

11-12-2014

Gender Benders: Shakespeare's Rosalind and Woolf's Orlando

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DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI14110734

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

GENDER BENDERS: SHAKESPEARE'S ROSALIND AND WOOLF'S ORLANDO

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

by

Katrina Armenteros

2014

To: Interim Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Katrina Armenteros, and entitled Gender Bender: Shakespeare's Rosalind and Woolf's Orlando, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Date of Defense: November, 12, 2014

The thesis of Katrina Armenteros is approved.

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Florida International University, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would have remained a dream had it not been for the support and guidance of my professors at Florida International University and my family.

I would like to gratefully and sincerely thank my committee chair, Professor James Sutton, for his mentorship, patience, understanding, and most importantly, his friendship during my graduate studies at FIU and abroad. Without his guidance and untiring support, this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Professor Michael Gillespie, for introducing me to “Orlando” and encouraging me to grow as an independent thinker through stimulating class discussions. Many thanks go out to Professor Ana Luszczynska, for her time, positive energy, and expertise on all matters of literary theory. I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Asher Milbauer, for granting my acceptance into the English graduate program.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my family, for encouraging me in all of my pursuits and inspiring me to follow my dreams. To my parents, Luis and Silvia, thank you for supporting me emotionally throughout this journey. I always knew you believed in me and want the best for me. To my loving boyfriend, Yoandry, thank you for your quiet patience and tolerance of my occasional mood swings, for they prove your unyielding love and support. To my sidekick, Diana Lombardic, thank you for providing some much needed humor and entertainment, in what could have otherwise been a somewhat stressful environment. Each of you has given your time, energy, and support and I am richer for it.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

GENDER BENDERS: SHAKESPEARE'S ROSALIND AND WOOLF'S ORLANDO

by

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Professor James Sutton, Major Professor

English Renaissance playwright, William Shakespeare and twentieth century modernist author, Virginia Woolf's works, "As You Like It" (1599) and "Orlando" (1928), respectively posit a vision of gender that transcends the physical sex of the body. The play's heroine, Rosalind, and the novel's protagonist, Orlando, each challenge the stability of the binary categories of male and female, demonstrating how gender is not absolute but rather a constantly adapting and evolving construct. This thesis traces the development of Rosalind and Orlando by analyzing and comparing both protagonists' journeys towards *concordia discors*, considering how gender transformation plays a pivotal role in helping both figures transcend prescribed gender roles and restraints placed upon them by family and society. Both Rosalind and Orlando mount challenges to prescribed gender norms during periods when conservative gender roles were strictly enforced. By doing so, each character positions themselves as pivotal and progressive representations of gender performance for their time.

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I. INTRODUCTION: GENDER, ANDROGYNY AND CONCORDIA DISCORS

In this thesis, I examine the complex and multivalent roles of Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, written in 1599, and the title character of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, a novel penned in October 1928. Both characters in these novels challenge the stability of the binary categories of male and female, and demonstrate how gender is not something absolute but rather a constantly adapting and evolving construct. This thesis purposes to trace the development of Rosalind and Orlando within their respective texts by analyzing and comparing both protagonists' journeys towards *concordia discors*, considering how gender transformation plays a pivotal role in helping both figures break free from prescribed roles and restraints placed upon them by family and society. This thesis will also examine the role of androgyny and how it directly relates to and affects these characters. Embodying both male and female characteristics provides Rosalind and Orlando with a sense of flexibility and liberty.

Feminism is one of two subfields, along with Masculine studies, that arguably fall under the category of 'gender' studies. For this reason, before I can begin to examine and analyze the texts of Shakespeare and Virginia Woolf in terms of their purchase on feminism, some brief account of this term and others closely related to it, such as gender, identity, and androgyny is necessary. The term 'gender' typically refers to the social processes that work toward dividing people, and social practices along the lines of sexed identities (Beasley, 1). Through the gendering process, a division is created between men and women, as well as a division of social practices into two fields. The gendering practice typically also involves creating hierarchies among the divisions it enacts. Such practices are evident in virtually all Western societies, as a consequence of the common

and strong association between women and domestic life and reproduction, and men and production, even though in reality men and women occupy and share both spaces. The gender practices of Western society also create a strong binary division of social practices, to a point where the division is constructed as oppositional, such as in the term ‘the opposite sex’. However, while these categorical distinctions between men and women are often divided, they also indicate lingering connections. According to Beasley, “The binary nature of gender in Western society means that features of one category exist in relation to its supposed opposite.” For example, to be a man is to be not-woman and vice versa (Beasley, 3).

Although the previously mentioned terms indicate contemporary meanings and attitudes towards gender, its meaning has alternated over time and continues to remain a topic of debate amongst critical thinkers. Many writers today describe gender in comparatively narrow terms concerned with the social identities of men and women, while others see it more broadly, in terms of social interactions and institutions that form between groups. While in everyday usage and common practice, gender is commonly linked to social interpretations of reproductive biological distinctions; several analysts reject the notion that it is necessarily connected to or limited by notions of reproduction. Theorists such as Judith Butler and Nikki Sullivan attempt to liberate the idea of gender from reductive thinking about physical bodies; in doing so, they demonstrate that physical bodies, alone, cannot explain much about human organization of sexed identities and practices. In short, a female body does not necessarily result in social femininity, in a personal identity deemed ‘feminine’. Therefore, gender is not explicitly something that is biologically inherited (Beasley, 4).

However gender is regarded or understood by feminist theorists, in practice it refers to or covers two major subfields- Masculine and Feminist studies. While each of these areas speaks largely on the subject of its respected field of interest, each one also addresses and is shaped by the other. Because the subjects of this thesis- Shakespeare's Rosalind and Woolf's Orlando- predominantly inhabit and perform the "female" gender, I have chosen to primarily address and employ a feminist perspective in my analysis. Feminism, much like its counter subfield, masculinity, has a critical history. It stems from a critique of the mainstream of the 'norm', or what is taken for granted, operating from the point of view of skeptical inquiry (Beasley, 16). According to Beasley, author of *Gender and Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers*, "feminism is a critical theory that refuses what it describes as the masculine bias of mainstream Western thinking, on the basis that this bias renders women invisible/ marginal to understandings of humanity and distorts understanding of men" (16). Beasley's way of thinking begins by questioning whether things have to be a certain way and continues to question whether the world *is* what it claims to be.

Feminist theorists such as Judith Butler focus on a specific aspect of gender and sex in their criticism. According to Butler, sex has been interpreted as being a representation of the body as a natural container of some internally gendered self. "Sex is understood as the bodily indication that concealed within it is the essence of either a woman or a man" (Bettcher, 1). Butler believes this idea of gender to be false; however, just as the world may be treated as something true even if it is not, so too can bodies be falsely treated as gendered containers themselves. From Butler's perspective, fixed views of gender can be interpreted as being naturalized, pervasive and regulative of human

conduct. Furthermore, sex can be interpreted as being socially constructed. Butler states that what we take for granted as natural features of one gender are simply traits that have been assigned to that gender over time, perhaps through social or political norms of male and female (Bettcher, 1).

The norms assigned to each category are strengthened and reinforced by the existence of the other, the opposite category, or an idea that is founded on the old-fashioned need to organize the world into binary oppositions. It is society's preconceived dogma about the binary oppositions of male and female that upholds the rigid gender hierarchy, and consequently our gender categories. As Beasley states, "The field of gender/sexuality theory assumes that sex is a matter of human organization- this is, it is political, associated with social dominance and subordination as well as capable of change" (3). As these roles are performed and repeated every day, they thus become the standard and reinforce themselves as absolute features.

Butler believes "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results" (34). Thus, one of her fundamental theories posits that all humans are androgynous beings who are genderless (I will address androgyny later). We are simply beings shaped by our surroundings and by society. Butler argues that both gender and sex are constructed and controlled by society, and that there is no need to distinguish between the two. Gender is additionally a gradual and temporal process, which one learns to perform through repeated acts (Butler, 34).

A very similar case can be made for identity; philosophers such as Vygotsky and Mead argue that people are capable of demonstrating different versions of themselves in different social settings, depending on the feedback and social expectations of others. “Once one has developed a self-perception, has received feedback that affirms that self-perception, and can interact with others within an environment or culture, one can attain a reasonable sense of self-worth, whether positive or negative” (Wise, 8). It is when an individual begins to voluntarily choose to mingle their identity with others through interactions with groups, that the person realizes how many “identities” they may actually possess, and that those identities may not all act in agreement with one another in the eyes of society. It is believed that each of these identities subscribes to a different set of rules, depending on the norms of the group being associated with. For example, one can hold multiple roles as a spouse, parent, child, professional, educator, etc. Each of these identities holds a set of normative behaviors that are established as the standard for membership in that group.

If repeated activities can formulate a social identity and create norms for many different roles, such processes can also be applied to gender. Susan Stryker’s ideas are helpful in establishing this analogy. A gender theorist, Stryker theorizes that one can assume that gender roles originated from a group of individuals who carry common beliefs and who create these gender norms which society chooses to follow. Her theories further support the opinion of other critical thinkers such as Judith Butler, who proposes that gender is constructed through relations of power, and specifically normative constraints and behaviors placed upon the individual (Bettcher, 1).

Therefore, if identity is shaped by the opinions of those around us, then gender roles, too, may well be fashioned, shaped, and controlled by the elite and powerful, everywhere at all times. Thus, Nikki Sullivan argues that gender, sexuality, and the relations between them, have been discursively constructed in culturally and historically specific ways. According to Sullivan's theory, gender has more to do with politics than heredity, more to do with social construction than supposed biological imperatives (Sullivan, 3).

If one can acknowledge that gender is constructed rather than inherited, the same can also be said about androgyny. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, to be androgynous means "having both male and female characteristics; looking neither strongly male nor strongly female." In accordance to this definition, androgyny is a term describing someone's outer appearance, rather than his or her intellect or manner. One can appear androgynous by wearing certain types of clothing, or having a certain haircut or look. However, the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers the definition of androgyny as "uniting the physical characteristics of both sexes, once a male and female; hermaphrodite". The OED also states that androgyny is "a union of sexes in one individual; hermaphroditism" (OED online). The inclusion of hermaphroditism in these definitions indicates a union of male and female at a biological level; however, androgyny has also been known to focus on the intellectual and spiritual level of the individual. According to Marilyn R. Farwell, androgyny can either be "based on balance or based on fusion, that is either an interplay of separate and unique elements or a fusion of one into the other" (Rognastad, 28). Farwell also states that androgyny is not stagnant, but is rather something that is developed and shaped over time, and in constant flux.

In her book *Orlando*, Virginia Woolf claims that “in every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what is above” (Woolf, 189). To Woolf, both sexes, although different, intermix. Woolf’s perception of androgyny is similar to that of Butler’s notions involving gender, in that both women believe gender is not static, but rather something that is mobile and constantly evolving. Although Woolf and Butler both argue that gender is fluid, their views differ in that Woolf believes in two possibilities (the masculine and the feminine) blended in one individual, while Butler completely disregards any notion of gender identification.

Woolf believes that the ideal state of androgyny is one of harmony, where neither gender dominates the other, but both are equally balanced (Rognstad, 97). Unlike Woolf, Butler resists this idea of a totalizing, all-inclusive wholeness and balance, and does not believe in embracing or identifying with a gender at all, but rather “defends a collective practice of gender subversion that demands no unity among women” (Stone, 1). However, countering Butler and agreeing with Woolf, are other feminist thinkers who believe that various contradictions and opposing elements can ultimately lead towards harmony or a feeling of ‘home’ for an individual. One such prominent writer is Gloria Anzaldúa, a scholar of feminist Chicano theory; in her memoir-manifesto, she enlists and embodies traits of discord and divergence brought into harmony. Interestingly, Anzaldúa’s practice mirrors the classical and renaissance idea of *concordia discors*. This term was used by the ancients to describe the idea that numerous opposites and conflicts between elements of nature paradoxically create an overall harmony in the world. The

phrase can be traced back to Horace (65 BC) and references to the Pythagorean paradox that all nature is in discordant harmony. It was Horace himself who believed that harmony between contrasting elements was necessary and always involved tension or strife between the two opposites of which it was composed (Gordon, 1).

For Anzuldua, these oppositions were manifested through growing up between two cultures, the Mexican and the Anglo. Living her life on the border, (deep-South Texas) she managed to keep intact her shifting and multiple identities, forming what she claims was an internal, whole self. In her book, *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, Anzuldua describes a border as a defining line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. Surrounding the border is the borderland, a vague and undetermined place “created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (Anzuldua, 25). The borderland itself is in a constant state of transition, to- and- fro, much as gender is continually adapting, swaying back and forth in accordance with the elements.

Anzuldua ultimately learned to embrace her new identity, one of multiple oppositions and mixtures of cultures, despite the disapproval of society. However, at the end of her journey Anzuldua felt she no longer needed to beg for acceptance nor apologize for who she is. Once she learned this invaluable lesson, Anzuldua discovered her mixed identity and learned to embrace the multiple oppositions of which she was composed.

Anzuldua’s journey is surprisingly similar to that of Orlando and Rosalind in Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* and Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Orlando and Rosalind encompass both masculine and feminine qualities, and each constantly switches roles in order to adapt to new situations in their lives. The role of masculine and feminine is not

solely worked out in terms of the “head” and the “heart” for either character, but as well through their clothing, words, and actions. As a result, Orlando and Rosalind challenge the seeming stability of the binary categories of male and female for “their” times (the early Elizabethan and early 20th century), thereby further demonstrating that gender is not something absolute, ever.

Gender transformation plays a pivotal role in helping both of these characters break free from prescribed roles and the restraints placed upon them. In this thesis, I assert that once both characters realize that gender is not a fixed quality but rather something that is constantly evolving, they are then able to live freely and find concord despite the discord that characterizes their family’s disapproval and their society’s oppression. Through this revelation, Orlando and Rosalind achieve a form of *concordia discors*, a discordant harmony. Additionally, they learn how opposing characteristics can come together for the greater good, and that sometimes it is necessary to leave one’s comfort zone in order to discover a fully realized version of oneself. Once both protagonists overcome their fears and refuse to remain submissive to an oppressively patriarchic society, they are finally liberated and able to live openly as androgynous figures. As a result, they are able to overcome their own personal borders and find comfort in the feeling of ‘home’ Anzuldua describes in her work. Rosalind and Orlando are superb examples of how shifting personalities and alternating gender roles can come together to find harmony in strife and concord in discord.

II. SHAKESPEARE'S ROSALIND- THE EMBODIMENT OF CONCORDIA DISCORS

In *As You Like It*, William Shakespeare presents a compromise of opposites in two comic protagonists, Rosalind and Orlando. Shakespeare invites us to conceive the difficult idea of “magic” between these two opposites, existing simultaneously although they are truly contrary, bound together in a creative and paradoxical union- like husband and wife. The play is not concerned with making one or the other subordinate to the other, it is about uniting them and making them into their own creative relationship. In Shakespearean and Renaissance literature, oppositions need not be resolved by categorizing the opposite as more “objective” and hence objectified than the other. Opposites were often balanced, if not “yoked” together, to form a “new connection.” Barber implies such an example in *As You Like It* when he states, “romantic participation in love and humorous detachment from its follies, the two polar attitudes which are balanced against each other in the action as a whole, meet and are reconciled in Rosalind’s personality” (Beckman, 45).

Rosalind is the central representative of balance in *As You Like It*. She is harmony, a coincidence of opposites who promises to make “all matters even” (V. iv. 18,25). Her methods involve trickery and magic, as she defies logic and her actions are impossible to define or predict. In a sense she is an “authority” figure who orchestrates much of the action in the play. However, her magic is not harmful, as the opposites she represents are not yoked together in service to either evil or violence, but are bent towards of peaceful reconcilements found in the harmony of “good” marriages (Beckman, 45). In the play, she is the unifying central character who maintains two

alternative perspectives and represents the Greek philosophy of *concordia discors*, “the idea that numerous oppositions and conflicts between elements of nature paradoxically create an overall harmony in the world” (Blick, 2).

Before further explaining *concordia discors*, I wish to elaborate upon my choice here to focus on Rosalind and *As You Like It* as the most representative Shakespearean exemplar of androgyny, gender performance, and comic balance. Such distinctions are perhaps easiest to identify in comparisons to *Taming of the Shrew* (1593), an earlier comedy that demonstrates no patience for its outspoken heroine, a play whose entire energy seems focused on breaking and beating Katherine into submission, forcing her to conform to strict codes of what a woman and wife must be. Thus, though Katherine is as outspoken as Rosalind, she is nowhere near as flexible, free and creative.

Midsummer Night's Dream's (1596) happy conclusion depends heavily on a working out of *concordia discors*, an idea directly referenced in the fourth act of the play. However, the weddings of opposites at its conclusion are achieved literally by magic, via the fairies, not through any delightful machinations of the Athenians- court, nobility, or “mechanicals”- all of whom find their happy endings quite by chance. Thus, neither Hermia nor Helena can hold my interest as does Rosalind, for they lack her complexity. Even that delightful, untamed shrew Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 1599) begrudgingly makes her match due to the discovery of her love notes to her mate, Benedict. Rosalind, masquerading as an androgynous boy, authors Viola, who similarly bends her gender as Cesario for most of her *Twelfth Night* (1601). Nevertheless, Viola presents very differently than Rosalind. As Cesario, Viola feels trapped and hidden away, unable to express herself as she wishes. Her release from this unpleasant and

frightful masquerade only comes about as a result of the appearance of her brother on the scene- again an accident over which she has almost no control. Thus, my decision to focus on Rosalind is no accident- it is a necessity, because she is the Shakesperean heroine who best embodies the characteristics of androgyny and magic, and furthermore, she is emblematic of *concordia discors*.

Concordia discors was first used by Horace in 65 BC and can be found in his *Epistles* as, “Quid velit et possit rerum *concordia discors*.” The phrase translates to, “What the discordant harmony of circumstances would and could effect” (Blick, 2). According to Horace, it was a reference to the Pythagorean paradox that all nature is in discordant harmony. Diogenes Laertius, a follower of Pythagoras, proposed that, “continuous changes never cease... at one time all things uniting in one through love at another each carried in a different direction” (Blick, 2). His belief was that harmony between contrasting elements is necessary and always involves tension or strife between the two opposites of which it is composed. He argues that the tension is never fully resolved; however, both sides can live in harmony despite their differences.

Concordia discors is not something these characters fall into intentionally, but rather something they become as a result of their contradictory nature. The concept plays a fundamental role in the development of Rosalind and Orlando through its exploration of “what the discordant harmony of circumstances would and could affect” (Walsh, 2). It examines the possibility of two characters achieving harmony amongst contrasting elements, despite the tension and strife that are often associated with such differences. Ironically, the two manage to create a harmonious union through various contradictions.

As a couple, Orlando and Rosalind represent two complete opposites in *As You Like It*. It can be assumed that Rosalind stands for realism while Orlando stands for idealism; however, there is frequent exchange of traditional gender roles and sexual characteristics within the text. Rosalind, though often eager to speak of logic, also has an emotional side. She can be witnessed as a protecting masculine figure, such as when she disguises herself as a man to protect and lead Celia in the forest of Arden with “a board and spear in my hand, and in my heart lie there what hidden woman’s fear will be” (I.iii.125-126). However, she can also be interpreted as a faint-hearted woman. This latter side of Rosalind can be witnessed through her fainting reaction to the sight of Orlando’s bloody handkerchief, which she later proclaims was a counterfeit act to convince Oliver that she truly does not care for Orlando.

Although Rosalind’s alter ego, Ganymede, tries to cover up her behavior later on in the play, and is often witnessed mocking Orlando, the authentic nature of her emotions cannot be denied or repressed. According to Shakespearean scholar Harold Jenkins, Rosalind’s mockery of Orlando is not truthful, but “only a play at taunting her adorer while allowing her real woman’s heart to be in love with him in earnest” (Jenkins, 47). Evidence of Rosalind’s feelings for Orlando can be observed in the following lines:

Rosalind. I do so, I confess it
Ah, sirrah, a body would think this was well-counterfeited.
I pray you tell your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho.
Oliver. This was not counterfeit.
There was too great testimony in your complexion that it was a passion
earnest
(IV. 3. 175-181).

Rosalind (as Ganymede) may try her best to disguise her emotions for Orlando; however, her attempt to convince his brother, Oliver undoubtedly fails, as he advises Rosalind to

continue to “pretend” to be a man. As for Orlando, he often shows his softer side in the play when he tackles a lion in order to save his brother, proving that he can be a fighter and also have an emotional side such as when Oliver mentions:

Twice did he turn his back and purposed so,
But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,
And nature, stronger than his just occasion,
Made him give battle to the lioness,
Who quickly fell before him; in which hurtling,
From miserable slumber I awaked.
(IV.ii. 135-140).

In the beginning of the play, Orlando expresses grief that his brother has denied him the schooling he believes he deserves as a gentleman, but in the end, he proves himself a gentleman without the formality of that education. It is evident that Orlando truly cares for the brother who left him scorned. He continues to reveal himself as an emotional figure throughout the play when he relies on commonplace clichés of love to declare that without the fair Rosalind, he would die. The constant role reversal between the two lovers casts Rosalind and Orlando as a double paradox or a *concordia discors*. Ironically, this couple manages to create a harmonious union through their various contradictions.

During the Elizabethan era, women were traditionally perceived as being in touch with their emotions rather than their intellect. They were often associated with the heart, while men with the head (Beckman, 47). *In As You Like It*, it is ironically Rosalind who intelligently speaks truth from the head and is thus criticized by Celia who claims “You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate” (IV.i.205-206). Celia’s remark reveals how women of the time were not expected to step out of their place. However, Rosalind disregards society’s prescribed gender roles as she continues to speak her mind as her alter ego, Ganymede. She is very blunt in telling Phoebe “Sell what you can, you are not

for all markets” (III. iv.60). Rosalind’s (as Ganymede) candor can also be witnessed through her conversation with Orlando in Act 4:

No, faith, die by attorney.
The poor world is almost six thousand years old,
and in all this time there was not any man died in
his own person, videlicet, in a love cause...
Men have died from time to time, and worms have
eaten them, but not for love.

(IV. i. 100-112).

By informing Orlando that no man has ever died from love, Rosalind speaks from her head rather than her heart, disregarding conventional feminine beliefs about love. At times Rosalind appears blatantly cynical about love. When Orlando attempts to reveal his love for Rosalind, she replies, “No, no Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed. Maids are May when they are maids, but they sky changes when they are wives” (IV. i.154-157). She believes Orlando will lose interest once he has married her and slept in her bed.

Contrary to Rosalind is Orlando, the man who speaks from the heart. Orlando runs through the forest of Arden proclaiming his love for Rosalind. He hangs poems of his love for her on every tree hoping that others will see her true virtue:

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love.
And thou, thrice-crownéd queen of night, survey
Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.
O Rosalind, these trees shall be my books,
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character,
That every eye which in this forest looks
Shall see thy virtue witnessed everywhere.
Run, run, Orlando, carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.

(III.ii. 1-10).

Orlando’s behavior proves that when he falls in love, he invariably falls hard and fast,

abandoning all logic in an attempt to win over his lover. Orlando continues to speak of love for Rosalind to Ganymede later in the act when stating, “I will not be cured, youth” (III.iv. 444). It is evident that Orlando will never be cured of his love sickness and will continue to fight until he can have the object of his desire, Rosalind.

When one looks deeper into the character of Rosalind, it is evident that she alone stands for both opposites and also has a much more complicated role in the play than Orlando. Orlando has a brave and generous spirit, but he does not possess the same intelligence and insight as Rosalind. Next to Rosalind, Orlando’s imaginative flame burns a bit less bright. The upstaging of Orlando by Rosalind is only natural, given the richness and complexity of Rosalind’s character. In a sense, she alone stands for the same things they stand for together as a couple. The union of masculine and feminine in Rosalind is not solely worked out in terms of the head and heart, but is physically represented in the text through the character’s lines and actions. Rosalind is emblematic of *concordia discors*, as can be witnessed in her proposal of a disguise to Celia:

Were it not better,
Because I am more than common tall,
That I did suit me at all points like a man?
A gallant curtal-ax upon my thigh
A boar spear in my hand, and in my heart
Lie there what hidden woman’s fear there will,
We’ll have a swashing and martial outside-
As many other manish cowards have
(I.iii.121-128)

These lines reveal Rosalind’s masculine nature to fight with an axe and spear, while hiding her womanly fears. However, this woman’s fear is later revealed when Rosalind as Ganymede faints at the sight of the napkin dyed in Orlando’s blood. She unsuccessfully tries to disguise this swoon as a counterfeit act, but the audience of the play knows she is

simply revealing her emotions as she attempts to conceal them. In both of these instances, Rosalind's womanly fear and her manly courage are less authentic than they appear to be. The external reactions reveal the inner truth- Rosalind may be taller and braver than others such as Celia, but she is shorter, weaker, and less aggressive than she would like us to believe.

Throughout the play, we continue to see more of these masculine/feminine coincidences in the character of Rosalind. Rosalind's choice of alternate identities is significant. Ganymede is the cupbearer and beloved of Jove and is a symbol of homosexual love. In the context of the play, her choice of an alter ego contributes to a variety of sexual possibilities. As an androgynous figure, Rosalind demonstrates how, contrary to supposedly "natural" attitudes about sex, human beings cannot always be neatly divided into male and female, insofar as these natural attitudes prevail. However, individuals act as if the natural attitude were true (Bettcher, 3). According to feminist thinker Simone de Beauvoir, one is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one. "If one can learn to accept that gender is a social process, one that is not dictated by bodily sex, then there is nothing that guarantees that the body of one who becomes woman will necessarily be what is normally conceived of as a female body" (Alsop, Fitzsimons, Lennon, 99). Rosalind challenges the preconceived ideas of gender mentioned by de Beauvoir, through her transformation as Ganymede. Through her disguise, she demonstrates how masculinity and femininity are neither absolute nor biologically inherited.

Before entering the forest of Arden, Rosalind is the submissive and hopeless daughter of Duke Senior, who follows her cousin's plan for a trip to Arden and allows

her to purchase a cottage for their stay. Her father has been banished and she is in some danger with her uncle, Duke Frederick. She cannot fathom how she has offended the duke and therefore pleads her innocence; however, the duke remains firm and replies that she is her father's daughter and that is enough reason. Celia makes a plea on Rosalind's behalf for leniency, but Duke Frederick condemns Rosalind when stating, "She is too subtle for thee, and her smoothness, / Her very silence, and her patience/ Speak to the people and they pity her" (I. iii. 80-82). In his remarks, the Duke tries to convince Celia that Rosalind's banishment will be for her benefit, claiming that Rosalind is weak, submissive and a dreadful influence on his daughter. Celia refuses to accept her father's opinion of Rosalind and the two cousins run off to the forest to escape the Duke's rule.

Once in Arden, Rosalind takes over and organizes Celia's actions, protects her, and decides on the guises she and Celia will assume in the forest. Through her new disguise as Ganymede, Rosalind transforms herself into an androgynous figure. Away from the threatening court, Rosalind is able to explore her fully realized self in a place of possibility, kindness, and hospitality, a shelter offered even to those grumpy-natured characters such as Touchstone and the ever-so-melancholic Jacques. It is here in Arden where serendipitous encounters occur and where Rosalind can fully discover her fully realized self without consequence. Arden is a place of playfulness but it also a place of serious magic. The forest guides, teaches, and reveals. It is not merely a backdrop in the play, but an ethical place of transformation with its particular grace of light hearted gravity (RSC, 2013 Production). The forest is where Rosalind completely transforms and becomes liberated from social expectations. Here is where she opens herself up to possibilities she had never even imagined for herself.

It is interesting to further examine what exactly society expects of women. According to feminist philosopher Judith Butler, “being a female and being a woman are two very different forms of being” (Jones, AYLI Playbill). If asked how to be a woman, Butler argues that it is unlikely two individuals would offer up the same response. However, it is equally likely that some measure of agreement will emerge around certain aspects of what it is to be a woman; this can range from particular types of dress to certain career paths. These stereotypical expectations set forth by society form part of what Butler states sociologists call “the construction of gender, whereby acceptable masculine and feminine behaviors, dress, speech, personality, and aspirations are instilled through social institutions including families, schools, the work place, and the media” (Jones, AYLI Playbill). In the workplace or in the public, there is still pressure for women to perform a particular brand of “soft” or feminine behavior.

Rosalind must have experienced the same pressures in courtly life. The pressure to look or act a certain way can leave many women with a desire to adopt masculine qualities in order to gain assertiveness, authority, and leadership; or simply the ability to be heard in a place where no one listens to what women have to say. A socially acceptable performance of women requires scripts, props, costumes, along with an equivalent amount of time and effort. Such standards can leave women exhausted from trying to keep up with feminine expectations.

For Rosalind pre-Arden, the court, her family, and her uncle were the ones who set forth these expectations. It is indeed freedom that Rosalind seeks as she departs for the forest of Arden. Upon entering Arden, Rosalind is transformed and all pressures vanish, as she is free to explore her sexuality and gender through her own means. “Now

go we in content to liberty, and not to banishment” (I.iii.144-145). Celia and Rosalind are now free to explore beyond the courtly Elizabethan boundaries of gender and power.

Like many women throughout history, Rosalind acknowledged femininity as a performance of construction and limitation. According to Butler, gender as performance can suggest an agent or subject who is formed prior to the performance who then engages in it, perhaps choosing which acts to execute. However, Butler finds it difficult to entertain or accept such a claim. In her view, we become subjects from our own performances, and the performances of others towards us. In addition, the gender performances in which we engage in are in accordance with a script. Such script provides us with ideals of masculinity and femininity which render certain behaviors appropriate and others not. The script is not absolute but can change or alter itself over time, and is directly tied to relationships of power (Alsop, Fitzsimons, Lennon, 99). Consequentially, Rosalind’s masculine performance in the play can be interpreted as being tied to a script, as well as a rejection of her father’s power and courtly life. During the Elizabethan era, external marks of gender, such as clothing and behaviors, were of utmost importance. Therefore, Rosalind’s decision to masquerade as a man provided her with a greater thrill than did her role as the subservient daughter of the Duke. By assuming the clothes and likeness of a man, Rosalind treats herself to powers that are normally beyond her reach as a woman in her uncle’s court.

Some women may choose to reject social construction by choosing gender neutral clothing, forgoing a typical makeup routine, or keeping their hair unkempt, in order to do things their own way or on their own terms. Perhaps it was not Rosalind’s initial intention to rebel against her gender in Arden, but it is an undeniable fact that Rosalind transforms

into a figure of assertiveness and power after becoming Ganymede. As Ganymede, Rosalind utilizes her wit and presents the same coincidence of opposites that her disguise and actions present in other modes. Her wit is a necessary result of her function in the play and helps emphasize the parallel between the “courtly Rosalind” and the “Rosalind of Arden”.

It is an unmistakable fact that the true Rosalind is a *concordia discors*. The numerous oppositions and conflicts within her provide her with an overall sense of harmony and acceptance for who she is, a figure who can never be defined as fixed; therefore, a representation of an “untrue” truth. The only absolute truth in Rosalind is the acknowledgement that there is no absolute truth. She is a collection of shifting oppositions combined to create one character. These opposites are very much present in Arden, such as when she refuses to marry a woman; yet, as a woman she marries herself to the man she has rejected while also marrying the woman she rejected to another man. On one hand, she is a chaste woman who will not tell of her love for Orlando, but at the same time she forces Orlando to reveal his feelings for her to Ganymede. Rosalind uses both her masculine and feminine traits to her advantage in order to maintain control of her life, and domineer over others.

When disguised as Ganymede in the play, Rosalind utilizes her masculine performance to gain information and emotional control over Orlando. If Orlando were to realize that he is in the presence of a woman, let alone Rosalind, he would have returned to his pre-Arden tongue-tied self. Rosalind, because she is uncertain that she and Orlando can carry on with an open, mutually committed relationship, incorporates the role of Ganymede, which is a hidden way of being openly herself. Through her disguise,

Rosalind is able to reveal her feelings without having to face embarrassment or anger from Orlando for lying.

It is important to note that Rosalind's androgyny does more than set forth a paradox for her own sake. It is through her method as well as her embrace of *concordia discors* that she brings together not only herself and Orlando, but also the natural union of the other opposites in the play, the couples who marry in the final act. Such an act can be witnessed through her conversation with Phoebe. Rosalind's gentle speech to Phoebe regarding the treatment of Silvius is filled with such good advice and common sense that Phoebe would never tolerate it from another woman. Yet, because Rosalind is a woman, her speech is delivered without any sexual threat. Rosalind's behavior emphasizes a particular wit that is both masculine and feminine and is therefore not tied to one particular gender. As both woman and man, Rosalind can mock society's expectations caused by gender stereotyping. In utilizing her disguise to act in a manner which society will not permit, Rosalind discovers her fully realized self and helps others find their match.

An example of this can be seen through the match making of Phoebe and Silvius, Celia and Oliver, and Audrey and Touchstone. The complex meaning of Rosalind's description of love for these couples can only be built up by such a person as Rosalind. Her wordplay, along with the setting of the play serves to bring about these unions. It is in Arden, in this magical setting where all action is transformed from a normal setting to a green world, where metamorphosis begins and where Rosalind is given the ability to solve the play with a comic resolution. In this magical forest, Rosalind is able to not only help her friends but also learn about herself. Toward the end of the play, just before she

resolves the plot, Ganymede tells Orlando:

Believe then, if you please, that I can do strange things.
I have, since I was three year old, conversed with a magician,
Most profound in his art and yet not damnable...
If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries out,
When your brother marries Aliena shall you marry her
(V.ii.62-68).

No magic has been worked before this scene. It therefore seems strange that Shakespeare has Rosalind resolve the plot by appearing to work magic rather than stripping her of her disguise. Despite these facts, Rosalind is still considered a magician because she ends the play by transforming an extraordinary, seemingly hopeless situation into a reality and thus creating a *concordia discors* amongst contrary characters such as Orlando and herself, Oliver and Celia, Phoebe and Silvius, and Touchstone and Audrey. The white magic she produces is not of an evil nature but stems from good intentions, for it brings opposite things together and harmonizes them. To know Rosalind is to know that opposites can be reconciled. The strange things she does are not incidental to the play, but rather part of a logical development of what Rosalind has been demonstrating all along.

Throughout the play, Rosalind grows and develops from a young, naïve girl obedient to the court's demands, into a wise and witty young woman capable of capturing the heart of her lover while bringing together those she loves most. Her transition from quiet Rosalind to the witty and wise Ganymede, casts her as a fully representative figure of *concordia discors*. She is a prime example of how opposites can come together for the greater good, and how sometimes it is necessary to leave one's comfort zone in order to discover a fully realized self. Now that Rosalind acknowledges that gender is not a fixed

quality, but rather something that is constantly evolving within her, she no longer feels the need to hide. Once Rosalind removes her disguise and comes forth to her lover and father, she is finally liberated from courtly life and becomes the person she has always wanted to be. Her duplicate personalities and alternating perspectives blended together to form harmony and concord amongst the discord.

There is continuous comic appeal in Rosalind's satire of the conventions of both male and female behavior; however, the Elizabethan audience of the time may have felt a certain amount of anxiety regarding Rosalind's performance. Perhaps this is why in the epilogue, Rosalind addresses the audience in her finale. She has made good on her promise to "make all matters even" that is, to smooth out the unresolved romantic entanglements of others and herself. However, she can no longer hide behind the mask of Ganymede. She asks women and men to take what they will from this play. "I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you; and I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women...that between you and the women the play may please" (Epilogue, 12-17). After all, the structure of a male-dominated society depends upon both men and women acting in their assigned roles. Thus, in the end, Rosalind dispenses the truth about her disguise to her audience. She is finally free to strip herself of her disguise and use what she has learned from this experience to live her life as the true Rosalind, one who is happily married to the man she loves and can now return to the court fully liberated of her pre-Arden concerns.

III. WOOLF'S ORLANDO: FROM GENDER CONFORMITY, THROUGH ANDROGYNY, TO CONCORIDA DISCORS

Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, frequently hailed by feminists as one of the most important twentieth-century novels on gender and androgyny, playfully posits a vision of identity that transcends the physical sex of the body. The protagonist, Orlando, falls into a deep sleep one night after an encounter with a mysterious Spanish dancer named Rosita Pepina and when he awakes, he is a she. This change is undesired and unanticipated, and initially Orlando finds that despite the sudden change of sex, she remains fundamentally the same. Orlando is not alarmed by this transformation; however, she is conscious of the fact that despite her new female body she must continue to change, as she has done so in each new adventure of her life, in order to survive and become accepted in the new age. Such conformity becomes oppressive to Orlando, and she grows tired of changing herself to fit her surrounding environment. Once Orlando ultimately matures in the twentieth century, she resists conformity, choosing instead to exist in her own androgynous world. Orlando realizes that although she has matured over time, as people do, she has always remained the same person all along (Kaivola, 3). "Orlando had become a woman- there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatsoever to alter their identity" (Woolf, 138). When Orlando is a man as well as when she is a woman, Woolf plays with what is considered stereotypical for each gender. Through this playfulness, she challenges the stability of the binary categories of male and female, and further demonstrates that gender is not something absolute. Once Orlando realizes that gender is not a fixed quality but rather one that is constantly evolving, she is able to live freely as

herself and find concord in the discord that is society's oppression. As a result, she achieves *concordia discors*- discordant harmony. Writing to a friend, the famous philosopher Horace describes man as fascinated by "the discordant harmony of the cosmos, its purpose and power." To Horace, *concordia discors* or a discordant harmony is "an aesthetic principle where classical literature addresses politics in the idiom of sexual desire." Horace believed that societal tension and instability could register as an ideologically charged polyphony- two simultaneous lines of independent melody, such as in Woolf's Orlando, two simultaneous genders of one independently androgynous body (Scholtz, 3).

If indeed Orlando's gender is androgynous, that androgyny evolves and is not static, for Orlando's gender and desires are constantly changing. Orlando responds to and eludes gender roles and sexual codes that shape Western culture, and as a result is constantly changing in order to fit those constructions. As Orlando is introduced to each new age and each circumstance, he adapts himself to fit the rules of those around him. Thus, in the sixteenth century, Orlando wears fine clothing and serves as a courtier to the Queen Elizabeth, a noble, older woman who is accustomed to having power and control. She is drawn to Orlando for his youthful and innocent appearance, something she longs to regain for herself. In the seventeenth century, Orlando learns the Turkish language and adapts himself to exotic customs. During this time he is also transformed into a woman and flees to England to engage in a legal battle to regain property she held as a man. In the eighteenth century, Orlando figures out how to fit in with London society, as she becomes acquainted with prominent literary figures such as Joseph Addison and Jonathan Swift. During this century, he also marries and struggles to reconcile her desire to write

with Victorian notions of femininity. In the beginning, Orlando is only unconsciously aware that he embodies both sexes, and thus femininity and masculinity intermix more freely as Orlando has not yet learned how to separate his one self from the other. It is no surprise that once Orlando becomes a woman, the pressure to conform to gender roles intensifies and clearly begins to affect her.

Although while in Constantinople amongst the natives Orlando does not experience gender differences because of her changed sex, she does however experience it as soon as she boards the *Enamored Lady* to return to England. While suitably clothed as a “young Englishwoman of rank” (153), she recalls how as a man he believed that English women must be “obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely appareled by nature” however, as a woman she realizes that this is not the case. Orlando notes the effects of the different garments and different roles English society would have women wear. After forming a low opinion of “the other sex, the manly, to which it had once been her pride to belong” (157), she realizes that “what fools they make of us (women)- what fools we are!” In that moment, the comforts of ignorance are denied to her and she is left with the realization that her female body, just as her male one, comes with its own set of expectations, rules, and codes of behavior to which she must adhere (158).

Orlando particularly feels oppressed by her gender during the Victorian period. As with the previous periods, the clothing of the Victorian period symbolizes the effects of gender performativity (Little, 23). Orlando feels dragged down by “the weight of the crinoline which she had submissively adopted”. Clothing in Orlando is described as something that shapes individuals as well as something that is shaped and fashioned by the time. In addition, the clothes also influence how we perceive gender. In the novel,

fashion does not serve as something that strengthens Orlando's status as a man, but rather as something that makes us doubt it. Typically clothing aids in distinguishing one's gender identity; however, as it does in this novel, it can also make one's gender identity appear ambiguous. It is a product of its time and culture, thus it serves to prove the assumption that gender is not absolute, but rather constantly developing.

At times Woolf uses humor when speaking of gender roles, and to a certain extent this may seem to undermine the seriousness of her exploration of gender. However, it is still evident that Orlando remains confused and influenced by society's expectations of gender. Such an instance can be noted particularly when she ponders over her the idea that the gleam of her wedding ring will designate a place for her among the angels in heaven. Although this line can be perceived as being petty and humorous, Woolf seems to be exposing the importance of gender performance in society in these lines in order to show how it directly relates to and affects Orlando.

Although forces of nature and environment are changing Orlando on the outside, inside he is of the same nature. Shaw states in her article that there is a connection between Woolf's thinking and that of the famous philosopher, John Locke. In his essay *Concerning Human Reason*, the use of "The Oak Tree" draws connection to Orlando's poem. Locke claims that outside forces have no change over one's identity. He states, "an Oak, growing from a plant to a tree and then lopp'd, is still the same oak" (Rognstad, 2). One particular scene from the novel that supports the idea of the constant identity of Orlando after switching genders is when she returns back to England. "No one showed an instant's suspicion that Orlando was not the Orlando they had known. If any doubt there was in the human mind the action of the deer and the dogs would have been enough to

dispel it, for the dumb creatures, as is well known, are far better judges both of identity and character than we are” (Woolf, 161). Woolf states that Orlando is still Orlando to himself and is still seen as Orlando by those who know him best, even though the physical gender has changed.

Philosophers such as Vygotsky and Mead argue that people are capable of demonstrating different versions of themselves as part of their own uniquely comprehensive identity. “Once one has developed a self-perception, has received feedback that affirms that self-perception, and can interact with others within an environment or culture, one can attain a reasonable sense of self-worth, whether positive or negative” (Wise, 8). Once one begins to voluntarily choose to mingle their identity with others through interactions with groups, that individual realizes how many “identities” they may actually possess, and comes to understand that those identities may not all act in harmony or balance with one another in the eyes of society. It is believed that each of these identities subscribes to a different set of rules and standards, depending on the group they are associating with. For example, one can hold multiple roles as a spouse, parent, child, professional, educator, etc. Each of these identities holds a set of normative behaviors that are set as the standard for membership in that group. How well one’s multiple identities exist in harmony together is an indicator of salience. According to Burke, “Identities that have common underlying frames of reference have high salience and conversely, identities that don’t share common meaning in the performance of their roles have low salience” (Wise, 9). A case of high salience can be made for Orlando’s identity as a man, while a case for low salience can be understood through his identity as a woman.

In his role as a man, Orlando's identity is that of a wealthy nobleman who takes interest in dallying about the royal court with lovely noblewomen. As a woman, Orlando is a mature writer of beautiful epic poetry. Although Orlando's identities as both a woman and a man are congruent within herself, such is not the case in society. As a result, this creates a disruption in Orlando's identity process, leaving her with high levels of distress. According to Peter Burke, stress is a relationship between external conditions and the current state of the person. "High levels of distress or anxiety can interrupt the identity process where one compares their self-perception to the identity standard" (Wise, 10). For Orlando, the pressure to conform to society's expectations leaves her wondering about who she truly is and what part or parts of her identity make up her comprehensive self. It is not until Orlando learns to reject societal gender roles that he/she is able to fully consider his androgynous self, his both male and female qualities, as part of his complete identity.

In his research on social identity, Striker proposes that people become members of a particular group as a result of a common identity and a shared belief system that makes collective action possible. Each person in the group bonds with those who have similar interests. Through repeated activities within that group, a personal, role based identity is verified and collectively strengthened. "When a group identity is particularly strong, "an "us" versus "them" attitude can develop, causing high-group affiliation and the willingness to take behavioral risks" (Wise, 10). It is through such symbolic interactions that the self and society are conceptualized. As a result, group social behavior is structured and governed while personal identity is shared in favor of the group's standards.

If repeated activities can formulate a social identity and create norms for different roles, such beliefs can also be applied to gender. Through Striker's theory one can assume that gender roles originated from a group of individuals who carried common beliefs and who created these gender norms in which society should follow. Striker's theory further supports the opinion of other theorists such as Judith Butler, who proposes that gender is constructed "through relations of power, and specifically normative constraints that not only produce but also relegate various bodily beings" (Butler, 3). If identity is shaped by the opinions of those around us, then one can also assume that those with the upper hand are the ones who control the gender roles.

It is important to look back at the scene of gender transformation and notice how several factors were set in place to try to prevent the change from happening in Orlando. Directly before Orlando wakes up and finds himself a woman, he encounters Our Lady of Purity, Our Lady of Chastity, and Our Lady of Modesty. These three figures represent traditional, conservative values, and their purpose is to try to prevent the revelation of Orlando's true gender. The three women are depicted as wanting to hinder the transformation and hide the truth stating. They state, "Truth come not out from your horrid den. Hide deeper, fearful truth. For you flaunt in the brutal gaze of the sun things that were better unknown and undone; you unveil the shameful; the dark you make clear, Hide, Hide, Hide!" (96). The Ladies of Modesty, Chastity, and Purity are potent symbols of the social and political discourse on gender that constructs standard gender categories as they are traditionally known and accepted through the centuries and up to today. Their presence is underwritten by their purpose: they are "here" to uphold and promote the illusion of a stable gender core. In their desire to cover up the truth, they want to "cover

Orlando with their draperies” (96). It can be noted through the quote above that those who prohibit, deny, and criticize gender fluidity need to maintain this view on gender. In the scene with the ladies, Woolf implies that such gender norms are reinforced and upheld on a false basis, and there is nothing being done to change things because no one ever questions the existence or origin. Woolf appears to be criticizing the fact that people are not questioning the prescribed gender categories because it is much easier to conform to one of the two categories available. Again, Woolf’s criticism is not stated directly here, but rather implied through a personification of the negative, traditional forces and values she wishes to present in order to confound them.

By presenting her critique through fictionalized characters, one could assume that Woolf succeeded in promoting a controversial view on gender without being censured. Marte Rognstad argues that, “Orlando’s sudden change of gender, along with the ability to live through hundreds of years, probably made it easier to accept the novel, and not to see Woolf’s portrayal of gender as a real threat to existing gender norms” (50). Woolf, wanting to expose what she believes as truth, shares her own view of reality, gender, and the individual’s place in society. Sarah Hastings touches upon this subject when she writes:

Woolf recognized that the perceived dependence of gender determination upon biological sex was ridiculous, yet temporally existed in an era that did not provide a fertile atmosphere to foster lasting substantial change with regards to the interpretation of gender. In response to this environmental limitation, Woolf created a fictional atmosphere in which she could subvert the heteronormative

assumptions and could effectively divorce gender from sex in its inherent construct within her works and in the lives of her protagonists (Rognstad, 51).

Woolf created her own unique universe in order to avoid the limitations of the time, and as a result was able to reveal gender as a construction rather than an inherited quality that is not fixed but always evolving and flowing.

It is almost impossible to discuss *Orlando* without giving mention to the one person who inspired Woolf to create the novel, Vita Sackville-West. It is no secret that Sackville-West was a close friend, and an inspiration for Woolf's character Orlando. Sackville-West's ambiguous sexuality and gender identity inspired Woolf to write a novel that till this day remains controversial in its portrayal of gender. Sackville-West was known for refusing to act according to gender conventions. Sackville-West did not wish her life to be limited to one specific gender category. By promoting a radical new view on gender, Sackville-West later came to be represented by Judith Butler (Marcus, 10). She believed that one cannot and must not escape the category of female, but one can choose to act outside the norms of society, much like Orlando does in the novel when she cross dresses and alternates genders (Wise, 10).

“If gender is not an artifice to be taken on or off at will and hence, not an effect of choice, then how are we to understand the standards of gender norms without falling into the cultural trap that casts out to brand men and women as one specific gender? How then are we able to understand the ritualized repetition by which norms are produced?” (Butler, 3). Such constraints placed on individuals assist in producing unthinkable, abject, and undividable bodies that do not question these norms but simply abide by the standards placed on them by society (Butler, 3).

Just as Striker and Butler believed in gender as a stereotypical convention, so too did Virginia Woolf. By describing Orlando as a character who exhibits both male and female qualities, Woolf is stating her beliefs that gender roles are prescribed and not inherited. “If Orlando was a woman, how did she never take more than ten minutes to dress” yet at the same time Orlando could “drink with the best and liked games of hazard” (133). Additionally, Orlando was kind hearted, yet detested household manners; Orlando rode well but had little patience and would easily burst into tears. Such examples indicate a personality made up of stereotypical traits, both masculine and feminine. Woolf presents these characteristics with humor and irony, as she appears to ridicule the stereotypical gender conventions.

Although Orlando can be read as a witty and humorous fantasy novel, there is a more serious undertone present in Woolf’s piece on gender. Woolf’s implicit criticism of the oppressive nature of gender roles demonstrates how society decides what is appropriate and what is considered inappropriate behavior for each gender. An example of this can be noted through Orlando’s inhabited characteristics of both genders at the same time. By creating the character of Orlando, one who freely chooses gender attributes and even switches genders, Woolf deconstructs gender and shows her audience how gender is a social construction made up by acts rather than an inherited and absolute gendered core (Boshier, 5).

Through her mockery, Woolf criticizes how male and females are put into two opposing categories with incompatible qualities. To inhabit a quality of the opposite gender, she believed, “would be detrimental and lead to confusion, and lead you to a meaningless gender” (Kaevon, 3). However, in the eyes of Woolf, there is no need to

define, categorize, or determine Orlando. “Whether, then, Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and cannot now be decided,” (133) and if it is impossible to do so in Woolf’s fictional universe, then that is perfectly alright. “In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what is above” (189). To Woolf, although both sexes are different, they often intermix as in the case of Orlando, who is living with two genders in one physical body.

Through her use of irony and humor, Woolf shows her audience how Orlando inhabits both masculine and feminine characteristics, but also poses the question of why it is that we think of these characteristics as typically male or female. Why is it that “it was to each such a revelation that a woman could be as tolerant and free-spoken as a man, and a man as strange and subtle as a woman?” (179). Could it possibly be the other way around? Perhaps being sentimental was typically male and drinking and games of hazard were typically female?

Butler focuses on these questions in her criticism, as she states that what we take for granted as natural features of one gender are really traits that have been assigned to that gender over time, perhaps through social or political norms of male and female. The norms assigned to each category are strengthened and reinforced by the existence of the other, the opposite category, or an idea that stems from the habitual need to organize the world into binary oppositions. It is the belief in the binary oppositions of male and female that upholds the rigid gender hierarchy, and consequently the gender categories. As these roles are performed and repeated every day, they thus become the standard and reinforce themselves as absolute features (Butler, 32).

In the beginning of the novel, Orlando's physical appearance hints towards an ambiguous gender identity. In terms of Orlando's looks, Woolf plays with what is considered as a typical masculine appearance by using words and images typically used in reference to femininity. His features are described as very delicate and pure: "He had eyes like drenched violets, so large that the water seemed to have brimmed in them and widened them; and a brow like the swelling of a marble dome pressed between the two blank medallions which were his temples" (12). Orlando is described in this scene as an undoubtedly good-looking male. It is interesting to note how Woolf uses this description of Orlando to contradict what society expects a good-looking man to appear like. Masculine men were traditionally viewed as the most attractive; however, Orlando is depicted as feminine and delicate, yet is still considered desirable by the opposite sex. On the basis of the descriptions of his physical appearance at the beginning of the novel, Orlando as a young man could definitely be described as a manly woman, due to his mentality and behavior.

Just as Orlando was an ambiguous figure, he also appreciated partners who were also vague in their appearance and attitude. He prefers more "masculine" traits in his women over the feminine and delicate. Such preferences can be witnessed through Archduchess Harriet, who we later learn is a man. His affair with Archduchess Harriet is perhaps a mere fascination, for it is definitely not love. However, there appears to be some lust and an unaccountable sexual desire, particularly in the line that states, "and it was lust the vulture, not love, the bird of paradise, that flopped foully and disgustingly, upon his shoulders" (82). The fact that Orlando feels sexually attracted to someone who is actually a man highlights the very ambiguity surrounding Orlando's sexual identity.

If Woolf allowed Orlando to inhabit characteristics from both genders, then she must have wanted to question what certain qualities are typically male, and what others are typically female. She must have also wondered if one can instead choose freely to live and act as one wishes without being limited by gender norms that cast themselves as a particular social construction. By posing these questions, Woolf suggests that there are indeed acts that make up gender, and consequently she appears to deny the existence of a “gender core”, in accordance with Butler’s statement that, “the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all” (Butler, 522). Perhaps both masculine and feminine characteristics together can make up one comprehensive fluid identity.

An example of said liquidity can be noted in Orlando’s relationship with Sasha at the beginning of the novel. On the surface, this affair appears to be one of a traditional heterosexual relationship; however, there are a few ambiguous factors that are responsible for blurring their gender roles. For one, Orlando falls head over heels for Sasha before knowing if she is a man or a woman. This intense feeling of love was described as if “the thickness of his blood melted the ice turned to wine in his veins; he heard the waters flowing and the birds singing; spring broke over the hard wintry landscape” (28). The passion and emotion over his relationship with Sasha turns Orlando into an irrational, and thus feminine character.

Orlando can also be seen switching between gender roles after he is devastated over the departure of Sasha. After she leaves him, he goes into a solitary state of depression and forgets how to be a true male. On the other hand, the narrator describes how Sasha aids Orlando in evolving into a perfect nobleman, one who is “full of grace

and manly courteously” and one who “offered her his hand for the dance” (29). Here Orlando demonstrates how he acts androgynously in his relationship with Sasha, by allowing himself to expose his masculine and feminine qualities.

In addition to Orlando, Woolf’s conception of androgyny is also present in several of her other novels. Such ideas of thinking and writing about androgyny are explored in Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, where she writes that “it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman – manly or man – womanly” (102). When Woolf addresses androgyny in her writing, it entails more than being androgynous at a superficial bodily level, instead she always discusses the androgynous brain and the androgynous self, not just physical characteristic.

Woolf believed that the ideal state of androgyny was that of harmony, when neither gender dominates the other, but both are equally balanced in harmony (Rognstad, 97). It is true that Orlando inhabits both female and male qualities after the transformation, and that Woolf exploits both genders. An example of this can be noted once Orlando awakens after a long sleep. The narrator describes how, “he stretched himself. He rose. He stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumpets pealed Truth! Truth! We have no choice left but to confess- he was a woman” (97). Woolf uses the pronoun “he” here even though Orlando is physically and biologically now a woman. She later goes on to reference Orlando as “their”. By first using the male pronoun then switching to the plural pronoun, Woolf appears to show us that there is nothing absolute about Orlando’s gender identity. It is certain that she is woman in the flesh, but there is still very much a presence of both genders in her.

Although Woolf acknowledges Orlando's male and female personality throughout the novel, it is only at the end of the novel that Orlando himself refuses to accept society's prescribed roles and discovers that it is impossible to categorize himself as part of one fraught category.

Orlando's performance of masculinity and femininity appears to be balanced within her self; however Orlando's awareness of both genders keeps her locked into one or the other side throughout the novel. Such behavior is due the result of her awareness of society's expectations for her as a man and as a woman, and her choice to capitulate to such strictures. In public, the masculine and feminine never intermix, and thus seem to operate independently. Therefore, we see at several times in the novel that Orlando switches back and forth between genders. "For her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn only one set of clothing can conceive" (153). Orlando actively alternates from masculine to feminine according to the situation and her surroundings. When wearing proper women's clothing for the first time, the narrator suggests that Orlando had not ever given her sex a thought up until that moment. This supports Butler's theory that as humans, we are androgynous beings who are in fact genderless. We are simply bodies shaped by our surroundings and what is forced upon us by society. The fact that Orlando had not given much thought to her sex before wearing women's garments indicates that without these superficial factors such a clothing, we would have no precise idea of what the male or female sex would be like. Orlando's example also shows how the female gender identity of Orlando only comes into play through external factors that are culturally fashioned, such as clothing (Rognstad, 40).

Even after the “sex transformation”, Orlando continues to shape his masculine identity along with his feminine one. It is evident that Orlando is not completely “over” being male in the second half of the novel, and this further supports the idea that he is both male and female (Kaivola, 13). Many examples of Orlando dressing up and performing the role of a man even though she is technically a woman exist in the second half of Woolf’s novel. Again, Orlando uses clothing to perform the role of gender, this time dressing as a noble lord. While dressed as a man, Orlando wanders the streets of London performing masculinity and sweeping her hat off to a passing lady who we later learn is named Nell, and who wrongfully mistakes him as a male lover. Nell plays the female role to perfection for Orlando, yet Orlando later decides to reveal her true gender when “she flung off disguise and admitted herself a woman” (151). Orlando successfully fooled Nell for a while by mastering masculine characteristics, much like Rosalind did in *As You Like It*, except Rosalind’s target was her male lover, Orlando, not a female lover, Nell. Woolf and Shakespeare, by focusing on the role of clothing and costumes, are trying to show how superficial features created by society assist in creating the presumed gender categories of male and female.

As a woman, Orlando inhabits characteristics that she knows will be expected of each gender in a given situation, yet she can easily alternate between each gender with ease. An example of this can be noted in Orlando’s scene with Nell. Once Orlando, now a woman, dresses as a man to meet Nell, she is able to decode Nell’s behavior and learns to understand why she acts the way she does. “Having been so lately a woman herself, she suspected that the girl’s timidity and her hesitating answers and the very fumbling with the key in the latch and the fold of her cloak and the droop of her wrist were all

performed to gratify her masculinity” (150). Orlando’s actions serve as an example of how gender roles are indeed performed, and how one can put on an act as a way of reinforcing the existing conventions of gender. Nell’s act serves to strengthen Orlando’s masculinity and her own femininity. Orlando, even as a woman at this point, has learned to perform masculinity and can thus respond as expected to Nell’s feminine performance. As a result, Nell’s and Orlando’s gender performance confirms their positions in two split gender categories.

Woolf also focuses on the role of others in constituting one’s identity. This can be witnessed in how Orlando’s female identity is shaped and strengthened through her encounters, particularly her encounter with the captain aboard the ship from Turkey to England. In this scene, the narrator describes how, “it was not until she felt the coil of skirts about her legs and the captain offered, with the greatest politeness, to have an awning spread for her on deck, that she realize with a start the penalties and privileges of her position” (108). It is not solely her clothing in this scene that make Orlando conscious of her female gender, but it is also the captain, who performs masculinity so that Orlando must play the game and perform femininity. In her meeting with the Captain, Orlando is treated as a woman, thus further establishing her female gender identity.

In addition, Orlando at the same time experiences first hand the limitations placed on women because of their gender roles. Women led seemingly carefree lives, where the most important thing was to look nice on the arm of their husband. The fact that Orlando feels that, “these skirts are plaguey things to have about one’s heels” (108) indicates the limitations and restrictions women experienced. Additionally, the belief that she, “should have to trust the protection of the bluejacket” symbolizes that women were dependent on

men to swim, or in case of an emergency, to survive. Through this, Woolf seems to imply that the expected gender roles of her time were not equal. If the female was dependent on the male, then she was thus ranked as subordinate. Perhaps it is not Woolf's intention to critique such practices directly, but rather illustrate it through the descriptions of situations where the focus is placed on the superficial features of gender.

Woolf continues to use Orlando's relationships to highlight the ambiguity of gender. An example of this can be seen in the last and perhaps most important relationship in the novel, the relationship between Orlando and Shel. As Orlando is trapped in the tight grip of the 19th century, an age that insists on marriage for young women, Orlando comes to the realization that everyone is mated but herself, and she must now face a difficult decision. But how can Orlando, a person of both genders, reside herself to a strictly man and woman relationship? Fortunately for Orlando, he does not have to compromise. While Orlando lies sprawled in a field with a broken ankle contemplating life, she looks up and sees a sea captain named Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire. In what feels like almost an instant, the two are engaged to be married, without even knowing each other's names. In this moment, Orlando embraces nature and rejects society; nature provides her with a partner to fulfill her needs. This character is Shel.

Though their acquaintance had been so short, they had guessed as always happens between lovers, everything that is important about each other in two seconds, and it now remained only to fill in such unimportant details as what they were called; where they lived; and whether they were beggars or people of substance (5.30).

Typically things like names and one's upbringing are particularly important facts to know

when one is in a relationship; however, Woolf appears to be emphasizing that the conversations between the two characters prove to be more important.

While all of Orlando's partners in the novel are given multiple names, Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire is no exception. However, it is interesting to note that Shel is the only one whose name changes according to Orlando's mood. He is "Bonthrop" when Orlando is feeling lonely, he is "Mar" when she is feeling dreamy, and he is Shel when he plays with snails in the grass. It is interesting to note that Shel's name changes not in relation to his character but to the mood of Orlando. It appears as if Shel is a perfect match for Orlando because he allows her to be herself in all her forms. It is as if Orlando has married someone of her own nature and her own art, someone as malleable, flexible, and unstable as herself.

At times the two question the perfection of their match, intellectually, spiritually, and physically such as when Shel asks:

Are you positive you aren't a man?" "Can it be possible you're not a woman?" and then they must put it to the proof without more ado. For each was so surprised at the quickness of the other's sympathy, and it was to each such a revelation that a woman could be as tolerant and free-spoken as a man, and a man as strange and subtle as a woman, that they had to put the matter to the proof at once (252).

Neither Orlando nor Shel can believe that they are of opposite gender because they both understand each other so well and both have opposite parts, both masculine and feminine, but they nonetheless share the same ideals and balance each other out. Orlando cannot believe she has found a man who is at once boldly courageous and "as strange and subtle as a woman" (250). In Shel, Orlando finds an individual like her, someone not defined or limited to his gender. It is as if they are two halves of the same coin.

When the wind carries Shel back to Orlando at the end of the sixth chapter, it marks a moment of tranquility and candidness. Orlando calls Shel to her as she bares her breasts to the moon, and allows herself to be open to her history, to nature, and to her art. Orlando is no longer afraid or willing to hide or remain taciturn, for she is now proud to be an individual of both genders. She is ultimately able to recognize that she is not defined by the moment in which she lives. What she discovers is that she is a composite of selves, many experiences and many lifetimes existing in a continuum. When the clock strikes twelve, Orlando reaches maturity and learns to understand the various facets that create unity in her life.

I believe that Woolf's main purpose in writing *Orlando* was to present a character whose gender transformation does not determine his/her identity. In doing so, Woolf is implying that there is no absolute gender identity prior to those acts set up as the standard by those who establish gender norms. As Judith Butler states, "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results" (*Gender Trouble*, 34). It is noted in Woolf's novel that Orlando "remained precisely as she had been" after the transformation. This indicated that her identity and personality are precisely the same after she transforms physically into a woman; despite appearances she has not intellectually changed.

Through the example of Orlando, Woolf seems to share Butler's opinion that both gender and sex are constructed and controlled by society, and that there is no need to distinguish between the two. As Orlando breaks down and transcends the prescribed categories of male and female, she thus disrupts the traditional gender norms and conventions, proving their socially and cultural construction. Although Orlando's

biological sex changes after the transformation, there is no change present in her until the external and socially produced gender roles work upon her and construct for her a female gender identity. This claim relates to Butler's theory that gender is a gradual and temporal process, "which one learns to perform through repeated acts" (Gender Trouble, 34). It is only after Orlando becomes one with nature that she meets Shel, and is thus able to release the inhibitions that she kept inside as a result of society's restricted gender roles. The fact that Shel challenges all labels and categories, and that he too is a complicated person, makes him an acceptable partner for Orlando, who is herself also a complicated person of both genders. Both of these characters ultimately balance each other and create harmony in opposites: a *concordia discors*. They are examples of how two character can achieve harmony amongst contrasting elements, despite the tension and strife that are often associated with such differences. Once Orlando realizes that she can be open and free in her relationship with Shel as well as in her life, she is able to find happiness. By resisting conformity and choosing instead to exist in her own androgynous world, Orlando finds concord in the discord that is societal pressure.

It is significant to examine how gender themes in *As You Like It* and *Orlando* are parallel, despite the time lapse between these texts. Both Rosalind and Orlando, although they lived centuries apart, challenged the supposed stability of the binary categories of male and female during a time when conservative gender roles were strictly enforced. Furthermore, Orlando and Rosalind demonstrate how androgyny can be shaped and altered by experience, and how gender develops and evolves over time. It is interesting to note how *Orlando*, a novel written centuries after Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and spanning 300 years, shows little to no significant progress in terms of society's

interpretation of gender roles; therefore, both Orlando and Rosalind position themselves as pivotal and progressive representations of gender performance for their time.

IV. ANZULDUA, BORDERLANDS AND CROSSING HOME

Similar to Chicano writer Gloria Anzaldúa, Shakespeare's Rosalind and Woolf's Orlando encounter and overcome various invisible "borders" throughout their transformation. For Rosalind it is courtly life and Arden life, masculine and feminine, Rosalind and Ganymede. For Orlando, it is the struggle between shifting genders and adapting through different decades. According to Anzaldúa, borders do not just separate two opposite sides, but rather they do something more; they psychologically and sociologically affect us. Anzaldúa believes that borders limit the development of one's identity and are a creation of those in power –men. Men make the rules and laws; women transmit them, thus women are limited in a male dominated society (Anzaldúa, 38). Anzaldúa's view of borders is similar to Butler's view of gender, in that both are controlled by a purportedly higher power.

Anzaldúa offers several examples of how she was able to overcome her own borders- Latinos and whites, heterosexuality and homosexuality, Texas and Mexico. In addition to the physical border between America and Mexico, and the linguistic border between English and Spanish, Anzaldúa also explores the borders of gender and sexuality in *La Frontera/Borderlands* (Hartley, 2). In her semi-autobiographical text, Anzaldúa shares how she came to terms with her Chicana lesbian identity, and how she learned to accept its masculine and feminine components, as well as her culture as a mixture of different races and ethnicities. Anzaldúa describes how the ultimate rebellion for a woman of color is to rebel against her native culture through sexual behavior. By acting

against two moral prohibitions -- sexuality and homosexuality-- Anzuldua defies the beliefs of her people through her sexual preference. She explains how “being lesbian and raised Catholic, indoctrinated as straight, I made the choice to be queer (for some it is genetically inherent)” (Anzuldua, 41). For Anzuldua, life offers an interesting path that does not lead towards a particular destination, but rather twists and turns. Along this path, she continues to slip in and out of the white, the Mexican, the Catholic, the indigenous, the instinctual, and the mental. She describes this as a path that “crosses home,” a path of knowing and learning, but also a path of balance and mitigating duality (Anzuldua, 41). The idea of duality transfers over to other aspects of her life as well. In her writing, Anzuldua speaks in both English and Spanish, thus shattering the linguistic border between both languages and demonstrating that Chicana literature cannot be expressed solely in one tongue (Hartley, 2).

Similarly, Rosalind, in learning that she too is composed of masculine and feminine identities, and that the true “Rosalind” cannot fully be expressed in solely one gender, “crosses home”. Rosalind has become an ambiguous figure who no longer holds a single name or sexual identity, but is rather a combination of Rosalind and Ganymede, man and woman, maiden and wife, epicene and shrew. In addition, the epilogue allows for a play between “straight” and “gay” to occur, as Rosalind drops her disguise as Ganymede and Rosalind steps forth. The actor states that if he were a woman, he would kiss all the men in the audience who pleased her. The intermingling of homosexual and heterosexual desires of a man pretending to be a woman pretending to be a man who is really a woman pretending to be a man in the hopes of seducing a man, exposes the play’s celebration of the marvelous complexities of life and proves that gender

performance can be masterfully executed by both men and women. In doing so, Rosalind/Ganymede/ the actor crosses home and concludes.

For Orlando, learning that she is an individual of multiple identities creates unity and harmony in her life. Orlando shatters her own borders after meeting Shel, a character who challenges all labels and demonstrates to her how it is entirely acceptable to disrupt traditional gender norms and conventions in order to live openly and freely as their fully realized selves. Much like Anzuldua and Rosalind, Orlando's identity will always remain in constant flux, a perpetual slipping in and out of various personalities that compose one completely multidimensional self. By emerging beyond their supposed limits, Rosalind, Orlando and Anzuldua position themselves as examples of multiple personalities in one physical body, combined to create harmony amongst tension and discord. They have all "crossed home."

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