The Female Role in Shakespeare's Festive Comedies:

Diversity of Interpretation

By: Ola Zarrouf

Submitted as an MA Dissertation
at the English Department
Tishreen University

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Supervised by: Dr. Yousef Shaheen

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First, to my father, my mother, my sister, and brothers for their love and support; to Ahmad and Ali too.

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Abstract

Shakespeare's female characters have often attracted the attention of the critics over the time. The controversial aspects of the female role in Shakespeare's comedies were particularly evoked by twentieth century critics. Although these female characters have been intensely studied and analyzed, some controversies and disagreements over the interpretation of the female role were often left unresolved. Are these female characters liberated or oppressed? How could these women manifest such power and authority on the Elizabethan stage on which the mere presence of actresses was forbidden? Answers to these questions seem to depend largely on the specific cultural perspective of different historical periods. Despite C. L. Barber's great study of dramatic form and its relation to social custom which highlighted the significance of the Elizabethan festive culture to the interpretation of Shakespeare's comedies, the female role in the comedies has not been approached or analyzed from the point of view of the festive culture of Elizabethan England.

This dissertation studies the female role in three selected plays of Shakespeare's comedies, Twelfth Night, As You Like It and The Taming of the Shrew, investigating its relation to the Elizabethan festive culture, and the way through which the female role has been interpreted throughout different historical periods of time. Though
ferociously fought by the ascending power of the Puritans, festivity had its prominent existence in the Elizabethan popular culture. Shakespeare's employment of festivity and public celebrations in his comedies seems to have had an immense impact upon the Elizabethan audience who were able to recognize the festive frame of the plays and take part in the dramatic holiday experience. Festive traditions have always included female rights, as they reversed the ordinary order of the everyday life of the Elizabethan communities. Bold, defiant, and enabled, female characters in Shakespearian comedy seem to have inherited those festive traditions in which they would naturally head the societal hierarchy. The selection of *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Taming Of The Shrew* is governed by their contribution to the theatrical and cultural questions raised in this dissertation as they draw in various degrees on holiday motifs, and not only highlight the prevailing festive customs, but also the other anti-festive line in Elizabethan England.

Studying the female role in the Elizabethan context of festivity does not promise that the comic effect of the festive meanings will be recaptured. In its festive context, the female role belongs to Elizabethan England and its public stage, but this study, however, is an attempt to clarify and disclose controversial points which have always haunted the production and reproduction of these plays and informed their interpretation.
- Introduction:

This dissertation investigates the relationship between festivity and the role of the female characters in three selected plays of Shakespeare's comedies with an outlook on the various readings throughout different historical periods of time. In this research, the female role is studied in relation to culture, history and ideology, both on the synchronic and diachronic levels. In order to comprehend the female role within different cultural, historical and ideological contexts, it attempts to uncover and identify the various factors which shaped and defined the position of the female in Shakespeare's time, and in later historical periods. However, it is not a historical study, rather it is a realization of history as a cultural practice, among other practices, which modified the female role in Shakespeare's comedies, both in the Elizabethan age and the successive ages. Jean E Howard and Marion F O'Connor demonstrate the process through which such an approach to literature operates:

This process differs from a traditional approach to literature in history in several ways. First, it places literature in history, rather than as a reflection of it, makes it one of a vast ensembles of cultural practices through which constructions of the real are circulated and people positioned as subjects of ideology. Second, it argues that representations and cultural practices are not politically neutral . . . Third, while assuming that literature and drama cannot exist outside of ideology and history, one nevertheless recognizes that the specific material conditions connected with a cultural practice have ideological consequences. (8)

This approach to the study of the Elizabethan culture and the history of Elizabethan drama, comedy in particular, helps reveal a rarely touched upon aspect of the female role in Shakespeare's comedies. Analyzing the relationship between the
female position in the Elizabethan culture, and the way the female role in Shakespeare's comedy has developed in successive interpretation, serves, in Sinfield's words, to "develop an adequately complex framework of social, and hence textual, interaction" (6-7).

In this sense, both the comedies and the female characters are viewed as agents of culture, history and ideology of the Elizabethan community and the successive historical periods in which the comedies are reproduced. Hence, the female characters in the comedies do not stand for universal values. On the contrary, they are the product of specific cultural practices. In Elizabethan England, the female role was the product of collaborative cultural practices, social, economic, political and ideological, with which the Elizabethan theatrical conditions accorded. Thus, the female role is looked at as a product of the historical period in which the comedies are produced and reproduced. The role of the female characters, then, could be reproduced either from the point of view of the dominant, or the marginal forces in society. Whereas in Elizabethan England the female role stood for the marginalized festive culture, in successive interpretations it seems to represent the viewpoint of the interpretive community, whether dominant or marginal, by whose standards the comedies are reproduced.

Wiemann argues that "the text is a product as well as a 'producer' of power, a reflection as well as an agent of social relations" ("Towards a Literary Theory of Ideology" 267). Elizabethan England was defined by an ongoing cultural conflict of festive versus anti-festive forces which arguably found its way to Shakespearean drama, most notably to the comedies. The festive culture, which represented the inherited traditions of the nation, was being gradually replaced by a culture dictated by the Puritans and nascent capitalism. The change in the positions of power was that from an agricultural community manifested in public festivals and seasonal
celebrations to a materialistic and conservative community on the run to establish a strong economy.

In this sense, to grasp the relationship between the female role in the comedies and festive traditions entails a study of the festive phenomenon in Elizabethan England and its relation to Shakespeare's comedy, the female characters in particular. The focus here is first on the set of diverse and inextricable factors which govern the relations between the festive phenomenon, comedy, and the female role in Shakespeare's comedies. Secondly, attention is paid to the way festive comedy reflects the diverse attitudes and conflicting cultural forces within the Elizabethan community towards festivity.

The cultural transition between festive and anti-festive forces, which became part of the Elizabethan daily life, found its expression in Shakespeare's comedies. The position of the female in the festive culture was at odds with that in the anti-festive, or puritan culture. The liberty, superiority and transgression permitted to women by festive traditions were contrasted by suppressive conditions forced by the Puritans upon women. Henceforth, the female role in Shakespeare's comedies can be grasped in better terms when examined in the light of the Elizabethan oppositional forces, festive versus anti-festive.

As festivity in Elizabethan England was becoming gradually marginalized, the female position shared a similar fate. Thus, the examination of the female role in the wide cultural context – social, economic, political and ideological which collaborated to produce and reproduce the female role in the comedies sheds the light on "the marginal but insistent forces that challenge and may eventually breakdown a monolithic construction of power" (Waller 20).

In this context, this dissertation attempts to illustrate that _Twelfth Night, As You Like It_, and _The Taming Of The Shrew_ reflect cultural attitudes, both festive and anti-
festive. Viola, Rosalind, and Katherina offer distinctive female characters who are active, creative and in control of their dramatic situations. The comedies do revolve around these females who lead the action right from the start. However, the happy endings with which the comedies close function just like a festival which violates the rhythm of everyday life only to bring ordinary life back into prospect.

In *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, festive liberty and transgression finds its best expression in the disguise of Viola and Rosalind. Disguise, a popular festive custom in sixteenth century England, provides Viola and Rosalind with physical liberty granting both heroines access into their male-dominated worlds. Disguise, as a form of festive cross-dressing, becomes quite intriguing due to its unique position on the Elizabethan stage given the fact that Viola and Rosalind were played by Elizabethan boy actors. The eroticism arising from watching a boy actor playing a female role and then disguised as a male was a part of the Elizabethan festive versus anti-festive conflict. Nevertheless, the Puritan's allegations and condemnation of disguise as a theatrical technique cannot degrade the multi-dimensional theatricality of disguise on the Elizabethan platform. Cross-dressing and the female role on the Elizabethan stage have had their unique signifying system.

The conflict between the festive and anti-festive currents which belies the comedies has its prominent impact upon the linguistic discourse of the female characters. The different manifestations of festivity greatly influence the vocabulary of the heroines in the comedies. Viola, Rosalind, and Katherina constantly fluctuate between the festive and anti-festive modes of expression depending on the occasion in the action. The festive discourse is characterized by verbal liberties and license. By contrast, the anti-festive discourse restricts and limits the linguistic properties of the female characters. The immense diversity between these two modes of discourse is best apparent with relation to the female characters. The obvious active, rebellious,
and liberal attitudes of Viola, Rosalind and Katherina are reflected in their language. However, towards the end of these festive comedies these heroines take off those festive traits of liberty and put on the costumes of ordinary life.

In this dissertation, a general outlook on productions prior to the twentieth century is going to be provided. However, the main discussion is going to be addressed to the twentieth century aspects of performance. Almost each decade in the twentieth century dealt with the comedies according to its own politics and theatrical perspective. Most importantly, despite this diversity of interpretation within the twentieth century, the festive interpretation of the comedies, that had dominated and governed the Elizabethan stage, has not been involved or entailed. Instead, on the modern stage, the comedies and the female role became mouthpieces of contemporary issues and concerns.

The dissertation falls into five chapters. The first chapter introduces festivity as a cultural phenomenon in Elizabethan England. It examines the inextricable relations between festivity, Elizabethan comedy and the female role, and contends that the strong ties between festivity and the female position in culture are quite significant to the interpretation of the female characters in Shakespeare's festive comedies.

The second chapter examines Shakespeare's adaptation of popular festivals and their relation to the female role in the selected comedies: the celebration of the twelve days of Christmas in *Twelfth Night*, the country/court opposition in *As You Like It*, and the Hocktide Games and Shrove Tuesday in *The Taming Of The Shrew*. The festive meanings each of these celebrations conveys, which are significant and indispensable to the comprehension of the female role in the festive context, are studied here in details.

The third chapter discusses the use of disguise as a theatrical technique in *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, and the festive liberty the disguise provides for
Viola and Rosalind in the two comedies. Disguise, a popular festive custom, provides Viola and Rosalind with physical liberty allowing both heroines access into their patriarchal worlds. The fact that female roles used to be played by boy actors adds to the specificity of disguise on the Elizabethan stage. Disguise became a part of the Elizabethan festive versus anti-festive struggle. In this chapter, the festive, theatrical, and problematic uses of disguise are examined.

The fourth chapter examines the way through which Festivity with its different manifestations in the three selected plays has affected the discourse of Viola, Rosalind and Katherina. The female characters fluctuate between two modes of expression; one is festive; the other is anti-festive both of which used to coexist in the Elizabethan culture. At the end of each comedy the heroines take off those festive traits and put on the costumes of ordinary life with its static routine.

The fifth chapter focuses on performance of the female role throughout different historical periods, with specific reference to performance in the twentieth century. The role of the female characters seems to undergo major alterations once festive traditions are no longer the direct reference in the process of theatrical production and reception of the comedies. Performance has always come in line with the contemporary concerns of the historical period in which the comedies have been staged. This chapter tries to illustrate how the theatrical production and reproduction of these plays has drifted away from festivity and the effects of this change on the playing and interpretation of the female role.

The aim of this research is to show that the roles of Viola, Rosalind and Katherina embody important manifestations of the culture of Elizabethan England. The Elizabethan cultural conflict of festive versus anti-festive forces is quite detectable and significant in relation to the female role in the selected comedies. However, the festive meanings of the female role are changed and altered within
different cultural contexts and diverse historical periods in which festivity does not have a voice to claim anymore.
Chapter One: Festivity, Comedy and the Female Role

1-1- Festivity: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Renaissance

Francois Laroque defines Festivity as "a social manifestation linked with natural and seasonal cycles and rooted in a so-called archaic vision of time and the cosmos" (3). Laroque goes on explaining the way in which festivity particularly in Elizabethan England has been inextricably woven into the popular mentality and conduct: "the age was, in short, pervaded with the spirit of festivity" (4). In his research which is dedicated to the years between 1590 to 1613, Laroque detects irresistible traces of festivity within the literature of this period. According to Laroque festivity seems to have continued to mark the Elizabethan daily life despite the growing protestations of the Puritans shown in some writings of the period which clearly signal "a strong movement of opposition to festivity, while at the same time testifying indirectly to its persistent vitality and popularity among the masses" (Laroque 6). In fact, the Elizabethan calendar has been studded with a number of festivals scattering throughout the whole year. Those festive dates are mostly related to agricultural customs and seasonal changes, but more importantly is their link to pagan beliefs.

Communal celebrations in the Renaissance have always included games, disguises, dancing and music along with other practices which seem to have launched the public's energies to the most inconvenience of the Puritans whose fears of recovering pagan rituals have been highly alarmed. In addition to the inherited pagan element, festivals have often taken the form of mockery and ridicule designed to evoke enjoyment and laughter. Objections of the Puritans against the immoral practices of these apparently annoying, yet obviously well alive festivals, have continued to escalate. In order to avoid further complications, the church has sought "to integrate pagan celebrations into its own calendar, in the hope of unobtrusively
changing their immediate meaning" (Laroque 17). It is worth mentioning here that, due to the economic and social evolution in the cities, the calendar’s festivals have had a stronger impact in the countryside and rural areas than in big cities, though this cannot be over-generalized. But the fact remains that the English Renaissance has been immensely intermingled with festivals to the extent that "it appears as a commitment to a joyous world and way of life" (33).

With the passage of time and the evolution of economy, festivity, an agriculturally defined phenomenon, neither suited nor met the developing needs and demands of the economically growing cities. The rapid expansion which markets, products, trade, and export witnessed seems to have cast away traditional economy, bringing along changes in the socio-economic and political structure of Elizabethan England. As feudalism was declining, capitalism was flourishing nationwide. The urban society in particular was moving in a line of development where popular festivals "did not fit the way of living of the urban groups whose energies were beginning to find expression through … the Puritan ethic" (Barber 16). The postponing of daily work and chores during festive celebrations did not at any cost fit the new attitude in Elizabethan England that was pushing towards building a strong economy. The new system has found an echo in the puritan strictness and conservatism that privileges hard work and at the same time condemns festivity as a withholding force to good faith, and, ironically, good business:

The decline of feudal social organization and medieval habits of life ushered in a new era of prosperity for England- an age fundamentally of an economic revolution which nonetheless, despite the profound disruptions, was an era of social compromise that achieved a temporary political stability and a cultural synthesis of old and new. (Wiemann 161)

Festivity in Elizabethan England was versatile and fell into different categories
and forms. Winter holidays and summer holidays have divided the Elizabethan agricultural calendar in two halves. In addition to their popular associations, festivities have also gained strong ties with the court and the queen as all celebrations have been dedicated to her majesty, Queen Elizabeth I. Public celebrations, dependent on ancient mythology, seem to have fostered a mythological ambivalent that has shielded a sacred image of the queen in the eyes of her people. This analogy can in a way explain the continuity and progression of traditional festivities, which seem to have earned a present function other than their common liberties, despite the persistent labor of the Puritans to ban them:

Festivity had always been an outlet for popular energies; under Elizabeth and James I, it became an instrument of government as much as a means of amusement. These festivals furthermore gave the supernatural new associations with the person of the sovereign, for a cult of the 'virgin queen' gradually superseded the old festivals devoted to the Virgin Mary. (Laroque 9)

Shakespeare's background and the nature of the Elizabethan community where festivity was still a way of living of the masses contributed to the composition of Shakespeare's festive comedy. Shakespeare was in a position "perfectly situated to express both a countryman's participation in holiday and a city man's consciousness of it" (Barber 17). Barber considers it important, when examining Shakespeare's comedies, to concentrate on two forms of festive customs: those of the May Day and The Lord of Misrule. In Elizabethan England, people would gather to welcome the arrival of the joyful spring on the first of May. Elizabethans would usually go out to the woods singing, dancing and celebrating in what appeared to be a unity with nature that had now come to its best in this colorful season. The May Day refers to the occasion, nevertheless, it is also a lord, and thus people "can express a relation to the
season by doing honor to him and his lady Flora” (Barber 20).

Undoubtedly, the Puritans headed the list in sensing and pointing out the hazardous consequences of this occasion where men and women enjoyed a festive liberty outdoors without a supervising authority. At another level, never less dangerous to the Puritans, it was always necessary to consider the amount of abuse that might harm actual authority when such a mock one had been celebrated. Outdoors, a crowd of men and women having an outlet for their energies in a very symbolic period of the year was unquestionably a risky matter that required serious contemplation. In this context, Laroque demonstrates how "countless ballads, songs and poems" referred to the games and amusements of May Day which had been "highly prized by the young since they made it possible for lovers to meet or renew their relations" (112). The puritan concerns at the playful sports of May Day had been especially aroused for the sake of young women who could be the victims at such an occasion. Being totally taken by the pleasure of the day, young maids could be subjected to temptations by men in the woods, a place far away from the civil laws and social constraints of the community. This concern finds its best expression in the writings of the Puritan Phillip Stubbes. Directing his outrage against festivity and the massive wave of liberty, particularly at May Day celebrations, Stubbes confirmed having heard that "amongst maidens, . . . of tenne maidens which went to fet May, and nine of them came home with childe" (qtd. in Laroque 113).

Wiemann interprets Stubbes' allegations to reflect the puritan newly adopted social attitude and Protestant ethics which promoted individualism and ushered the collective element festivals embody. Therefore, it would stand as the individual’s personal choice to "enjoy the festival, the wine, and the love, but at the risk of losing business, sobriety, and chastity" (Wiemann, Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition 163). However, to Barber, the amount of concentration against such an outdoor
occasion may stimulate speculations first about the strength of festivity in Elizabethan England, and also about "how completely all groups who lived together within the agricultural calendar shared in the response to the season" (22).

May Day has always presented a special bond between man and nature. Around this day people would gather flowers and make maypoles out of the greens in the forest. Back at their towns, Elizabethans would dance and sing around the decorated and garnished maypoles which meant one true connection with nature. Laroque presents some historical material which testifies that "May Day was permeated with an atmosphere of erotic license and made exciting by its amorous games and pitfalls" (112). Nevertheless, in the same context, Barber explains that this "wantonness" of May Day games "has a reverence about it because it is a realization of a power of life larger than the individual, crescent both in men and their green surroundings" (24).

Another distinctive holiday feature had been the Lord of Misrule which was a stable and a quite popular ritual during festive celebrations. It would serve our interest the best in this survey to focus on the function of The Lord of Misrule chiefly at the celebrations of the twelve days of Christmas. This particular custom might have received some of the most brutal attacks from the Puritans since it has involved true indulgence, brutality, and mockery where "abuse predominates over invocation" (Barber 24). Though the lord of Misrule was not exclusive to Christmas celebrations, and was present at other festive occasions, still it had been identified above all with the merriment of the twelve days of Christmas. This celebrated lord had been responsible for the different sorts of amusements that could at times jeopardize actual authority. Mangan demonstrates that the purpose of such symbols, classified under the term of misrule, had been "to parody the forms and emblems of authority" (31). It was not at any level peculiar to have a lord of misrule at courts and households of the nobles. Quite the contrary, Barber argues, "it was in the households of such men, or
in the still larger establishments of institutions or of the nobility, that the more formal lords were set up at feasts" (25). In the villages, the churchyard had been a spontaneous location for the villagers to celebrate their mock lords of misrule. The very choice of place had been provocative to the Puritans who found that "setting up a mock lord and demanding homage for him are playfully rebellious gestures" which have "interrupted divine service inside the church" (29). Records also show a favorability of such lords among students in some of the leading English universities where performances of this sort have been "the targets of particularly vigorous attacks from the Puritans, who considered them to be incompatible with a religious education" (Laroque 151). The huge amount of hostility with which the Puritans have faced festivity in general has appointed them as the worst possible enemy for the holiday spirit and the celebration of good times. A rigid puritan such as Stubbes would have earned the title "kill-joy," and of course such puritans had their share of mockery and "festive abuse" (Barber 30).
1-2- Festivity and Comedy

The Puritans who attacked the festive celebrations in Elizabethan England must have had a similar attitude towards the theatre in general, being a form of popular entertainment, and comedy in particular for containing direct reinforcement for the festive spirit in the public's mentality. Bradbrook states that "studies in stage history" have unraveled a strong bond between Elizabethan drama and public festivals, and that such a bond "naturally predominates in comedy" (The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 3). The nexus between festivity and the Elizabethan theatre has also been highlighted by Laroque who states how the staging, for instance, of the popular May games in the villages on May Day celebrations "shows how much the public theatre in London had inherited from the spirit and traditions of popular provincial festivals" (Laroque 35). Naturally, the festive atmosphere had a far more prevailing presence in comedy than that in tragedy. Though comedy has often been overshadowed by tragedy, the fact remains that "comedies outnumbered tragedies on the Elizabethan stage by nearly three to one" (Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 3). In this context, Laroque notices how tragedy has evidently been regarded as a "noble" and a higher form of art whereas comedy with its static rituals of games, music, dancing and the "rustic antics of the clown are out of place" (Laroque 35). The strong presence of comedy on the Elizabethan stage could allude first to the fact that the general disdainful outlook on comedy had not much bothered Elizabethan theatre goers, and that playhouses could not neglect the public's appreciation of comedy that had stemmed out of their own popular traditions.

Elizabethan comedy, however, cannot be reduced to popular festivities solely. Elizabethan playwrights had a whole literary tradition to look back to. The oral literary tradition of the popular culture derived from public festivities was paralleled by the inherited literary tradition which was taught in the English schools and
universities. The inflation of these two literary forms, learned and popular, formed the cornerstone of drama in the Elizabethan age. Thus, the specific nature of Elizabethan drama in general, comedies in particular, can be regarded as the corporative interaction of both literary and popular traditions. This had actually been the point of strength that made comedies applicable to the various tastes of diverse Elizabethan audiences. Insofar as the "shapeless popular tradition was in need of organization," nonetheless true it was that the "learned tradition was equally in need of flexibility" (Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 4).

However, the appreciation of festivity among the masses could protect neither comedy nor the theatre, the official patron of comedy, from being attacked. The ascending power of Puritanism has gradually become stronger and bolder with the increasing "support of certain Justices of Peace or municipal authorities" (Laroque 119). The Elizabethan stage has been assimilated to the public places in which celebrations have been held and has thus been treated with similar dissatisfaction for promoting immoral, abusive activities among the masses:

The nature and purpose of theatre was the subject of vigorous debate in Elizabethan England, and the relationship of theatre to the cultural life of the community as a whole was hotly disputed. But one way in which theatre sometimes functioned was to provide a space in which the energies of carnival could exist: an alternative place of opposition to official culture … (Mangan 35)

The investigation of the relations between festivity and comedy involves a discussion of the role of the Elizabethan stage whose ties with popular culture were compatible with those of comedy and popular traditions. The Elizabethan theatre has come to occupy a respectable position in the overall cultural development of Elizabethan England. Located "outside the jurisdiction of the city authorities,"
Elizabethan theatres have managed to preserve their popular roots (Wiemann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 170). Resembling out-of-doors festive locations, theatres have become popular places where Elizabethans would meet to observe some of their favorite local traditions performed in play-like forms. In a playhouse, away from capitalist tensions and puritan doctrines, the public could still bond with their folklore, simultaneously developing a connection with the theatre in general:

Thus, while growing capitalism and its related asceticism had not yet become a way of life for the masses, the new economy and corresponding social changes had already created conditions whereby a permanent public theatre independent of the controlling influence of clergy and conservative guilds, could develop. (Wiemann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 171)

In addition to its deep popular attachments, the Elizabethan theatre had simultaneously strengthened its ties with the court and the queen. "Court comedy" came to be quite familiar in sixteenth century England. Designed in the form of complimentary allusions to the queen, it had been a "variation, or specialization, of the pastoral, brought into England from Italy chiefly by John Lyly" (Bellinger). Elizabethan playwrights such as Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, all composed court comedy using its devices of dream settings, masques, and female characters disguised as men. Other forms of court comedy, or court masque, took the shape of mythological and allegorical shows at the end of which queen Elizabeth I would appear, allied by magical powers, to unmask disguised vices and redeem nymphs "from vile enchantments" (Barber 31). The complex continuity of pastoral comedy was possible in its intimate relation with the court and the queen as these parties had truly benefited from the substantial influences of one another. Depicted as
the supreme power of popular traditional performances, it was as thus that queen Elizabeth I "appeared in plays of Marston and Dekker as well as Jonson, and even- as the divine infant inspiring a Vergilian prophet - at the end of Shakespeare’s King Henry VIII" (Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* 112).

Accordingly, pastoral, or festive, comedy should be observed as the product of a complex ideological and historical process. The different factors that had collaborated in creating the Elizabethan public theatre intermingled and participated in the process of production, presentation, and reception of the comedies. The Elizabethan anti-festive and anti-theatrical institutions had as well contributed to the character and context of Elizabethan popular drama and theatrical practice as a whole. Studying the comedies within their complex social, political, and literary contexts would dismiss claims of textual universality. Viewed in this light, festive comedy gains more sense standing "not as a passive reflector of great ideas, but as a site of social struggle conducted through discourse" (Howard 7-8).

Though the immediate purpose of comedy would usually be to stir laughter, substantially, laughter depends on social common sense and experience. Thus, laughter is temporary and immediate due to its necessary dependence on specific human correspondences. Nevertheless, although the functions and purposes of laughter vary among diverse times and cultures, one recurrent function has often been to cope with "issues which individuals and societies find threatening, embarrassing, or disturbing" (Mangan 23). At Elizabethan public celebrations, mockery and parody had actually been the source of genuine laughter. Festivals had typically involved kill-joy characters, side by side to lords of misrule, who contradicted and interrupted the joyful celebrations and the uninhibited festive spirit in the comedies. In reproducing such festivals, whether directly or indirectly, Elizabethan festive comedy, in order to achieve its comic purposes, had to involve forms of mockery that
naturally led to abuse and the scapegoat characteristic implied in festive games and amusements. Kill-joy characters were the target of mockery at whose expense laughter was invoked, and became the scapegoat for festive comedy. Shakespeare’s festive comedy does reflect cultural attitudes, both festive and anti-festive. With specific allusion to literature, Raymond Williams has analyzed such "complex historical process" generated by oppositional forces, both ascending and declining, "in terms of the residual, dominant, and emergent elements which coexist at any cultural moment" (Dollimore 7). In this sense, festive comedies can be envisaged as a site of social struggle and conflict which had also, in a broader sense, assigned the Elizabethan public stage as an arena of opposite conflicting powers. Such an analogy had become a motivating factor that nominated the Elizabethan theatre to receive its share of disapproval and condemnation. Theatrical practice had thus been fought and treated as the other festive traditions such as the maypoles around which people would gather on May Day to dance and celebrate. The 8th of April 1644 had eventually witnessed the Parliament’s banning of the maypoles, strong metaphors of festivity, and simultaneously the closure of the theatres in London, the procreators of festive traditions and practices.
1-3- Festivity and the Female Role

The relationship between festive traditions and female position in culture can be appropriated to get a better perspective on the female role in Shakespearean comedy. Though deeply inflected with seasonal cycles and changes, yet the fact remains that a festival time is marked out by a break with everyday life. Celebrations have definitely broken the rhythm of the daily routine. People would refrain from doing their jobs and the ordinary order of the community's life is usually turned upside down. Naturally, women constitute no exception to these rearrangements motivated by the festive phenomenon. In most of those celebrations women seem to be redeemed of their traditional roles as they are invited to these out-of-time-and-place occasions. In this context, Laroque reminds us when he quotes an elaborate article by Keith Thomas, which was published at a time where "gravity was beginning to be regarded as a virtue," that the most vulnerable to laughter and the festive spirit are children, women, and the ordinary people (Laroque 33). Festive traditions have indeed included female rights unparalleled in everyday life circumstances. Thus, it is no wonder to see women on these special occasions heading the hierarchy, taking action and indulging themselves actively and freely in the games and sports of the day, making the most out of these rather stolen moments of a fixed order. For instance, the enthusiastically celebrated May Day festival has a strong female attachment. As a matter of fact, on the Elizabethan calendar, Laroque explains, May Day coincides with two ancient festivals: a Greek festival of the "Thargelia", and the Roman celebrations of "Bona Dea, the Goddess of flowers and fecundity."¹ Both festivals have "included strictly female rights involving dances and other practices frequently condemned as licentious" (Laroque 111).

Despite vigorous campaigns launched to warn Elizabethans, particularly women,

¹ Bona Dea has as well been the goddess of prostitutes.
against the immoral festive and theatrical practices, historical documents do point out to female presence, though in scarce numbers, at playhouses. Still, the texture of Elizabethan audiences has been mostly composed of men. Accordingly, plays have been intended to a mixed audience, though "one myth of the period held that only lewd or debauched women would be present at a playhouse" (Mangan 89). The fact that in Elizabethan England no woman was permitted a license to mount the theatrical platform does not shadow the presence of distinguished female roles on the professional stage. In Shakespeare's comedy, one cannot fail to take heed of defiant, bold and resourceful female characters who put into practice their wits and efforts in whatever time given to make the best of their situations. The undoubtedly bold actions and apparently creative imaginations these female characters enjoy have always been encoded under disguises, games, as well as other practices usually classified as the very symptoms and manifestations of festive traditions which, though ferociously fought, have named the Elizabethan popular culture.

Shakespeare's comedies do project this "upside-down festival world" in which masques, disguises, and other forms of entertainment encourage role reversals and couples exchange as well as a general "atmosphere of freedom which prevails when the prohibition and constraints of ordinary life are lifted" (Laroque 264). This surreal world of festivity contains ambiguous and changing modes of desire through which the female characters stir the deck of emotions and passions. Twelfth Night, As You Like It, and The Taming Of The Shrew reflect cultural attitudes, both festive and anti-festive. Viola, Rosalind, and Katherina offer distinctive female characters who are active, creative and in control of their circumstances. The comedies do revolve around these females who lead the action right from the start. However, the happy endings with which the comedies close function just like a festival which violates the rhythm of everyday life only to bring ordinary life back into prospect.
Chapter Two: Shakespeare's Adaptation of Popular Festivals and The Female Role

2-1-The Twelve Days of Christmas in *Twelfth Night*

An adequate examination of Shakespeare's adaptation of popular festivals, and their relationship to the female role in the comedies, requires a general survey on the sources around which the comedies have been composed. Such an outlook on sources proves efficient especially with regard to female characters, and their physical and verbal actions. Shakespeare's alterations, eliminations, or enhancements at some places become highly significant in displaying the relationship between festivity and the female role in Shakespearian comedy.

Barnabe Riche's *Apolonius and Silla* is most likely to be the immediate source of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. It has been thought that the Italian play *Gl’ Ingannati* or "The Desired Ones" has direct implications in *Twelfth Night*, yet "none of them carries irresistible conviction" (*Twelfth Night*, Introduction. xxxvii). This Italian play lacks certain parts of Shakespeare's text which *Apolonius and Silla* can definitely supply. Despite the thematic similarities of mistaken identities and confusions, yet by contrast to *Twelfth Night*, "little attempt has been made to develop the romantic aspect of its plot" (xxxvi). It is, nonetheless, taken for granted that the tale of *Apolonius and Silla* has been read by Shakespeare "whose departures from it may be as significant as his debts to it" (xliii). It appears that, having this initial source material at hand, Shakespeare has set to work out the outlines of his *Twelfth Night*. Named after a major holiday in Elizabethan England, Shakespeare has as well given his comedy an alternative title -*What You Will*- which is going to name the motives, gestures, and actions of the characters on the stage.
The point of festive significance regarding Shakespeare's comedies in general and *Twelfth Night* in particular has but seldom been evoked in the successive readings of the play. Whereas moral claims have usually dominated the interpretation of *Twelfth Night*, one critic in the nineteenth century, E. Montegut, has "stressed the element of masquerade, festival, topsyturveydom, and ambiguity, and resisted the moralists" (*Twelfth Night*. Introduction. liii). However, the effective breakthrough in questioning and articulating the contribution of public celebrations to the festive world of the Elizabethan comedies in general, and Shakespeare's in particular, has been the penetrative intervention achieved by C. L Barber towards the mid twentieth century.

The debt of *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will* to the twelve days of Christmas surpasses just the occasion on which the play might have been first performed. The twelve days of Christmas -Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and the Epiphany Eve- constitute the closure of the various festivals on the Elizabethan calendar extending from December the 25th until the 6th of January. This festive period in particular has always enjoyed a specificity being "the longest and most sustained of the whole year," in addition to the fact that it has been "enthusiastically celebrated in town and country alike" (Laroque 148). In this sense, the festive claims of *Twelfth Night*, quite familiar to the Elizabethan audience, would have directed the overall scheme of the play and the perception of its comic nature.

Illyria, the elected setting of *Twelfth Night*, is Shakespeare's own invention, and according to Muir "Olivia's Illyrian household is essentially Elizabethan" (*Shakespeare's Sources* 75). In fact, Olivia's household resembles a small Elizabethan community in which a variety of the different cultural groups are gathered underneath  

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1. The point is made by Barber (1959), Muir (1957), and editors of the 1975 Methuen *Twelfth Night*, J.M. Lothian and T. W. Craik. All relate some historical material assembled by Dr. Hotson stating that Shakespeare “was writing the play by the middle of the year,” and that he “completed it before the year’s end, with the approach of the Christmas holiday period" (*Twelfth Night*. Introduction. xxxiv, xxxv).
one ceiling. This assorted cosmopolitan collection provides a good presentation of actual festive indulgence. It is worth noting here that although Olivia is obviously not the oldest member in the group, nevertheless, she is the one in charge and in control of her own residence. Despite Olivia's mourning for her dead brother, which seems to be exclusively individual, the rest of the company at her house appear to take part in the spirit of festivity; some celebrate for the sake of their own pleasure; others, however, are made the object of it. Drawing on Baktin's notion of carnival, its mobilizing energy, and the collaborative effects it helps to create, Mangan explains that:

The experience of carnival is participatory: it is not something to watch from the sidelines, but something with which to become involved, and the laughter is implicated in the laughter. It is also … an ambivalent laughter, simultaneously celebrating and mocking, sympathizing and deriding. Carnival laughter, above all, is a laughter which works against the traditional hierarchies, ranks and norms of the everyday world. (Mangan 34)

Olivia's relative, Sir Toby, never fails to presume the holiday's Lord of Misrule; he stays up all night getting drunk and acting foolishly since this lord "reigns chiefly at night" (Barber 24). Lords of misrule, symbolic yet consistent characters of festivals, jeopardized actual authority, and, to be more exact, divine authority for the most part. The constant abundance of fear and despise Puritans have uploaded upon such figurative lords explains Malvolio's rather disgusted attitude towards Toby being an epithet of the "principle of freedom, chaos and anarchy" (Mangan 32). Nevertheless, the familiarity and regularity of having a lord of misrule at holidays in general, and the twelve days of Christmas in particular, may explain Olivia's virtual tolerance of Toby's follies. She acknowledges his role and thus allows him to go
about as his will dictates though she herself is not to take part, at least not intentionally, in those festive games.

Olivia's mourning, however, does not stop the clown from trying to amuse his lady who is, in his opinion, herself acting foolishly. "The clown," Laroque tells us, "is one of the foremost representatives and spokesmen of popular culture," also known for his "forthrightness and his total lack of inhibitions" (42). The presence of Feste, the clown in *Twelfth Night*, at this stage of the play would have instilled the interest of the Elizabethan audience in the action. Although there was a movement to banish the part of the clown from the life of the community, nevertheless, his role on the stage has been a necessity heavily demanded by the Elizabethan audience. Traditionally, as Mangan asserts, so early as the fourteenth, fifteenth, and up to the sixteenth centuries, households of the nobility have indeed incorporated and entertained the service of fools:

According to this critical tradition figures like Lear's fool and Feste are typically seen as the outsiders in the corridors of power, as marginalized figures, hovering between the Council Chamber and the servant's quarters. . . . His role [the fool] is that of the witty, sardonic servant whose seemingly meaningless words conceal profound thoughts . . . through his seeming folly he speaks occasional words of devastating and radical insight. (Mangan 55)

Feste is the only character to ridicule Olivia's announced grief openly and explicitly. His absolute, well expected, lack of restraints pushes Olivia to step out of her alleged state of inconsolable sorrow. Lady Olivia seems to lighten up around the clown who in her words can truly "mend" (*Twelfth Night*, I. v. 72). In this scene Feste manages first to unravel another side of Olivia's character; to draw a distinction between his rather festive attitude in contrast to that of Malvolio's towards Olivia; and
finally to bond with the audience whose laughter and likeness would then be guaranteed. This particular exchange between the two shows Olivia's willingness to get involved in merriment should the right circumstances offer:

CLOWN. Good Madonna, why mourn'st thou?
OLIVIA. Good fool, for my brother's death.
CLOWN. I think his soul is in hell, Madonna.
OLIVIA. I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
CLOWN. The more fool, Madonna, to mourn for your
Brother's soul, being in heaven. Take away the fool,
Gentlemen. (I. v. 64-70)

In the festive world of make-believe when a game is to be executed, a fitting object at whose expense comedy would be evoked, must perform the scapegoat for the redemption of fine laughter. Living up to the joyous world of holiday, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian, even Feste, with the help of Maria manage to pass a trick on Malvolio, the official representative of the Puritans in the play, making him believe he is loved by Olivia. Therefore, here in this scene an animated sample of one pleasurable festive entertainment is to be displayed before an audience that will be the sole judge to the nature of the show enacted on the stage throughout different presentations and times. The theme of disparity between appearance and reality which extracts the very core of festive celebrations is strongly reinforced in this playful trick. The holiday spirit described as a form of "madness" at several occasions in the play seems to haunt those who are not willing to step in for it. Olivia's and Malvolio's rejection to join in the holiday games means their equal refusal to engage in life itself since a festive celebration violates the ordinary rhythm of life only to bring a resilient sense of living for those who get involved in it. Both Olivia and Malvolio are unconsciously dragged into these festive games to the most delight of
the conspirers. It is amazing how this joyful festive atmosphere draws this very
puritan, Malvolio, to jump out of his conservatism, to disguise, and even swear using
non-Christian gods. On whatever grounds might Malvolio's sudden conduct be
interpreted, Olivia bears the guilt and the blame for the later harm that catches up
with Malvolio. At this point, it is Olivia who plays the defining role in manufacturing
events in the world of the play. Having no festive expertise, Malvolio ditches reason,
resigns to fantasy and subsequently goes astray:

I [Malvolio] do not now fool myself, to let imagination
jade me; for every reason excites to this, that
my lady loves me. … I thank my stars, I am
happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow
stockings, and cross-gartered, even with
the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be
praised! (II. v. 164-66, 170-74)

The alliance between Nature and Festivity has had the effective significance of
turning Illyria into a natural location much expressive of festive potentials. The
celebration of the twelfth night in a pastoral orbit completes the imagery, implications
and purposes of festivity in the play. Henceforth, Twelfth Night is an invitation to
violate the static order of everyday life motivated by the very popular belief,
vehemently detested by the puritans, that "whosoever worked during the twelve days
of Christmas would subsequently be afflicted with lice" (Laroque 152).

The vehicle of change within the Elizabethan society has unfolded some rapid
political, economic, and social adjustments the impact of which has been much more
tangible in the Elizabethan towns than in the relatively less developed or remote
villages. As a formal social institution, the Elizabethan theatre was not peculiar or
alien to the multiple lines of development in society. The fact that theatres were
located outside the city borders helped reduce the duly pressure of modern contemporary life allowing room for the popular tradition to relatively develop on the pastoral-like stage:

But in spite of the postfeudal, postpatriarchal business ethics that made these theaters commercially viable, they were still dependent on large plebian audiences-people who remained attached to the old miming and festival traditions and still removed the new Puritan ethos. (Wiemann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 170)

The games and misruling going on about Olivia's residence are paralleled by an immediate contrast at Orsino's court where joyful celebrations are excluded and therefore substituted by melancholic music that showers the scene. Festivity, nevertheless, is to find its own way into this melancholic court once Viola, the right key so to speak, rushes in. Then again, another female character steps boldly into action and reshapes some seemingly inactive, unyielding characters and situations on the stage. Viola, the herald of the festive spirit to Illyria, has managed to alter the mode of this duke because Viola, as she herself has already put it, "can sing, / And speak to him [Orsino] in many sorts of music, / That will allow me very worth his service" (*Twelfth Night* I. iii. 57-59).

Holidays are times to release kept energies, to get involved in the pleasures of the day, to be resourceful, creative and active if possible. The holiday spirit summons up what C. L. Barber refers to as "a saturnalian attitude, assumed by a clear cut-out gesture toward liberty, brings mirth, an accession of wanton vitality" (7). In *Twelfth Night*, Viola appears to have the will and attitude similar to that of the holiday spirit. Surviving a shipwreck and arriving at Illyria, Viola now only needs to plan and put her design into practical action. She decides to disguise herself as a page willing to serve lady Olivia: "O that I serv'd that lady" (*Twelfth Night* I. ii. 42). When this initial
plan fails, Viola adds a slight change and goes with the captain's recommendation to serve Orsino instead. As far as Viola is concerned: "What else may hap, to time I will commit; / Only shape thou thy silence to my wit" (I. ii. 60-61).

Viola's disguise, the singing, and the other amusements she volunteers to accommodate Orsino with are all indicative of the festive atmosphere Twelfth Night successfully conveys. Loaded with these festive keys, Viola, especially at the beginning, seems to enjoy the kind of liberty which in Elizabethan England can be generously offered only by festivity. Viola falls in love with Orsino and is able to be around him most of the time now that she has almost immediately earned his trust and become his favorite servant: "I [Orsino] have unclasp'd / To thee the book even of my secret soul" (I. iv. 13-14). Viola also gets to deliver her master's love messages to Olivia with such lighthearted festive liberty: "I'll do my best/ To woo your lady" (I. iv. 40-41). Viola here can be regarded as the messenger of festivity and love, which might have created an affinity between the two on the Elizabethan stage and the popular mentality of its audience, as both are embodied by the same character. But the complications brought about later on are reminiscent that a festive time should not be prolonged or else it may lose its functional significance. Nevertheless, festivity seems to lead the circumstantial events from mystery to light as all are expected to be clarified at the end. To use Barber's words, festivity is a process "through release to clarification" (242).

The quarrel Sir Andrew attempts to have with the disguised Viola is another clue to festive comedy. In the Renaissance, the Sword dance, a form of festive pastime, used to be performed through the figures of two madmen, and has been a traditional category of folk play. The other sort of folk play which could be better related to Viola's attempted quarrel with Andrew is called the "plough play," and is a variety of the "Mummer’s play" usually performed "at the end of Christmas festivals" (Laroque
53). The symbolic theme of such plays would usually revolve around life, death and resurrection. In *Twelfth Night*, this particular incident of quarrelling may successfully bring up the festive theme of resurrection. Sir Andrew sends Viola/Cesario a challenge to fight him for the love of lady Olivia. Meanwhile, Fabian and Sir Toby's playful follies concerning this match serve to ridicule and downplay the whole scene of real heroic combat into a mock fighting perfectly matching the festive ambivalence. Viola declares that she is "no fighter," (*Twelfth Night*. III.iv.245) while Andrew strives to get out of it as he is even willing to give up his "horse, grey Capilet" (III. iv. 291-92). The arrival and then the arresting of Antonio, Sebastian's confidential friend, whose presence into the scene holds back the fighting, raises the theme of life and death stronger than ever before in the play. Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian arousing Viola's hopes of a brother resurrecting from what she has assumed to be the world of the dead. At this point Viola is better informed than any other character on the stage, having more clues to the confusions taking place; Viola is actually granted a superiority of insight over other characters:

   VIOLA. Methinks his words do from such passion fly
      That he believes himself; so do not I:
      Prove true, imagination, O prove true,
      That I, dear brother, be now ta'en for you! (III. iv. 382-85)

*Twelfth Night* also tackles the other rather negative side of holiday celebrations. In accordance with what has been stated before, festivity is a time of relative freedom; a freedom that may lead the celebrants into some chaotic fantasies and illusions "which take them out of themselves, bringing out what they would keep hidden or did not know was there" (emphasis added) (Barber 242). The puritan fears of the complications festive times may bring about are summed up somehow in Malvolio's remark "My masters, are you mad?" (*Twelfth Night*. II. iii. 87). Madness as
well as other mental disorders ascribed to festivity in Elizabethan England actually come from the fact that a celebration always places people somewhere between reality and fantasy; a temporary desirable utopia away from the hectic, weary life. As a matter of fact, the festive function in life resembles the theatrical function of the stage in the daily life of the Elizabethan community.

At all costs, in *Twelfth Night* Viola and Olivia seem to be either the source or the object of the fantasies and accordingly the apparent madness that is surely to follow. This dreamy world of illusions haunts almost every character in the play. Olivia falls in love with the disguised Viola whose only helpless comment is: "poor lady, she were better love a dream" (II. ii. 25). Malvolio, due to the game played upon him, crosses the rigid limits of his puritan self believing that Olivia is in love with him. Watching Malvolio's peculiar manners, on her part, Olivia thinks "this is very midsummer madness" (III. iv. 55). Antonio, and shortly after him, Sir Toby, Fabian, and Andrew all mistake between the twins Viola and Sebastian. Sebastian is amazed at how fiercely this completely strange lady, Olivia, wants to marry him immediately: "Or I am mad, or else this is a dream" (IV. i. 60). Another festive key is provided here when Sebastian surrenders to Olivia's instructions letting her lead the way as traditionally accustomed during the upside down festive world:

  OLIVIA.  Nay, come, I prithee; would thou'dst be rul'd by me!
  SEBASTIAN.  Madam, I will.
  OLIVIA.  O, say so, and so be. (IV. i. 63-66)

These delusions may undoubtedly evoke and push even further the point of danger in festivity and therefore somehow justify the hostility towards that lucid character of festive culture. John Astington confirms the notion, much agreed on by social historians in the twentieth century, that "one of the roles of festival customs"
has been "to enforce communal order as much as temporarily to subvert it" (28). Sebastian, after examining these peculiarities, arrives at the conclusion that this is "no madness," as he is willing to "distrust mine eyes," and ride with this festive flow for a while until things clear out (IV. iii. 10, 13). In any case, these festive disorders can wrap up what Barber describes as "an exhibition of the use and abuse of social liberty" (248). Still, this social liberty belongs solely to the defined time of holidays. *Twelfth night*, the play as well as the occasion, can be considered the occasional sunshine of the rainy winter "for the rain it rainth everyday" (*Twelfth Night*. V. i. 391). An Elizabethan audience would have left the playhouse humming the lyrics of Feste's song overlooking and putting behind former uncertainties and perplexities.
2-2-Country/ Court Opposition in *As You Like It*

Tracing the origins of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, one is usually led into one main source which is that of Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*. Regarding the basic lines in the story up till the arrival of the characters to the Forest of Arden, Lodge has for the most part relied on *The Tale Of Gamelyn*. But the character of Rosalynde in addition to the happenings in the forest are, according to Muir, "apparently Lodge's own invention" (*Shakespeare's Sources* 55). With this main source at hand, Shakespeare ventured to compose his comedy *As You Like It*.

Rosalind's disguise provides the first hint to the festive frame which may not be strongly recognized since in *As You Like It*, as C. L. Barber notices, "there is relatively little direct use of holiday" (5). Once the characters and accordingly the scenes shift to the Forest of Arden, there emerges one immense diversity between the two worlds of the court and the forest. This shifting to the pastoral sphere draws yet another hint to the festive climate since, as Laroque puts it, "the country/court opposition still lay at the heart of the whole phenomenon of festivity" (10). Thus, the mere use of the forest as a setting quite early in the play would have been an invitation sufficient enough for the Elizabethan audience to connect *As You Like It* with those festive traditions which have prevailed and flourished in the countryside. The festive atmosphere celebrated in the countryside, it should be pointed out, and due to the immense socioeconomic changes, would have necessarily differed from that in the bigger towns of Elizabethan England:

These changes profoundly affected the ancient cultural traditions and customs which the shared land of the medieval village had immemorially fostered. Once the land was enclosed and made the object of speculation, traditions associated with it were, when not completely destroyed, severely
threatened. The new Puritan morality, with its sexual repression, thundered against the "Dionysian" freedoms characteristic of popular custom. (Wiemann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 162)

The unbreakable chains between the Elizabethan stage, comedy, and public life are strongly brought back to surface. *As You Like It* manages to highlight distinctions within the Elizabethan life in the course of providing diverse comic patterns of court, country, and also a court set up in the country. "Traditionally," Bradbrook illustrates, "society was divided into the three regions of Court, Country and City, and the comedy for each had its own decorum, though the pure specimen for each kind is the exception rather than the rule" (*The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* 43). In this light, the diverse patterns of comic representations in *As You Like It* would have fostered and reinforced the discrepancies, familiar to Elizabethans we might suggest, between the two remote worlds of Court and Country. Nevertheless, the recognition of such contrast actually helps to understand theatrical conditions and modes of representation. The range of utterances of the contrastive Court/Country entertainments have both been penetrated at the Elizabethan popular theatre which has "enjoyed a truly royal reception, and as a national institution" has been a stage of the public and the Court alike (Wiemann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 172).

Barber explains how the aristocrats and Nobles have indeed taken part in the liberties offered by festivity, though, of course, "conditions of court life made its expression complex" (31). Pastimes at the court, dedicated to glorify the sovereign, have included various sorts of allegorical and mythological entertaining shows which were often extracted out of traditional celebrations. At such court shows, performers would usually be "members of the aristocracy, sometimes of the royal family" (Bellinger). The symbolic presence of queen Elizabeth I has always engulfed the
atmosphere of the events with a mystic attendance as "every play in fact was concluded in a general prayer for the Queen" (Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* 113). At Duke Frederick's court, Rosalind’s soul is at odds while she and Celia try to amuse themselves discussing the gifts of Fortune and Nature. Their witty exchange being interrupted by the court’s fool provides a beforehand pattern for later comparison of how natural gifts may be suppressed at court: "Indeed, there is fortune too hard for Nature" (*As You Like It*. I. ii. 46).

The wrestling match staged early in the action can be as well considered as another clue to court entertainment in Elizabethan England. Rosalind and her cousin Celia are invited to observe the wrestlers compete as the match comes to acquire different meanings and connotations which operate at the same line of progression in the play. The wrestling match is obviously of a brutal, merciless nature that best projects and speaks for the entertainment available at Duke Fredrick's court. In *Rosalynde*, Rosadar, Orlando's parallel, is convinced by his malicious brother, who wants to get rid of Rosadar permanently, to wrestle. By contrast, in *As You Like It* Orlando chooses to wrestle asserting by the victory his masculine identity. To Muir this "alteration has the effect of raising our opinion of Orlando" (*Shakespeare's Sources* 57). It is quite significant that Orlando is enabled to certify his presence and power at this point in the action especially that he is going to be outwitted by Rosalind in the following acts in the woods. At the court, Rosalind stands as an inactive observer whereas Orlando is all power and dominance. By contrast, in Arden, Orlando becomes the character through whom the audience can capture the power and dominance expressed by the leading female heroine: Rosalind dictates Orlando's movements and speech in the woods. Moreover, the match has as well a clear cultural indication that separates genders hinting at some seemingly immobilized hierarchal positions in society; wrestling is cruel and of no use to
entertain the ladies: "It is the first time that ever I [Touchstone] heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies" (I. ii. 128-29).

The shift to the Forest of Arden is inevitable since comedy and holiday have been almost inseparable symptoms of Elizabethan culture. The indirect echoes of holiday in *As You Like It* thus reinforce the escape of characters to Arden, though each has a different motivation, so that "if they don’t seek holiday it happens to them" (Barber 6).

Once more, the country/court opposition takes even a clearer scope when Rosalind and Celia run off to the forest. The two runaway ladies express fears as well as desires, which speak for the Elizabethan age as a whole, "to overstep boundaries and to appropriate wild nature" (Laroque 11). Rosalind's disguise as Ganymede and Celia as poor Aliena serve to discard those fears from the minds of the ladies. By contrast to *Rosalynde*, Shakespeare's source, where the two ladies are attacked by a band of outlaws, in *As You Like It* Rosalind and Celia don't happen to suffer from any gang attack in the woods. This alteration conjures up the flawless festive function implicit in the female role. Upon making the intimidating voyage to Arden, Celia does not neglect the aspired desires of freedom the forest has got to offer. "To Liberty," she reassures Rosalind, "and not to banishment" their passage into Arden is going to be (*As You Like It*. I. iii. 134).

The entrance of the two ladies into Arden evokes images of wilderness, and at the same time the inevitable surpassing of social boundaries which will not enjoy the same status under this natural frame of life. Within the borders of the forest, Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede, invites Orlando to "woo" her allowing herself to be totally indulged in this sort of playful show:

ROSALIND: Come, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humour and like enough to consent. What would
you say to me now, and I were your very very
Rosalind? (IV. i. 65-68).

Holidays are times to celebrate and to disrupt the daily routine of life providing the exception to the well-established social pattern by means of "temporarily" creating "an oppositional subculture" (Mangan 33). Rosalind and Celia certainly try to make the most out of their current state in Arden: Rosalind becomes a landowner fully in command and control of her new property. Yet the fact remains that due to these reversed orders and rules during holiday time, confusions and misunderstandings are naturally to be developed. While Rosalind seems to enjoy playing the role of a man, the negative side of her game finds an echo in Phebe's heart who falls in love with this soft-featured, confidant young man who is in love with Orlando whose heart lies with Rosalind but is currently wooing Ganymede.

On the Elizabethan stage, Arden becomes a festive setting that represents nature. In this sense, this pastoral world clearly offers "an alternative realm to the official culture of " the world of the play (Mangan 35). Arden creates outlets for characters who in turn are released to bond with nature and subsequently their own human nature in a wider context. Rosalind’s insightful experiments in Arden grant her a broad exploration of her role as well as those of others, and eventually bring her to solid ground with her own feminine nature. Arden is not that mystical place of metamorphosis, rather a festive stage on which characters become, by means of lifting typical life constraints, better acquainted with their inner entities and are able to commune and correspond to others in better terms. Rosalind at the court is not the same as in Arden. In Arden, Rosalind the woman has been allowed to experience the roles of man and woman, commenting on both, and now that she is of a better knowledge, Rosalind seems to be at peace with herself, her attitude towards the end of the play speaks best for her.
As You Like It also sheds some light on the fears and worries expressed by the Puritans of the abuses festive traditions can generate and the sort of impact these abuses may have on the community as a whole. This continual anxiety of what influence public celebrations have on certain social standards on the long run springs from the fact that these occasions "gave a community license to transgress those boundaries and abolish those dividing lines" (Laroque 14). Laroque quotes Philip Stubbes in his outrage against festive games and amusements especially their impact on young women who by virtue of celebrations, particularly the ones celebrated outdoors, spin out of control and that "there have scarcely the third part of them returned home again undefiled" (qtd. in Laroque 113). Stubbes' is the conscious voice of an upcoming culture forcing its way, attempting to outdate a threatening popular culture sober in the mentality of a public that seems to treasure its traditions and inherited customs. Wiemann perceives this whole puritan attitude with its obvious sexual inhibitions as contrasted to the offerings of festive freedoms to mark "both the continuity of traditional culture and the threat posed to it" (163). In As You Like It Rosalind and Celia are reported to have run away with Orlando to the woods. This report has the most distracting effect upon Duke Frederick. Here again the full weight of the Country/ Court opposition is laid down with its various implications between conducts of these two extreme worlds particularly in relation to female characters as expressed by the character of the Second Lord:

Hisperia, the princess' gentlewoman,
Confesses that she secretly o'erheard
Your daughter and her cousin much commend
The parts and graces of the wrestler
That did but lately foil the sinewy Charles,
And she believes wherever they are gone
That youth is surely in their company. (*As You Like It*. II. ii. 10-16)

As soon as Rosalind and Celia step into the festive realm of Arden, they are subjected to the community’s hearsay. What the maid has "o'erheard" becomes that Rosalind and Celia are "surely" with Orlando. This quotation does in fact adhere to the general attitude that has surrounded festive atmospheres and locations. The intensive effort of the puritans to stigmatize festivities seems to have brought its goals home, especially in the world of the court.

Religious authorities have without doubt been the most appalled category by the supernatural and magical layers of the Elizabethan festivals in which religious icons could be easily imitated or mocked. The public’s strong belief in magic, charms, amulets and other superstitions have at some point, due to some intensive religious labor, been replaced by "modern equivalents" such as "relics, holy waters" and the additional support of holy saints presented as "healers who could be invoked to cure all kinds of ills" (Laroque 18). Throughout her intervals with Orlando in the woods, Rosalind as Ganymede plays the role of a healer offering Orlando to "cure" him of his love: "I [Rosalind] profess curing it by counsel" (*As You Like It*. III. ii. 392-93). In the forest Rosalind also boasts about having in her some sort of supernatural powers; suddenly, she is a magician with a magic wand to transfer everything around her. Rosalind’s magical power has no parallel in *Rosalynde*, and this alteration has the evident influence in reinforcing the significance of the festive frame with respect to the female role in the world of the play:

> Believe then, if you please, that I can do strange things. I have since I was three years old conversed with a magician, most profound in his art and yet not damnable. (V. ii. 58-62)
The appearance of the Hymn towards the end of the play to constitute the marriages and bless the couples is as well very suggestive of the shy festive atmosphere *As You Like It*, it seems, is triggered by. Hymen strengthens the impact of the magical powers Rosalind has already claimed she has, but the wedding, itself a festival, seems to wash away the effect of these peculiar events that from here on will not matter any more. Expectedly, the happy ending summons in just the right spirit to celebrate and simultaneously set everything back in prospect:

- While a wedlock Hymen we sing,
- Feed yourselves with questioning,
- That reason wonder may diminish
- How thus we met, and these things finish. (*As You Like It*. V. iv. 136-39)
2-3-Festivity and The Taming Of The Shrew

Critics are not on positive grounds concerning the source[s] Shakespeare had relied on in composing The Taming Of The Shrew. Some critics believe that The Taming Of A Shrew had been the original source. There has also been a suggestion that another source might have provided the basis for both A Shrew and The Shrew. All these theories have been more or less opposed to. From his own point of view, Muir suggests "that it would be unprofitable to discuss the question of sources" (Shakespeare’s Sources 259). However, it would be quite interesting to trace the festive threads in The Taming Of The Shrew and survey the festive mould of this early Shakespearean comedy.

The Induction to The Taming Of The Shrew where Sly the tinker is fooled into believing he is a lord sets the mode for a playful atmosphere that is surely to be expected. Historically speaking, Inductions are medieval methods of presentation that introduce and enclose "the main story or group of stories in a dream vision," bringing out its "underlying theme" (Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 82). Thus, to throw some light on the Induction would be inevitable to the discussion of the play since it stirs the overall implied set of motifs and inclinations in the course of the action. The dominating theme in the Induction, one cannot help but notice, is related to assigned gender roles and hierarchies in society which mount to the surface proving vital to any interpretation of the play.

Court entertainments were very common in the Renaissance and C. L. Barber notes that though such pastimes could not necessarily express "festive attitudes or themes" in a direct form, yet there were for example "presentations of local or family history or heroes" (31). In the Induction Sly is put into this holiday mentality; he is accommodated with drink, music, good service and even a wife. Sly is appointed as a lord, a very expressive quality of festivity since festive celebrations have always
included mock kings and queens:

The man who acts as a mock lord enjoys building up his dignity, and also exploding it by exaggeration, while his followers both relish his bombast as a fleer at proper authority and also enjoy turning on him and insulting his majesty. (Barber 37)

Of course the audience is aware of the fact that Sly is being mocked and ridiculed, but the whole scene acquires a different reaction since it pours directly into the public's mentality of festive rituals as both Sly and the audience are invited to "frame" their minds "to mirth and merriment" (Induction. ii. 135). There is also a play on the way to be performed and lord Sly absolutely has a mind for it:

SLY. Marry, I will. Let them play it. Is not a comonwy A Christmas gambol or a tumbling-trick?
PAGE. No, my lord, it is more pleasing stuff.
SLY. What, household stuff?
PAGE. It is a kind of history. (Induction. ii. 137-140)

In this light, *The Taming Of The Shrew* can be inspected as a play within a play. The play, however, while enacting and drawing on specific festivals, encodes the way through which festivity could and actually has been used to certify the authorized order in society. Of course there is always a calculated risk when a rioting public executes law at its hand which is already sobbed in a lofty ritual of festivity:

A popular ritual may sometimes be an expression of rebellion against authority or oppression, but its laughter may also be self-regulatory, directed against an errant member of its own social group. The laughter of ridicule is essentially conservative, and its function is to punish the non-conformist, the deviant, the rebel or the rule-breaker. (Mangan 41-42)

Two festivals might be traced in this play: the Shaming ritual, a part of Shrove
Tuesday, and the Hocktide games. The play presents Katherina, the shrew, to be an out of control lady mouthing off to people around her, and sometimes even turning physically abusive. With both harsh words and attitude, Katherina has a threatening power to the whole social order; she is retaliating against all standard rules. Gremio, a suitor to her sister Bianca, would rather "cart" than "court" Katherina (*The Taming Of The Shrew*. I. i. 55).

Shrove Tuesday has been a popular celebration in the Renaissance often reputed for anarchy and disorder. Shrove Tuesday does in fact convey resemblance to the Lord of Misrule during the Christmas holidays, still the former, Laroque notes, has been loaded with chaotic rioting and festive violence and aggression. It has become commonly customary on Shrove Tuesday that theatres, brothels and animals should be the most possible candidates to suffer. Celebrants would invade brothels where "inmates" are likely to be "seized, dragged from their lodgings and even paraded through the town in carts" (Laroque 100). Gremio, in the former metaphor, is building his words on a familiar festive tradition drawing an image of Katherina as the female who has chosen a path odd to straight women stepping out of her defined role. There is no suggestion here that Katherina is a prostitute. The metaphor, however, can successfully bring, especially to the Elizabethan audience, a sense of how far has Katherina span off the norm in transgressing the expected, dogmatic formula in her environment. This festive allusion also serves to give an account of Katherina's choices in life. If she chooses to continue with her rebellious conduct, she might receive a similar destiny as that of whores. Nevertheless, in case she decides to give up this defiant role, which she eventually does, Katherina would without a doubt become a respectful, functioning member in her society. The other implication of the carting ritual is to direct the attention of the audience once again to festive celebrations under which Katherina's behavior should be categorized, scoped and
measured.

In addition to the carting ritual, another public ceremony, also a part of Shrove Tuesday, the Shaming ritual can more clearly relate to the *Taming Of The Shrew* since it basically reflects the main plot in the play. The major details of this festive ritual may direct both the initial reception as well as later readings of the play. In light of such ritual, *The Taming Of The Shrew* can be safely guaranteed as a festive comedy and its denoted functions:

This popular ceremony was a 'shaming ritual', the purpose of which was to humiliate the husband who was downtrodden or deceived by his wife (an 'unruly woman') for having allowed the traditional social order and sexual hierarchy to be turned upside-down. (Laroque 101)

For all those who encounter her, Katherina certainly constitutes a challenge, a riddle to be solved. For quite a while, Katherina has depended on her outrageous behavior to intimidate and frighten away people around her, especially suitors. Within the context of festive comedy, *The Taming Of The Shrew* presents the character of Katherina to be derived out of a public celebration in which women, as has been noted in the introduction, have been empowered to turn the regular situations of every day routine upside down. Once Petruchio has stepped up to face this challenge called Katherina, his motivating intentions must have been to set the records straight or else face the worse. The challenge lies in taming wild Kate, to get her out of this mode which in no sense suits the social order that is perfectly supposed to survive festive inclinations no matter how pervasive they are. Katherina's behavior will only be tolerated when it takes the shape of a festive ritual that lasts only temporarily.

Katherina provides just the perfect match to the category of the unruly women. Should Petruchio fail to bring in the right intervention, he is more or less to become
another fitting object of humiliation of the shaming ritual. Katherina's conduct before marriage should not at all costs have room after the marital vows are made. Katherina's reputation as "a shrewd ill-favour'd" lady precedes her interval with Petruchio (The Taming Of The Shrew. I. ii. 59). Petruchio, however, is fully intended to conquer this shrewish lady and restore the right order back in perspective "for he fears none" (I. ii. 209). It is this threatening potential of Katherina becoming a scolding wife that compels Petruchio to take some extreme, intolerant measures:

In the case of a scolding or violent wife, the whole scene of the offence might be acted out by surrogates - neighbours dressed up to represent both husband and wife, with the 'husband' riding backwards on a horse or ass while the 'wife', frequently a man dressed up in women's clothes to stress the 'unnaturalness' of her violence, berated or beat him. (Mangan 43)

Shrove Tuesday has for the most part carried negative connotations of chaos and disorder. In the Renaissance, festivals have been blamed for the different sorts of disorder that would usually accompany the free spirit of the celebrations. Petruchio seems to enjoy this sportive game of mutual abuses with Katherina: mostly verbal abuses and once physical by her. Katherina describes Petruchio, now her official suitor, to be "one half lunatic, / A mad cap ruffian and a swearing Jack, / That thinks with oaths to face the matter out" (II. i. 280-81). It is only when he allows himself to join in Katherina's game that Petruchio is able to regain power over the situation. Their game, having a whole tradition to feed upon, could equally reflect "a form of street theatre in which a community would stage a ritual show acting out the roles of those who offended against established norms" (Mangan 43). Moreover, Shrove Tuesday can not be in all cases related solely to abuses; "it was also a day renowned for its gaiety," being the last festive occasion before "the long Lenten period of abstinence" (Laroque 101).
While the shaming ritual lays its shadows on the events of *The Taming Of The Shrew*, the Hocktide games seem to have a solid ground in the play. These games, according to Laroque, constitute "a form of sexual warfare," and that *The Taming Of The Shrew* "is the Shakespearean play in which the theme of comic sexual warfare is central." The animal related images used by Petruchio and Katherina in addition to the metaphor of Petruchio as an animal tamer "evokes both the medieval and aristocratic bestiary connected with themes of love and at the same time the games and amusements associated with many popular festivals" (Laroque 211). Laroque explains the rituals of these games which usually revolve around the subjugation of a wife shown as the accomplishment of an animal-tamer. Plainly indicated in the title, *The Taming Of The Shrew*, the play dwells upon this metaphor of Katherina as a wild animal awaiting for the right tamer to come along. The animal imagery intensively deployed by Katherina and Petruchio in the course of the action owes a great share to the atmosphere of the Hocktide games.

When he first starts conversing with Katherina, in only one passage Petruchio refers to Katherina's name as "Kate" about ten times:

> PETRUCHIO. You lie, in faith, for you are call'd plain Kate,
> And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst;
> But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,
> Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,
> For dainties are all kates, and therefore, Kate, . . .

(*The Taming Of The Shrew*. II. i. 185-89)

This particular allusion to the name Kate instead of Katherina is considered to be "Petruchio's pseudo-affectionate nickname" which enables both Petruchio and the audience to assimilate Katherina "both to a 'cat' and to a 'Kite'" (Laroque 211).

Katherina and Petruchio continue with these animal assimilations of one another
for a while. By alluding to most animals that exist, both protagonists are reassuring the Hocktide rituals which stimulate much of the comedy in the first part of the play. The animal imagery, apart from its festive nature, investigates gender roles and the formal expectations of positions in society. There can be sensed, between the lines of this verbal war, an unspoken anxiety that relates "to a more general fear of breakdown in the social order which was felt by many people in the period" (Mangan 44). On the outset, this effective connection between festivity and comedy succeeds into producing a scene of festive comedy which on the Elizabethan theatrical stage had surely brought its goals home:

   KATH. Asses are made to bear, and so are you.
   PET. Women are made to bear, and so are you.
   KATH. No such jade as you, if me you mean.
   PET. Alas, good Kate, I will not burden thee!
   For, knowing thee to be but young and light-
   KATH. Too light for such a swain as you to catch,
   And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

   (The Taming Of The Shrew. II. i.199-205)

Petruchio's remedy for Katherina's wildness in the second part of the play is carried out in a style similar to that of the animal tamer. To subject his shrew, Petruchio starves his Kate and leaves her sleep deprived. He faces her harshness with anger and an instable affectionate mode to which Katherina at first knows no medicine. Playing her game of railing about, bullying and scolding, Katherina seems no longer tempted to this style once used by her, now against her; in short, "he [Petruchio] kills her in her own humour" (IV. i. 167). However, Petruchio's servants affirm the fact that all of this attitude Petruchio is adopting has no prior occurrence. This suggests the nature of both Katherina's and Petruchio's odd behavior placing it
within the festive phenomena of abnormality and temporariness. The taming method itself playful and rustic is worth noting in some parts:

PETRUCHIO. Thus have I politicly begun my reign, (sic)
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
To make her come and know her keeper's call,
That is, to watch her as we watch these kites
That bate and beat and will not be obedient. (IV. i. 175-76, 181-83)

To wrap things up, even though an early dramatic piece, Shakespeare's *The Taming Of The shrew* can be classified as a festive comedy. Generally speaking, festive comedies should be regarded more of as memorials of a great culture that was in a lose situation. Symbolically, Katherina stands for that festive culture and seems to be in favor of it. Katherina's bold, anti-societal behavior lends force to her unclouded presence in the play. When festivity is the mode of expression in the action, Katherina is all power, supremacy, and gaiety. Her final steps of resignation into the other non-festive, authoritative line in culture is the path of festive traditions that were finally bowing the head, making way and coming to terms with recent changes of power.
Chapter Three: Festivity, Disguise, and the Female Role

3-1- Introduction

Disguise has come to occupy a respectable area especially in twentieth-century criticism of Shakespearean comedy. Feminist critics in particular have dedicated sincere efforts to the study of this complex theatrical technique, especially to its sexual implications, and the way through which it can be approached to appropriate modern concerns of the twentieth century dilemmas. Such approach in criticism, however, necessitates addressing the controversies of disguise first in Elizabethan drama, focusing on the Elizabethan theatrical use of disguise, and the way through which it had been perceived in Elizabethan England.

In the literary sense, disguise is a technique that was used in the Italian comedy and its "opposite extreme" of the morality play (Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 86). Disguise is to be found in much of Shakespeare's drama, with both male and female characters. Its most noted presence, however, is mostly evident with relation to female characters in the comedies. A common feature of Elizabethan festivities as well, disguise displays the festive theme of the discrepancy between appearance and reality. The evolvement of disguise in the comedies resembles to a great extent the evolvement of public festivals in Elizabethan England. In its first stage, disguise radiates a distinguished energy of freedom, release, and a temporary reversal of gender roles. Release, nevertheless, may lead to misunderstandings directing attention to the negative side of festive outlets and liberties. Eventually, the casting of disguise announces revelation, relief, and restores order back. Where a festival would usually bring on some satisfactory closure, so does disguise when the curtains fall on the dramatic scene. When performed on stage, disguise also acquires a theatrical function which entails its
festive roots. Concealing one's identity becomes a revealing process on many levels. The various forms of disguise, cross-dressing included, hold a mirror that, by means of putting on some imaginative garment, helps undress some, otherwise, difficult-to-address realities. Cross-dressing becomes a means to cross social boundaries of class and gender investigating the potentials of defined rules and stigmatized roles. In Bradbrook's words, disguise "enlarges the original role, and also discovers its latent possibilities" (The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 88). Disguise is a multilayered technique. It builds up meanings with the progress of the action right until it is finally disposed off on the stage. The set of potential meanings embedded in disguise depends on, and moves in the same line with, the main theme each play text conveys. Barbara Hodgdon demonstrates that, "each play tailors sexual disguise to its own socio cultural milieu and gender politics" (185).

The fact that on the Elizabethan stage female characters have been played by male actors further complicates disguise. A disguised female character is originally a male actor dressed as female and then disguised as a man. The absence of actresses on the stage has without a doubt assigned the Elizabethan male actors to become part of the comic schemes in which female characters are involved. Consequently, Elizabethan boy actors filling in female roles cannot be dismissed from the scene where female roles are studied, interpreted or performed. In this context, Lorraine Helms conceives the whole Elizabethan theatrical tradition which "completely excluded women," to "construct gender from a restlessly androcentric perspective" (196). On her part, Susan Bassnett stresses what she calls the "intensive homoeroticism" of the Elizabethan theatre, and the striking difficulty readers face in fully comprehending the complexity of disguise as a theatrical device in Elizabethan times:

The comedy of female disguising was, of course, operating within
completely different signs on the Elizabethan stage. . . . Likewise, it is often conveniently forgotten that much of the humour in the situations of women disguised as men derived from the fact that those women were already young, sexually attractive men in female disguise. (126-127)

Nevertheless, the maleness underneath female figures cannot stand in the way of perceiving bold, defiant, and active female heroines who are remarkably present in Shakespearean comedy. Rooted in festive pastimes, disguise seems to lend female characters with distinctive physical and verbal liberties. Not only are these female characters, such as Rosalind, Portia, and Viola, dominant, but also they are the focal centre of the plays.
3-2-Viola's Disguise

When disguise becomes a theatrical device, it puts on additional dramatic features to suit the play in which it is performed. In her discussion of disguise, specifically in *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, Nancy K. Hayles demonstrates that the "dramatic function" of the male costume "is shaped by the particular design of each play" (63). In *Twelfth Night*, Viola's initial decision to disguise as a page is first contemplated as a means of protection on this strange island of Illyria. But since "duplicitity certainly stands as a central feature of *Twelfth Night*," then the meaning of Viola's disguise will not stop at the protection level solely (Hawkes 173). To start with, disguise duplicates Viola's identity from the moment she puts it on; Viola is a woman from within, a man from without, and is to remain as such for most of the action. This duplicity of identity leads back to another central theme in *Twelfth Night*, which is that of incongruity between appearance and reality: "I am not what I am" (*Twelfth Night*, III. i. 143).

A reminder of festive freedoms, Viola's disguise in *Twelfth Night* has an emancipating impact particularly over the two self-contained characters of Orsino and Olivia. Prior to the meeting of Viola disguised as Cesario, Olivia, we get to know, has been locking herself up in an up till now seven years of mourning over the death of her brother. On his part, Orsino is imprisoned in the shell of his melancholic imagination. While in disguise, Viola helps reveal what Orsino and Olivia thought they have long managed to submerge. Hayles interprets Viola's disguise with its "underlying femininity which both Olivia and Orsino sense" to free these two "from their initial rigidity" (70). Here again springs the significance of festivity which serves to unravel the different sorts of indulgence and liberties it both implies and offers.
After a while of serving Orsino, the protective layer in Viola's disguise seems to evaporate little by little. By virtue of her male attire Viola is brought closer to this melancholic duke, and now that she knows him better than anyone else around him, it seems, the more she learns the deeper her affections grow for Orsino. Some critics have argued that Viola's love for her master is unjustified and has no ground just like her sudden decision to serve him instead of Olivia at the beginning of the play. In the eighteenth century, Charlotte Lennox, for example, could not accept Viola's impulses as she accused Shakespeare of depriving "the story of probability because he neglects to provide his characters with acceptable motives" (Muir, *Shakespeare the Comedies* 74). Almost as soon as she becomes Orsino's page, disguised Viola seems to sneak into her master's mind where she totally captures his thoughts like a festive spirit possesses the minds of its celebrants. Obviously, Viola and Orsino are allowed considerable time together, and Orsino is for once bluntly expressive and open about his inner, rather hidden, emotions. Nothing could explain this sudden alteration Orsino's character undergoes when this effeminate "boy", Viola, is around except for festive outlets with their clear, still highly controversial, impact: "Thou know'st no less but all" (*Twelfth Night*. I. iv. 13).

Up till this point in the action, Viola's male attire is still harmless. As a matter of fact, disguise is much enjoyed by Viola, and this joy of cross-dressing will continue right until Viola takes her first steps from Orsino's court to Olivia's household where disguise is to unfold another layer. Henceforth, it is this "free-and-easy way she [Viola] settles what she will do," and later on what other characters will do, starting from the captain, which makes disguise, in its elementary entrance, express a "sort of festive pleasure in transvestitism" (Barber 242).

Viola's disguise also issues a liberating influence upon lady Olivia who appears to be willing to break with her isolation and get involved in life once again. Similar to
Orsino who "has found an object" in disguised Viola, Olivia has laid her eyes on just the right object, we may assume, for the first time in seven years (Barber 247). Olivia describes the recently burning flames in her bosom to be a disease, "plague" is the word lady Olivia employs, a description not far from the Puritans' equivalent in their attacks on the disorders and illnesses festivity brings about: "Even so quickly may one catch the plague?" (Twelfth Night. I. v. 299). Yet this sickness Olivia is so strongly seized by is not at all undesirable; on the contrary, it breathes life into Olivia's still emotions and long-preserved passions, turning those rather into a "merry madness" (III. iv. 15). In Olivia's case, disguise asserts once more the festive theme of inconsistency between appearance and reality: Olivia falls for a form not an essence of a man. Nonetheless, this "discrepancy between appearance and essence," generated by Viola's disguise has actually "allowed Olivia to find fulfillment" (Hayles 71).

Cesario provides the perfect match for Olivia who, according to her relative, Sir Toby, can never fall for Orsino who is above her status: "she'll not match above her degree, neither in estate, years, nor wit" (Twelfth Night. I. iii. 16). Through Olivia's character, disguise mirrors a social side that may as well explain this lady's social attitude and consequently the social criterion of the age as a whole.

Up till this point in the action, it is just a festive nature of liberty, openness, and a joyous sense of release both Orsino and Olivia experience with disguised Viola. As Cesario, Viola has more access and efficiency approaching Orsino. Equally true, Viola's feminine inside translates itself in better terms for Olivia. Thus, as Hayles argues, in both Orsino's and Olivia's cases, "it is the combination of masculinity and femininity in the love-object that accomplishes what neither could by itself" (70).

Although disguise and the double Viola/Cesario identity doesn't turn against Viola until "Orsino decides to send her as his love envoy to Olivia," yet it is actually here that "the mistaken identity motif becomes most comic" (Bassnett 125). Viola
unwillingly experiences a constant wave of ebb and flow moving back and forth between Orsino and Olivia. Viola's misfortunes become the play's fortunate share of laughter. Having Olivia deceived by her fake manhood, Viola reaches the conclusion that: "Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness" (*Twelfth Night*. II. ii. 26). Viola's disguise here highlights the supernatural element connoted in festive pastimes. When she is no longer capable of handling the chaos and disorder created by her male costume, Viola resigns to time which points out to the temporariness of disguise and its complications. Time that brings along festive dates and customs itself marks the ending of festive practices and their aftermath. Disguise alters Viola's nature, produces much of her fortunes and misfortunes, and in due time should bring about revelation and relief. The supernatural agents of fortune, nature, and time eventually resolve all the troubles they have already invoked: "O time, thou must untangle this, not I / It is too hard a knot for me t' untie" (*Twelfth Night*. II. ii. 39-40).

Whatever the reason[s] behind the attractions of disguise, the sexual connotations of this complex theatrical technique have long attracted critics' attention both to their significance on the Elizabethan stage as well as for successive problematic issues regarding sexuality and gender roles. On the Elizabethan stage, boy actors dressed as females have necessarily impersonated a part of the festive world of make-believe. The comedy of observing boy actors playing female roles in disguise depended largely upon the awareness of the Elizabethan audience of the prevalent festive traditions of masquerade, and also of the Elizabethan theatrical conditions which had articulated festive customs. The reaction of the Puritans to such theatrical illusion which, even when similar to celebrations lasts for a relatively short period of time, has been perceived to cause irrecoverable damage on the moral system of Elizabethan spectators. A package of all male actors receiving one another
with affection, falling in love, and sometimes be married, has been a serious matter worthy of the Puritans' attentive thought and contemplation:

But Elizabethan moralists could not imagine the boy player "just" as a convention, for he stood at the center of a virulent attack on the theatre as a deceptive practice that contaminated "natural" or God-given identity with counterfeits of "true" originals, enticed spectators with devilish shape-changings and unsettled the very fabric of a culture based on stable hierarchies of social class and sex-gender, the latter reinforced by biblical prohibitions against cross-dressing. (Hodgdon 180-181)

The sexuality of disguise is highly complicated and controversial. On the Elizabethan stage, Viola would be a male actor dressed as a female disguised as a man and simultaneously loved by two male actors one of whom is playing the role of a female. The fears aroused out of this perplexing combination is actually over what fancies it could have invoked in the Elizabethan male actors as well as the audience whose members would naturally be reacting to the action in front of them fantasizing upon fancies. In *Twelfth Night*, Orsino treats disguised Viola affectionately as she has gradually substituted Olivia and become the centre of his attention. On stage, theatrical illusion indicates that Orsino doesn't know his Cesario is a woman, but here lies the danger of this passionate relationship mutually exchanged between the two. In this sense, theatrical illusion justifies and condemns both at the same time. Under the influence of disguise, Olivia is in no better position than Orsino regarding sexuality and the initiated attacks over it. After a long period of abstinence and rejection of love, she is helplessly taken by Cesario's form. It is this sin of desiring another woman that Olivia commits, which on stage would basically be between two boy actors, potentially having the power of jeopardizing the defined heavenly order. The climax of the sexual disguise reaches its peak when at the end of the play Orsino
does in fact marry Viola now that her true identity has been revealed. Orsino's love for his page right from the start is continued, even legitimized, after disguise is discarded: "you shall from this time be your master's mistress" (Twelfth Night. V. i. 149). This final twist in the events is also responsible for the attacks against the mostly thought of homoerotic theatrical practice in Elizabethan England. Hayles cites some of the period's accounts regarding cross-dressing as illustrated in the documents of one rigid Puritan, Dr. John Rainolds:

Sexual disguise, according to Dr Rainolds, is evil even when done in play because the semblance of a woman which the attire creates leads men to desire the boy wearing that attire; and this results in practices condemned by biblical law. . . . The important point here that both elements- the maleness of the boy actor and the femaleness of the womanly costume- are necessary to lead the spectator into abomination. (70)

Needless to point out, on the Elizabethan stage, those miscomprehensions created by Viola's male costume would stand behind the audience's heartily laughter, enjoyment, and applause. Upon leaving Olivia's residence, confused Viola has yet another encounter disguise sets to deliver. The comic formula of disguise proves most vital when Viola is dragged into a fighting against Sir Andrew Aguacheek, the purpose of which is to assert each competitor's "masculine" claims over lady Olivia. It is in this scene that disguise begins to play against its owner's will. Viola temporarily disconnects her manly outward from her feminine inward addressing the audience in an aside. Viola's aside calls for the spectators' sympathy to her current misfortunes. The audience Viola is pleading for would have most likely been composed of the same rustic, potentially dangerous, crowds involved in festive gatherings, pastimes, and entertainments whose "power of sharing a group-response was highly developed" (Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan
Comedy 19). Submerged in guilt and fear, Viola realizes the necessity of snatching a moment to gain and secure the audience on her side: "Pray God defend me! A little thing/ would make me tell how much I lack of a man" (Twelfth Night. III. iv. 307-309). Disguise here highlights the illusionary presence of the stage and the interaction between actors and the audience. For an Elizabethan audience, Viola's plights become the comic fuel convened by the ironies of disguise: "the image of a male dressed as a female recurs in Shakespeare's plays as an occasion for jokes and laughter" (Mangan 99).

Just when Viola thinks circumstances cannot go any worse, disguise is about to set up another twist. Hayles reminds us that "it was common place in puritan attacks on the stage to say that theatre in general, and cross-dressing in particular, was the work of the devil" (70). In the same context, Viola's disguise somehow emulates a defiance to the true and absolute faith the Puritans have cherished and struggled to maintain when the male attire works its magic on Antonio, Sebastian's friend. When Viola is confronted by Sir Andrew, Antonio, mistaking her for her brother, runs to the rescue but only gets disappointed when disguised Viola, not knowing this stranger, denies him. It is here that Viola's disguise is about to make another threatening statement. Antonio who has previously shown a benevolent, charitable attitude towards Sebastian feels irritated when disguised Viola appears completely ungrateful. Disguise, and the curse of cross-dressing, turns Antonio into a man who has lost his faith in God: "But how vile an idol proves this God" (Twelfth Night. III. iv. 113). Laroque cites that some of "the most common criticisms of popular sport and festivities was that they fostered practices linked with paganism and distracted the faithful," a criticism that quite fits Antonio's situation and unfortunate transformation so to speak (Laroque 37). Whereas formerly disguise has shown a positive and emancipating influence on Orsino and Olivia, Antonio's darker side is released.
Antonio's reaction to Viola's disguise actually involves "imagery which again sets into opposition the diabolical and the divine" (Hayles 71). In Elizabethan times, the most appalled party at the sexual disguise have naturally been the Puritans whose restraints and rigid moral ethics could have been jeopardized by the notorious promptings of the theatrical practice in general, cross-dressing in particular. In a sense, it is the very reliance of religion, and here only Puritanism is concerned, on imagery, fiction, and abnormalities in spreading faith, that assigned the Elizabethan stage as a non-religious rival that must be illuminated and plunged out. In order to divert people from the immoral practices of festivity and the theatre, Calvin admits that "clever men" have crafted "many things in religion by which to inspire the common folk with reverence and strike them with terror" (qtd. in Dollimore 11).

Notwithstanding, in its obvious crossing of sexual codes and gender roles, disguise conveys some seriously dangerous connotations and consequences. But once again the theme of inadequacy between appearance and reality, applied to events as well as to the Elizabethan stage, should ease out some controversies in the play. According to Barbara Hodgdon, "the moment where a comic heroine cross-dresses prompts a discussion that calls attention to the gap between fictional and material bodies" (182). In this sense, the whole play would bring in a state of consciousness to its own fiction, and also to the platform where this imaginative fiction is being performed. In Hayles words, "the sexual disguise illuminates not only the relationship of woman to man, but also the relation of appearance to reality and human beings to force more than human" (72).

Viola's disguise truly proves multi-faceted in Twelfth Night. Protection, sexuality, profanity, power, and better knowledge are all granted and implanted in Viola's disguise and therefore character. Nonetheless, despite the multiple layers Viola's disguise unfolds, the sexual element, due to its significance to the specificity
of the Elizabethan stage as well as to later interpretation, is always to receive the most attention. Having said that, one cannot neglect the artistic beauty of the female role featuring disguise which actually lies in these irritating questions one feels obliged to raise, and yet equally to applaud their magnificent vision:

The multiplicity of meanings with which Shakespeare invests the disguise does not really 'disentangle the perplexity [of seeing] a boy play a woman playing a man', but it provides a thematic counterpart to that complexity of vision, and so orders it into one aesthetic whole. (Hayles 72)
3-3- Rosalind's Disguise

In *As You Like It*, the principal concerns of disguise are more of a social orientation. The play dwells on binary oppositions which question gender roles and stabilized hierarchies in society, opening up the sphere for unsettling possibilities, and thus arguments. Unlike Viola, Rosalind doesn't put on disguise because she is stranded on a strange island. Rosalind is a banished outlaw whose life is in great danger unless she escapes the court. Nancy K. Hayles argues that in *As You Like It* Rosalind's disguise evolves in two directions:

We can consider the disguise as proceeding in two separate movements.

First, the layers of disguise are added as Rosalind becomes Ganymede, and then as Ganymede pretends to be Orlando's Rosalind; second, the layers are removed as Ganymede abandons the playacting of Rosalind, and then as Rosalind herself abandons the disguise of Ganymede. The layering-on movement creates conflict and the layering-off movement fosters reconciliation as the disguise confronts and then resolves the issue of competition versus co-operation. (Hayles 64-65)

Upon entering the Forest of Arden, Rosalind decides to disguise as a man, taking the name of Ganymede, while Celia, Rosalind's cousin, dresses herself up as a poor lady and both ladies flee the court escorted by Touchstone, the clown at Duke Frederick's court. Rosalind's disguise is initially thought of as means of protection in the forest which incorporates many threats particularly to ladies. The use of disguise at once doubles up Rosalind's identity who is a woman playing the role of a man and the effect would be tripled on the Elizabethan stage since Rosalind's character is in the first place played by a boy actor. Moreover, the protective disguise has two paradoxical meanings within the same layer: it emancipates Rosalind’s action, yet at the same time it is used to protect her because, as Celia puts it, "beauty provoketh
thieves sooner than gold" (As You Like It. I. iii. 106). In this context, the male costume is used as a survival technique in a world that openly privileges and acknowledges the male presence and at the same time confines, withholds, and trivializes women. The safety of Rosalind and Celia is highly dependent on, and is guaranteed by, the male costume. Throughout this uncomfortable patriarchal bias, disguise lays out the festive theme of contrast between appearance and reality, this time in a social context: "We'll have a swashing and a material outside, / As many other mannish cowards have / That do outface it with their semblances" (I. iii. 116-118).

The fact that on the Elizabethan stage a disguised female character is originally a boy actor turns disguise into a multifaceted technique that is hard to grasp. In this sense, the opposition between what seems outwardly and what lies inwardly makes the Elizabethan theatre a highly professional stage for turning certain popular sports of disguising and cross-dressing into some complicated theatrical practices. In addition to festive liberties, and technical theatricality, disguise throws some light on other cultural contexts of social perspectives projected in the world of As You Like It. Rosalind's male attire poses one very difficult, yet essential, question about the true meaning of both male and female identities. Disguise in As You Like It offers a serious argument raising questions about assigned roles and their societal firmness and constancy. To begin with, Ganymede facilitates Rosalind's access into this "high-culture male pastoral world," and Rosalind seems to gain power by virtue of her new identity (Dusinberre 18). As a matter of fact, Rosalind and Celia undergo no threats or dangers in the forest of Arden because Rosalind is disguised as a man, a powerful one rather. This new male identity, with the various advantages it provides, is unquestionably Rosalind's privilege in her world. The question is whether the credit for male and female classification, and thus position in society, is dependent on a
form, a shape, and not an essence. With Rosalind's fake manhood, the alleged significance of the position as a man in the patriarchal hierarchy would fade away. *As You Like It* dares to invoke such a question enabling "the critique of stereotypical ideologies" (Hodgdon 184). Yet having all the final resolutions both socially and culturally constructed, in which the position of man and woman is assertively restored and preserved, seems to downplay the suspicious effects. Once Rosalind puts on the male attire, her appearance guarantees her a secured social position as a man. Rosalind gets the protection and the admittance she needs to survive in wild Arden. With Rosalind, disguise is all about power and this exceptional heroine "exercises extraordinary control" over her masculine outfit (Hayles 67). Nevertheless, the fact remains that Rosalind's power seems to vanish when Rosalind loses her manly looks, and this accomplished female character resigns into a more conventional and expected societal role.

Addressing the sexuality of disguise and the problematic gender issues of the Elizabethan stage, Hodgdon demonstrates that "*As You Like It* displays an even more radical investment in sexual disguise and gender performance" (190). Rosalind's disguise is at its most complicated level when Rosalind is playing Ganymede who is now playing Orlando's Rosalind. From his own point of view, Erickson regards Rosalind’s disguise as an expansion of her identity "so that she can play both male and female roles" (156). Needless to point out, the effect on the Elizabethan stage would be highly overwhelming. On stage, Rosalind's character is a male actor playing a female role disguised as a male and pretending to be a female. As in *Twelfth Night*, this technique of roles within roles and identities within identities serves to project the disparity between appearance and reality. In a parallel line, such technique also distinguishes between what is on stage and what is not. In Arden, Rosalind is
right before Orlando's eyes yet he can not recognize her. In Hodgdon's words, *As You Like It* "juxtaposes literary culture to theatrical entertainment, playing one against the other" (190).

Rosalind's disguise also tackles a very sensitive issue of identities within the festive context of appearance and reality. In the first act in the play Rosalind and Celia have already turned the point of the gifts of nature and the ways of fortune inside out. In Arden, Rosalind's womanly nature has been fortuned by her male appearance. Once disguised, Rosalind not only looks like a man, but also acts and speaks like one. She scolds Phebe, a shepherdess, for manipulating her fiancé, Silvius, and invites her to accept her position and settle for whatever fortune may throw at her and still be grateful: "But mistress, know yourself. Down on your knees/ And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love" (*As You Like It*. III. v. 57-58). Rosalind also advises Silvius to "play her [Phebe] hard" and neglect her womanly nature that is usually full of manipulation and deception (III. v. 76). Disguised Rosalind instructs both Orlando and Silvius, representatives of ideal lovers, on the way a real woman should be treated. Undoubtedly, the male costume has its most powerful and dangerous impact on Rosalind's character. Disguise turns Rosalind into a patriarchal figure that judges, condemns, and misuses women in the worst fashion. Celia can see the negative influence disguise has on her cousin: "You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate" (*As You Like It*. IV. i. 191-192). On his part, Erickson regards Rosalind's fake manhood with all its sequential complications to be harmless since Rosalind never quits reassuring "the metaphor of exterior (male) and inferior (female)," and thus preserving the "categories distinct and separate" (Waller 157):

ROSALIND. Good my complexion! Dost thou think though I
Am caparisoned like a man I have a doublet and
Hose in my disposition? (As You Like It. III. ii. 70)

Ann Thompson emphasizes how the use of transvestitism as a dramatic convention has given "rise to a number of debates about sexual identity, sexual difference and sexual transgression" (Thompson 5-6). Disguised Rosalind, at odds with the passionate Silvius, with her firm attitude and highly-held masculine values, actually attracts Phebe who is in love with Ganymede and ready to forsake Silvius. In this sense, Rosalind has become Silvius' rival in love exactly like Viola in Twelfth Night is considered once Sir Andrew's, and later on Orsino's rival in love of lady Olivia. Disguise enlarges the sexual identity of the heroine who is now loved by a woman, Phebe, in what may seem a homosexual love. Moreover, Rosalind as Ganymede is loved by another man, Orlando, in a none less sexually controversial relation than the former. Though it is perfectly true that Rosalind's androgynous appearance, with all its effects and complications, stimulates much of the comic aspects in the play, yet laughter can neither conceal nor underestimate meanings generated out of these confusing events. All of the characters involved in the confusions and illusions of disguise are to be suspected, and probably found guilty, when their sexuality is put into trial. Since there is no previous account of Orlando wooing the actual Rosalind, many critics, coinciding with the Elizabethan anti-theatrical tradition, would argue that Orlando seems to enjoy flirting with Ganymede much more than he would with the real Rosalind\(^1\). Whether Rosalind is a transvestite female who really enjoys dressing up like a man, or whether Orlando takes more pleasure in making out with Ganymede instead of Rosalind, or even if Phebe is a possible homosexual, will always be arguable and a rich source for literary and theatrical debates and discussions. The sexual tensions of disguise on the Elizabethan stage are without a doubt extremely intricate, both endorsing and suppressing

\(^1\) "Orlandos maybe happier wooing their Ganymedes than wedding their Rosalinds" (Hattway 124).
femininity in the figure of the boy actor playing a female role. The Elizabethan theatrical conditions and the inextricable relations between actor, role, and performance all add to the complexity of comprehending disguised female characters, particularly on the Elizabethan stage. Commenting on the multi-dimensional role of Elizabethan boy actors playing female roles and their theatrical and cultural perception, Lorraine Helms explains that:

The performance of the boy actor could have been eroticized for some spectators, aesthetically distanced for others. . . . Its ideological valence is ambiguous. It could foreground the social construction of gender by imposing femininity on male bodies and at the same time trivialize women's social roles in puerile caricatures. It could celebrate female heroism while it excluded women from the economic and expressive opportunities of theatrical activity. Certainly the theatrical convention resonates with the cultural practices of a patriarchal society in which women shared their children's disenfranchisement. (197)

It is somehow ironic that disguise, this controversial theatrical technique responsible for the play's most confusing complications, is in itself the answer to the same problematic issues it has raised. In its eliminating effect, the male costume seems to have some of the magical powers Rosalind claims to possess. Despite the incorporated theatrical and interpretive traits, disguise retains the festive characters of enjoyment, liberty, temporariness, and ultimate resolutions. Whatever the meanings Rosalind's disguise might acquire, in As You Like It, the social context is always so strongly present. Furthermore, Rosalind's continual emphasis that she is a woman not a man does not underestimate, and always shifts the attention to, the social convictions disguise succeeds to highlight:
Moreover, because the disguise is the key to Rosalind's ability to solve problems, the emphasis on male and female perspectives inherent in the sexual disguise places the problems in the context of the social roles of each sex. (Hayles 67)
Chapter Four: Festivity, Language, and the Female Role

4-1- Festivity and Language

When language is to be examined in Shakespeare's comedies, three levels should be considered. First, the specificity of drama in which a play is ultimately written to be performed on stage. Secondly, the fact that comedy may be at some places neglected and its meanings underestimated or undervalued. "The boldest critic," Brown demonstrates, "is afraid of taking a joke or a fancy too seriously" (1). Lastly, one has to put in mind the radical discrepancies among the different readings, productions, and thus potential meanings under certain cultural contexts within which the comedies are to be scoped. In the Renaissance, Shakespeare's comedies had been framed within the context of festivity which would have naturally lent these plays with different meanings depending on the adapted festival. To Barber, the only way to truly extract the authentic meaning of the comedies in general is to explore "the way the social form of Elizabethan holidays contributed to the dramatic form of festive comedy" (Barber 4). However, the fact remains that festivity itself as a mode of expression, whether in daily life or in the theatre, had been fought in Elizabethan England. Accordingly, the very expression of festivity in the comedies may not always be strongly sensed, nevertheless, it can definitely be traced. The Elizabethan audience was perfectly capable of comprehending festive meanings uttered on stage. In this context, Barber declares that "so perfect an expression and understanding of folk cult was only possible in the moment when it was still in the blood but no longer in the brain" (11). Shakespeare's festive comedies intermingled both the literary and the popular traditions which helped produce the theatrical oral tradition on the Elizabethan stage. The Elizabethans had already been quite familiar not only with oral traditions, but also with the fierce fighting between the oral, festive culture and
that of the written and more formal culture the Puritans represented.

When Shakespeare's comedies are studied within the general frame of festivity, there are certain meanings the effect of which can neither be neglected nor isolated for the interpretation of these plays. As a matter of fact, language in Shakespeare's comedies had been immensely affected by the social conflict, festive and anti-festive, which the plays project. The comedies not only highlight the prevailing festive customs, but also the other anti-festive line in Elizabethan England. The language of festive comedy is not a mere reflection of conflicting powers; it aims at "asserting the interactive values of orality and community in the face of literate, book-committed Puritan opposition to the theatre" (Hawkes 172). Moreover, the commitment of the Elizabethans to orality had in part been responsible for the puritan attacks on the theatre in general, and comedy in particular. It was a verbal war between oral against written words. The transition the Puritans longed to achieve in the Elizabethan community required delivering the public's mentality from the oral, rustic tongue to the puritan decorum of language:

This was an age of incantation and spells, of blessing and curses, an age in which the word 'spoken with power' would inevitably produce effects which might be cataclysmic. The word spoken with power was a word spoken according to a recognized formula. The right word would call up the devil: the right word would call down God upon the alter in the form of bread and wine- or at least in question whether it would do so or not was central in all the great religious conflicts of the time. (Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* 42)

The Elizabethan festive calendar has without a doubt its salient mark on Shakespeare's comedies and can effectually provide interesting interpretation for these plays. "The arcane meaning of the calendar" thus Laroque concludes, "can
reveal secrets that have been forgotten" due to the fact that "our minds lost the habit of making all the possible permutations and establishing the covert correspondence" (Laroque 304-5).
4-2- Viola's Discourse

Viola's discourse in *Twelfth Night* develops in more than just one direction. This linguistic multiplicity Viola puts forward points out to the fact that language is the "most flexible and perhaps the most complex of signifying systems" (Belsey, *Critical Practice* 45). Throughout the course of the action Viola preserves quite a realistic approach. According to Palmer Viola is a "realist" whose "enforced secrecy and self-restraint contrast with the generally unrestrained and uninhibited temper of life in Illyria" (76). Once Viola lands on the Illyrian shores, there emerges a form of festive practicality and resourcefulness which characterize Viola's discourse. There is also disguise which dictates a form of verbal liberty, and not just physical, that wouldn't be aired had Viola not been disguised. Disguise in this sense becomes part of discourse. Viola's realism stands at odds with the flowing nature of both festive practicality and liberty. Throughout the play, Viola shifts between these different mediums of language depending on the occasion. This tendency to express diverse patterns of speech points out to the upside down festival world where action and language become capricious and loose. Barber explains that in its exploration of holiday pastimes and folly, *Twelfth Night* "exhibits the liberties which gentlemen take with decorum in the pursuit of pleasure and love, including the liberty of holiday" (248). Although Viola's language is divided, yet it was, we may assume, quite accessible to the Elizabethan audience being dictated by the course of action and delivered in its unified context.

In *Twelfth Night*, Viola maintains a realistic attitude that emerges from her own circumstances. As soon as she lands on the shores of Illyria, Viola enquires "What Country, friends, is this" (*Twelfth Night*. I. ii. 1). Viola's realism is further shown when the captain confesses to have seen Sebastian clinging to a mast when their ship was drowning. Viola, notwithstanding, moves on with her plan as determined never
surrendering to what might be a mere illusion. She doesn't allow herself to reflect much upon these news as she turns back to her initial question about Illyria:

VIOLA. For saying so, there's gold:

Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,
Where thy speech serves for authority,
The like of him. Knowest thou this country? (Twelfth Night. I. ii. 9).

By contrast, Orsino proves an idealist. His language in the opening scene is flourished with imagery and fantasy. Each of Viola and Orsino seems to stand at an extreme post of experience and accordingly a divisive pattern of language. Orsino's words relish from his dissatisfaction and frustration of both owned and claimed objects. In his poetic obsession about Olivia, Orsino jumps between sentences as Olivia along with this unattained love "falls into abatement and low price" (I. i. 6). Orsino's words draw an immediate contrast between his pattern of speech and that of Viola's. Orsino is eloquent and articulate in his choice of imagery where language "shifts quickly from one elaborate comparison to the next, rather than suggesting any real involvement with Olivia" (Warren 80).

When Orsino elects Viola/Cesario to woo Olivia on his behalf, Orsino's words are flattering his page and not even once Olivia. Orsino's choice of vocabulary with his Cesario reinforces the theme of homosexuality in the play. Orsino is describing with such admiration Cesario's features in a language that exposes Orsino's infatuation with his page. Viola's admirable features were actually those of the young boy actor playing Viola on the Elizabethan stage. The following dialogue then could come to voice the attraction and sexual desire for the boy actor in disguise:

DUKE. Dear lad, believe it;
For they shall yet belie thy happy years,
That say thou art a man; 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. (*Twelfth Night*, I. iv. 29-34)

The sensuality of the language here is one example of the language which had been pretty much responsible for the amount of hostility and irritation poured by the Puritans against the Elizabethan theatrical practice. Mangan stresses that the "physicality of his [Orsino's] language is sensuous even without the double-entendres of 'organ' and 'part'" (250).

In Act II, Orsino and Viola/Cesario are listening to an old song of unrequited love which speaks equally to the two of them. The song in Viola's words "gives a very echo to the seat / Where love is thron'd" (*Twelfth Night*, II. iv. 21-22). Although viola, in Orsino's words, "dost speak masterly," she remains unable to express her love for her master in a direct form (II. iv. 23). Palmer compares between Viola's character and Ovid's Echo in her unexpressed love for Narcissus. Viola's semblance to Echo is evident "particularly in the device by which viola preserves her secrecy" (Palmer 75). However, Viola is not an echo of a voice. On the contrary, the echoes of Viola's voice reach where they are targeted. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola's silence becomes equally as important as her speech. Viola is able to protect her identity by means of withholding and shielding some of the significant facts she has come to know.

Viola's affecting discourse is best shown when Viola is narrating for Orsino the love story of her sister. Viola faces Orsino's idealism with a non-illusive and realistic pattern of speech, yet her words are delivered in a story-like form that would far better fit Orsino's suit. Viola tells her master that he must abandon his fancies regarding Olivia: "Sooth, but you must" (*Twelfth Night*, II. iv. 89). It is actually here that Orsino "receives his first instruction in the necessity of accommodating his fantasies to practical realities" (Jenkins 79). Viola then begins with the story of her
sister's unrequited love combining two types of speech, one imaginative, and the other concrete. Though she fabricates a fictive sister, the story itself reveals much about Viola's real situation. At this point, only Orsino is too self-absorbed to realize the real identity of the fictive sister. This technique Viola adopts is intended to detach Orsino from his possessive nature leading him gradually to her:

DUKE.   And what's her history?

VIOLA.   A blank, my lord: she never told her love,
       But let concealment like a worm i' th' bud
       Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought,
       And with a green a yellow melancholy
       She sat like patience on a monument,
       Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?

  (Twelfth Night. II. iv. 110-115)

Mangan observes that in this speech Viola's language is passive and that Viola "can only articulate her love for Orsino in the subjunctive mood" (248). Viola's discomfort with disguise transfers into her language. Viola is there between the lines, yet she is not there at the same time. Viola describes women deductively. In this passage, Viola's male identity imposes a patriarchal conduct upon her. "Misogyny," writes Dobson, is a "function of patriarchy, but the terms in which it is understood form part of a whole series of signifying systems, not all of which can be attached to historically specific cultural agendas" (135). Nevertheless, Viola's male identity is what in fact gives way to Viola's versatile language. Barber observes that the "effect of moving back and forth from woman to sprightly page is to convey how much the sexes differ yet have so much in common, how everyone who is fully alive has qualities of both" (247).

When Viola lays her eyes on Olivia for the first time, she feels an urge to
instruct Olivia about life as well. At the outset, Viola admires Olivia's beauty: ""Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white/ Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on" (Twelfth Night. I. v. 242-243). But then almost immediately reproaches her from what appears to be a male point of view: "Lady, you are the cruellest she alive" (I. v. 244). Viola's feminine inside reaches out for this lady who in turn finds herself responding to young Cesario almost instantly. The male identity which disguise provides Viola with retreats giving air rather to a feminine voice that does its work with Olivia. In her assigned mission to woo Olivia on Orsino's behalf, Viola doesn't have a learnt speech, but acts out her own. Olivia has already heard Orsino's reported love: "We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy" (I. v.168). However, what lady Olivia didn't expect was this type of language with which Viola/Cesario conveys her master's passions: "Not too fast: soft! soft!" (I. v. 297). Jenkins demonstrates that Cesario's language and way of speech "cunningly diverts attention from the message to the messenger" (82). Viola/Cesario here becomes the centre of Olivia's attention just as she has already become for Orsino:

Thy tongue, thy face, thy limps, actions, and spirit
Do give thee[Cesario] five-fold blazon. Not too fast: soft! soft!
Unless the master were the man. How now?
Even so quickly may one catch the plague? (Twelfth Night. I. v. 296-299)

Olivia is obviously distracted by Viola's words, once flirting and another time scolding and repressive. Olivia's following speech reflects just how far she is bewildered and her tone of speech altered. Whereas formerly we have encountered Olivia's self-sustained attitude and her organized, well-delivered speech, she is now confused and her language is perplexed:

OLIVIA. I do I know not what, and fear to find
Mine eyes too great a flatterer for my mind.
Fate, show thy force; ourselves we do not owe.

What is decreed, must be: and be it so. (Twelfth Night. I. v. 312-315)

This tangible alteration Olivia undergoes is the impact of the festive spirit implied in Viola's character. Similar to festive celebrants, Olivia seems to surrender giving in totally to a force beyond her contemplation. For the first time in the play, Olivia becomes a participant in the pleasures of life symbolized in the festive atmosphere Twelfth Night celebrates. It is at this point that Olivia "ceases to mourn the dead and gives herself to the pursuit of the living" (Jenkins 83). Viola's language releases Olivia who becomes ready to celebrate life through her love for Cesario. The effect of this exchange points out to the power of festivity on mentality, action, and speech. Olivia's earlier language of death becomes that of life and love. Warren demonstrates that Olivia's language and "particularly the imagery, has a solemnity and directness which makes her situation sympathetic as well as humorous" (81):

Cesario, by the roses of the spring,
By maidhood, honour, truth, and everything,
I love thee so, that maugre all thy pride,
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide. (Twelfth Night. III. i. 151-154)

There are few points that are worth noting with regard to Viola's verbal exchanges with Orsino and Olivia. First, as Barber notices, "how little direct sexual reference there is in Twelfth Night - - much less than in most of the festive comedies" (258). However, from his point of view, Mangan observes that the "text toys with the possibility of same-sex eroticism more intensely than was the case in As You Like It" (251). The indirect toying of sexual references added to the general atmosphere of celebration and holiday are actually what reduce the intensity in the Viola-Orsino and Viola-Olivia scenes. Same-sex attractions feed the lines, but the festive nature of Twelfth Night eases the tension and leads to release. Jenkins explains that in Twelfth
Night, Viola "represents a genuineness of feeling" and that it is "her role to draw Orsino and Olivia from their insubstantial passions and win them to reality" (79). It is the mission of the leading female heroine to bring together lines of the action into a satisfactory closure. Viola/Cesario leads the way through which Olivia discards her mourning and therefore her long term loneliness. And that's how Olivia is led by degrees to love Sebastian, "the male substitute for Cesario" (Hayles 70). During this holiday time, Viola manages to release both Orsino and Olivia, achieve unity, and put an end to discord. So, when the feast is done and over with, when Twelfth Night becomes a past holiday, Olivia is united with Sebastian and Viola becomes her "master's mistress" (Twelfth Night. V. i. 324).

In both Orsino's and Olivia's cases, Viola's language comes to reflect a festive atmosphere of amusements and game playing. However, the transformation she achieves for both is culturally constructed. Orsino and Olivia are at peace and comfort in a culturally defined ending. Marriage here reaffirms the communal order of expectations for both the male and the female. During the celebration of the twelve days of Christmas, Viola manages to release both Orsino and Olivia into a lively celebrating mood. What Viola achieves is the best and most comforting ending which enables Orsino and Olivia to resume their daily life when holiday time is over. It is a temporary and cathartic release that prepares these two to restart their ordinary lives as best as they can. Viola's discourse throughout the play, once liberating and at other times withholding, decrees such ending pointing out the cultural fact in which "language is a matter of convention" (Belsey, Critical Practice 41).

Viola's verbal duel with Feste, "the Corrupter of words", crowns the model of festive language in the play (III. i. 37). Viola is unable to rise up to or meet the clown's linguistic excellence. Feste both comprehends and subjugates linguistic entities and ambiguities to serve his witty vernacular. By means of her double
identity, Viola becomes aware of such multifaceted language as that of Feste's "being herself the epitome of ambiguity, the signifier which belies its signified" (Mangan 247). However, Viola's ability to convey diverse patterns of speech doesn't at any level match the verbal capacities of the clown. Playing the role of the clown, Feste's unique style points out to the side of festive celebrations where language is eloquently turned upside down as means of entertainment. To keep up with Feste's linguistic craftiness, Viola loses her versatile decorum and becomes a puppet in the hands of the clown. This authorized representative of festive culture compels Viola to get on with him on a series of statements that could be classified as anti-theatrical. Viola and Feste investigate the different usages of language, and the way through which words could be manipulated for diverse ends. Belsey argues that "it is language which offers the possibility of constructing a world of individuals and things," where the "transparency of language is an illusion" (Critical Practice 4). Feste alludes to the fact that the Puritans have usually taken the negative side of the words performed on the stage. The significance of this anti-festive speech lies in the fact that it is uttered by a major festive character in Twelfth Night, the clown. The effect of this exchange between Viola and Feste is constructed to ridicule and play down, in a festive wordplay, the protestations and arguments of the anti-festive and anti-theatrical authorities:

CLOWN. You have said, sir. To see this age! A sentence
    is but a chev'ril glove to a good wit- how quickly
    the wrong side may be turned outward!

VIOLA. Nay, that's certain: they that dally nicely with
    words may quickly make them wanton. (Twelfth Night. III. i. 11-15)

Feste also refers to the tradition of the boy actor. When Viola gives him a coin for his past entertainment, Feste passes a quick note on the fact that Viola is a boy actor,
hinting at the theatrical false impression of the boy actor playing the female role and then disguising as a man. When such a reference is crossed with the clown's former comments on the deception of language, the effect is that to point out to the delusions of performance and role play. Language in this sense becomes a medium to commune certain illusionary exchanges among performers on the stage. The theatre is the ultimate world of make-believe with which the Elizabethans were well familiar. As the boy actor, Viola is desperate for a beard. Aside, Viola tells the audience she cannot afford to have masculine features in an allusion to the boy actor playing a female role:

    CLOWN.   Now Jove, in his next commodity of hair, send
              thee a beard!
    VIOLA.   By my troth, I'll tell thee, I am almost sick for
              one, [Aside] though I would not have it grow on
              my chin. – Is thy lady within? (Twelfth Night. III. i. 45-49)

Viola's versatile speech patterns – realistic, fictive and festive - should not in any sense disturb or disrupt the interpretation of Viola's discourse in Twelfth Night. This divisive, and at times contrastive, discourse serves to reflect the discrepancy between the official and the festive culture in the sixteenth century. "Ultimately," as Belsey demonstrates, "the plural meanings of the text are not in conflict with one another but complementary, each contributing to our understanding of the work as a (single) whole" (Critical Practice 28).
4-3- Rosalind's Discourse

The country\court opposition manifests itself noticeably in Rosalind's language. In the opening scene, Rosalind's words are conservative and reluctant pointing out to her inactive state at the court. In Arden, however, Rosalind's speech energies seem to be released as the holiday spirit takes over. Rosalind is granted with an exceptional chance to rewrite some of the societal mythologies regarding gender roles. The final scene witnesses Rosalind's promise of a commitment to a discourse that suits the court life and its restraints. A distinguished feature of *As You Like It* is that Rosalind's character reappears one last time to deliver an epilogue to the audience. Significantly, Rosalind's final speech intermingles the Elizabethan boy actor and the female role addressing the audience from what sounds a neutral point of view. The epilogue constitutes a middle ground offering a position that stands between everyday life and festive celebrations. Throughout the action and the epilogue, Rosalind's discourse indicates unique power and control over language which characterize this superb female role.

In *As You Like It*, Rosalind displays a unique ability to use discourse in a way that suggests Rosalind's awareness with the structure and inner entities of language. Right from the beginning of the play, Rosalind's words indicate her control over language. In Duke Fredericks' words, Rosalind's "very silence, and her patience / Speak to the people and they pity her" (*As You Like It*. I. iii. 74-75). Nevertheless, Rosalind's awareness of her position and its demands does not stop her from breaking the rhythm of the text every now and then especially with talks about sexuality. Rosalind's "No, some of it is for my child's father" (I. iii. 11) has been sometimes reversed to "father's child" through some "editorial delicacy"¹. "Child's father", the man she would marry, would plainly refer to Rosalind's sexuality. The alteration,

¹- The point is made in footnote(11) in the Arden 1996 series(*As You Like It*. I. iii. 11).
therefore, would resolve any resulting inconvenience diverting the attention from what might appear a sexually exposed Rosalind to a passionate heroine concerned for the welfare of her father. Throughout the play, Rosalind seems to be moving in a structure with which rules and foundations she is familiar. Accordingly, she is able to manipulate her language and circumstances without necessarily disrupting or disturbing the established order. Rosalind seems to keep at balance both the festive liberty to deliver speech and the restraints of the conventional tone. Rosalind's triumph over language is balanced by her surrender to love.

When Rosalind disguises herself in Arden, she names herself Ganymede, Jove's page, a "(male prostitute), wrapping both into a figure for the boy actor- the embodiment of homoerotic attraction, at least as imagined by early modern antitheatrical writers" (Hodgdon 190-191): "I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page" (I. iii. 120). Rosalind's adaptation of the name Ganymede alludes in a direct way to the "erotic androgyny" of its bearer (Jardine 19). Festive license which expresses both physical and verbal liberty is encoded in Rosalind's choice of name. It is remarkable how Rosalind remains loyal to her name throughout the action. In Arden, Rosalind swears by Jove in a provoking gesture to anti-festive and anti-theatrical authorities: "Jove, Jove! This shepherd's passion/ Is much upon my fashion" (As You Like It. II. iv. 57-58). The profound investment of the play with social issues is also implicated by the mythological Jove. Rosalind points out that her male attire will conceal her feminine identity that could be jeopardized in the forest. Once more, As You Like It investigates the relationship between appearance and reality in the social criteria of gender roles. Festive signs are denoted in the festive theme of appearance versus reality, court versus country, and implicated by Rosalind's decision to disguise in Arden. "Like woman," Michael Hattway demonstrates, "man is not born but made" (124). Rosalind's boldness is wrapped
under feeble male features that in turn empower Rosalind's supposed female frailty and limitation:

Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will,
We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,
As many other mannish cowards have
That do outface it with their semblances. (As You Like It. I. iii. 115-118)

There is a substantial difference between Rosalind's discourse at court and that in the forest of Arden. At court, Rosalind talks about the "little strength" she has in her, but in Arden Rosalind manifests major controlling power both in action and words (I. iii. 183). This contrast apparent in Rosalind's conduct in the forest serves to reinforce the effect of festivity particularly with regard to female characters in festive comedies. After the wrestling match held at the court, Rosalind gives Orlando a chain not only as a token of love, but also of her faithfulness and chastity, something that plays down the impact of her jokes about female sexuality, marriage, and cheating later in Arden. At the end of the match, Rosalind admits that she "could give more but that her hand lack means" (I. ii. 237). The chain also symbolizes Rosalind's inability to express her affections for Orlando adequately and openly at court hinting at the festive country/court opposition. Still, Rosalind leaves Orlando speechless by this passion which "hangs these weights upon my[Orlando's] tongue" (I. ii. 247). Despite court restraints, Rosalind seems to have quite a good control on her language which allows her to impact characters around her. Dusinberre argues that Shakespeare "has surrounded Rosalind with the Queen's iconography," and that there are many allusions implied in Rosalind's character referring to queen Elizabeth's notions of chastity (16).

However, in Arden, Rosalind/Ganymede is more expressive and dynamic. Rosalind seems to always maintain her language in equilibrium despite the double
identity effect of disguise. Rosalind's discourse reflects this balance and projects the festive opposition between appearance and reality. When in the forest disguised Rosalind plays Orlando's sweet Rosalind, she does not precisely play her. Whereas earlier in the course of action Orlando has been writing poetry to the "heavenly Rosalind," this Rosalind in front of him is quite different (As You Like It. I. iii. 23). At the wrestling match, Rosalind appears as a sympathetic compassionate lady: "Your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial" (I. ii. 18). In the forest of Arden, Orlando is hanging love poems on the trees of his "fair, chaste, unexpressive she" (III. ii. 61). But when Orlando agrees to "woo" disguised Rosalind in the forest, she shows a sample version of how an actual Rosalind may act and behave. She bluntly tells Orlando his Rosalind will be jealous, manipulative, probably cheat on him and "make her fault her husband's occasion" (IV. i. 100). This method which Rosalind deploys serves to investigate the discrepancy between imagination, reality and gender roles "as female reality is playfully set against male fantasy" (Hayles 65).

When Rosalind comes across Orlando's poems, her feminine desires control her language. Once she finds out Orlando is the verse composer, Rosalind lays a series of questions for Celia to answer in just one word:

    ROSALIND. Alas the day, what shall I do with my doublet and
    Hose? What did he say when thou saw'st him? What
    Said he? How looked he? Wherein went he?
    What makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where
    remains he? How parted he with thee? And when
    shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.

    (As You Like It. III. ii. 215-220)

    Where formerly at court Rosalind's discourse has been characterized by smoothness, silence, and patience, in Arden Rosalind's speeches are elaborate,
impulsive, and constantly interrogative. Dusinberre argues that in *As You Like It* Rosalind "finds herself in a script supplied by men which she rewrites as the play progresses" (9). In the festive sphere of Arden, Rosalind becomes the writer of a distinguished and unordinary part. Rosalind redefines the learnt and traditional records of desire and love inspired by classical learning. Mangan illustrates that "around the Orlando-Rosalind story are woven other love-stories which in one way or another comment ironically on the conventions of romantic love" (222). When Orlando is wooing Rosalind/Ganymede, Rosalind's words are sarcastic in the way they parody traditional forms of literary love. In Dusinberre's words, Rosalind "seems to mock the literary stories from which the play itself is derived" (18). Rosalind's parody energizes and motivates the abandonment of learnt literary fictions regarding women, desire and love. In this respect, Dusinberre again makes a comparison between Rosalind's character and queen Elizabeth I. In the sixteenth century, the queen led a movement to enhance the vernacular and make it worthy to exist alongside the classical languages. In her mocking of traditional romantic clichés, Rosalind is setting a new model of discourse that is quite different and equally unexpected. This ability to challenge classical patterns of speech is mouthed by the leading female character who is both enabled and empowered by the liberating festive traits symbolized in Arden. Placed at the top of festive culture, Rosalind is now offered a unique chance to ridicule and interrogate the inherited discourse of love and desire where "gender relationships upon which romantic love is predicted are called into question" (Mangan 223).

In Arden, Rosalind also comments on the Elizabethan theatrical practice and the tradition of the boy actor. When Rosalind/Ganymede agrees to provide Orlando with counsel to cure him of his love, the remedy is prescribed as:

ORLANDO. Did you ever cure any so?
ROSALIND. Yes, one, and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress; and I set him everyday to woo me. At which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconsistent, full of tears, full of smiles, for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour . . . (As You Like It. III. ii. 394- 403)

Jardine interprets this speech as that which "combines the terms of the anti-stage attacks and the wanton effeminacy of the classical Ganymede to intensify the provocativness of 'his' exaggerated wooing" (19). Rosalind does in fact allude to the "effeminacy" of the boy actor. By making such an allusion, Rosalind once again is both using and challenging the argument of the anti-theatrical authorities. In Rosalind's words, boy actors do actually resemble real women. Rosalind's speech is charged with a provocative tone addressed to Puritans who had dedicated many of their writings to condemn festive and theatrical practices. When such an anti-stage speech is uttered by no other than Rosalind/Ganymede, with its various connotations, the effect is that to ridicule and underplay the puritan argument against theatrical practice in the sixteenth century. Rosalind's words are festive in the way they involve forms of ridicule and mockery. To parody actual authority is a festive character, and "the more dignified the victim the greater the joke" (Mangan 30). The holiday humor Rosalind refers to has unquestionably affected her language and choice of words.

Ann Thompson illustrates that feminist critics have often pointed out to the negativity that surrounds Shakespeare's female characters, arguing that the "plays are less sexiest than the theatrical and critical traditions which continually reproduce
them" (3). In the same context, Hattway observes that "Shakespeare's plays explore not only the connections between sex and power but those between sex and pleasure" (122). Rosalind's new identity may explain the power Rosalind manifests both physically and verbally. However, on the stage Rosalind is a female heroine whose magical powers and capacity to solve problematic issues match those linguistic capacities to raise such issues in the first place. Rosalind displays some models of female types who are not only quite aware of their mental and sexual abilities, but also using them. Thompson realizes that among editors there has often been a tendency to underestimate the "amount of sexual innuendo in Rosalind's speech" (4).

On his part, Hattway explains that the "plethora of cuckolding jokes in comedy may well manifest a fear of female emancipation" (131). Rosalind's remarks about female sexuality must be viewed in their festive context which allows such utterances to take place:

Make the doors upon a
woman's wit, and it will out at the casement; shut
that, and 'twill out at the keyhole; stop that, 'twill
fly with the smoke out at the chimney. (As You Like It. IV. i. 153-156)

From her position, Rosalind teaches Orlando about the realities and fiction concerning women. In Rosalind's words women surpass typical roles transgressing measured lines and boundaries in society. Rosalind's language aims at shattering some traditional myths regarding female essence, sexuality, and desire. Rosalind is also deconstructing the male imagery regarding love, women, and courtship: "But these are all lies: men have died from / time to time and worms have eaten them, but not / for love" (IV. i. 101-103). Orlando, Bradbrook demonstrates, "is most agreeably schooled in the wooing of Ganymede" (The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 91).
Rosalind's tutoring is not addressed to Orlando solely, Phebe also seems to benefit. Rosalind keeps her language in balance by means of addressing both men and women. Whereas Rosalind has already visualized female boldness for Orlando, she reminds Phebe about the gentle nature of women: "women's gentle brain/ Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention" (IV. iii. 33-34). This kind of balance in perspective appeals to male and female spectators. In this festive-comic climate, Rosalind seizes the chance to rewrite the records of female nature, sexuality, and desire so that "women want to read it" (Dusinberre 16).

The final scene witnesses the discarding of the disguise which puts an end to a series of confusions and restores order symbolized by the union of the couples. The binary oppositions with which the text has opened are now distinct, separate, and no longer confused. Rosalind gives up disguise and simultaneously gives in to patriarchy which has long before defined her very existence and granted her a position to which Rosalind is to surrender sooner or later. The festive climate which has permitted Rosalind to be active and outspoken is over now, and Rosalind is heading back to the court. Still, the audience rejoices in this surrender since Rosalind's wit makes her step into it willingly. According to Althusser, ideology interpolates individuals as free subjects in order that they will "submit freely to the commandments of the Subject," making the "gestures and actions" of their subjection all by themselves (62):

    ROSALIND. [To the Duke] To you I give myself, for I am yours.
    [To Orlando] To you I give myself, for I am yours. (V. iv. 115-116)

This fall into the symbolic order, however, does not do women justice. Marriage separates between Rosalind and Celia yet reconciliates between Orlando and his brother, weakening the power of women and strengthening that of men. Through their passage in Nature, characters seem to get acculturated as they are ready now to
go back to the court more settled and stabilized than ever. Erickson interprets both the ending and the epilogue in the play as "containing and even eliminating female power" (Thompson 7). With such ending, one may question whether Rosalind's power in the first place has been only some sort of magic show. Rosalind is a woman who acknowledges her role in society.

At the end of the play, Rosalind reappears one last time in an epilogue. The tone of this epilogue is a continuation to that of Rosalind's in the course of the play. The epilogue is delivered by Rosalind and addressed to both male and female playgoers. Although Rosalind admits that "a good play needs no epilogue" (V. iv. 201), Rosalind wittingly adds that "good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues" (lines 203-204). What is it then that Rosalind needs to add to what she has already said in the play? In *As You Like It*, Rosalind aims at altering some seemingly fixed and unchangeable prospects concerning the relationships between men and women in society. With Rosalind meaning is unsettled, flexible, and ever changing. She has also defied some of the theories about the boy actor. Rosalind aspires to reinforce what she has already presented in the play: "My way is to conjure you" (line 208). To enforce the role she has written for herself in the play, once again, Rosalind seems in need of her magical powers. When she is delivering the epilogue, Rosalind uses the same tone which involves both the female role and the boy actor. As the female heroine, Rosalind begins with women urging them to "like of this play as much as you please" (lines 210-211). Then she addresses male spectators deploring them that "between you and the women the play may please" (lines 213-214). The play constitutes a middle ground between men and women. Rosalind also hints at the boy actor playing the female role: "If I were a woman" (lines 214-215). If the audience applauds the play and her brilliant role, then Rosalind's mission is accomplished. However, Rosalind seems pretty sure that the audience have liked the play and its
resolutions: "And I am sure." (line 217).

The effect of Rosalind's discourse, the epilogue included, is both highly energetic and quite deconstructing. In its festive license, Rosalind's discourse deconstructs fixed theories concerning gender roles in society. Above all, Rosalind's role aims at altering the static myths about the meaning and roles of the male and the female in society. Nevertheless, Rosalind's mastery and brilliance in delivering her intended messages is what in fact makes her role most appealing and pleasantly applauded.
4-4- Katherine's Discourse

Katherina's discourse takes a different direction from that of the other Shakespearean heroines in the comedies. In contrast with Viola and Rosalind, Katherina enters the play with her sharp tongue and fiery words which she is already reputed for. Kate's words are festive in their impulsive, retaliating nature. In her defying attitude, Kate is dismantling fixed theories concerning the female discourse. Katherina's festive discourse at the beginning of the play contradicts her seemingly anti-festive speech at the end. Although at the end of the play she seems to resign into a conventional role, Katherina's final speech leaves the text even more unsettled and wide-open to diverse interpretation.

As soon as Katherina appears in The Taming Of The Shrew, there seems to be no question or doubt concerning her shrewish nature. Yet the vitality of her manners and the unfamiliar boldness in her words invoke "the possibility of seeing her [Katherine] as more interesting than as a shrew produced by the bullying male imaginary" (Newman 39). Katherina is retaliating against the passive patriarchal roles women are left with. Katherina is struggling to avoid this vicious patriarchal circle that would "make a stale of me[Katherina] amongst these mates" (The Taming Of The Shrew. I. i. 58).

Newman argues that in The Taming Of The Shrew, Shakespeare "emphasizes not just the relationship between language and identity, but between women and language, and between control over language and patriarchal power" (44). The play is a struggle site over power and authority where language becomes a major player. Those who are in control of their words are equally in control of their situations. In the first scene, Transio, upon hearing her outrage, concludes that either Katherina is "stark mad or wonderful froward" (I. i. 69). Both descriptions "mad" and "froward" are direct associations with festive celebrations. Katherina here is alluded to with
anti-festive vocabularies to indicate her abnormal conduct. By contrast, Bianca's "silence" indicates her "mild behaviour and sobriety" (line 71). The terms used to contrast between Katherina and Bianca are quite significant in their reference to festive versus puritan, or anti-festive, approaches in Elizabethan England. Festive madness represented by Katherine is at odds with the anti-festive sobriety Bianca stands for.

By contrast to Viola and Rosalind, Katherina doesn't assume a disguise to lend force and legitimacy to her words. Through discourse, Katherina establishes her own independent identity which sharply negates the expected female role assigned to her by society. Katherina's repulsive and anti-social language falls under the category of festive vocabulary which is characterized by non-typical patterns of decorum. Even this unmet, anti-societal attitude Katherina surrounds herself with is interpreted, by other characters, to be the fruit of a "liberated" father: "and liberal/ To my own children in good bringing-up" (The Shrew. I. i. 98-99). Gary Waller, on his part, interprets Babtista's liberated attitude towards Katherina on the grounds that "it is perhaps easier to be a 'liberated' man when ultimate control can be reclaimed" (Waller 40). Katherina is transgressing the typically measured social standards of what discourse women should adopt in their lives. The Induction to the play here is of a great significance. In fact the Induction manages to construct social relations of class and gender which will be reinforced as the play progresses. The Induction focuses the "attention on the idea of appearances being deceiving, as well as on the importance of acting and role playing" ("Role Playing"). The discrepancy between appearance and reality is a festive theme that keeps recurring in both Katherina's and Petruchio's exchanges.

When they first meet, Petruchio alludes to Katherina as "Kate" when she insists on using her name as it is: "They call me Katherine that do talk of me" (The Shrew. II.
This particular insistence on her part reveals Katherina's attempt to emphasize her existence as a woman who has a cloudless voice and presence in her environment. In addition to the festive connotations of the name Kate, naming indicates power and dominance. When disguised as men, both Viola and Rosalind practice this power of naming. However, since Katherina assumes no male attire, her words are her only means to fight for her right to have a name of her own. Asserting her name becomes a significant part of Katherina's power conflict with Petruchio since "women will remain powerless until they themselves exercise the power of naming" (Ruthven 3).

In one of their verbal exchanges, Petruchio promises Katherine to bring her "from a wild Kate to a Kate / Comfortable as other household Kates" (II. i. 211). Petruchio, who stands for the patriarchal system in society, promises that the final word will be his. The existence of Katherina as a wild and outspoken woman is temporary just like wild festive celebrations which are temporal and short-termed. In Bassnett's words, the situation is that "katherina is sharp-tongued before her marriage and her husband endeavours to bring her into line" (75). In Act III, when they are married, Katherina insists on staying for a while longer, while Petruchio is determined to leave. For the first time Katherina makes her case clear: "I see a woman may be made a fool / If she had not the spirit to resist"(III. ii. 218-219). Petruchio, in turn, has quite a different case to point out. As the husband, Petruchio is granted a position to practice full authority over his wife: "I will be master of what is mine own" (line 227). Bassnett interprets this effective speech which displays Petruchio as the owner of Katherina to be a "parody of the Old Testament definition of a wife" (78). At this point it is still a verbal war between the festive spirit of Kate and official culture represented by Petruchio. Marriage reduces Katherina into a mere possession. Yet Katherine is a woman whose voice and words speak loudly of her potential power and activeness. The official interpretation of "wife" which equates
with silence, inaction, and submission is not yet in Katherina's diction:

The contest for the meaning of the family which took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries disrupted sexual difference, and in the space between the sets of meanings, the old and the new polarities, there appear in the fiction of the period shapes, phantasms perhaps, that unsettle the opposition defining the feminine as that which is not masculine—not, that is to say, active, muscular, rational, authoritative... powerful. Women are defined precisely as the opposite sex, and the 'evidence', the location of this antithesis, is the process of reproduction. (Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference* 178)

At the tailor's, when Petruchio and Katherina are still newly weds, Katherina displays her individuality and independence in plain language. Katherina wants to have a certain cap, but Petruchio is all against what Katherina chooses for herself. Petruchio continues in his policy to tame Kate by means of controlling her choices. Katherina's words are still bold and uncompromising. Katherina is speaking with the same excessive energy the play opened with. This energy matches the festive nature of excessiveness and radicalism:

KATHERINE. Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak,

And speak I will. I am no child, no babe.
Your betters have endur'd me say my mind,
And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,
Or else my heart concealing it will break,
And rather than it shall, I will be free
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.

(*The Taming Of The Shrew*. IV. iii. 73-80)
Katherina is still persistent, her words are free and only she is the master of her own medium. So far, it is just a verbal war between Petruchio, the animal tamer, and his shrew "kate". Petruchio's taming for Katherina's conduct begins by means of taming her discourse. Newman explains that "as the receiver of her messages, he[Petruchio] simply refuses their meaning," and that due to his marital supremacy it is Petruchio's "power over language that wins" (48). Petruchio, according to Tranio, is "the master, / That teacheth tricks eleven and twenty long, / To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue" (*The Shrew*. IV. ii. 56-58). The extremity Katherina projects in her words seems to jeopardize and dismantle patriarchal doctrines. Katherina is presenting the audience with a contrastive perspective to the prevailing value system. Katherina's words are quite festive in their freedom and revulsion, and her diction is breaking apart a unified belief system, disrupting fixed meanings, and existing values:

Conversely, those moments when the plurality of meaning is most insistent are also moments of crises in the order of existing values. A contest for meaning disrupts the system of differences which we take for granted, throwing into disarray the oppositions and the values which structure understanding. (Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference* 178)

However, Katherina reappears on the stage most shockingly as an obedient wife. Katherina's words and her entire world, the sun and the moon are at Petruchio's disposal. She seems to blindly confirm and abide by Petruchio's commands calling an old man a virgin, and then also at her husband's order correcting her terrible mistake. It is significant how Katherina justifies the embarrassing mistake by admitting that her eyes "have been bedazzled by the sun" (IV. v. 45). Newman does not behold a submissive attitude in Katherina's words here. On the contrary, Newman explains, Katherina puns the word "sun" with "son" which Petruchio has previously referred to
himself with. Through her proven mastery over language, Katherina is able once more to disrupt meanings and divert the female role on stage:

But Kate's self-consciousness about the power of discourse, her punning and irony, and her techniques of linguistic masquerade, are strategies of italics, mimetic strategies, in Irigaray's sense of mimeticism. Instead of figuring a gender-marked woman's speech, they deform language by subverting it, that is, by turning it inside out so that metaphors, puns and other forms of wordplay manifest their veiled equivalences: the meaning of woman as treasure, of wooing as a civilized and acceptable disguise for sexual exploitation, of the objectifications and exchange of women.

(Newman 51)

Katherina's final speech provides yet another method through which Katherina manages not only to separate herself from the other ladies in the play, but also to permit herself a superiority over them. Waller points out that "Katherina's final speech is always a crux in any interpretation" (Waller 40). Now it is Katherina's turn to scold the other disobedient, and "unruly" women. In a manner similar to when Rosalind reproaches Phebe in As You Like It, and also Viola with Olivia in Twelfth Night, but Katherina's final words have a far stronger impact which is noticeable both on her and the other characters around her. Throughout this speech, Katherina secures her position and status once and for all. This security actually comes when she finally learns to use the proper language without necessarily losing her style. Katherina seems to have learnt her lesson as she will now "(freely) accept" her subjection (Althusser 62). For forty-four lines, Katherina describes vehemently her altered attitude. Katherina is no longer the unruly woman. On the contrary, she is the most obedient wife, her words are her enthusiastic testimony. When the husbands make the bet regarding whose wife is the most obedient, both Bianca and the widow fail the
test. The passion with which Katherina delivers her speech is quite remarkable and significant:

What is she but a foul contending rebel,
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?
I am ashamed that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

(The Shrew. V. ii. 160-165)

Bassnett illustrates that the "taming of Katherina, which is a process full of violence and savagery, reflects the position of women in Elizabethan society rather than any special misogyny on the part of Shakespeare" (80). This radical transformation Katherina's language and conduct come to voice does in fact call attention to it. Muriel Bradbrook points out to the fact that Katherina's submissive speech is in "the high style, directly opposed to the 'low' style of her first speeches" ("Dramatic Role as Social Image" 109). Is Katherina sarcastic or desperate? Is she truly tamed? There is absolutely not even one single tone of desperation in Katherina's final words. Katherina's words are still fiery, bold, and forward. Petruchio's taming does not seem to have affected Katherina's defiant style. It is just a matter of altered perspective which "allows Katherina to avoid any reference to her own changed state" (The Taming Of The Shrew, Introduction 149). Kate seems to be looking from within a different angle now. "What we see is not a quiet and submissive Kate," writes Newman, "but the same energetic and linguistically powerful Kate with which the play began" (50). Katherina's ability to manipulate her language is a sign of her power and dominance: "But now I see our lances are but straws, / Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare, / That seeming to be most
which we indeed least are" (The Shrew. V. ii. 174-176). The celebration and the taming ritual is over, both Katherina's and Petruchio's outrageous behavior have come to an end. Katherina knows better now that to be a dignified member of her society, she has to adopt the officially validated diction. It is worth noting here that if Katherina's odd conduct at the beginning of the play has separated her from other women, her reformed conduct, however, has not united her with well-behaved women at the end of the play. Katherina remains in a class of her own. This paradox is what makes the ending of The Taming Of The Shrew open to interpretation. Most importantly, and this should prove true on any stage, Katherina's final words leave all other characters especially Petruchio speechless. Petruchio is literally "lost for words" (The Taming Of The Shrew, Introduction 149). The following question remains to be answered: who tames whom? Is Katherina tamed, or is Petruchio "kated"? (III. ii. 243).
Chapter Five: Performance and the Female Role

5-1- Festivity and the Interpretation of Shakespeare's Comedies

The adaptation of public celebrations in Shakespeare's comedies had its tremendous effect on both the popularity and profitability of the plays in the Renaissance. Undoubtedly, Shakespeare's employment of these popular festivals in his drama had successfully encompassed a magnetic force upon the crowds who were enabled to recognize the general references despite the omissions, shortcuts and alterations in some places. However, since festivity itself was gradually being brushed away from the Elizabethan public life, with the passage of time, festivals had to lose their previous position both in life and on the theatrical stage. Accordingly, Shakespeare's comedies, especially those which profoundly relied on festive occasions, had to undergo the same process, and shared a similar fate of relative unpopularity. In Elizabethan England festivity had been the corner stone of the production and perception of the comedies. The absence of festivity from the general picture of presentation has been a modifying factor for the perception of the comedies which seems to have lost one magnificent touch. What certain metaphors might have stimulated for the Elizabethan audience could not be in any sense recreated within different contexts of cultural productions.

There is no question as to the popularity of Shakespeare's drama during the Restoration period. Following the reopening of the theatres in 1660, productions of Shakespeare's plays became quite frequent. Theatrical practice in the Restoration period is distinguished by many interesting characteristics. Comedy in the Restoration, and the eighteenth century, had the upper hand over tragedy. Restoration comedy is noted for its "sexual explicitness, a quality encouraged by Charles II

1. The closure of theatres, or the Interregnum, by the Puritans extended from 1642- 1660.
(1660-1685) personally and by the rakish aristocratic ethos of his court" ("Restoration Comedy"). The Restoration also witnessed the entrance of the first professional actresses into the world of the theatre. For the first time, Female roles began to be performed not by boy actors, but by real women. However, Shakespeare's plays were often reformed and adjusted, and were "staged with music, dancing, thunder, lightning, wave machines, and fireworks" ("Shakespeare's Reputation").

Shakespeare's drama was also well-received in the eighteenth century which marked the production of the first text editions of the plays. The eighteenth century promoted Shakespeare upon his contemporaries. His drama was considered as matchless, and his characters were regarded as the most authentic representation of human nature. However, as textual criticism peaked, performance was rendered a secondary position. Gradually, Shakespeare criticism addressed readers rather than theatre audiences. In the age of reason performance scripts strayed more and more from the original play texts:

The only aspects of Shakespeare's plays that were consistently disliked and singled out for criticism in the 18th century were the puns ("clenches") and the "low" (sexual) allusions. While a few editors, notably Alexander Pope, attempted to gloss over or remove the puns and the double entendres, they were quickly reversed, and by mid-century the puns and sexual humor were . . . back in to stay. ("Shakespeare's Reputation")

By contrast, Shakespeare's festive comedy is loaded with sexual allusions, puns, and humor derived from the uninhibited discourse of festive celebrations. This uninhibited festive discourse is noted particularly with the female characters. The eighteenth century promoted rational, moderate and simple literature, and Shakespeare's festive comedies, it seems, had to undergo alterations in order to qualify to the criterion of good taste of this period.
In the 19th century theatrical practice took on a whole new perspective. Performance centered around luxurious, ostentatious staging. Shakespeare’s comedies were turned into musicals where the audience would be provided with pamphlets narrating the main course of the action. Unfortunately, 19th century actresses could not revolutionize the female roles they played. Resolving the controversy of boy actors playing female roles was simultaneously paralleled by a tendency to resolve the existence of any passage or gesture that might jeopardize the set Victorian image for women. The festive liberties under which the bold actions of the heroines in Shakespeare’s comedies would be explained, justified and much enjoyed have no longer been in the picture of the Victorian stage:

In the time of Kemble the comedies had almost been transmuted into musicals, their music and lyrics pillaged from every source and freely exchanged from play to play. … the urge towards comic operetta at least acknowledged that Shakespeare's romantic comedies were none too realistic. (Styan 15)

Since public celebrations were no longer the touchstone of the public life, it seems, festivity and the female role had to bow their head to one demanding, materialist culture in which the puritan ethics of hard work and good business replaced the easygoing, country-like festive traditions. Freedoms became restrictions and the absence of festivity had left a vacant space in the reading, interpreting and staging of the comedies. On stage actors were asked to ignore the audience as though they did not exist. Ellipses, shortcuts and eliminations were some of the harm done to the plays, especially with regard to the female role. Styan illustrates that "the general feeling at this time was that Shakespeare wrote magnificent poetry, but not good plays" (17).

*The Players of Shakespeare* series offers an adequate account of some of the 20th
century performers of Shakespeare; a detailed description of a thorough study of characters, texts, and performance on the stage. Most articles speak of a profound interest in the inner properties of the plays, a close examination of words and phrases with an attempt to translate those into the right gesture. Reading accounts of actresses who have played Viola, Rosalind, and Katherina would give a feeling that the comedies are more of a romantic rather than comic nature. It seems as though the modern stage too could not successfully make up for the missing festive humor. Despite the intensive study of the comedies, that antic festive element, which the actresses in the articles could not explain, has been strongly felt by performers and audiences alike. This loss is to be sensed especially with regard to the female role where only hopes and ambitions of a better approach for a creative staging are concluded with.

The diversity of interpretation has got plenty to do with cultural differences among various ages and cultures. Even within the same century, a single play has been produced from multiple viewpoints. Many factors come into play and determine the line of production: socio-economic, political, and theatrical conditions in addition to the background of producers and directors. Penny Gay argues that "each play will in every production, at every performance, be retexualised according to what is available, or fashionable, at the time of its presentation" (4).

The twentieth century in particular offers a rich gallery of productions which clearly signal diverse cultural trends from one decade to the other. The nineteen fifties, or the post-war period, tended to produce the comedies in a gentle way avoiding the difficult questions the comedies contain about the community. In the sixties, most evidently with Peter Hall, more radical approaches and "intellectual adventurousness" emerged in the presentations of the comedies (Gay 13). The early seventies witnessed the strong presence and influence of Feminism where gender
issues were vigorously put into trial. Under the feminist impact in the seventies and the eighties, it should be noted, occasionally, distinguished feminist actresses had the chance to put their stamp on some Shakespearean female roles. The oppressive and pessimistic conditions which pervaded the eighties under the monetarism of "Thatcherism" in England resulted in the production of the comedies as dark plays. "These historical shifts," Gay comments, "are reflected – either consciously or reactively – in the performances of gender and sexuality, and of the idea of the community (its structuring via class, wealth, race), which audiences are willing to pay to see" (14).
5-2- Female Characters and Performance in *Twelfth Night*

*Twelfth Night* had been a popular festive comedy in Elizabethan times. However, as the comic essence of the festive interpretation was excluded from the general frame of representation, the play was both perceived and performed within a completely altered vision. A highly-developed comic scheme such as that of *Twelfth Night* in the sixteenth century has come to be addressed in some productions as bitter or dark comedy. The history of the play on stage reveals the drift of interpretation away from festivity and its vital ties with the female role. *Twelfth Night* has strode into quite diverse theatrical contexts: from the rationalism of the eighteenth century to the lavish and extravagant, yet conservative Victorian stage, and right into the twentieth century with its various productions.

During the Restoration, *Twelfth Night* was produced by D'Avenant's company in 1661. Pepys who attended the play in 1663 and in 1669, "had a low opinion of *Twelfth Night*" (*Twelfth Night*, Introduction lxxx). After a period of neglect, *Twelfth Night* returned to the stage in 1741 and continued to be performed until 1820. In 1820, "it was again briefly supplanted by a thoroughly altered version, this time a musical production devised by Frederick Reynolds" (lxxx). The alterations and modifications in songs had also been recurrent.

The verbal alterations in the nineteenth century were frequent. Kemble, for instance, replaced Viola's "eunuch" by "page" in an attempt to eliminate what could be an "embarrassing word" to the Victorian ear. Such verbal alterations point out to the cultural differences between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth century. The festive culture of Elizabethan England was no longer present to support its vocabulary in the comedies. The liberal and impulsive character of festive comedy, remarkably present in the female role, either did not suit or could not be wholly comprehended in later successive interpretations. Kemble also omitted Viola's line:
"More, by all mores, than e'er I shall love wife" (V. i. 134) in a gesture that could be considered as:

... an interesting pointer to his[Kemble's] judgment (he probably thought 'by all mores' an eccentric phrase and the whole line dangerous to the seriousness at which he was presumably aiming in Viola's asseveration of her love for Orsino). (lxxxii)

The nineteenth century witnessed a huge shift in the perception of the comedies. On stage, Viola, as other female characters, was supposed to set an example of proper and descent conduct for the Victorian women. The reference to the Elizabethan boy actor and the hint at homosexuality were not in line with the nineteenth century objectives when performing such scenes on stage.

Moreover, it was common place in productions from Kemble's time on to start with Viola's line "What country, friends, is this?" (I. ii. 1) instead of Orsino's initial scene. The nineteenth century platform with its low-leveled front curtain that was lifted to reveal a representational stage had obliged productions of *Twelfth Night* to open with Viola's line as a substitute for Orsino's opening scene despite the fact that a relatively short scene such as Orsino's court did not need representational set. On the Elizabethan stage, Orsino's scene would set the mode of the action to the audience. It prepared the audience to draw a contrast between the restrictive atmosphere of Orsino's court and the opposite cheerful temperament of Olivia's household. This first scene would also make obvious Viola's role and her festive impact upon Orsino and his court. But the obsession of the Victorian stage with lavish productions subjugated any disqualifying scene to its demands. Styan argues that it had become a procedure of the theatrical practice in the nineteenth century to transform "scenes to fit the scenery" (19).
Although productions in the twentieth century have usually tended to highlight the comic parts of *Twelfth Night*, Bassnett observes how several critics "saw another, much darker side" to the play (121). Bassnett explains that there are "too many signals" which contradict and interrupt the comic aspects in the play: "there is the shipwreck and Viola's fear that her brother is drowned, Olivia is in mourning for her own dead brother, plague lurks in the background from the opening scene" (122). The subplot where Malvolio is humiliated seems also to discord with the intended comic nature in the play. To the Elizabethan audience, however, such moments were not at all disrupting. The festive scheme that was well expected in Shakespeare's comedies had necessarily involved mockery, ridicule, and abuse which were mentally absorbed by the audience as forms of festive entertainment. Viola's arrival at Illyria had marked the beginning of the twelfth night celebration on the Elizabethan stage. For the Elizabethan audience, Olivia's mourning drew an immediate contrast with the joyful company at her house reinforcing the festive effect in the play. When Olivia responded to Viola/Cesario, there had been no such awkward moment as that modern audiences experience when watching the scene performed on stage. An Elizabethan audience would have rejoiced in Olivia's return to life. The bullying of Malvolio had without the least doubt signaled the peak of festive comedy in the play. *Twelfth Night* presented no such uncomfortable cruelty, but a festive atmosphere in which chaos, madness, and even violence were crucial characteristics to lead back to order. Ironically, the general perception of *Twelfth Night* in the twentieth century, notwithstanding, has motivated productions to create an "unfamiliar world in order to make the 'unrealistic' main plot more acceptable" (*Twelfth Night*, Introduction lxxxv).

In one of the Royal Shakespeare Company's productions of *Twelfth Night*, actress Zoë Wannamaker played Viola's part. Wannamaker speaks about the number of difficulties with which performers are faced when attempting to play
Shakespearean roles in general. Bright performers who have formerly taken on such roles intimidate upcoming performers. Wannamaker admits that it took her about a year to come to terms and be comfortable in Viola's role. "But a year to find that sense is a long time," Wannamaker confesses (82). To Wannamaker, the text, rhythm, and language have not been "instinctive," rather a "secret code to be penetrated" (83). Viola's festive discourse, and her position in a festive climate, has not come as easily and flowingly to either Wannamaker or modern audiences as had been the case with Elizabethan audiences. Practice and rehearsals left performers with major obstacles especially with the formation of the setting. *Twelfth Night* held the setting of an ancient festive celebration no longer. On the modern stage the absence of the holiday sense did not help trigger the comic reaction of the audience. The construction of the Elizabethan platform, which was open and close to the audience, outlined an ambivalence of a festive comedy to the Elizabethan playgoers. This construction of the Elizabethan stage helped shape a scene close to holiday celebrations for the audience. By contrast, the term "comedy" could not always promise humor or laughter on the modern stage:

The set was partly supposed to represent a sort of nightmare, and the lighting was subdued to give an atmosphere of emotional turmoil, discovery of self, growing up, but the translation of these concepts into practical stage terms was not without difficulties for us. It was hard to find your light, and the unevenness of the floor was exacerbated by the eight-inch wide trough for the safety iron, in which many an ankle was in peril of being turned during the season . . . All these things were part of the disappointment (not unusual) of turning initial concepts and ideas into concrete, and sometimes cumbersome, reality. (Wannamaker 84)
Wannamaker found that Viola's reply to Orsino about the love of women to be "defensive, and angry," and that at the end of this scene Viola was "really depressed" (88). This scene, according to Wannamaker, encloses one of the darkest moments for Viola in the whole play. The final scene instituted another difficulty. Orsino's conversion, and the fact that master and page will be united together has been a matter hard of hearing.

To modern audiences, the play does not provide the characters with proper motives to justify the final resolutions. Conversely, surrounded by the spirit of holiday, Elizabethan audiences yearned for reconciliation and longed for a happy and joyful ending such as that of Twelfth Night. Unlike modern audiences, Elizabethans were well accustomed to stories where heroines are disguised in male attire. Shakespeare used disguise as a theatrical technique in his drama with fools and clowns. However, according to Bradbrook, Shakespeare's "most constant and successful use was that of the page's doublet and hose for the heroine" (The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy 88). Consequently, an Elizabethan audience would have been more than willing to embrace and celebrate the final resolutions of the play. Wannamaker writes with such dissatisfaction that "whatever it was, our final scene never seemed to me thorough enough; it was never fully clear to the actors so could not be to the audience" (90).

A general survey of some of the productions of Twelfth Night in the twentieth century can show the different trends in performance and the theatrical methods this century has brought to the play. A 1947 production of Twelfth Night by director Walter Hudd at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre can make obvious the point of departure between the Elizabethan Twelfth Night and later interpretation. Actress Daphne Slater, nineteen years old, played Olivia's part. Viola, most shockingly, was played by forty-four years old actress Beatrix Lehman. On the Elizabethan stage,
Viola had been a boy actor whose undeveloped masculine voice and adolescent energy were intended to perform the female role, and would quite fit the suit of the female disguised as page. In *Twelfth Night*, Orsino comments abundantly on Cesario's soft features which indicate the adolescence of the boy actor, and also hints at the erotic possibilities the play displays:

This was a production not intent on foregrounding sexual confusion, but confidently presenting an image of the emotionally-independent, self-reliant, and rather interestingly 'masculine' woman whom the social disruptions of the second war brought into being. (Gay 20)

Another production of *Twelfth Night* was that of Director Ngaio Marsh in 1951. Upon taking the voyage of directing Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Marsh acknowledged that:

The modern producer of Shakespeare's comedies believes himself to be up against a number of difficulties. Much of the word-bandying is, he says, disastrously unfunny while many of the allusions are obscure and some so coarse that it is just as well that they are also incomprehensible. (Marsh 69)

Marsh saw the play as one whole refusing to promote one character, or even one scene over another. Illyria became the focal point of this production, "a place we had visited only in dreams" (70). Watteau fabrics came in line with the lighting which "modulated from grey and blue-pink to full watteauesque gold and turquoise." Marsh viewed the play as rich yet sad, dwindling with an indispensable tone of regret: "it is because *Twelfth Night* is so gay that it is also so delicately sad" (71). Actors shared with Marsh his sense of sadness engulfing the atmosphere of the play. Again, the joyful presence of *Twelfth Night* on the Elizabethan stage was contradicted by the dark view of this production.
One point is quite interesting about Marsh's production. After examining her language, Marsh thought that Olivia must be considered as an adolescent, not a mature woman. Although the action has many clues to indicate that Olivia is an adult, Olivia's sudden impulses assigned her as a young, immature lady in this production. On the outset, Olivia is the ruler of her house. She is obviously old enough to decide that Orsino does not suit her. Olivia is also mature enough to acknowledge that she will not accept any man out of her social range. Olivia's bewilderment and confused language upon her interval with Viola/Cesario could well be explained in terms of the upside down festive world to whose gestures the Elizabethan audience was accustomed.

In 1958 *Twelfth Night* was directed by Peter Hall who, according to Gay, "had sought for and found the 'dark side' of this comedy" (23). With Hall, *Twelfth Night* became a serious and dark play, lacking the sense of the light festive comedy on the Elizabethan stage. Malvolio was presented as a tragic figure, no longer the indispensable kill-joy character of festive comedy. Feste the clown, the utmost representative of festive culture and comic entertainment on the Elizabethan stage, performed a tragic role in Hall's production.

Hall cast actress Geraldine McEwan to play Olivia's character. Through casting McEwan, Hall attempted to revive and innovate Olivia's often overshadowed role. With McEwan, Hall managed to achieve what Gay terms as "the sexualizing of Olivia" (24). Olivia's bewilderment at the sight of disguised Viola and Sebastian side by side was performed in a manner that exposed Olivia's delight having found two handsome men to choose from instead of one. Such a representation on stage was not unanimously favorable among critics or audiences. Gay comments on this particular point that "obviously a sexually-aware Olivia was 'not Shakespeare' for some members of the audience" (25). 'Not Shakespeare' in the sense that Olivia's character
has come to be associated with mourning and death over the time. In any case, on the Elizabethan stage Olivia was neither meant to be that sexually exposed nor tragic. It is more likely that Olivia's initial mourning and conservatism had been intended to contrast with her rather liberal and impulsive attitude upon encountering disguised Viola, the messenger of the festive spirit in the play. Olivia's confusion at beholding two Cesarios in front of her was part of the well-expected holiday chaos and misunderstandings that would eventually lead to release.

Viola's character, however, was more Elizabethan in representation than modern. Played by actress Dorothy Tutin who, according to Gay, performed the role with enthusiasm and warmness successfully presenting the young and boyish element in Viola's role. As a whole, Hall's "moderate changes to tradition" which offer "just a hint of modern irony and gender-disruption in the Viola-Olivia scenes, seems to have satisfied – or sated- the market" (Gay 26).

A common feature that productions of the nineteen eighties share is the tendency to exhibit the dark and violent elements especially in the second half of *Twelfth Night*. This notion was best manifested in Bill Alexander's 1987 *Twelfth Night*. Alexander placed the play in a hot country deconstructing the Elizabethan setting of a winter *Twelfth Night*. On the Elizabethan stage, the associations of the play with the winter holiday of the twelfth night were irrefutable. The indoor pastimes at Olivia's household, in addition to the presentation of the characters in the action, all came in line with the atmosphere of a typical winter holiday. Actress Harriet Walter who played Viola's character in Alexander's production was "a very boyish tall crop-haired redhead, with no yearnings towards femininity," and her performance gave the impression of "an awkward, melancholy Viola who seemed perpetually on the point of tears" (Gay 45). Olivia, Deborah Findlay, was also melancholic showing no interest in Viola\Cesario. Orsino, Donald Sumpter, was presented as a character more
fitting as Viola's father than potential lover. The lack of chemistry between the two was quite visible on the stage. By contrast, the mutual attraction and infatuation between Orsino and his page had in fact been responsible for the hostility which the Puritans poured on the Elizabethan theatrical stage. Moreover, the Elizabethan boy actor playing Viola could not be cheerless or depressing. Viola's character had been the festive medium through whom both Orsino and Olivia were delivered from their depressive modes. This production, in line with most of the nineteen eighties productions, completely drifted away from the festive interpretation of *Twelfth Night*. Instead, the play became a mouthpiece for the conditions in the world of the eighties:

In fact, what emerges from these 'dark' productions of *Twelfth Night* in the 1980s is a sense of the repression of desire, both in the *dramatis personae* and in the audience. Love is difficult (if it exists at all), sex is egoistic greed, laughter is cruel, and any beauty is fraught with melancholy or danger. By displacing the play from an imaginary Illyria to a realistic Aegean community, Bill Alexander offered a metaphor for the conservative and selfish society of the 1980s. (Gay 46-47)

Clearly, each period, even in the same century, has interpreted *Twelfth Night* and the female role based on its own realities, values and premises. The festive context of the Elizabethan century is often replaced by other contexts which accord with the cultural context of the period in which the play is being performed.
As You Like It has never ceased to be a popular play in which audiences have delighted from the sixteenth century on. Rosalind's joyful role and subtle wit has made the play one of the most loved Shakespearean plays. However, popular did not always equal comic. In this survey of some theatrical performances of the play, the question is not of whether productions have been popular or not. It is rather an investigation of how far has interpretation traveled from festivity and its associations with the female role, and the way this shift has affected the performance of the female characters in As You Like It. An examination of a number of productions of As You Like It over several ages, but with special regard to the twentieth century, serves the purpose of projecting the way in which performance has drifted away from the festive interpretation, and the impact this festive vacancy has left especially with reference to the female role. On stage, the social context of As You Like It, which had been devised by the festive associations of the country/court opposition in Elizabethan times, came to portray diverse contemporary concerns of different historical periods. The play, and particularly Rosalind's role, was at times considered too liberate; at others withholding and dissatisfactory. The final resolutions in the play, while conducting quite a suitable ending for some cultural periods, have often been rejected as unacceptable especially in the twentieth century.

In 1723, Charles Johnson, a playwright, staged the first in a series of many altered adaptations of As You Like It at Drury Lane under the name of Love in a Forest. Characters such as Touchstone along with the other low class characters were excluded. Johnson had as well borrowed certain passages from Much Ado About Nothing, and Richard II as substitutes to some passages in As You Like It. Conversely, the presence of Touchstone, the fool, on the Elizabethan stage had
without the least doubt contributed to the festive sphere in the play. Furthermore, the existence of lower class characters in the forest had also helped shape and deepen the country\court opposition \textit{As You Like It} was framed around.

The fact that Rosalind's role is the longest female role Shakespeare had ever composed attracted actresses to play this exceptional heroine from the eighteenth century on. Comedian actress Dorothy Jordan delighted audiences playing Rosalind between 1778 and 1814. Tragic actress Sarah Siddons, on the other side, failed to deliver Rosalind's character on stage. Although Siddons brought playfulness to the role, but she refused to dress as a man and she also lacked the assertiveness and sauciness audiences had come to expect from the part. During the nineteenth century, actresses Helen Faucit and Ada Rehan both performed Rosalind with success. Rehan in particular was thought as perfect in the role. In the twentieth century, actress Edith Evans played Rosalind between 1926 and 1937, and was perceived as "witty, romantic, modern Rosalind" ("\textit{As You Like It} Performance").

In 1973, director Buzz Goodbody was the first woman to direct \textit{As You Like It} at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Penny Gay describes Goodbody's production as "relentlessly anti-theatrical and defiantly feminist" (64). Goodbody's production was done with modern outfits and was meant to comment on modern society and the contemporary position of women.

Within Goodbody's feminist perspective, the final scene in the play constituted a major obstacle. Goodbody could not accept the final resolutions in which Rosalind, having projected remarkable strength and power in Arden, willingly chooses to fall back into the patriarchal system represented by Orlando and her father. This paradoxical irony of the final scene was consequently not "explored by the production, which thus rather lost its point" (Gay 65). Thirty-nine years old Eileen Atkins who played Rosalind was described as a modern, liberated, and intelligent
Rosalind. Once again, the discrepancy between Atkins and the tradition of the Elizabethan young boy actor floats to the surface. Through choosing Atkins, Goodbody sought for a "strong female lead with distinctly contemporary air - an anti-romantic- and could not find such a figure among young actresses . . . " (66). On the Elizabethan stage, Rosalind's character was supposed to put forward the qualities of both a romantic and a liberal woman. It was the contrast between the court and the forest which made the distinctions clear to the Elizabethan audience. Rosalind's power and supremacy were the symptoms of the festive climate manifested in Arden. Her final surrender declared the end of holiday, and the restoration of order announcing the return to the restraining life of the court which stood for the official culture.

Sophie Thompson played both Celia for the Renaissance Theatre Company, and Rosalind at Stratford. Thompson explains how the large stage at Stratford did not help facilitate the movement of the performers. Although happenings in the forest indicate that Arden is a mystical place, the setting came contrasting to this notion. On the Elizabethan stage, Arden was the festive setting which brought into action the country\court opposition. Arden had provided the festive space for an outlet that contradicted and transgressed the restrictions of the official culture:

When we go to the forest, in the Stratford production, it wasn't nice cherry-tree with deer. It always had an edge to it. . . . by the time Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone came to the forest, there was just a big wall with a clock on it: Rosalind pushed against the middle of the wall and it swung open like a pair of high doors; there was a deep, ominous musical chord and what we found was a frightening void, with swirling smoke and wind and nothing remotely resembling tree. (Thompson 81)
At Stratford, Thompson acted in a manly form with Silvius and Phebe. With Orlando, however, she did not alter her voice or conduct; she remained a woman in tone and attitude. Bassnett refers to the fact that the exclusion of the Elizabethan boy actors playing female roles from the eighteenth century onward had drifted the interpretation and performance of the female role completely. On the Elizabethan stage, the boy actor had been a part of the comic scheme. The jokes uttered by the boy figures under female characters gained a whole different sense once actresses took on the roles of disguised heroines. Bassnett writes that "it is difficult for contemporary minds to grasp all the implications of this style of performance" (127). Thompson points out that Rosalind and Celia's interval with Jacques was quite "difficult." The two actresses could not maintain the required rhythm. The outcome was ambiguous to the audience:

The transition into the next scene – when they meet Jacques – is difficult, too. At Stratford when we started the run Celia and I used to come on in hysterics, two young girls who had just had a very funny experience. They met Jacques, who wanted to talk about melancholia, but Rosalind could hardly speak she was laughing so much. We seemed to 'find it' one day in the rehearsals, but it never worked again. We played it that way to the first audiences but they didn't know what was going on. (83)

Despite all the enthusiasm that actress Sophie Thompson has put on to get the most out of her role, no genuine sense of comedy could be felt in her words about the performance. With Orlando, the meetings were romantic and instructive. Rosalind's encounter with Jacques was characterized by a touch of melancholy and sadness that was shared and understood by both characters.
Adrian Noble has also directed *As You Like It* in an 1985 RSC production starring Juliet Stevenson as Rosalind and Fiona Shaw as Celia. Noble has deliberately cast his Celia two inches taller than Rosalind. The production was performed with modern clothes for the purpose of obliging both "audience and actors to recognize the play in the light of contemporary thinking and experience" (Shaw 57). Rosalind's jokes and wordplay in the first section of the play were considered as means to "rationalize her own situation in a more personal way, accusing Dame Fortune of negligence in the distribution of 'her gifts to women'" (58). Arden was thought of as an imaginative world to which both Rosalind and Celia escape "through their word-play," a world that is "created by their pooled imaginations" (59). Again, the notion that Arden stands for festive culture and its inclinations was missed out. The play was intended to comment on contemporary issues, and not on an ancient culture that carried no interests to the modern audience.

Both Shaw and Stevenson agree that Celia's discourse in the first section of the play is assertive and dominant whereas Rosalind's is lacking. In performance, Rosalind seemed distant and absent. Accordingly, playing Rosalind here became quite hard and demanding since "her silence must be placed by the production so that it has an eloquence" (60). In the second half of the play, Rosalind takes over as Celia resigns into silence. Stevenson thought that Rosalind's feelings and the way through which she expresses her inner emotions had an "adolescent ring of absolutism about them, and also an astonishingly mature consciousness of the power of love" (62). Again the ages of both Rosalind and Celia could not be properly marked out. Their activeness and liveliness indicate a very youthful teenage energy, yet their sophisticated language and sharp wordplay reflected quite a reversed notion. In this production, it was thought more convenient to avoid assigning Rosalind and Celia with any particular age. The absence of any clear statement to the age of the two
characters allowed both Shaw and Stevenson to play their roles more freely with no definite edges. However, to the Elizabethan audience, this seeming contradiction apparent in the language of the two ladies could easily be explained by the festive country/court opposition. As a matter of fact, Rosalind and Celia's flipping utterances had prepared and set the rhythm of the text to identify the opposition between the official versus festive cultures; between the confinements of the court and the liberties of the forest.

Once disguised, the discourse of Stevenson's Rosalind floated and she created her own world in Arden. But disguised Rosalind instituted another challenge to Stevenson, and in fact to any actress, whose whole energy and intelligence had to be present in every single word:

The actress playing her requires an alacrity of thought and nimbleness of tongue second to none, as Rosalind's language dances out of her spirit in ever-lengthening arcs of prose, allowing barely a chance to breathe. Reaction must be challenged immediately into action, and she quite literally seems to leave the ground. (Stevenson 66)

The ending was by no means easy to the performers. After all the radical investigation of values, traditions, and gender issues, Duke Senior closed the action with a most conventional closure. On the Elizabethan stage, this ending would have been quite appropriate completing the magical atmosphere of Arden in a ceremony which marked the end of the outdoor festival the play conveyed. It was a celebration at the end of which everything must return back to normality and order. Arden offered a festive opportunity of liberty, transgression, and exploration, yet it also issued the necessary return to the standards and criteria of ordinary life. To modern
performers and audiences such ending sounded and felt restricting, withholding, and unsatisfying:

This, at the end of a play which so fully and radically explores the complexities of sexuality, maleness, and femaleness, and sends gender boundaries flying, was endlessly difficult to play. In Stratford, we came to feel that the production was somehow at risk in washing over these difficulties, and that we were required to become different people in those last moments. (70)

Commenting on Stevenson's performance, Penny Gay explains that "what was evidently lost in this reading of Rosalind was the comic vitality" which actresses have often attempted to pervade the role with. Stevenson, Gay illustrates, "was intense and sincere rather than naturally playful" (80).

In 1977, director Trevor Nunn turned *As You Like It* into a musical. According to Gay, the play "required a more obviously intellectual approach" (69). Nunn added an opening masque in addition to the final masque of the Hymen. This addition contradicted the course of festive comedy on the Elizabethan stage. The supernatural element of festivity would naturally take place in Arden, the festive sphere, and not at the court, representative of the official culture. The setting and costumes were French, the point of which was to comment on the "dominance" of the French culture over England in the seventeenth century. Failing to make this point out, most critics and reviewers persisted that *As You Like It* is "a play, not an opera or a ballet or a musical called 'Kiss Me Kate'" (70). Kate Nelligan played Rosalind in this excessive production. Gay points out that although critics admired her energy and gaiety, yet Nelligan's Rosalind somehow lacked the complexity and irony of modern passion. Particularly, Nelligan failed to represent "the ambiguities of the part critics were beginning to expect in the sexually-exploratory 1970s" (71). The sexual revolution of
the seventies, it should be noted, which was "an outgrowth of the counterculture, cast aside traditional sexual restraints and began a decade of alternative eroticism, experimentation, and promiscuity" ("1970's Lifestyles and Social Trends"). Apparently, Nunn's *As You Like It* failed to represent the effect of an old culture, and equally misrepresented the cultural context of the seventies. There was an obvious shift from the festive interpretation in this production. However, the exclusion of modern concerns made the play inaccessible to the contemporary audience of the seventies.

John Caird directed *As You Like It* in the year of 1989. Surprisingly, the audience entered the theatre to find an ongoing party, the point of which was to expose the "bored, idle, and corrupt rich" (82). Yet this gesture was not welcomed or fully made out by reviewers or critics. Of course, the Elizabethan audience, familiar with the country\court opposition, were enabled to absorb the connotations of the repressive world of the court versus the liberties of the country. A party at the court would have misguided and complicated the whole perception of the Elizabethan audience to the country\court opposition. In this 1989 production, Gay demonstrates, even Arden came as somehow shocking and distanced:

It was, however, the image of Arden which most worried the critics- an alien, vaguely sinister world in the play's first half, all piles of planks and swirling mist, and in the second half, a pool surrounded by surrealistic bulrushes; no trees (again). Its inhabitants, most notably Silvius and Phoebe, behaved very oddly indeed, pursuing their courtships in underwear . . . The audience was clearly invited to take a patronizing view of the absurd behaviour of these pastoral types ineptly aping their betters. (83)
Gay comments that generally speaking the characterization in this production "was too short on sexual excitement" (84). Characters bore the semblance of small children playing on stage. Sophie Thompson played Rosalind where she was outfitted as a school girl. The festive scheme of the Elizabethan stage indicated young people celebrating an outdoor holiday, crossing the lines, and then going back to the routine of everyday life. Those were people old enough to have a celebration in the woods, as they were equally capable of making a safe return to their real world. However, in Caird's production, Gay continues, "one wondered how these children of the greenwood would survive on the outside, lacking even the empowerment of sexual desire" (85).

A production of *As You Like It* in 1991 by director Declan Donelllan was distinguished by Donellan's use of a whole team of strictly male actors, "an all male cast," whose impact on the stage has had, in Holland's opinion, "a much-loved picture restored." Though of course this has not been the first attempt to recreate something similar to the original effect back on the Elizabethan stage. However, this all male cast, the director, and the audience, though both offering and being offered with an experience quite close to what the original might have been, they have not been at any expense themselves Elizabethans neither in mentality nor in conduct. Consequently, the reaction to the performance has definitely been of a different nature especially concerning sexuality and the controversial role of a male actor playing a female part disguising as a male and finally pretending to be a female. According to Holland, "gender became a construct of performance and sexuality was placed within the control of character, not actor". In this production, actor Adrian Lester played Rosalind's character. His amazing and much credited performance has made Rosalind's role more ecstatic than would a female actress and "the tremendous
erotic charge between Rosalind and Orlando had nothing glibly homoerotic about it" (Holland 128).

Of course Elizabethan boy actors playing the parts of Shakespeare's female characters cannot be compared to those male actors who played the female parts in the twentieth century. The whole tradition of acting was condemned and fought based on the theories of what might lead to homoerotic license between adult and boy actors. Shakespeare's comedies which were particularly charged with festive license and freedom could invoke such forbidden desires in actors. The success of Donellan's production in the twentieth century partly came from its all male cast even though the jokes had operated on a different level in the sixteenth century. The audience grasped the double role of a male actor playing a female role pretending to be male, and this realization in itself had the virtue of provoking laughter. The comparatively tolerant nature of the twentieth century automatically resolved the supposed homoeroticism of the performers on which the Elizabethan anti-theatrical authorities based their judgments and verdicts.

Every age, and each decade, it seems, has brought into play its own social, economic, and political agenda which has tremendously affected the vision and production of *As You Like It*. The disparity between the sixteenth century *As You Like It* and later interpretations lies in the cultural differences which are modifying factors that cannot be escaped or ignored in any reproduction of the play. Shakespeare's play could no longer convey the festive connotations of the country\court opposition which have become irrelevant in any performance past the sixteenth century.
5-4- Female Characters and Performance in *The Taming Of The Shrew*

In its gender politics, *The Taming Of The Shrew* is a problematic play that has issued many challenges to directors over the time. Bassnett suggests that *The Taming Of The Shrew* "was not a great success" in the sixteenth century, and that the first record of performance took place in 1762 in a "revised vision" (72). Bassnett points out to the "difficulties" presented by Katherina's final speech. While some performers interpret Katherina's words as mocking; others, notwithstanding, behold a submissive attitude in Katherina. Actress Sinead Cusack played Katherina in a production by Barrie Kyle. Sinead has an optimistic view in which she sees a liberated Katherina. Paola Dionisotti and Fiona Shaw, who have played Katherina in RSC productions, do not share Sinead her optimism. Both actresses thought the play revolved around Petruchio's triumph over Katherina. Katherina, as these two actresses perceive her, "has very few lines and is off-stage at crucial decision-making moments" (76). Bassnett identifies Katherina as the object of jokes in the play where the audience "colludes with the husband in seeing her brought to heel" (79). However, in Elizabethan England, the shaming ritual, around which *The Taming Of The Shrew* was built, aimed at humiliating the husband and not the shrewish wife. In such ceremony, Katherina was under no pressure; Petruchio, on the contrary, was. It was Petruchio who had allowed his wife to surpass her defined edge. Katherina's outrage was a lively part in a festive scheme that permitted both physical and verbal liberties. Katherina's role reflected a festive show of chaos and liberty portrayed on the stage in a theatrical performance. It is quite reasonable to suggest that the audiences would take Petruchio's side. Yet, the sixteenth century audience, who could as well have colluded with Petruchio, had equally enjoyed Katherina's shrewish temper and her verbal war with Petruchio. Without an outrageous Kate, there would not be a Petruchio nor could there be a play. In fact, whether for the sixteenth century or for
later ages, Katherina is the focal point of the play and the success in conveying her role is a decisive factor for the play as a whole to make it through. Some of the productions of *The Taming Of The Shrew* are going to be surveyed here, highlighting certain points which contribute to the purpose of this dissertation. The optimal aim is to project the way through which Katherina's role had been perceived in the festive interpretation of sixteenth century England as contrasted to the portrayal and perception of this female role within the different cultural contexts in the performance history of the play.

Peter Hall produced the play in 1960 with director John Barton. Barton cast fifty-two year-old Dame Peggy Ashcroft to play Katherina and twenty-eight year-old Peter O'Tool as Petruchio. To penny Gay, "the casting of Ashcroft had the effect of slanting the play towards high comedy" (96). Many reviewers observed that Ashcroft played Katherina in a manner demanding sympathy rather than provoking laughter. The age is again a modifying factor to the female role. No matter how convincing or moving Ashcroft's Katherina was, fifty-two years old does not even come close to the presentation of the Elizabethan Katherina fundamentally played by the young boy actor. On the Elizabethan stage, Kate did not cry for sympathy or compassion. Both Katherina and Petruchio were performing parts of a public ceremony the audience had been quite acquainted with. When Hall's production was revived in 1961, Ashcroft was replaced by twenty-four year old actress Vanessa Redgrave. The age this time was more appropriate displaying a better match for Petruchio. It was Redgrave's final scene that came somehow disappointing. In this final scene, Redgrave seemed too eager to inform Petruchio that he has won the bet. The play intended to show that the two were in love at first sight right from the beginning of the play. For some reviewers, Redgrave "missed the role's irony"; for others, male reviewers in particular, Redgrave's performance was characterized with "grace,
charm, and sweetness" (98). As a matter of fact, Katherina's first words in her last elaborate speech would make her obedience in abundance. Despite this, Katherina goes on with her speech not allowing anything or anyone to stop her short. It is this lengthy lecture on female submission Katherina compiles which opens the text, and in particular Katherina's role, for diverse interpretations over the times.

A 1973 production of the play directed by Clifford Williams has few interesting points. Sly remained on stage throughout the whole play. In this production, Alan Bates played Petruchio and Susan Fleetwood played Katherina. Gay points out that "this pairing did not provide the right chemistry" (103). On his part, flouting with irony, Bates seemed distanced from the role. Fleetwood's Katherina was desperate and melancholic swaggering between laughter and tears. To bring out her hostility plainly before the audience, Williams makes Katherina enter the stage with a gun in her hand. Conversely, in the sixteenth century, fiery words were Katherina's only weapon. In her exchanges with Petruchio, festive vocabularies manifested to the audience what position each of them stood for. Language made the personification of the shaming ritual and the Hocktide games apprehensible to the Elizabethan audience who were able to pick up such festive inclinations and meanings. In this 1973 production, Kate and Petruchio's hostility and violence needed some other means than just words to make the point to the audience.

With Michael Bogdanov's 1978 production, the setting generated a provocative image presenting the taming of Katherina as a repulsive exposition of male chauvinism and exploitation. From between the audience a drunk man mounted the stage arguing with an usherette. Later on, this drunk man turned out to be no other but Sly who also returned back on the stage as Petruchio mounting the stage on a motor-bike where Katherina turned out to be no other than the usherette. Gay demonstrates that the point of this was to show that "male violence and the desire to
dominate are a present problem, not something which 'used to happen' in a safely sanitized past" (104). This production is renowned for the violence in which most of the characters take part: Kate and Petruchio had violent quarrels together, Kate and Bianca also fought ferociously. Aiming at dismantling tradition, Dionisotti's Katherina was not presented as the neglected, unattractive sister. By this alteration, Bogdanov sought for a "mould-breaking image" (105).

In the scene at the tailor's, Petruchio's bad temper blended the comedy with "danger." As for Katherina's final speech, the first lines indicated her reformed attitude as an obedient wife. But the speech was far from being wholly delivered:

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\text{. . . but as she continued in tones of increasingly bitter irony an embarrassed silence fell and Petruchio sat, face averted in angry shame, pushing away her hand as she crouched by his foot. His shame did not prevent him from nodding to Grumio as he departed with his wife leaving his servant to clamber eagerly over the table, scooping up his master's winnings on the way out. ("The Taming Of The Shrew in Performance") 6)
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The Taming Of The Shrew became a play about Petruchio and his victory, and not about Katherina. Opinions of the reviewers conflicted around this modern production. To Penny Gay, in this production the "entrenched social attitudes . . . were largely undisturbed by Bogdanov's attempted radicalism, and the fault must partly lie in his allowing the comic business to overtake his radical reading" (107). Bogdanov's modern outlook was curbed by his intention to stage the play still as a comedy. In order to exhibit Petruchio's male violence and prejudice, Katherina was tossed out of the picture and again it was Petruchio who ruled the scene. Dionsetti found herself out of place in this production as a modern Kate. This modern presentation confused the actress who could not make out how a woman in the
twentieth-century would possibly surrender to male violence and dominance trouble-free. However, this was not what really bothered Bogdanov. According to Gay, what actually interested Bogdanov was "an anatomy of the patriarchal society" by means of exposing a male figure (Petruchio) whose openness about his greed and materialism was overtly brutal and undisguised (109).

In 1987, director Jonathan Miller substituted the Induction by a band playing Renaissance music. In this way, the director "freed himself from the framework of the play within a play, allowing him to handle the taming story as a realistic social comedy" ("The Taming Of The Shrew in Performance" 9). However, to the Elizabethan audience, the Induction and the effect of play within a play had been indispensable in the sense that it helped introduce and reinforce the festive frame of the play. The Induction's dream-like vision prepared the audience for the coming show. This production focused on the condition of women in the sixteenth century aiming to present the modern audience with a realistic version of a past history. The Taming Of The Shrew was no longer a performed ceremony on stage, it has rather become a serious statement and a metaphor of women's oppression in the Renaissance. It seems that the upside-down festive world in which women had enjoyed a relative release has not been a part of any twentieth century production of the play.

Miller saw the play as a representative of the Elizabethan politics about marriage and family. In this production, Miller provided a text-book containing some passages from social historians on the background of the Elizabethan age. Miller eliminated the Induction, and the setting was a typical Elizabethan community. To Miller, the problematic gender issues in the play were somehow resolved by aliening the world of the play from modern life. Miller, it is worth noting, was also interested in relating the reactions under such repressive social conditions and modern psychological
presuppositions. Penny Gay notices Miller's fusion of past conditions with modern theories most evidently in the portrayal of Katherina's character. Actress Fiona Shaw played Katherina in this production. Shaw's Kate was depicted as the neglected child who "suffered from recognizably modern neuroses although dressed in Renaissance costume" (116). Katherina was instantly attracted to Petruchio because he offered her an escape from her miserable life at home. As a feminist actress, Shaw's reading of Katherina's role came somehow different from that of Miller's. Gay records that Shaw was a miserable, silenced, and marginalized Kate who came to recognize that the patriarchal system could not be changed. Kate, in Shaw's opinion, boldly acknowledges that her strength is weak under such patriarchal structure. In the final scene, both Katherina and Petruchio sat on stage one next to the other intimately. By contrast to most productions in the twentieth century, the play was not violent in any sense:

    Miller's production did give huge satisfaction to both critics and audiences, . . . because he treated the play as a document in social history, an autonomy of an acquisitive masculine society, which had recognizably the same impulses as our own, though a different social structure. (118)

    Through placing the play in ancient history, both performers and audience were able to relax when viewing the play. It was as though the audience were watching an old black and white movie which concepts did not apply to their modern perspective, but still could tolerate and even enjoy it. However, to suit the expectations and mentality of the twentieth century audience, *The Taming Of The Shrew* made a huge leap from its Elizabethan context. Although the setting and concepts were those of the sixteenth century, the staging as a whole held a modern look onto the play.
The Taming Of The Shrew is but seldom performed as a comedy. There emerges a sense of uneasiness and discomfort regarding the play's gender politics, and particularly the treatment of Katherina. It seems that the Elizabethan festive interpretation of The Taming Of The Shrew lost its essence and humor in the succeeding ages. Not perceiving the play as a comedy is a tendency that remarkably predominates the twentieth century productions of the play. Twentieth century interpretations of the play tend to consider that the "essence of farce is the dramatist's intention to provoke laughter in his audience, and laughter is by no means our dominant response when watching or reading The Shrew" (The Taming Of The Shrew, Introduction 141).
**Conclusion:**

In this dissertation the female role has been studied within the context of the festive culture which prevailed throughout sixteenth century England. The Elizabethan cultural conflict of festive versus anti-festive forces which has been echoed in the world of Shakespeare's festive comedy is identified and investigated. The female position in the festive culture has also been analyzed disclosing points of significance to the interpretation of the female role in the comedies. A thorough examination of festivity and its inextricable relations with the Elizabethan theatrical practice in general and the female role in particular has been provided in this research in order to reveal aspects of the female role which were hardly addressed after the Elizabethan era.

Understanding the female role in its original festive context entailed examining the festive culture in Elizabethan England in general highlighting the festive celebration that each comedy adapted in an attempt to define the position, and thus role, of the heroines in the three comedies.

*Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* are among Shakespeare's festive comedies, which were built around popular celebrations in Elizabethan England. Viola, Rosalind and Katherina are the heroines of the festive atmosphere these comedies emulate. These leading female characters are at the centre of the action around whom threads of the plot revolve. Viola, Rosalind and Katherina represent the festive culture in its various manifestations of liberty, transgression and power, both physical and verbal. Each of these heroines enjoyed a temporary freedom to turn her patriarchal world up-side down. The unconventional actions of these female characters, which seem eccentric in the patriarchal Elizabethan community, start to make perfect sense when interpreted in the context of the Elizabethan festive culture. The point is not that Viola, Rosalind and Katherina are examples of bold
heroines who attempted to revolt against their patriarchal worlds, but were eventually forced into silence. It is rather that these heroines are participants in certain festive celebrations which involve revolt and transgression. In this light, all three heroines enjoyed the temporary festive release and resumed their ordinary lives when the festival was over.

Looking at disguise and its function in both the festive celebration and on stage was crucial to the comprehension of the female role in the comedies since the heroines were in disguise for most of the action. The festive and theatrical layers of disguise were quite significant to realize the position of the female both in the festive culture and in festive comedy. In *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like it*, Viola's and Rosalind's disguises came as complementary to the festive frame of the two comedies. Being a form of festive masquerade and cross-dressing, disguise provided Viola and Rosalind with physical and verbal liberties. Moreover, disguise enlarged the sexual identity of Viola and Rosalind, and thus both of them experienced the roles of male and female. Disguise and the male identity allowed both heroines entrance and granted them respected positions into their male-dominated worlds. Disguise, however, did not unfold similar meanings for Viola and Rosalind. On the one hand, in *Twelfth Night*, Viola was obviously not at comfort in her male attire. Rosalind, on the other hand, seemed to have a mastery over her doublet and hose. In disguise, Rosalind was all power and supremacy. On the whole, the festive privileges and transgressions of disguise granted both Viola and Rosalind with a superior position in their worlds. In disguise, Rosalind was able to question and defy the traditional theories regarding women, love and marriage. Disguise was a part of the festive transgression which permitted both Viola and Rosalind to transgress their traditional roles and have their say on stage.

Discourse is another intriguing factor which has its influence on the perception
and understanding of the female role. The discrepancy between the festive and the anti-festive discourse found its best expression in the discourses of Viola, Rosalind and Katherina. The three heroines shifted back and forth between the festive and the anti-festive modes of speech. The seeming paradox and irony of this constant shifting would lose color when the female role is interpreted in the context of festivity. In Illyria, Viola's language is festive especially around Olivia's joyful residence. Conversely, Viola's discourse is quite repressed and tongue-tied at Orsino's court. In a parallel line, Rosalind's awkward discourse at court contradicts her rather uninhibited language in the festive realm of Arden. Katherina's discourse in *The Taming of the Shrew* is outrageous and violent in the first part of the action. After marriage, however, Katherina's discourse takes on a diverse course. Kate's final words sound in favor of the anti-festive discourse. Festive vocabularies, which referred to the specific festive occasions each comedy conveyed, were the clues of the Elizabethan audience to pick up the festive frame and thus understand the comic aspects of each play. How could a female utter such defiant and bold utterances and still be applauded to in a patriarchal environment and playhouse governed by men and attended to mostly by male spectators? It is only that the female characters spoke to the Elizabethan audience who was aware of the nature of festive celebrations and their verbal transgressions where a female could turn her world upside down.

Highlighting performance over diverse historical periods aimed at emphasizing the cultural context as a defining factor in reproducing the comedies. This in turn has strengthened the importance of the festive culture in producing the female role on the Elizabethan stage. Performance of the female role throughout diverse historical periods revealed the way through which interpretation has always adhered to the cultural context of each historical period. A brief survey of theatrical productions of the plays in different historical periods illustrates that performance and the female
role in particular has always assimilated contemporary issues and concerns. Productions of *Twelfth Night* in the nineteen eighties presented a melancholic Viola always on the verge of tears. In 1989 director John Cai red intended *As You Like It* to expose the corrupted rich class in society. With director Michael Bogdanov, who intended to expose patriarchal practices, *The Taming of the Shrew* was renewed for its violence and lack of humor.

Overlooking the festive element which informed the original productions of these plays left theatrical companies in the twentieth century with some difficult performing decisions: either make the comedies represent contemporary concerns or place them in an ancient or remote and alien environment. In both cases, the festive presence in comedy would lose its place on stage. Neither the festive transgressions of the female characters nor the comedy behind them were fully comprehended by twentieth century performers and audiences. It was illogical that Rosalind, for example, would willingly surrender to the patriarchal authority of Orlando and her father. Olivia's marriage to Sebastian and the final resolutions in *Twelfth Night* were often found intangible. Katherina's role, for instance, is figured as problematic and discomforting: Why would a woman in the twentieth century stay in an abusive marriage where she is treated less than human? Once festive celebrations around which these comedies were designed and originally produced are left out as an essential factor in the interpretation, the plays seem to have lost their comic potentials. As a result, the logicality and comedy of the female role, which depended on the festive interpretation, could not be recaptured anywhere on stage past the Elizabethan age.

All in all, the festive interpretation is one way of reading the female role in Shakespeare's comedies. It is an interpretation through which the role of the female characters has been viewed in relation to culture, history and ideology. The festive
meanings of Viola’s, Rosalind's and Katherina's roles have their place and prominence in Elizabethan England in which festivity was a vivid part of the texture of the Elizabethan community. For the succeeding interpretive communities, to whom festivity was but an ancient history, the female role became the outcome of diverse and different collaborative factors, socioeconomic, political and ideological.
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