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MATING IN THE BUSHES: A STUDY OF SEXUAL AGGRESSION AND DESIRE IN
SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY

by

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B.A. University of Montana, 2000

presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Masters of Arts

The University of Montana

May 2002

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Mating in the Bushes: A Study of Sexual Aggression and Desire in Shakespeare's Comedy

Director: Robert M. Pack

RMP

In her essay on comedy, Susanne K. Langer claims that, mankind has its rhythm of animal existence, too – the strain of maintaining a vital balance amid the alien and impartial chances of the world, complicated and heightened by passionate desires . . . this human life-feeling is the essence of comedy. (243-44)

Nowhere does this appear more prominently than in the comedies of Shakespeare, most particularly within those dealing with the green world of the forest. In such plays, Shakespeare creates a tension between civilization and nature, social morality and desire, rationality and bestiality that finds resolution only through the complete expression of all its elements. Within the greenwood, animal urges and socially unacceptable desires make their presence known, freed from the confines of the civilized world. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* best embody this animal life-force and its necessary sublimation to the rules and rituals of normalized society.

The forest near Athens provides a place for animal desires to run rampant without the restraints of social norms; love and aggression interplay within the actions of both mortal and fairy lovers while revealing the arbitrariness of desire. Theseus and Hippolyta serve as a model of mature love for Demetrius, Hermia, Helena, and Lysander; they have already sublimated their sexual aggression and desire through love of the hunt. The young lovers enter the forest only to protest love to the wrong partner and threaten others with murder. Puck intervenes, and the young Athenians emerge from the forest ready to take vows of marriage, sublimating their desires to socially acceptable modes.

The forest of Arden also nurtures this play between Eros and Thanatos, as well as the arbitrary nature of love; the socially unacceptable desires and fluid sexuality of its inhabitants all find expression before being sublimated through the comic resolution of marriage. Each pair of lovers must undergo a confrontation with an ambiguity of gender, desire, or both. Hymen, like Puck, arranges for all the lovers to enter into the rites of marriage in order to return to civilization as a well-adjusted individual.

Mating in the Bushes: A Study of Sexuality and Desire in Shakespeare's Comedy

I

In her essay on comedy, Susanne K. Langer claims that,

mankind has its rhythm of animal existence, too – the strain of maintaining a vital balance amid the alien and impartial chances of the world, complicated and heightened by passionate desires . . . this human life-feeling is the essence of comedy. (243-44)

Nowhere does this appear more prominently than in the comedies of Shakespeare, most particularly within those dealing with the green world of the forest. In such plays, Shakespeare creates a tension between civilization and nature, social morality and desire, rationality and bestiality that finds resolution only through the complete expression of all its elements. C. L. Barber claims that in the green world comedies “everyday-holiday, town-grove, day-night, waking-dreaming – provides a remarkable resource for mastering passionate experience”(161). Within the green world, animal urges and socially unacceptable desires make their presence known, freed from the confines of the civilized world. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* best embody this animal life-force and its necessary sublimation to the rules and rituals of normalized society. The forest near Athens provides a place for animal desires to run rampant without the restraints of social norms; love and aggression interplay within the actions of both mortal and fairy lovers while revealing the arbitrariness of desire. The forest of Arden also nurtures this play between Eros and Thanatos, as well as the arbitrary nature of love; the socially unacceptable desires and fluid sexuality of its inhabitants all find expression before being sublimated through the comic resolution of marriage.

II

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact.

A Midsummer Night's Dream - V.i.7-8

Aggression between lovers runs throughout Shakespearean comedy, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is certainly no exception. Sexual aggression appears between all pairings of lovers within the play to some degree or another, causing madness and chaos, and eventually finding resolution through sublimation. In fact, the whole play centers around the expression of those desires within the “green world” of the subconscious mind, the forest of Athens, and their eventual submission to control, bringing said desires into alignment with the laws and traditions of civilization, within the “real world” of Athens proper. Helena, Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, Oberon, Titania, even Theseus and Hippolyta undergo dramatic changes within the realm of the forest, becoming examples of true, vow-taking lovers through the manifestation and eventual sublimation of their deepest sexual desires.

Theseus and Hippolyta serve as a rather unusual couple in relation to the young lovers of the play. They serve as an example of mature love for the young couples to follow upon emerging from the forest of dreams and madness. Theseus and Hippolyta earn that honor by having already completed the transformation of love, and the sublimation of their sexual aggression to love of the hunt within the “dream world” of the wood.

In his opening speech, Theseus addresses his future bride,
 Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
 And won thy love doing thee injuries;
 But I will wed thee in another key,
 With pomp, with triumph, and with revelry.

(I.1, L16-19)

Theseus reveals the former state of his love and desire, expressed in terms of battle. He fights for her, kills for her, and wins her with his “sword.” In the use of battle imagery to describe his courtship, Theseus reveals his former desires in their unsublimated state. The symbolism of the “sword” functions on many levels. The sword deals death, assuaging a deep-seated desire for power over mortality. Theseus admits to “doing [Hippolyta] injuries,” presumably with the sword mentioned above. Since she remains among the living, the injuries seem to be of a mental nature, springing from a desire to do her harm with that symbol of male power and authority. At the same time, Theseus’ sword also functions as a symbol for his virility and sexuality. A sword pokes, prods, invades, penetrates, and draws blood, all associated with sexual intercourse. Again, by wishing to harm Hippolyta with his sword, Theseus reveals his underlying desire for extreme sexual aggression.

Yet none of these desires come to fruition, as evidenced by Hippolyta’s obvious well-being, and the following discourse. Theseus now wishes to court Hippolyta “in a different key,” that of the pomp and festivity of marriage. The key also serves as a symbol for Theseus’ phallus, but in a milder sense. Just as a key unlocks a chest, so Theseus plans to “unlock” Hippolyta. This imagery lacks the force and aggression so

prominent in the previous imagery of the sword and warfare. Theseus also reveals his mature love by making a vow to marry Hippolyta with “pomp” and “revelry.” Pomp or pomposity have connotations of rigid control, of adherence to tradition. Revelry, on the other hand, hints at the lessening of inhibitions and the (dare I say orgasmic) release of joyous emotion. By juxtaposing the two terms, Shakespeare reveals the sublimated state of Theseus’ desire for Hippolyta; he shall at last consummate his desires, but in restrained, pompous accordance with tradition and ceremony.

The process of Theseus’ sublimation appears later in the play, during Oberon’s reply to Titania’s accusation of infidelity. He replies,

. . . I know thy love to Theseus
 Didst thou not lead him through the
 glimmering night
 From Perigounna, whom he ravished;
 And make him with fair Aegles break his faith?

(II.1, L76-79)

Theseus enters the “green world” of the forest and fairies, and in doing so, unleashes his deepest, most repressed desires. This manifestation of his desires, led and directed by Titania, causes him to ravish a maiden and abandon all honorable ties to others. Titania serves as a sort of personification of Theseus’ sexual aggression. She leads him to do things within the dream world that remain unacceptable within the real world of Athens. In doing so, Titania causes Theseus’ desires to manifest themselves, opening the path to their sublimation through the ritual of marriage upon his return to Athens.

The darker desires of Hippolyta also appear within the same exchange between

Oberon and Titania. Titania questions Oberon,

. . . Why art thou here,
 Come from the farthest step of India,
 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
 Your buckskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
 To Theseus must be wed. . .

(II.1, L68-72)

In her opening exchange with Theseus, Hippolyta appears calm, unruffled, and mature, counseling him to remain patient through the remaining days until their wedding. Yet this maturity is hard-won, for Titania's description of Hippolyta reaches beyond, finding the true nature of the woman. Within the realm of the fairies, the realm of the dream and unconscious, Hippolyta also has aggressive desires. She appears to Oberon and Titania as a "bouncing Amazon" and a "warrior." In the forest Hippolyta finds expression of her sexual desire by acting as a woman warrior, conquering the heart of Oberon, and thereby vanquishes her rival Titania. Oberon appears as a manifestation of her unconscious desires for warlike aggression within the constraints of love.

Both Theseus and Hippolyta emerge from their dream world of forest and fairy and must find a way to sublimate their desires, to make them acceptable within the constraints of civilization. They may not hunt each other, nor fight each other to the death in order to release their aggression towards each other. In addition, Theseus and Hippolyta may not have sexual relations with each other (either by force or consent) without first making a vow placing them accountable to both god and society. Due to these restraints, the royal couple appease their desire for aggression by finding fascination

in hunting, which involves a degree of aggression and desire for power over life and death yet appears acceptable to civilization. In act four, Hippolyta recalls the hunting hounds of Sparta (a country known for its preoccupation with war and aggression) and claims

. . . never did I hear
 Such gallant chiding. . .
 Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

(IV.1, L111-112,114-115)

The hounds' discord combining to make music, the blending of chaos into a solitary bay mirrors Hippolyta's sublimation of uncontrolled, discordant natural desires into an acceptable love which blends with other civilized, ordered loves to form a musical harmony. Theseus also enters the fray, claiming,

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind. . .
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
 Each under each. A cry more tunable
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheered with horn

(IV.1, L116,120-122)

Theseus' hounds also reflect his sublimated wishes, serving as an "image of harmonious control over brute impulse"(Dean,100). While his love may be descended "out of the Spartan kind," it is "tunable" to society's constraints, able to be sublimated into a correct form.

By their ability to sublimate their naturally aggressive desires, Theseus and Hippolyta demonstrate their suitability as role models for the young lovers to follow.

Thus it seems no accident that they encounter the lovers at this very moment of revelation. The lovers emerge from their dream world of instinctual desires and must now abandon the madness of the dream (for so the dream appears to the rational Hippolyta and Theseus) for the real world of society and its constraints.

Another royal couple, the fairy lovers Oberon and Titania, teach by example. Through their custody dispute over the Indian boy, the two fairies reveal another facet of instinctual desire: the nurturing and possession of offspring. Titania wishes to deny Oberon the paternal role he believes to be his right, claiming sole possession and access to the child for herself. Due to Titania's flouting of his natural paternal desires, Oberon resorts to trickery, his own form of warfare, in order to reclaim that which he believes rightly belongs to him, namely the boy and the role of father, generator, life-giver.

In the beginning of their woodland encounter, Titania orders her fairies, "skip hence; I have forsworn his bed and company" (II.i,L62), revealing her rejection of sexual relations with and the husbandly rights of Oberon, her sworn lover, a sexually hostile maneuver. Oberon questions her, "am I not thy lord?" (II.i,L63), attempting to remind Titania of said vows and the sexual rights of access they give him. Titania deigns to acknowledge her responsibilities, claiming, "Then I must be thy lady" (II.iL64). Yet "Oberon and Titania are so accustomed to mutual sexual betrayal that their actual rift has nothing to do with passion but concerns the protocol of just who has charge of a changeling human child" (Bloom, 153). Only after affirming their mutual vows, not of chastity, but of commitment may the two discuss the true source of their contention and abandonment of their vows: parental rights and access.

Oberon gets to the heart of the quarrel, asking, " Why should Titania cross her

Oberon? / I do but beg a little changeling boy / To be my henchman” (II.i,L119-121).

Oberon, rightful consort of Titania, wishes to complete his role of father, sire, and patriarch through the fostering of the changeling. Titania continues to deny him his rights, claiming, “The fairy land buys not the child of me”(II.i,L123). She goes on to describe the relationship between herself and the boy’s mother, revealing an almost loverlike feeling between the fairy and the mortal, and ending her speech, “And for her sake do I rear up her boy; / And for her sake I will not part with him”(II.i,L136-7).

The last words of Titania hint at another vow, a vow between friends, for the sake of which Titania ignores her vows to Oberon. She denies him access to the boy, and in doing so denies him fulfillment of his desire to act as father while she fulfils her erotically linked desire to take on the role of mother.

The matter remains unresolved, with Titania flouncing away from Oberon while he taunts her, “Well, go thy way; thou shalt not from this grove / Till I torment thee for this injury”(II.i,L146-7). Oberon then succumbs to his latent desire for warfare by plotting with his henchman, Puck, against Titania. Oberon’s battle plan works upon the latent desires of Titania, for once he has the juice of love-in-idleness, Oberon plots,

I’ll watch Titania when she is asleep,
 And drop the liquor of it in her eyes:
 The next thing then she waking looks upon
 (Be it lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
 On meddling monkey, or on busy ape)
 She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
 And ere I take this charm from off her sight

(As I can take it with another herb)

I'll make her render up her page to me.

(II.i,L178-185)

Oberon builds a failsafe plan for his battle, for it matters not what Titania looks upon, simply that she wakes and spies a creature. Evidently Titania has latent desires for bestiality, for no human, fairy, or plant finds a place in Oberon's plan, only animals known as dangerous or annoying. Only the lion, the bear, and other such predators will serve as love object to the fairy queen, revealing a darker form of sexual desire only permissible within the forest. This latent bestiality also applies to Oberon, as this desire may be a projection of his sexual appetite upon Titania, as well as an element of her own sexuality.

So it happens within the wood. Titania awakes to become enamoured of an ass (as is the fate of all women at one time or another). She sports with him, plays with him, then lies down to dream with him. Meanwhile, Oberon and Puck stand back and watch the true desires of the four Athenian lovers manifest due to the fairies' sport. Oberon tires of all this, however, deciding, "I'll to my queen, and beg her Indian boy; / And then I will her charmed eye release / From monster's view, and all things shall be peace" (III.ii,L375-77). Oberon's stratagem has worked, and now he may finally claim the parental rights Titania has denied him.

Thus the quarrel ends as Oberon plans, for as he informs Puck:

When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
 And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
 I then did ask of her her changeling child;

Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
 To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
 And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes.

(IV.i,L56-62)

Oberon now has the boy in his possession and may assume the role of parent, as is his right as the consort of Titania. Oberon has also proven his dominance over his consort, as revealed in his reference to Titania's manner of mildness, and her begging for his patience. Oberon gains a superior sense of his own dominance in his ability to taunt Titania at will and to "undo this hateful imperfection of her eyes" at his pleasure, just as the imperfection arose out of his displeasure. In essence, all has been set to rights in the forest of male dominance and parenting; Titania, in giving up the boy, assures Oberon's role as "father." The two fairy lovers may now assume a normal relationship in keeping with their vows, creating another example for the mortal lovers to follow. As a result, Titania and Oberon shall leave the dream world of the forest, of their desires, and "will to-morrow midnight, solemnly, / Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly, / and bless it to all fair prosperity" (IV.i,L87-89), celebrating their "new amity" (L85) and reconciliation of desires to the acceptable modes of consorts and parents.

Another aspect of primitive, unconscious desire arises among the four lovers caught within the wood as Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena reveal the interchangeability of lovers and the importance of vows. As Bloom states, "Does it make any difference at all who marries whom? Shakespeare's pragmatic answer is: Not much" (163). Importance lies only within vows taken between lovers - vows that only arise after

sexual desires and instincts become manifest within the woods.

Before any of the four lovers enter the woods the transience of love and the interchangeability of lovers reveals itself as a problem. Hermia refuses to marry her father's choice of men, Demetrius. Theseus, as the mature, reasonable lover, supports Hermia's sire, stating, "Demetrius is a worthy gentleman" (I.i,L52). Hermia counters him with the irrefutable truth, "So is Lysander" (L53), her chosen mate. Theseus cannot deny this fact, agreeing, "In himself he is" (L54), lending credence to Hermia's choice while opening the field to the very interchangeability of lovers Hermia wishes to avoid.

Lysander, in his attempt to plead his case, reveals his equality and interchangeability with Demetrius as well as the necessity for vows due to man's inconstancy. Lysander emotes,

I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
 As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
 My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
 If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
 And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
 I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia. . .
 Why should not I then prosecute my right?
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
 Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
 And won her soul: and she, sweet lady, dotes,
 Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
 Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

(I.i,L99-110)

Lysander reveals the crux of the matter which will become manifest within the wood. Hermia and Helena, abiding by their Darwinian instincts, have chosen the mates they feel are most suited to sire and protect their young. They will remain constant to that choice, for they find no interchangeability between Demetrius and Lysander. The two males, however, act according to their instincts as well. Demetrius found Helena attractive, pursued her, and abandoned her, having won her. Now he pursues Hermia, as does Lysander, giving action to their need for aggression and competition. The attraction of the females lies not within them, but according to their accessibility, and thus Hermia and Helena may interchange.

Hermia goes on to make a vow to Lysander in private, promising,

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
 By his best arrow with the golden head,
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
 And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen;
 By all the vows that ever men have broke
 (In number more than ever women spoke)

(I.i,L169-176)

Hermia vows her constancy to Lysander using both the symbols of steadfast love (Cupid's weapon, Venus' messengers) and those of inconstant passion (Dido and Aeneas). In doing so, Hermia reveals her understanding of love and lovers' vows ("that

which knitteth souls and prospers loves”) which will come to pass within the wood.

Women shall, like Dido, remain faithful unto death while men, like Aeneas, break oaths and protestations of love for the sake of indulging in their need for aggression and war.

Interestingly enough, Lysander replies to Hermia’s touching pledge without an oath of his own, but rather a final exhortation for Hermia to be true.

At this point Helena arrives on the scene and supports Hermia in her view of men. In her soliloquy, Helena examines men and love, revealing once more the interchangeability of women within the mind of men due to the inconstancy of men. She claims,

Through Athens I am thought as fair as [Hermia]

But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;

He will not know what all but he do know;

And as he errs, doting on Hermia’s eyes,

So I, admiring of his qualities.

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,

Love can transpose to form and dignity:

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,

Therefore is wing’d Cupid painted blind;. . .

And therefore is Love said to be a child,

Because in choice he is so oft beguil’d

As waggish boys, in came, themselves forswear,

So the boy Love is perjur’d everywhere;

For, ere Demetrius look’d on Hermia’s eyne,

He hailed down oaths that he was only mine;
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolv'd and show'rs of oaths did melt.

(I.i,L227-235,238-245)

Helena acknowledges the fact that she and Hermia appear as equals in the first lines, for Helena is “thought as fair as she.” Yet the problem lies, as Helena understands, within Demetrius, for he “will not know what all but he do know.” His choice lies with Hermia and her eyes. Yet that was not always the case, for “ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne” he loved Helena, and made many protestations of love to her. Unfortunately, just as “waggish boys, in game, themselves forswear,” Demetrius forswears his oaths of love to Helena in order to pursue the less accessible and thus more attractive Hermia.

Helena's speech also opens up the future chaos within the wood. She claims that “Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, / Therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind” (I.i,L234-5). Helena reveals what will become manifest within the wood: love has nothing to do with appearance, much less with things of the “mind” such as reason and intellect, but all to do with the *unconscious* mind. For if love really depended upon the conscious mind, men would not forswear their oaths due to ideas of honor, or they would woo only the woman most advantageous to them within society. Instead, they woo what they find attractive within the unconscious mind: the distant, almost unattainable woman.

In the wood, all desire becomes manifest. Demetrius lets his true desires shine forth, questioning Helena,

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
 The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.

Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood;
 And here am I, and wood within this wood
 Because I cannot meet my Hermia.

(II.i,L189-93)

Demetrius reveals his deepest desire: slaying his rival Lysander in order to have sole access to Hermia. His sexual desire for Hermia becomes obvious as well within the dirty joke of his being “wood within this wood” due to his inability to meet and take (in more ways than one) the object of his desire.

Demetrius then tries to rid himself of Helena's hindering presence, exclaiming harshly that he cannot love her. Helena replies according to her own desire for Demetrius:

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
 Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
 What worser place can I beg in your love -
 And yet a place of high respect with me -
 Than to be used as you use your dog?

(II.i,L203-10)

Helena seems to have a desire for domination. She begs for Demetrius to “use” her, as animal, as lover, as whatever he should choose. In doing so, Helena offers herself as a recipient of Demetrius' sexual aggression towards Hermia, an object to which he can

transfer his desires. Demetrius warns her of this, claiming “I shall do the mischief in the wood” (L237), but Helena presses on, claiming that every time he denies his former oaths of love, he does her even more wrong.

In the next scene, Lysander plays out his desires for Hermia, informing her “One turf shall serve as pillow for us both; / One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth” (II.ii,L40-41). Lysander, within the dream world of the wood, wishes to consummate his desires with his object of affection. Hermia, aware of the transitory nature of private oaths, orders Lysander “Lie further off yet; do not lie so near” (L43). Lysander grumbles, but gives in.

Puck arrives once the two sleep, and becomes the catalyst for all true desires to come forward among the four lovers. He mistakenly anoints the wrong lover, emphasizing their interchangeability, and Lysander awakes with a burning passion for Helena, not Hermia. His immediate reaction reveals his aggression, for he yells “Where is Demetrius? O how fit a word / Is that vile name to perish on my sword!” (II.ii,L105-6). He now wishes to kill Demetrius as perceived threat to his access to Helena. Lysander then forswears,

Content with Hermia? No, I do repent
 The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
 Not Hermia, but Helena I love:
 Who will not change a raven for a dove?
 The will of man is by his reason sway'd,
 And reason says you are the worthier maid

(II.ii,L110-15)

Lysander no longer finds Hermia attractive, but Helena, due to Puck's revelation of his true desires. For Lysander only desires that which lies in closest proximity, namely Helena. His swaying by "reason" actually derives from the realization of his desire for a consort, Helena appearing most accessible. Hermia lies forgotten, true in her vows and subject to Lysander's scorn. Helena chastises Lysander, "These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?" (L130) to no avail. He loves Helena and will not honor his vows to Hermia.

The lovers' entanglements become even more complex, for Puck intervenes once more. He places the love-in-idleness upon Demetrius' eyes, causing him to awaken in love with Helena as well. The men attempt to straighten matters, but all becomes more entangled than ever, for Lysander still adheres to Helena, and Demetrius claims, "My heart to [Hermia] but as guest-wise sojourned, / And now to Helen is it home return'd, / there to remain" (L171-3). Hermia stumbles into this imbroglio and attempts to reclaim Lysander, who rejects her for Helena once more. In doing so, Lysander creates a rift between the ladies. Hermia arouses Helena's desire for aggression, and the two join in battle for their men and for their friendship.

Matters come to a head at this point, causing all lovers to argue and threaten each other, giving vent to their desire for war. Hermia turns upon Helena, calling her all sorts of names, which Helena returns in kind. The men support Helena, leading to a disagreement between them. Lysander finally gives full vent to his desires, taunting Demetrius, "Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right, / Of thine or mine, is most in Helena" (III.ii,L336-7). Demetrius, no slouch himself, answers, "Follow? Nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl" (L338). Thus, the males leave in order to fight to the death for

access to the desired female, while the two women separate in order to pursue the men.

Puck enters once more, luring Lysander and Demetrius to sleep through sheer exhaustion in chasing each other. Once all the lovers find sleep, Puck sets all to rights, pairing Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena. When the lovers awaken, they will leave behind the dream world of the forest. They shall assume the mantle of responsibility, making vows in the presence of society in order to formalize their desires, conforming them to the strictures of marriage.

At this point the mature lovers Theseus and Hippolyta discover the quartet and inquire as to their state. The couples, however, have no real answer for the Duke. Lysander finds he “cannot truly say how [they] came here” (IV.i,L147). Demetrius can do no better, yet does in one respect: he acknowledges his love for Helena, and makes a vow to her in the presence of the royal couple, binding himself by saying,

But by some power it is - my love to Hermia,
 Melted as the snow, seems to me now
 As the remembrance of an idle gaud
 Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
 And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
 The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
 Is only Helena. To her, my lord
 Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia;
 But like a sickness did loathe this food:
 But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
 Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,

And will for evermore be true to it.

(IV.i,L164-175)

The immature lover in his “childhood” abandoned his Helena, but now, outside of the dream world, realizes his mistake and returns to “his natural taste” in order to pledge an oath to her. Demetrius vows, in front of the Duke, figure of society and its laws, that he shall love only Helena forever. By doing so, he presents “a resolution of the dream forces which so often augur conflict” (Barber,158).

The Duke accepts this and sums up the situation of all the lovers, asserting that “these couples shall be eternally knit” (L180) with him and Hippolyta, cementing their vows of love forever. The young lovers have manifested their deepest desires in the woods, and have now emerged to take their place in society, vowing their desires unto each other as that society dictates. No more shall Lysander and Demetrius interchange women, nor shall they abandon them. All shall abide by their vows, as shall their models, Theseus and Hippolyta.

Thus ends the dream of desires run amok. The lovers “can live in the result of their ‘dream’ without worrying about the status of its truth. For them, as for most men, unconscious adjustments are acceptable if they work, and are not made more effective by being understood” (qtd.inDean, 102). The young Athenians may reap the benefits of their sojourn, their now-acceptable desires, without ever having to examine the adventure more fully than they would a dream. As C.L. Barber states,

The woods are established as a region of metamorphosis,
where in liquid moonlight or glimmering starlight, things

can change, merge, and melt into each other.

Metamorphosis expresses both what love sees and what it seeks to do.(Barber,133)

The lovers change, merge, blend, and express their inner desires fully within the moonlit woods, emerging as mature lovers ready to take their place within the real world, while Oberon and Titania mend their quarrel, facing their desires and accommodating them within their differences. Thus both fairy and human manifest their desires within the woods, and channel them into an acceptable mode before emerging, serving as an example to all.

III

Now go in we content

To liberty, and not to banishment.

As You Like It – I.iii

As seen in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the green world of the forest brings out repressed, unconscious desires within the characters, allowing those desires to be both expressed and sublimated. Once desires long suppressed come forth, a resolution occurs through the very expression and confrontation of these hidden desires; each character acknowledges his or her passion for an "unacceptable" object while within the freedom of the faeries' world. Once the correct object of desire is made apparent to the lovers through the faeries' intervention, they may leave the forest and rejoin society as

functioning members through the ritual sublimation of desire by marriage. According to Northrop Frye,

. . . the action of the comedy begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis there in which the comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world. The forest in this play is the embryonic form of the fairy world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It*, Windsor Forest in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. . . . In all these comedies there is the same rhythmic movement from normal world to green world and back again.

(qtd.in Dean,85-86)

A Midsummer Night's Dream therefore does not stand alone in its representation of the green world as a place of metamorphosis and resolution. *As You Like It* also contains this golden world, the “dream world that we create out of our own desires” (Frye, 98), in which the lovers’ repressed desires come forth and wreak havoc. Once the lovers give free rein to their darker urges, they embark upon a journey of “discovery and reconciliation” (Frye,86); the lovers experience, confront and conquer these desires in order to reenter society through the festival of marriage, a necessary component of comic resolution.

The Forest of Arden “is a region defined by an attitude of liberty from ordinary limitations, a festive place where the folly of romance can have its day” (Barber, 223). This magical place where all irrational desires may become manifest serves as a cradle to

four pairs of lovers: Phebe and Silvius, Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Touchstone and Audrey. While Arden seems a benign place ideal for the pursuit of pastoral folly, it has much more importance for the lovers, for it serves as a realm of catharsis for taboo passions that the residents harbor. Each individual reveals an unacknowledged, socially unacceptable passion within the forest and must sublimate it before reentering the world. Silvius has dominance/submission problems, allowing Phebe to act as tyrant and persecutor to his grovelling affections, while Phebe, Rosalind and Orlando all reveal the fluidity of gender and desire as well as the inherent bisexuality of the mind: Rosalind by assuming the role of a man (Ganymede), Phebe in loving Ganymede, and Orlando by playing lover to Ganymede. Oliver finds resolution of his greed and lust for power while within the confines of Arden, while Touchstone and Audrey reveal animal lust that must be regulated by marriage before they may take part in society. Rosalind effects the resolution of all these desires in the end of the Arden idyll by tying up the threads of unconscious lust and redirecting them into the holy bonds of matrimony, preparing all for the return to civilization (although Phebe and Silvius do not leave the forest, and their sublimation does not seem completely effective, as it is based upon substitution).

Rosalind creates the space for Arden and its transformative powers through her preparations to enter its confines (or “freedoms” as Barber would have it), unlike her boon companion, Celia. Celia makes her preparations to leave by simply changing her status to that of peasant while remaining female. This turn will not suit Rosalind’s tastes, and she tells Celia,

Were it not better,

Because that I am more than common tall,
 That I did suit me all points like a man?
 A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
 A boar-spear in my hand; and, in my heart
 Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will,
 As many other mannish cowards have
 That do outface it with their semblances.(I.iii,L111-118)

Rosalind's speech reveals her desire to express the masculine side of her femininity. Her *animus* has taken precedence over her *anima*. She claims to be "more than common tall" for a woman, hinting at her discomfort in being defined by women's gender roles.

Rosalind is out of the "common" way, and thus such common definitions of female do not suit her. She wishes not only to dress like a man, but also to take on the weaponry of such. The axe, boar, and spear all symbolize the phallus; by desiring to wear them Rosalind hints at having what Freud would term penis envy, while her choice of location for such apparatus also reveals a desire to change gender or to abolish it. Rosalind would wear the axe strapped to her thigh, a configuration reminiscent of the phallic myth of Dionysus' gestation in Zeus' thigh. The phallic spear shall be carried in Rosalind's hand; the hand, according to Freud, "should be described as symbolic of male sexuality" (192). In truth, it seems more a case of power envy than penis envy, (although the two are inextricably linked) as Rosalind seems to want the freedom a man's gender affords him rather than the weaponry; she claims that men also have "woman's fear," but "outface it with their semblances." Men as well as women possess the *anima*, but refuse to let it influence their behavior. Thus the differences between men and women lie not so much

within their hearts as within their outward appearance and the gender roles associated with such. Desires manifested within the green world of Arden, as within dreams, “are to be interpreted bisexually, as a confluence of two currents described as a masculine and a feminine one” (Freud, 295), and thus all residents of Arden entertain such Janus-faced desires. Rosalind, for whatever reason, wishes to indulge her masculine-based desires and does so, revealing her deep-seated need for sexual change.

This heightened sexual awareness seems less innocent, less to do with simple gender roles than it first appears in light of Rosalind’s choice of name. Celia simply changes her name to reflect her station, Aliena, while Rosalind goes beyond that in claiming, “I’ll have no worse a name than Jove’s own page, / And therefore look you call me Ganymede” (I.iii,L120-121). This choice seems innocent enough at first, but the name becomes all the more appropriate when examined more closely. Ganymede, a Trojan boy and “the most beautiful of all mortals” (Bulfinch,907), caught the eye of Zeus. Filled with passion for the boy, the god, transformed into an eagle, brought him to Mount Olympus to serve as cupbearer. The latent homoeroticism evinced within the story causes Rosalind’s choice of name to fall suspect. The question of why, when taking a man’s name, Rosalind takes one laden with homoerotic implications seems to find an answer in Celia’s relationship to her cousin.

After Rosalind first meets Orlando, she “wrestles” with her love for him in a witty exchange with Celia. This repartee, while seemingly innocent enough, appears fraught with lesbian desire on the part of Celia. She encourages Rosalind to fight her affection for Orlando, then threatens to hate him, and only by pleading, “No, faith, hate him not, for my sake” (I.iii,L32) can Rosalind diffuse Celia’s jealous reaction to her perceived rival.

Also, when Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind, Celia jumps to her defense with words reminiscent of a lover, claiming,

We still have slept together,
 Rose at an instant, learned, played, eat together;
 And whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans,
 Still we went coupled and inseparable. (I.iii,L69-72)

Celia does not seem to realize how laden with passion her speech appears. The two women do all together, including sleeping and waking, reminding one of a married couple. In addition, the unconscious suppression of the true owner of the swans seems telling. Celia attributes the swans to Juno, goddess of marriage rather than their true owner, Aphrodite, goddess of passion, revealing an unconscious attempt to repress her desire. The use of the word "coupled" seems a lovely Freudian slip; the ambiguity of coupled: harnessed together, paired, locked in a sexual embrace, cannot be mere chance.

Celia seems to finally unleash that desire once the Forest of Arden appears invitingly before her. She plans on accompanying Rosalind to this place of loosened mores; indeed, Celia suggests Arden as a destination. In her speech Celia not only reveals her intention to abandon her father for the sake of her cousin, but also lets slip the true nature of her feelings for Rosalind,

Rosalind lacks then the love
 Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one.
 Shall we be sund' red, shall we part, sweet girl?
 No, let my father seek another heir.(I.iii,L92-95)

By using language reminiscent of marriage, Celia makes her claim for Rosalind as mate

while “relinquish[ing] her father as a love-object” (Gay, 640). The two women have “become one” in her mind, and may not be “sund’red”/put asunder. Celia, echoing her earlier defense of Rosalind to Duke Frederick, has left her father in order to cleave to her chosen mate, signified by her claim that he must “seek another heir” while revealing the bisexual and homoerotic strains inherent in her relationship with Rosalind. Whether male or female, Celia will have none but her cousin.

Celia realizes, however, that Rosalind may not accept this alternate lifestyle. She acknowledges that “Rosalind lacks then the love,” hinting that it may be found once they enter Arden. Rosalind’s choice of name, then, seems more significant. In taking on the name of Ganymede, Rosalind signals her passion for men, subtly informing Celia that her unacceptable desire is out of the picture. Celia, however, refuses to hear such a subtle message and follows her cousin into Arden.

Orlando also has a problem with socially unacceptable desire and fluid sexuality, for he exhibits passion not only for the lady Rosalind, but for the “boy” Ganymede as well. When Rosalind first meets Orlando, he plans to wrestle with Charles, the Duke’s favorite. The sport of wrestling itself has homoerotic overtones dating back to early Greek mythology. This slight predilection for homosexuality finds its fulfillment within the forest of Arden and the figure of Ganymede. Once in the forest, Orlando “courts” Ganymede in lieu of Rosalind. This substitution may be seen as wish fulfillment outside the confines of the green world; Orlando woos Ganymede out of a deep-seated desire for a homoerotic relationship that finds expression in their banter.

In the first encounter between Ganymede and Orlando, the “boy” makes an effort to “play the knave” (III.ii,L283)with Orlando, hinting at a more roguish, sexual manner

than a young page would usually take with an older person of stature. Rosalind then goes on to tease Orlando on matters pertaining to love, hinting that he holds no true passion for the lady Rosalind because he does not sigh on the hour and because Time does not move slowly for him. Orlando appears enchanted with such wit, not evincing the slightest perturbation at Ganymede's insinuations as to the lack of depth in his feelings for Rosalind. Instead Orlando calls Ganymede "pretty youth" (III.ii,L17) and inquires as to his home. This has serious implications, for by attempting to locate and subsequently enter Ganymede's home, his privacy, Orlando implies a desire for sexual entrance as well. Ganymede quickly diverts him into a discussion on the "giddy offenses" of women (III.ii,L330). Orlando seems less concerned with Rosalind's possible offenses as with finding a reason to find women offensive. Ganymede sees this as proof of Orlando's emerging homoeroticism, and when Orlando requests, "I prithee recount some of them[women's faults]," Ganymede replies, "No, I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick" (III.ii,L337-338), revealing Orlando's lack of passion for his lady.

Orlando continues to insist upon his desire for the lady, exclaiming, "Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love" (III.ii,L363). This sentence seems telling, for Orlando calls the young Ganymede "fair" while evincing a need to make the young man, rather than the lady Rosalind, believe in his love. Ganymede picks up on this, scolding Orlando, "Me believe it? You may as soon make her that you love believe it" (III.ii,L364). This unproductive, socially unacceptable passion finally comes to the fore at the end of this conversation when Ganymede offers to cure Orlando of his love for Rosalind through the art of practice; Ganymede offers "himself" as a substitute for the lady Rosalind. Tellingly, Orlando accepts this proposition, albeit hesitatingly. In fact,

this hesitation reveals Orlando's homoerotic desire even more fully, for at Ganymede's first offer of aid Orlando refuses by saying, "I would not be cured, youth" (III.ii,L398). Only when Ganymede entices him by revealing "I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me" (III.ii,L399-400) does Orlando acquiesce. Upon hearing about the necessity of spending every day with Ganymede and the accompanying invasion of Ganymede's private space, Orlando changes his tune and declares, "Now, by the faith of my love, I will" (III.ii,L401). By leaving the object of his love unnamed, Orlando leaves a space open which Ganymede slips into with ease, coaxing Orlando to reveal his home and offering to show Orlando his. In doing so, Ganymede creates a trust and intimacy usually found only between lovers; he invites Orlando up to his apartment for coffee on the first date, so to speak. Orlando agrees to follow the young boy "With all my heart, good youth" (III.ii,L406), signifying his willingness to transfer his heart to the young boy's keeping rather than leaving it with Rosalind.

From this exchange forward Orlando refers to the boy Ganymede as Rosalind, and woos the fair maid in the form of Jove's cupbearer. Orlando, tellingly enough, never slips in his use of Rosalind's name, thus effecting a transference of desire. Freud writes about transference love in which a "patient shows by unmistakable indications, or openly declares that [he] has fallen in love . . . with the doctor" (Gay, 378). This sort of emotional guidance supplied by an analyst finds a correlation in the situation between Ganymede and Orlando. Ganymede takes on the role of love object in order to "cure" Orlando of his love, informing him,

Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you,

deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do;
 and the reason why they are not so punished and cured
 is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are
 in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel. (III.ii.426-431)

Ganymede compares Orlando to a madman needing a cure, or a psychotic individual needing an analyst. He/she then offers to provide that service to Orlando, curing him through counsel. Orlando, like any wise psychopath, asks after his analyst's credentials and success rate. Ganymede reassures him by claiming to have cured a man of his madness by having him woo him/her, thus expressing all pent up desire until spent.

Orlando agrees to this Freudian treatment of his madness, an acquiescence that leads to his eventual sexual maturation, as well as to a slide in gender. By accepting Ganymede as his physician, Orlando opens himself up to doctor-patient transference of desire. His feelings and desires come forth unalloyed within the dialogue between Ganymede and himself; the only relatively jarring note sounds every time Rosalind's name occurs. The reader understands Orlando's passion through this technique, however, for the name does not sound awkward to Orlando, so deeply immersed within his fantastical transference of desire, but to the reader Rosalind's name gives a harsh jolt and reveals the passion at play between the "analyst" and his "patient."

Phebe raises the notion of gender fluidity through her passion for the boy Ganymede as well. Ganymede comes upon Phebe and Silvius locked in a battle of words, Phebe denying Silvius' obsessive protestations of love. After Ganymede delivers somewhat doctoral advice to the two, Phebe entreats Ganymede, "Sweet youth, I pray you chide a year together; / I had rather hear you chide than this man woo" (III.v,L64-65).

Phebe has fallen prey to Ganymede's charms and will not relinquish him as a love object until forced to do so, an act that will bring her love into accord with Freud's reality principle: "pleasure which is assured through taking account of reality, even though it is a pleasure postponed and diminished" (Freud, 444). This in itself holds no surprise; the real meat lies in Phebe's choice of words in describing her love. She expounds upon Ganymede's charms to Silvius,

It is a pretty youth; not very pretty;
 But sure he's proud; and yet his pride becomes him.
 He'll make a proper man. The best thing in him
 Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue
 Did make offence, his eye did heal it up. . .
 . . . 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.

(III.v,L112-16,119-122)

Phebe unconsciously reveals her awareness of Ganymede as female within this cataloging of his appearance. She describes him as "pretty" and having a fair complexion; a trait few women consider a cause for concern. Phebe also feels the need to declare that "he'll make a proper man" (L114), revealing her awareness that Ganymede really contains more *anima* than *animus* and lacks manliness at present. Also, Phebe's description of Ganymede's wounding tongue and healing eye, his vibrant lip and cheek color, all fall within the category of tropes for describing female attributes, thus revealing Phebe's tacit

awareness of Ganymede as a woman.

This awareness of Ganymede's femininity does not sit easy with Phebe. She evinces much ambivalence toward the boy. She tells Silvius, "I love him not nor hate him not" (III.v,L126), summing up her position toward Ganymede succinctly. Phebe comes to the acceptable conclusion, that Ganymede may be loved as a man, and thus writes him a love letter offering herself to him. She sends this letter by another lover suffering from unacceptable desire: Silvius.

Silvius' passion for Phebe seems that of a submissive slave for his dominatrix of a lover, revealing the Pastoral version of love as a perversion when given free reign. By maintaining an idealized state of love that causes suffering and pain to the afflicted, the sufferer expresses deep-seated desire for domination which is rooted in the interplay between Eros and Thanatos that must be sublimated into a moral, functioning devotion. Without such sublimation, unchecked domination leads to humiliation of the subject. This desire for domination and humiliation constantly finds expression through the dialogue between Phebe and Silvius. For example, when Phebe first meets the young lad Ganymede, she tells Silvius,

Silvius, the time was that I hated thee;
 And yet it is not that I bear thee love,
 But since that thou canst talk of love so well,
 Thy company, which erst was irksome to me,
 I will endure; and I'll employ thee too;
 But do not look for further recompense
 Than thine own gladness that thou art employed.

(III.v,L91-97)

Phebe thus assigns Silvius the role of submissive slave who must remain in her “employ” as long as he serves her purposes. She makes it plain that she feels no affection for him and will not give him any exchange for his services. Like a field hand, he must toil in her service because it is his lot, not for any appreciable gain.

Silvius immediately accepts this role, revealing his need for domination. He tells the lovely Phebe,

So holy and so perfect is my love,
 And I in such a poverty of grace,
 That I shall think it a most plenteous crop,
 To glean the broken ears after the man
 That the main harvest reaps. Loose now and then
 A scatt’red smile, and that I’ll live upon.

(III.v,L98-103)

Silvius’ choice of language reveals all: he will happily serve as slave to Phebe, thinking it a “most plenteous crop” for his “poverty of grace,” rather than assert himself as a “proper man” like the one Ganymede promises to be. In such a refusal to assert himself, Silvius reveals his inability to conceive a mature manner of loving Phebe.

This trope of fieldhand has other sexual connotations as well. Silvius styles himself after a poverty-stricken individual who will glean the leavings after a field has already been harvested. In an age where chastity holds sway and a man’s main concern regarding his wife lies in his having sole sexual access to her, Silvius’ acquiescence to another man reaping (an aural play on “raping”) the fruits of Phebe’s body reveals

submissive desire taken to the extreme. Indeed, Silvius has no problem with several men coming before him based upon his use of the word “loose” which signifies a plethora of smiles as well as implies wantonness of affection, both of which shall be “scatt’red” to all and sundry by Phebe. So long as he shall have the leftovers, Silvius remains contented.

This total lack of male assertion, this submissiveness, becomes a sort of virtual castration. This misplaced desire catches the attention of Rosalind who, as the male Ganymede, tries to coach Silvius into sublimating his desire for domination and becoming an assertive, passionate male. She chides him,

Wilt thou love such a woman? What, to make thee an
instrument, and play false strains upon thee? Not to be
endured! Well, go your way to her, for I see love hath
made thee a tame snake. . .

(IV.iii,L68-71)

As Phebe has demonstrated, Rosalind seems more a man than Silvius, claiming he “deserves no pity” (L67) and trying to push him on to a realization of his destructive submissiveness. She points out that the lady will not be faithful to such a weak man, but will use him like a toy and play with him while doing the same with others; she then demonstrates the correct response of a fully functioning male, claiming that such actions are “not to be endured.” (L69-70)

All such exhortations prove futile at this point, as Rosalind realizes. She describes Silvius as a “tame snake” (L71). Freud claims that “the famous symbol of the snake” (Freud, 192) represents the phallus. By claiming that Silvius has a “tame snake” Rosalind digs down to the very root of the problem: Silvius’ desire for domination and his

excessive submission has led him to the point of castration.

Touchstone and Audrey have no such problems. Their desires have little of the complex or submissive about them. For the unlikely pair, animal lust rides them hard. As Touchstone tells Jaques, “As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires” (III.iii,L69-70). By comparing himself and Audrey to animals, Touchstone points out the burden of lust that lovers, like beasts, must bear. This lust brooks no interference, for like a buck in rut, Touchstone challenges William for access to Audrey, ordering him,

. . . Abandon the society of this female, or, clown,
thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest;
or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life
into death, thy liberty into bondage . . .

. . . I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways.(V.i,L49-52,54)

Sole access to the female, the indulgence in animal lust, holds sway over Touchstone within the wood. Touchstone also reveals his animal aggression toward his beloved by threatening to kill her in over one hundred ways. The term “kill” signifies both the thanatopic act of murder, but also the erotic act of inducing sexual orgasm; Touchstone fuses both in his promise to Audrey in a revelation of his socially unacceptable, aggressive sexuality. Both he and Audrey must sublimate this animal desire into a more controlled, acceptable format through the ritual folly of marriage. Touchstone tells Audrey so in the third act, claiming, “We must be married, or we must live in bawdry” (III.iii,L83-84). The couple then make plans to do so, effecting the necessary change from bestial lust to human love.

One loose cannon of repressed desire remains: Oliver. Oliver masks his sexual desire through desire of a different sort: power. He attempts to kill his younger brother, Orlando, due to his position as future heir. As Oliver says to himself in the first act,

I hope I shall see an end of him; for
 my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more
 than he. Yet he's gentle . . . and
 indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially
 of my own people, who best know him, that I am
 altogether misprised. But it shall not be so long: this wrestler
 shall clear all. (I.i,L151-158)

Oliver hates Orlando because he stands as a rival. The people love Orlando much more than Oliver, causing a fraternal jealousy to emerge that cannot be controlled. If the people threw down Oliver for the young Orlando, he would lose all power and thus would be castrated after a fashion. Thus the threat to his power must be removed, and Orlando must be killed in order for Oliver to maintain his sense of potency in both the public and private spheres.

Within the forest of Arden a strange phenomenon occurs: Oliver must confront his fear of castration head on after Orlando saves his life. Oliver admits to Rosalind and Celia that “he was unnatural” in his hatred toward his brother due to the severity of such aggression and jealousy, and “did so oft contrive to kill him” (IV.iii,L126,136). Yet his confession contains a resolution, for he claims that “’Twas I. But ‘tis not I” (IV.iii,L137). Oliver no longer fears Orlando will usurp him, relieving him of power and essentially

castrating him, for the opportunity to do so arrives and Orlando refuses to act upon it. This triggers a realization of his problem for Oliver, and in confronting this fear, he sublimates it and becomes a new man, one without fear or jealousy, and thus may return to society. Oliver has undergone a change within the forest and within himself.

Once all the aforementioned desires come forth within the liberty of Arden, only one task remains: that of ritual sublimation of all expressed desire into a societally acceptable form through the ritual of marriage. Rosalind manages to bring all the couples to an awareness of the need for marriage and its controlling action. In the final act she brings Orlando, Silvius, and Phebe to an agreement of marriage in which Orlando agrees to marry the lady Rosalind, Phebe agrees to marry Ganymede, if she be willing, and if not to marry Silvius, who agrees to take her “though to have her and death were both one thing” (V.iv,L17). Rosalind, in her guise as Ganymede, draws up the contract much more succinctly than I:

I have promised to make all this matter even.

Keep you your word, O Duke, to give your daughter;

You yours, Orlando, to receive his daughter;

Keep you your word, Phebe, that you'll marry me,

Or else, refusing me, to wed this shepherd;

Keep your word, Silvius, that you'll marry her

If she refuse me . . . (V.iv,L18-24)

Rosalind then leaves to effect the resolution of all desires through a staged marriage ritual. She and Celia reenter, along with the god of marriage, Hymen, and the ritual unmasking and marriage of couples begins.

In the final scene of act five, Hymen serves as a personification of the choice each person makes to regulate his or her passions into a more acceptable format, taking on the role of Freud's superego in "divert[ing] from their sexual aims and direct[ing] to others that are socially higher" (Freud, 12) the desires of each lover within the marriage scene. Hymen tells Orlando and Rosalind "You and you no cross shall part" (L125), and Oliver finds his match in Celia, both of whom are "heart in heart" (L126), now that their taboo desires have been confronted. Hymen then instructs Phebe on the matter of Silvius, commanding her, "You to his love must accord, / Or have a woman to your lord" (L127-8). Phebe, interestingly enough, seems to have the option of maintaining her love in a lesbian relationship, possibly due to the fact that she will remain in Arden rather than enter society. Phebe realizes that Rosalind/Ganymede shall leave the forest of Arden where such desire carries no stigma, and thus accepts the hand of her only other option for love, telling Silvius, "I will not eat my word, now thou art mine; / Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine" (L143-4), signaling her conscious decision to reform and reshape her desires into a more conventional mode. Finally, Touchstone and Audrey receive sanctioning for their decision to wed rather than fornicate from Hymen who declares, "You and you are sure together / As the winter to foul weather" (L129-30). According to him, the two are a match made on earth by beings of the earth, and thus perfectly suited to each other. Thus ends the conversion of rampant, unacceptable desires to married love, and thus ends the idyll of the Ardent forest.

IV

Out of these convertites there is much
 matter to be heard and learned.
As You Like It – V.iv

The forest of Arden and the fairies' wood have served their purpose: they have opened a space for the maturation of Shakespeare's characters. Only there in the green world may repressed, socially unacceptable desires be expressed before being sublimated in the ritual act of marriage. Yet the return to society from the green world is far from an all-encompassing cathartic movement. I have chosen to examine *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* due to the near-totality of their sublimation through vow-taking, but their ritual movement from the green world, through marriage, to the world of socially acceptable desires contains an element of inadequacy that only increases throughout Shakespeare's other comedies. Titania and Oberon do not abandon their forest, nor are their sexual desires checked – they simply come to a mutually agreeable arrangement regarding their rampant sexuality. Phebe and Silvius come to a similar point of partial sublimation: Phebe accepts Ganymede's replacement, Silvius, but he is a mere substitute. Phebe does not sublimate her desire, she merely agrees to transfer it to an inferior object, and thus the two pastoral characters will never leave the forest of Arden. Such ambiguous sublimations form a necessary part of Shakespeare's comedy; without them, the plays would descend to the level of unbelievable pastiches.

This element of credibility lends itself to more than just a believable exit from the forest of repressed desire. The characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* are not the only ones to have undergone this process of maturation and

sublimation. Just as tragedy serves as a cathartic act for both characters and audience, so too does comedy aid in the maturation of its auditors and the sublimation of unexpressed desire. According to Robert W. Corrigan,

. . . because it is just these terrors, shadows, and fears that are the unique subject matter of the theatre, human beings throughout history have found themselves turning to the theatre as one of the most satisfactory ways of confronting them. . . the theatre's chief function is to make present mystery, make manifest the unknown or the inexplicable. (3)

Not only have Shakespeare's characters achieved a maturation of their love and sexual desire - we too have spent our time in the green world.

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