as male is completely constructed by her costume. At one point, she literally becomes “all the daughters of [her] father’s house, / And all the brothers too” (2.4.119-20). Without her particular dress, constituting her particular identity, Viola will remain Orsino’s “boy,” yet both Supple and Nunn’s films show Orsino kiss the still cross-dressed Viola (5.1.260). These films legitimize such blatant homoeroticism by removing Orsino’s speech which underlines the importance of costume in gender construction:

Cesario, come—
For so you shall be while you are a man;
But when in other habits you are seen,
Orsino’s mistress, and his fancy’s queen.

(5.1.372)

These lines underline the importance of costume in designating gender, and, without them, Viola has nothing to lose from lacking her own clothing. Nunn also cuts these lines, but, as mentioned earlier, Viola's maleness depends more on the fake mustache than her male clothes in this film. At the beginning of this film, the twins, performing for the ship, are both dressed as women and both wear mustaches. Sebastian removes Viola's mustache, signaling her femaleness. Viola reaches towards Sebastian's mustache, but the ship keels right before she touches him. As the opening establishes, Sebastian remains male as long as he has his mustache, and Cesario remains male until Sebastian reveals "him" as Viola. The siblings' reunion at the end mimics their first scene together, and Sebastian once again reveals Viola's femaleness by pulling off her mustache. We do not know whether or not Sebastian's mustache would have come off in the beginning, but the significance of mustaches in Nunn's film suggests a double meaning in Sebastian's lines to Olivia: "You are betrothed both to a maid and man" (5.1.256). Throughout the film, Nunn substitutes the actress that plays Viola, Imogen Stubbs, in for Sebastian, played by Steve Mackintosh (Osborne 103). Stubbs appears as Sebastian when Feste sees "him" with Olivia outside the church before she marries "Sebastian." Sebastian physically is both a maid and a man throughout the film, thereby perpetuating the homoeroticism of Olivia's interactions with Viola/Cesario and denying an entirely heteronormative resolution.

As we have seen, the highly structured society in *Twelfth Night*, with its concerns of hierarchy and duty, preoccupation with heterosexual marriage, and exclusion of nonconformists, compels most characters to exchange any erotic and emotional desires that impede the heterocentric institution. Despite the overwhelmingly heterosexual resolution, some homoeroticism still remains unresolved, because the performance of social roles often leads to homoeroticism and therefore suggests an underlying homoerotic structure in society. Think of

Malvolio, who attempts to climb social roles by the most heteronormative and patriarchal way possible—by marrying Olivia—yet he goes “mad,” and the household marginalizes him. In Shakespeare’s play, no character advances socially without homoerotic interactions, which signals a homoerotic substructure within the heteronormative society.

In the text, Viola’s costume never consists of her “woman’s weeds,” and Orsino will not marry her until her particular clothes are found. Only costume can differentiate genders; only “the chosen role, distinguishes Cesario from Viola and Viola from...Sebastian” (Orgel 57). Costume marks gender and, by extension, sexual object-choice. Viola is still dressed as Cesario in Plowright and Supple’s films, yet Orsino still takes “her” and, in Supple’s film, kisses “her.” Nunn, however, shows Viola in woman’s clothes during the credits as she dances with Orsino and the rest of the wedding party. Nunn’s *Twelfth Night* presents the most heteronormative resolution—even more so than the text—by assuring us that Viola does indeed revert to a feminine costume and can therefore marry Orsino. Only in Nunn’s film does the persistent duality of genders throughout the play finally cease, thereby irrevocably making Viola a woman. Unlike *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It*, we do not actually see the any of the marriages take place in *Twelfth Night*. We hear of Maria and Sir Toby’s marriage as well as Olivia and Sebastian’s marriage secondhand, but Viola and Orsino are still unmarried by the end of the play. *Twelfth Night* is perhaps the most uncertain of the three plays in its heteronormativity, even though the resolution works to shut down all homoerotic possibilities. Olivia marries Sebastian, Antonio is marginalized, and Viola reveals her femaleness, yet she does not truly become a woman before the play ends. Despite all exchanges and substitutions, the structured society fails to deny all homoeroticism, thereby revealing a homoerotic substructure and perhaps a new meaning to the play’s full title, “*Twelfth Night, or What You Will.*”

Conclusion

“It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue...”
-Rosalind, *As You Like It*, (Epilogue 1-2)

A Midsummer Night's Dream, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* all share an investment in attaining a heteronormative resolution. What is most striking about the plays' endings is the perpetuation of homoeroticism, or, at the very least, uncertainty in the dominance of heterosexuality. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* concludes with three marriages, although one of the grooms, Demetrius, remains under the enchantment of the love juice. The god of marriage presents Rosalind to Orlando in *As You Like It*, but Rosalind's epilogue undermines this divine reassurance of heteronormativity. *Twelfth Night*, on the other hand, does not feature the marriage of Viola and Orsino, and Viola is stuck as Cesario. Why does Shakespeare establish homoerotic desire so firmly if the resolutions attempt normalize these desires? I think the presence of boy actors might help answer this question. The use of male actors creates at least two layers of gendering, thereby establishing relationships that are simultaneously homoerotic and heterosexual. The plays' inability to reach completely heteronormative endings suggests that this all-male casting is why, in Shakespeare's text, none of the resolutions is entirely secure in its heteronormativity.

On the other hand, all of the films I examined—with the notable exception of the Plowright *Twelfth Night*—cast their roles in the correct gender. As we have seen, however, many of these films emphasize homoerotic relationships and moments without the aid of boy actors. Hippolyta's silences, female amity, and the love juice in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* disrupt heterosexual desire, which creates the opportunity for homoerotic desire to enter the play. No room needs to be made for homoerotic relationships in *As You Like It*, since Rosalind's cross-

dressing causes all of her relationships to be heterosexual and homoerotic. Viola/Cesario's relationships in *Twelfth Night* are similarly heterosexual and homoerotic, but society also plays a part in generating homoeroticism. In short, gender and gender performance is not the only cause of homoeroticism in these plays.

Looking at films of these plays, we see a shift of gender coding between the playhouse level and the movie theater. While both mediums rely on clothing to signify a specific gender, I was intrigued that many of the films locate gender in a specific part of the body. The *As You Like It* films are preoccupied with Ganymede's hat: a preoccupation that suggests the directors view gender as an intellectual rather than erotic matter. Nunn's *Twelfth Night* focuses on Viola/Cesario's peel-off mustache, while Supple uses her/his dress shirt to play with homoeroticism and the ambiguity of gender. In some films, this specific gender coding limits the homoerotic effects, like in Branagh's *As You Like It*, while in others it maximizes the homoerotic possibilities, as in the almost-kiss scene in Nunn's film, where Viola/Cesario's mustache is highlighted. The playhouse level automatically blurs gender because of the boy actors, but the precision of gender location in some of these films indicates the opportunity for film, as a medium, to emphasize homoeroticism, even without boy actors. In either setting, the stage or the movie theater, these comedies reject total heteronormative resolutions, and the unconventional desire and homoeroticism built up throughout the play still lingers. Demetrius remains enchanted, Rosalind's doublet and hose reappear in the epilogue, and Cesario never fully transforms back to Viola. The "knot" of homoerotic and unconventional desire remains tangled, and complete heteronormativity is unattained (*Twelfth Night* 2.2.39).

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